

OPEN ACCESS

MA 'ARIF-E-ISLAMI (AIU)

ISSN (Print): 1992-8556

mei.aiou.edu.pk

iri.aiou.edu.pk

## Contrast Opinions of Orientalists on the Spread of Islam: A Critical Analysis

*\*Dr. Muḥammad Shahzad Azad*

*Lecturer, Islamabad College for Boys, G-6/3, Islamabad*

*\*\* Dr. Abdul Rauf Zafar*

*Professor/Chairman, Deptt., of Islamic Studies, University of Sargodha, Lahore Campus*

### ABSTRACT

*Islam* approached the whole Peninsula so rapidly because of the true spiritual, social, political and educational teachings of *Islam*. Great sympathetic attitude, unbeaten determination and restless hard work of both Prophet *Muḥammad* (peace and blessings of *Allah* be upon him) and his followers were the key sources for this fastest ever intellectual missionary progress. The power was utilized by them, on unavoidable occasions, only to extend the boundaries of their state, but never to compel the conquered ones towards *Islam*. This historical reality is no more unknown to the modern orientalists. Yet a good number of them, including William Muir, Washington Irving, George Sale and many others propagated that the Muslims promoted their religion and widened their state altogether by force of sword. They have well been answered logically and historically by their fellow orientalists who not only rejected all such accusations on the missionary role of Muslims, but also acknowledged *Muḥammad* (peace and blessings of *Allah* be upon him) a moral symbol for Humanity. They maintain that *Islam* went on its spiritual growth even in the political degradation and economic weakness of its Empire. They proved that the Islamic teachings not only influenced the public of the lands conquered by the Muslims but they also proselytized the Non-Muslim conquerors of the Muslim territories. As None of the orientalists except Thomas Arnold has written such a comprehensive book for this sole purpose to attest thoroughly the extension of *Islam* in all over the world, and the answers of the orientalists quoted in this paper are scattered in their individual general works on *Islam* or its Prophet (peace and blessings of *Allah* be upon him), therefore this research paper is written to collect about all types of the objections and the justifying defensive statements of the orientalists on the spread of *Islam* on one place and to present a precise conclusion by analysing and evaluating them in the light of the authentic history .

P.7

- 11- Somayah Berrigan, Introduction, The Light of the Holy Qur'ān, Amir-al-Momneen'Ali Library, Iran, Vol.1, PP.XI-XVI
- 12- Ibid., P. XVIII
- 13- Ibid., P. XV
- 14- Khaleel Mohammed, Assessing English Translations of the Qura'n, Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2005, PP. 58-71
- 15- Alan Jones, The Qur'ān, introduction, The E.J.W Gibb Memorial Trust UK, 2015,P.21
- 16- E.A. nida, Translating a text with a long and sensitive tradition, Rodopi, Amsterdam,1997, P.57
- 17- Hussain, Abdul-Raof, Qur'ān Translation Discourse, texture, ad exegesis, Curzon Press, U.K, 2001, P.9
- 18- Daryābādī, 'Abdul Mājid, Tafsir ul Qur'ān, Darul Ishaat, Karachi, Vol.1, 2014, P.8
- 19- Arnold and Guillaume, Legacy of Islam, Preface, Oxford university Press, UK, pp.VI-VII
- 20- The Encyclopedia Britannica, Cambridge ,11th Edition, Vol.II, P.192
- 21- Khaleel Mohammed, Assessing English Translations of the Qur'ān, Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2005, pp. 58-71
- 22- Riazi, Abdmehdi The invincible in Translation, The Role of Text Structure, paper presented at International conference in Language and translation at Bahrain University, 2002, P.13
- 23- Fakhri, Haji, urdu translations, quarterly urdu magazine, Anjuman Taraqqe Urdu Dacan,Oct.1929, PP.593-597
- 24- Shah Wali Ullah, Alfauz ul Kabir fe asool utafseer, Al Faisal Publisher, Lahore, 2000, pp.3-20
- 25- Mansūr Pūrī, Qazi, M. SulaYmān Salmān Rehmat ul Lilalamin, Maktba Islamia Faislabad, P. 14,15
- 26- Somayah Berrigan, Introduction, The Light of The Holy Qu'rān, Amir-al-Momneen Ali Library, Iran, Vol.1, P. XVIII

meaning of the Qur'ān.

