BOOK REVIEW

THE MARVELLOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE MEANING
OF THE GLORIOUS QURAN BY MUHAMMAD PICKTHALL

All the translations of the Holy Qur’an are highly authentic and reliable, among the present available translations, as it has been rendered almost literally in a most beautiful language in grand English style.

The scholars unanimously subscribe to the publishers note appended to the Bangalore publication of the translation in 1952 that the services rendered by Muhammad M. Pickthall in translating the Holy Qur’an into English occupy a unique place in the history of Islamic faith. Being an Englishman, a man of letters and a staunch Muslim, he was pre-eminently fitted to accomplish this task. The translator has maintained the real spirit of the original in a language of pristine purity and beauty making it a work of lasting value.

From the biographical accounts given by Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi and Maulana Abul Qaddis Hashimi who is author of forty books and who knew him personally, it is evident that Muhammad M. Pickthall had mastery over the Arabic language and its idioms. Being a pious Muslim, he had laboured many years on the work of translation under the patronage of the Nizam of Deccan and thereafter, he personally took the whole work to Calicut, where he stayed for many months and got the translation scrutinised by eminent authorities of that period. Amongst them there were scholars who were well-versed in English as well.

After the completion of this scrutiny he sent the same for further scrutiny to the Department of Religious Affairs, Istanbul (Turkey) where also Ulama went through it further and after the labour of many months its authenticity was certified. It was then that the Government of Hyderabad, Deccan, got it published in 1935 which Arabic text in Hyderabad in 1935. Therefore, many editions of the translation have come out.

The most important feature of this translation has been made by Rabia-ul-Alam-al-Imami. Finding that the whole translation is free from any tangible errors and mistakes, they decided to get it published for distribution all over the world. Being a great scholar, the translator has kept many scholarly authentic Tafsirs in view to see that his rendering of the meaning of the Qur’an should be in strict conformity with the general orthodox view of the Ummah. The list of the Tafsirs is given in the translator’s note. The author of the translation, himself has written that he had set before himself two aims in his translation, i.e., accuracy and conformity with the orthodox majority interpretation. Muhammad M. Pickthall has fully succeeded in achieving both these coveted aims. Though there are some words which may be rendered into English in alternate expressions, yet Pickthall’s choice of words does bring out the spirit of the original Arabic text of Qur’an.
Pickthall titled his work as "MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN", and not as a translation, because he believes that the word of God cannot exactly be translated into any language, 'as it is its beauty and inimitability.

He himself writes:

"The Qur'an can not be translated. That is the belief of the old-fashioned Shiiha and the view of the present writer. The book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose fitting language. But the word is not the Glorious Qur'an, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and victory. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Qur'an and pervade something of its charm in English. It can ever take the place of the Qur'an in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so."

*According to Majid F. F. Husain of South Africa (Press Rex 399, Post Elizabeth) "the commentary of Abdul Rab Ahlu in many languages highly ornament...""
learning as well as with tribes of Arabian dervists and the Fortile Crescent. He had access to all original Arabic sources at these places and also in all the famous libraries of England and Europe. An unimpeachable proof of his concern was the fact that he personally took his manuscript to the Al-Azhar University for scrutiny. This is perhaps the only example of an English translation being scrutinised and approved by the highest seat of Arabic-Islamic learning.

The translation, "THE MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN" deserves wide distribution all over the world, all the more because of the fact that while other translations like that of 'Abdullah Yusuf Ali are individual efforts without having been scrutinised/ authenticated by any Islamic institution, the Pinchall translation has the sole distinction of having the stamp of approval of Al-Azhar University when it was at its height and the Department of Religious Affairs, Turkey and Rabieh Al-Aslan, Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

"This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off evil. (evil) Who believe in the unseen, and establish worship, and spend of that We have bestowed upon them; and who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter. These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful." (Al-Qur'an, 2 : 2-5)

"Shall We treat those who believe and do good works as those who spread corruption in the earth; or shall We treat the pious as the wicked? This is a Scripture that We have revealed unto thee, full of blessing, that they may ponder its revelations, and that men of understanding may reflect." (Al-Qur'an, 38 : 29-30)
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FALLOUT REGARDING NUMBER 19 AND OTHER NUMERICAL CALCULATIONS VS. THE HOLY QUR'AN.

A critical review of the book "19 and" numerical calculations of certain words in the Holy Qur'an has been published in Damascus and Beirut. Though the conclusions in the book apparently seem to be striking and arresting, yet they are likely to create misleading impressions about the real and genuine miracle of the Holy Qur'an that lies in the Universal guidance and invariable programme of the Holy Qur'an as substantiated by many authoritative sources, one of whom is Sheikh Muhammad Mustawali Sharawi quoted by the author himself on page 13 of the Book.