- 3- This research paper is also helpful for the reader to judge the right translator and precise translation of the Qur'ān.
- 4- A review committee should be made in every country on the pattern of King Fahd Qur'ān Complex Madinah, which may review all new translations of other languages and certify or rectify them.
- 5- The work of translation should be done by more than one scholar because it is not the task of a single person thus it can be free from more errors.
- 6- There should be at least three top level English translations in front of a person who is intended to write new English translation.
- 7- Translation of non Muslims must be reviewed by a special committee or competent Islamic academy and certify them after corrections if it will be up to the mark otherwise it must be banned.

### *References*

- 1- Al-Hijir15:9
- 2- Ar-Rūm 30:22
- 3- Daryābādī, 'Abdul Mājīd, English Translations of the Qur'ān, Saiyyara Digest, Qur'ān Number, Part.2, Vol.13, copy.6, 1969, Islamic publications Ltd. Shah alum Market Lahore, P.639
- 4 - Al-Baqarah 2:23
- 5- Fakhrī, Hājī, urdu translations, quarterly urdu magazine, Anjuman Taraqqe Urdu Dacan, Oct.1929, P.593
- 6- Fakhrī, Hājī, urdu translations, quarterly urdu magazine, Anjuman Taraqqe Urdu Dacan, Oct.1929, P.594
- 7- Alan Jones, The Qur'ān, introduction, The E.J.W Gibb Memorial Trust UK, 2015, P.15
- 8- Hasan Diauddin Itr. Al-Ahruf as-Sab'a wa Manaazil al Qira'at minha, Dār al-Bashir al-Islamiya, Beriut, 1988, P.200
- 9- Mahmood Ubaidat, Dirasaat fee uloom al - Qur'ān, Dār Amamr, Jordan, 1990, P.224
- 10- Daryābādī, 'Abdul Mājīd, Tafsir ul Qur'ān, Darul Ishaat, Karachi, Vol.1, 2014,

*"Life of Muhammad is an open book. every man should think that the life of Muhammad is an example for him."*<sup>25</sup>

### **Impartial and unprejudiced behaviour of the translator**

If a translator has some orientation pre-decided and pre-planned, he can not translate correct. Because in different shades of the meaning, he can use, which helps his mission directly or indirectly?

Somayah Berrigan Says:

"The hostile minds have done the worst possible work which is for them to black list the holy prophet and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful, subtle, mis-translations, mis- interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts. the distortion and the mis-interpretations are so strongly plastered with such attractive linguistic colours and the delusive logic get caught in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the sugar coated poisonous pills of deceit."<sup>26</sup>

### **Follow the unanimous and orthodox meaning and explanations**

It is the era of sectarianism. Each and every man has his own sect and many translations are being launched to introduce every one's doctrine. In this anarchy it is necessary to obey and follow those meanings and explanations upon which our great clerics have had consensus and being followed by the majority of the Muslims in the world. If one translator turns aside this principle, then each and every translator has his own translation according to his will and sect.

### **Comparative studies of the religion**

The holy Qur'ān refutes those things of other religions which are made by so called clerics not revealed; therefore it is essential for a translator to know about other major religions; their teachings, their sacred books and their history. This knowledge helps the translator about terminology of other religions, basic resources of them and current and past condition of the religions.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Deep acquaintance of the science of the translation of the Qur'ān with basic tools and comprehension of impediments, awareness of style and linguistic qualities of the Qur'ān and Arabic language are pre-requisite for translator. Unless and until the familiarity of these sciences and basic knowledge, one translator can not illustrate and succeed in presenting a precise and accurate and intent meaning of the Qur'ān.

- 1- Besides these guiding principles, a translator should consult those translations which are acknowledged as accurate and precise in Islamic circles.
- 2- By following these principles, a translator can do a good job and produce the right

## Impediments in translating the Qur'an and guiding principles for translation

---

Allama Jalal uddin Sioute has describes more than twenty areas of study known as Uloom el Qur'an which includes context of the revelation ( shan e nazool), abrogation ( nasikh omansookh), Ijaz e Qur'an, Gharaib Ul Qur'an, pre islamic literature and many more.

On the other hand Shah Wali Ullahh describes in his book Alfauz ul kabir five knowledges derived and described in the Qur'an, a translator should also be well versed with these five knowledges which are the basis of all other knowledges. those five type of knowledges are as under:

- 1- knowledge of commandments of Allah
- 2- knowledge of refuting disbelievers
- 3- knowledge of Allah's symbols and his glory. <sup>24</sup>
- 4- Knowledge of the past history (how Allah ruined the people and glorified some people)
- 5- Knowledge of the life here-after.

This attempt needed not only the knowledge and adroitness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic language and Islamic culture. the phonetic sound system of the two languages; English and Arabic are different. It should also be studies deeply.

### **Study of the life of the holy prophet**

The Qur'an is revealed by Allah on the holy prophet Muhammad (saw) therefore a translator can not translate the Qur'an until he knows the back ground and situation of that time and the life of the holy Prophet. Qur'an was not revealed all at a time but with the passage of time. That is why it is prerequisite to know the life of the prophet. Moreover, Qur'an is directly attached with the prophet. and the prophet used to determine the meaning of the verses because one Arabic word have different shades of the meaning. That meaning was authentic which Muhammad (SAW) prescribed and explained. The prophet's narrations and traditions are the basic source of determining the right meaning and explanation of any verse. For instance, Salawt, Zakat, Hajj, Sajdha and many more are the words which have more than one meaning. The prophet is the only source who tells the correct, precise and appropriate meaning of that word.

Beside this the lives of the companions of the prophet should also be gone through. Because companions of the prophets are the second source of determining the meaning of the verses after the holy prophet.

Qazi M. SulaYmān Salmān Mansūr Pūrī says:

For example, a piece from verse (18:26) *ابصر به واسمع*

Utilizes a certain tense that signifies amazement and wonder. This tense was apparently not understood by George Sale even, who translated the verse as “Do thou make Him to see and to hear” Rod Well understood this as a command “look thou and hearken to him alone” whereas the Palmer missed the whole point and translated it as rather dreary, “He can see and hear.” A more accurate translation of the verse is Pickthall's translation, “how clear of sight is He and keen of hearing.”

5 -Well versed with the exact meaning of the Arabic words

6- Awareness of different shades of meaning

7- No confusion between Arabic words as Menezes mistakenly translated Abu Bakr as the father of the virgin and the word for virgin is bikr not bakr

8-Having the ability to differentiate Arabic from Hebrew or syriac.

These all qualifications belong to Muslims and Non Muslims. only Faithfulness and objectivity is missed naturally among the non muslims translations oftenly and rest of the qualifications belong to ones level of caliber and interest of seeking the rules of both the languages and the subject matter and different sciences. All these belong to ones own scholarship. The Holy Qu'rān is not an ordinary book. special measures should be taken while translating the Qu'rān. After studying and analyzing different Qu'rānic translations; Guiding and leading principles of translation the Qu'rān can be concluded as:

### **1-Proficiency in both the languages**

A translator must be fluent and well versed with the techniques, proverbs, literature, history, culture and civilization of both the languages. This deep study of both the societies helps the translator to know pros and cons of respective language. He can read between the lines and mould it easily in other language. In case of the Qur'ān after having despite of much proficiency, hercolious task to do justice with the translation of Qur'ān. But the problems and difficulties can be minimized by having skillfulness in both the languages.

Hajji Ahmed Fakhri says:

*“A translator ought to be expert in language in which he wants to translate the Qu'rān to know each and every style and shade of that language, so that, he can opt an alternate shade or style where he needs.”*<sup>23</sup>

### **2-Awareness of the sciences of the Qu'rān**

## Impediments in translating the Qur'an and guiding principles for translation

---

the various theories of translation.”<sup>21</sup>

In order to have more accurate and communicative translations, the translators need to meet many requirements. Riazi<sup>22</sup> explains that it is a conventionally understood that translators should meet three basic requirements

1. having the command of the source language
2. having a command of the target language
3. Expertise in the subject matter to perform their job successfully.

Many approaches and types of the theory of the translation are there to indicate and guide for the best and most appropriate way to translate anything in any other language. Now a day the role of text structure in translation seems so important that by adding it as a basic requirement for the translators, it can contribute and lead to higher quality translations. The available literature on text analysis can be generally divided into two groups.