It was necessary to make a study of the numerical data asserted by the author as a miracle of the Qur'an. Many of the conclusions appear to be presumptuous and at some places even misleading e.g. on page 57 it is asserted that the word KUFA occurs in the Qur'an 31 times, so too the word MAN occurs 25 times and the terms of Al-Sheyatn and of Mahak occur in the Qur'an in equal number i.e. 88 and 106. The very idea of the occurrence of such sacred and profane concepts in equal number is misleading, because, according to the Qur'an, HADJ has supremacy over BTL and GOOD is dominant over EVIL. It is not meaningful and worth pointing in this manner that these terms occur in the Holy Book in equal number.

As a matter of fact, the Qur'an, was revealed verbally on the heart of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). The script of the Qur'an is not revealed. It is due to some variations in the script and different forms of pronunciation and QIRAT that there have been slight changes in the forms of writing of certain words. Therefore, there is bound to be differences in the calculation of the numerical values of the words. According to the AHIAD or any other system. Hence, it is unnecessary to spend time on such exercises. Besides, that there is a danger of diverting the attention of the UMMMAH to this futile exercise, from the original purpose of Qur'an which is TAZKIYAT (Purification of Soul) and knowledge and wisdom which lie in understanding of the meaning and the teachings of the Qur'an, not in the calculation of its letters and framing numerical tearing from the script which was not revealed but adapted in the days of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). and developed by the UMMMAH in the course of time. Even the claim that the total number of letters of HESSILLIYA in 19 is not correct, because from the point of view of the actual calculation of letters, and from the point of view of the original dictation of these words, the number should be 21 not 19.

Similarly, many other errors can be pointed out. The Computer mind not always be considered reliable, specially when it is taken into consideration that the human mind feeds it which is liable to error.

It may be noted that a considerable portion of the book has been devoted to the exposition of the view of the BAHAI'S, expounded by Keshid Khayal of Egyptian origin cited
to be originally a Coptic Christian, that the number 19 is sacred. He has tried to deduce the number from a series of calculations of letters in different ways from certain Surahs and words of the Holy Qur’an. The fallacy of his view has already been explained by Maulana Abdul Quddus Hashmi percursorly.

It may be mentioned that Rashad Khalifa denies the authenticity of Hadith and calls it fiction and dubts the followers of Hadith of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) as polytheists in his highly misleading English translation and commentary on the Qur’an. A scholarly review exposing his mischiefs has been printed in booklet form by the Islamic Research Institute, Post Box 1035, Islamabad (Pakistan).

This review is brought out with a view to bring to the notice of all concerned the authentic view of “Ulama of UMMAH” which is apt to the practice of giving importance to semantological deductions from the letters and Ayats of the Qur’an and about the Number 19 which is held in reverence by the BANAH and BAHIS. Giving importance to such digito-arithmetics is likely to result in superstitions and divert the attention of the UMMAH from its real teachings and mission of the Qur’an and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) to something which is misleading and may prove very harmful and dangerous in the course of time.

For further study, please ask for a free copy of booklet “THE QUR’AN AND THE FALLACY OF COMPUTER CONCOCTION” published by Mualiul Ulama of South Africa, P.O. Box 1093, Port Elizabeth, S. Africa.
REQUEST FOR COOPERATION IN THE
COMPILATION OF ARABA‘NAT

Dear Brothers-in-Islam,

"As-Salaam-o-Alaikum"

In pursuance of the Hadith of the blessed Prophet (S.A.W.) that "If anyone preserves for my people forty Ahadith concerning their Deen, Allah will raise him up in the next world as a faqih, and I shall be an intercessor and witness for him on the Day of Resurrection" (Bukhari), a number of MUHADITHIN, Fiqaha and ‘Alims of all ages have compiled 40 Ahadith for the guidance of Ummah in order to merit the reward mentioned in the above Hadith. A number of such collections have become very popular like that of Imam Nawawi which has been translated and published in several countries and in a number of foreign languages.

Excluding the collection of Imam Nawawi, which is easily available in the market, we are interested in collecting and publishing in one book form all the various collections of "FORTY AHADITH" (along with their Urdu/English translation) made from time to time which have either been published and are no longer in circulation or which are still in manuscript form. To facilitate our work, it will be greatly appreciated if a copy or photo-copy each of published or unpublished works about the collection of "FORTY AHADITH" that may be available with the readers of "Islamic Studies" or in the Libraries/Book Stores in the countries where they are living could kindly be supplied to us as soon as possible. Payments to this effect will be made by us through UNESCO Coupons. Your kind cooperation and assistance in this regard is invited and will be highly valued.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

Muhammad Samiullah
Secretary
Islamic Research Institute
Islamabad.

Dated:- 11th Jamadi-us-Sani,