Micro structure and Macro structure. Whereas micro structure belongs to a detailed linguistic analysis of texts in terms of lexis and syntax and macro structure relates to the analysis and description of the rhetorical organization of various texts. Text analysis is thus becoming a useful tool in performing more reliable translations. Talking about the role of text analysis Riazi's approach for the translators is that they should first try to reconstruct the macro structure and rhetorical structure of the source text in the target language, and then look for the appropriate words and structure. This is a procedure and method that competent and skill full translators perform in the process of translation, consciously or unconsciously.

This concept of text analysis is very useful and relevant tool for understanding the Qur'ānic discourse and its translation. The theory of translation overall has had practical contributions to the translation of the Qur'ān that can be seen in many successful translations of the Qur'ān. Some basic qualifications are very important for the translators.

1. Faithfulness and objectivity
2. Well versed in Arabic and target (English) language. (a person with a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic and armed with a few dictionaries and lexicons, can not do justice to any translation).
3. Knowledge of Islam and Islamic sciences (sciences of the quran; Uloom ul Quran and sciences of Hadith; Uloom ul hadith to the level necessary for a translator
4. Having approach to the authentic Tafseer of the Qur'ān in order to properly understand the intent of the verses.

translator in the sense

of comprehending and determining the meaning of a word and choice of the shade of the meaning.

- 9- An English translator can not help enlarging the translation of the verse, in many cases he has to omit few words in translation.

- 10- Nature of the sources in front of a translator in the form of exegesis and translation works and his extent to depend upon them. If he may get true and authentic exegesis while translating, he will perform better otherwise the case will be reverse.

- 11- Poor knowledge of pre Islamic literature

These all multi type of the problems can be minimized by acquiring the sound knowledge of different sciences of the Holy Qur'ān and taking care of some basic things which have been concluded as following.

#### **Guiding principles for translation**

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'ān is necessary, because other than Arabs who, do not know about the Qur'ān. They have only one source of understanding the Qur'ān that is translation. If translator is honest and takes all measures and learns all knowledges; which we will describe in next pages, then it is the fortune of a reader that he would read what is right. On the other hand, if the translator is not well versed with Arabic or English moreover he has some missionary ambitions against Islam then it would be bad luck and tragedy of a reader that he would not be familiar with real Islam and the Qur'ān. Before describing the guiding principles, we have to tell that if someone wants to understand the Qur'ān then it is his own duty especially for Muslims, to get basic knowledge and read the Qur'ān directly and consult as many translations as he or she can to his or her own capacity.

“When the source text (i.e., the Qur'ān) is one and same, hypothetically speaking, there should not be much room for variations either between a particular translation and the original or between the different translations except for minor changes of no great importance. Yet it is found that there are significant and momentous differences, which cannot be accounted for without referring to the role of the translator, the problems of translation, the principles and procedures of translating and the issues of style. The suitable theory of translation in the light of which such a penetrative investigation can be conducted is to be chosen from among



## Impediments in translating the Qur'an and guiding principles for translation

---

fundamental verbal theme which can, or could, be expressed by vowel changes and consonantal augments without the aid of the supplementary verbs and pronouns which we have to employ in English. The noun, too, has an appropriate form for many diverse things, such as the time and place of an action, bodily defects, diseases, instruments, colours, trades, and so on. One example must suffice. Let us take the root d-w-r which, in its simplest form, means to turn or revolve (intransitive)

Dawwara, to turn a thing round

Dawara, to walk about with some one

Adara, to make go round, and so to control.

Tadawwara, to be round in shape

Dawr, turning(noun)

Istadara

Dawwar, pedlar or vagrant.

Dawrah, one turning.

Dawran, circulation

Duwar, vertigo.

Madar, axis.

Dawwarah, mariner's compass.

Mudir, controller.

Mudarah, round water skin. none of these forms is fortuitous, but is predetermined by the structural genius of the Arabic language.”<sup>19</sup>

“From the root KTB, write, we have kaTabna (we wrote), nakTubu, we will write or we write, kaTib a writer, kiTab a book, makTab a place of writing a school, mukTib a teacher of writing, takaTaba, they two corresponded with one another, takTib, I will ask him to write, wakta taba, and he got his name written down in the register, kuTTab, scribe, makaTabat, correspondence, etc.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to these inherent handicaps many other things are also matters which include

- 1- One's own incompetence and low scholarship
- 2- Meager knowledge of Arabic and English
- 3- Ignorance of the sciences of the Quran
- 4- Passion for the mission
- 5- Lack of deep knowledge of Arabic Sarf o Nahav
- 6- Imitations of the translators like orientallists
- 7- Variations of the calibers of the translators.
- 8- The difference between Muslim translator and non Muslim

whereas they abound in Arabic.

and many similar words have to be rendered as adjectives or participles, not as substantives. In Arabic the feminine plural in the second and third person is always distinguishable from the masculine. In English both genders are covered by you and them. (Alan Jones while translating the Qur'ān indicates this difference by writing small s (singular) an p (plural) above second or third person similarly the same style exercised in the case of feminine and masculine.

The translation of word *س* (seen) and *سوف* (soufa) and the mild difference between them is very difficult to translate.

- 2- Repetition of synonyms for the sake of emphasis is of frequent occurrence in Qur'ān. This is the literary merit and beauty but there is no sanction in English language. Thus many such expressions as

انانحن نزلنا الذكروا ناله لفظون, انانحن نحي ونميت, انانحن نحي الموقى

Verily, we, we, we have revealed the admonition, have to remain only partly translated and deprived of the beauty of the text.

- 3- In the case of omission, the obvious duty of the translator to mention the omission, although his attempts in many cases must be hazardous. This is also the finest Arabic style and both words and phrase have to be supplied by the reader to make the sense complete.

- 4- Another perplexity is caused to the translator by the abrupt grammatical transition, in one and the same sentence frequent in Arabic

- (a) Of person, as from the first and second person to the third, or vice versa  
(b) Of number, from plural to singular, or vice versa.

5- A further complication is caused by what is known by *انتشار ضمائر* i.e., a personal or relative pronoun having different antecedents in one and the same sentence. The translator can not afford to allow such ambiguities; he has to make his choice.

6- English is not rich enough to indicate clearly the shades of the meanings of different sets of words

As to the genius of Arabic language it may not be amiss to recall a few observations made by a distinguished Arabist, Alfred Guillaume:

“Arabic is fitted to express relations with more conciseness than the Aryan languages because of the extraordinary flexibility of the verb and noun. Thus the ideas in break, shatter, try to break, cause to break, allow to be broken, break one another, ask some one to break, pretend to break, are among many variations of the

*meanings may overlap between some languages but these meanings can not be totally equivalent. Therefore, all translations represent varying degrees of paraphrasing because the meaning of words and text depends so largely on the corresponding cultures.”*<sup>16</sup>

Hussain Abdul-Raof explains linguistic aspect in this way:

*“Languages differ considerably from each other syntactically, semantically and pragmatically. The intrinsic syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences in languages lead to cases of both non equivalence and untranslatability between languages; the translators are, therefore, shackled by these limitations. The translators however, have to free themselves of these shackles in order to achieve an acceptable, informative, and effective translation by observing the target language linguistic and cultural norms. Thus, the reality is that the source text suffers structural changes which are inevitable in any process of translation.”*<sup>17</sup>

As for as limitations and impediments are concerned, translator has to restrict himself to many limitations due to the paucity of richness of the target language and in the case of Arabic to English it has become more difficult to translate the Quran in front of its inimitable ellipticism, miraculous elegance, grandiose cadence, emotive and evocative force.

‘Abdul Mājid Daryābādī<sup>18</sup> summed up these limitations and impediments in his preface of translation of the Qur’ān under six main points and various sub headings. Some other impediments and problems are as under:

1- Translator feels the comparative poverty and paucity of richness of the English language at many places.

There is a large number of Arabic verbs untranslatable into English as verbs such as

آخرون - صادقون، شاكرون، متقون، مشركون، مستأخرون، مستأخرون، مستقدمون، قانتون، معجزون،

مفلحون

And one has perforce to render of each word not by a single word but by a combination of words.

The Arabic مضارع (Aorist) is both present and future tenses combined therefore no equivalent in any language of the world.

In English grammar there are only two numbers singular and plural while and there is no single word to convey the sense of the Arabic dual تثنيه in nouns and verbs as well, both in the second and third persons.

There is comparative dearth of اسماء الفاعل (nomina agentis) in English language,

*adhere to the religion itself—is to produce a functional and relatively accurate English rendition. Many of these believers fail to take an academic approach to the history and the Judeo-Christian references in Islam's main document. Polished English prose should not substitute for poor scholarship. In addition, sectarian differences within Islam have undercut any Muslim consensus on a translated version. Increasingly, it looks like the quest for the perfect rendition will be endless”.*<sup>14</sup>

About the rhyme and rhetorical aspect of the 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī writes in the preface of his translation:

“The biggest problem for this and any other translation of the Qur'an is that the text was originally intended to be recited aloud and is highly rhetorical in nature. Recitation frequently gives the text a dimension that does not come across in silent reading, showing up lines of thoughts that do not stand out clearly when one is perusing the text. Translators usually tackle this problem by adding to their translation bridging phrases that they normally draw from the numerous, and lengthy, commentaries on the Qur'ān that have been written over the centuries in Arabic. If they do not, they run the risk of being incomprehensible, however accomplished the actual translation. This is shown very clearly by Arberry's the Kor'an interpreted. The translation is very good, interpretation, despite the title. The result is that there are numerous places where Arberry's translation, though technically correct, is almost impossible to follow unless one knows the Arabic well: and if one can not follow the translation one can not understand it.”<sup>15</sup>

Those who speak more than one language realize that verbatim translation is not successful in imparting the understanding of a text, because the grammar and syntax of every language is different, and each has its specific procedure and methodology of speech, in addition, we often find that there is no exact equivalent between the words of one language and the words of another. This fact leads the translator to believe that non equivalence in translation among the different languages is an expected linguistic phenomenon. The lack of equivalence among languages at lexical, textual, grammatical, or pragmatic level is a common fact and a problem that is always encountered by translators.

An expert says in this scenario:

*“At the heart of translation lies the problem of meaning. Every human language has ad hoc linguistic mechanism to express a meaning and to change the meaning not only through the change of words but also through change of word order. There may be cases where*

the knowledge of Arabic, Islamic science and culture. The editor comments more:

*“Then, it needs that those invoked, know a little bit, at least, about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with commentary. Also the phonetic sound system of the two languages; English and Arabic are different”.*<sup>13</sup>

#### **Brevity can not be maintained**

Translators want to be brief but they can not do so. They have to explain a single word sometimes, by a paragraph in footnote. It can not be avoided. It is impossible for the translators to convey the same sense, beauty and originality of the style of Qur'ān, which fascinated the Arabs while reading or hearing.

#### **Immaturity in arabic language**

Some translators, especially orientalisists are not expert in Arabic language, style and literature and have less knowledge about their civilization. Resultantly, they portray a foggy picture of Islam or miss deliberately the word in which they are not clear in meaning.

#### **Sectarianism, pre-emption and prejudicisim**

Many translators are pre-decided and pre-captured with some mission, a big problem comes up for them. They can not produce perfect and precise translation. The antagonistic minds have done the worst possible work in which their purpose is to blacklist the holy prophet and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations with distortion of the facts. The distortion and the mis-interpretations are so strongly plastered with such attractive linguistic emblem and the delusive logic to trap ordinary people. Sectarianism is also a problem for a translator. He hardly decides to agree or disagree with ancient commentators. Resultantly he gives new thought which is far from the fundamentals of Islam.

#### **Unawareness of basic references**

Some times unawareness or unavailability of the basic and primary sources lead the translator failure in producing good quality translation.

Even for native Arabic speakers, the Qur'ān is a difficult document. Its archaic language and verse structure are difficult hurdles to cross. The fact that translators and theologians have, over time, lost much of the Judeo-Christian cultural references rife in the Qur'ān is just one more impediment.

Khaleel Mūhmūd says:

*“The urge among many translators—especially now that many*

On these difficulties and genuine problem of translation, it is impossible to translate the Qur'ān in same harmony, style and literature because it is revealed by Allah Almighty who is the creator of all languages. This paucity can be shown in all translations of the Qur'ān.

#### **Different shades of the meaning**

The Arabic language is an extremely rich and powerful language. As a result, we simply can not convey all of the different shades of the meanings and all the fine and subtle differences in the meaning that are conveyed in Arabic in other language.

For example, word Allah can not be translated in any language. Allama Muhammad Asad translates it as God and many others left it the same. Word Ahad (one which can not be divided) has no brief word. Moreover, the Qur'ān uses same word in different shades of the meaning. Here translator is worried to translate. He has to comment or explain in foot notes. In spite of the problems it is very necessary to translate the Qur'ān in other languages.

Miss Somayah Berrigan says:

*“Obviously those people whose language is not Arabic, at first refer to the holy book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As for as we know there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'ān available in Iran.”<sup>11</sup>*

#### **Arabic is the richest language**

Translators can not translate precise and up to the mark because English language is deprived of that comprehensive vocabulary as compare to the Arabic language.

“In the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes. For instance, culture in Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words are nearly impossible to translate into English or the meaning of some words like prostration in English is rather different with what *Sajdah* exactly means in Arabic”.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Lack of the awareness of the sciences of the Qur'ān**

Some translators do not know the guiding principles of translating and explaining the Qur'ān and different types of knowledge derived from the Qur'ān, abrogation of verses, types of verses and fundamentals of both the languages. This venture needed not only the knowledge and ability in the English language, but also

## Impediments in translating the Qur'an and guiding principles for translation

---

schools of Muslim thought throughout the ages have been agreed upon the acceptance and veneration of its revealed Arabic text. It is the most famous masterpiece of the Arabic language and a classic for all the times.

“The eloquence and beauty of the Qur'ān is so great that it is considered to be the ultimate authority and reference work for the Arabic rhetoric, grammar and syntax, even by non Muslim Arabs”.<sup>9</sup>

The Qur'ān is fountainhead of the numerous of the Arabic literature and its decisive influence over the origin and development of Arabic literature is limitless. The Qur'ānic text has been and remains the standard of excellence in literary Arabic and its authority continues to be decisive for many linguistic disputes. Throughout the course of fourteen centuries, this standard of excellence has never permitted any deviation in literary Arabic at any time. As a result of this unique consistency, Arabic literature has been closely associated with the Qur'ānic standards. So, in this scenario one can imagine to how much extent the work of translation is difficult and translator faces a lot of problems and impediments despite of his scholarship and knowledge.

### **IMPEDIMENTS**

#### **INIMITABILITY**

'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī said in this context:

*“Off all great works the holy Qur'ān is perhaps the least translatable. Arabic is not at all easy to translate into a language so widely and radically differing from it in structure and genius as English, unless it be with the aid of loose periphrasis and lax paraphrase. Even so the fire of the original is quenched, its vivacious perspicuity is lost and the so called literal translation looks rugged and dreary. That the language of the Arabs abounds in nuances and both the noun and the verb are extremely flexible is a fact well known to every student of the tongue.”*<sup>10</sup>

The difficulty is increased hundred fold when one has to render into English, with any degree of accuracy and precision, a work so rich in meaning, so pithy in expression, so vigorous in style and so subtle in implications as the holy Qur'ān. To reproduce even partially its exotic beauty, wonderful grandiose and magical vivacity without sacrificing the requirements of the English idiom and usage, is the despair of the translator and an ideal impossible of attainment. The result is that every fresh attempt at translating the holy writ brings home, in varying degrees, the truth of the old saying that nothing is so unlike an original as its copy.

anthropology. It tells how did the prophets lead their subject to the right path and administered them; it is the part of law, constitution, jurisprudence and law of inheritances. Moreover, it informs mankind about the oneness of Allah, reality of angels and concept of believing divine unseen things e.g. paradise (Jannat), Hell (Jhanunm), the Day of Judgment and angels etc. This knowledge is the integral part of mythology, ethnology and metaphysics.

### **Miracle of Literature**

It is the teaching of Allah which has a unparalleled and marvelous style, which may astonish at the people who know the pros and cons of the Arabic language and literature. It has old and nice proverbs, idiomatic phrases, symbols and ancient examples; which belongs to the study of literature, phonology, dictionary and art of expressing views in brief but comprehensive rich literary style.

Hence it is necessary and perquisite for a translator of the Qur'ān to know all above said arts, techniques and acquaintances and he must know the way in which the Qur'ān addresses so that he may comprehend himself first and then make it understandable to others otherwise he may go the wrong path and mislead the others as well.

Hājī fakhrī says in this context:

*“A translator ought to be expert in language in which he wants to translate the Qur'ān to know each and every style and shade of that language so that, he can opt an alternate shade or style where he needs.”*<sup>6</sup>

Alan Jones says about the style and translation of the Quran:

*“The views on the style of the Qur'ān that develops with in the Muslim community came to center on what was seen at its uniqueness and inimitability (ijaz). This is an important doctrinal area, frightens Muslims which largely lies beyond the scope of this translation –though it should be noted that it is the basis of very traditional view that the Qur'ān can not be translated. The developments of these views limited the extent of the analysis of the stylistic and linguistic context of the Qur'ān.”*<sup>7</sup>

Famous scholar Ibn e Athir has appropriately summarized the vastness and the beauty of the expressions of the Qur'ān in the following words:

*“If we begin to investigate into the wisdom and secret of the eloquence of the noble Qur'ān we sail into a deep ocean that has no escape from it”.*<sup>8</sup>

The Qur'ān is the oldest and the most unique book of the Arabic language. All



*before me like Pickthall's and Yusuf 'Ali's but when I started my work then I felt it was not an easy task"<sup>5</sup>*

Apparently it is very easy to translate the Qur'ān and many people think it a pastime job. In fact, it is a bed of thrones and translator has to opt and select the words very carefully because translation is the name of expressing author's view in one's own language.

The difficulties and problems while translating the Qur'ān increase hundred times due to the nature of the text of the Qur'ān due to its unique features and qualities which are necessary to narrate earlier than describing the problems so we shall be able to comprehend the topic fully.

#### **Research Question and Literature Review**

What types of the impediments while translating the Qur'ān are there and to how much extent it is an easy task to translate the Qur'ān. When we take bird's eye view of the literature available on this topic then a wide range is available from the early to the latest. Translation and Tafseer go side by side so Al Itqan Fi Uloom el Qur'ān describes all basic areas of study which are necessary for translation and tafseer. Translations of M. M. Pickthal, Abdullah Yousaf Ali and Daryabdi also describe the nature of the impediments and the remedies to overcome the problems. This research illustrates the impediments and gives the guiding principles for translating the Qur'ān.

#### **The Qur'ān Is Not an Ordinary Book; A Miracle**

The Qur'ān is not an ordinary book. It is the book of Allah Almighty which is inimitable and matchless in its style, rhyme and particularly its valuable and comprehensive meaning have no comparison in the world and this is the miracle of the holy prophet also. It is the unique masterpiece of the Arabic language and literature we can think its literary altitudes that disbelievers could not produce a single verse against the challenge of the holy Qur'ān e.g., making and bringing a single verse identical in style and meaning with the Qur'ān. In spite of being ethnical Arabs; they could not do so.

#### **Variety, Vastness and Cranium of All Studies**

As for as the essays and the subjects of the Qur'ān are concerned; it has variety of subjects and vastness of explanation the intellectual capacity of which, is not as easy as to be understood by everyone. For instance, it has the stories of the previous prophets and their people; this is the study subject of histology, chronology and

in the holy Qur'ān:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْخِيَلِ وَاللَّسْتَكَمُ وَالْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ<sup>2</sup>

*“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.”*

As Adam's progeny spread around the earth, different languages were developed. The need for communication across these languages and the need to benefit from the books and texts written in different languages by a greater segment of mankind have led humanity to the art of translation. Thus, translation is the one of the oldest human practices in its written and oral forms as well. Here, first of all the meanings of the translation should be crystal clear. 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī mentions his view in his translation:

“To mould the views of any author in one's language in such a way that there would be seemed no difference in translation and the original one”<sup>3</sup>

Translation is essential for making communication possible between people of different cultures. Translation has been considered an artistic endeavor, or a scientific study, a technical craft, a branch of linguistics, or a branch of literature.

#### **The case with the translation of the Qur'ān**

Its mean that translator tries his best to change the author's view in his language. This definition can be applied on all types of books but not on the book whose author is Allah Almighty Himself. As Allah is great, same is the case with His last heavenly sent book; The Holy Qur'ān, due to its unique style, miraculous literary and figurate chic.

Allah says in his Qur'ān:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِمَّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ<sup>4</sup>

*“And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We revealed unto our slave (Muhammad), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witnesses beside Allah if ye are truthful.”*

We never meant that translation of the Qur'ān is not legitimate. It is not only lawful but indispensable and mandatory to translate in all other languages. But to translate the Qur'ān is not a child's play. Many problems might be faced by translator to translate the Qur'ān in English.

As 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī says:

*“In beginning I thought that there were many translations*