

WOMEN CONTRIBUTIONS IN TRANSLATING ISLAMIC BOOKS: A CRITICALTEXTUAL TRANSLATIONAL ANALYSIS

Dr. Shair Ali Khan¹, Dr. Zakira Jahantab², Dr. Nargis Nazir³, Dr. Arif Siddiq⁴

**¹Incharge/Assistant Professor Department of Translation & Interpretation Faculty of
Arabic International Islamic University Islamabad.**

**^{2,3,4}Assistant Professor Department of Translation & Interpretation Faculty of Arabic
International Islamic University Islamabad.**

**Dr. Shair Ali Khan , Dr. Zakira Jahantab , Dr. Nargis Nazir , Dr. Arif Siddiq , Women
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ABSTRACT

Men and women have been given the wisdom, intellectual, and creative powers by God. They contributed to humanity through their unique talents. Women have contributed significantly to the advancement of various sciences through their innovative talents. Since the inception of Islam, they have had the distinction of serving Islam with their intellectual qualities and skills. Throughout history, they have successfully imparted their services in various fields of Islamic studies, from household to educational institutions and courts. With their maximum intellectual faculties, women have contributed to the translation of religious literature into foreign languages. They dismissed the idea that only men can translate God's word, His Prophet's sayings, and other Islamic books into other languages. It's worth noting that many women have dedicated their lives and careers to translating these complicated and overloaded texts into other languages, exerting their whole faculties to ensure the correct and faithful transmission of God's word, His Prophet, and other scholarly works. We now have several prominent females who have completed this difficult task of translation in a beautiful manner that often surpasses the renderings of men. The

goal of this study is to describe the translational contributions of women in converting Arabic Islamic works into English, as well as to conduct a critical textual analysis of some selected translations of the Holy Quran.

1-INTRODUCTION

God has gifted men and women the wisdom, intellectual and creative abilities. They served humanity through their abilities in various fields. Women have a due share in enriching different sciences with their creative achievements. They have the honor to serve Islam with their intellectual abilities and skills since the dawn of Islam. However, they successfully imparted their services in different sciences of Islamic studies through the history from home to educational institutions and courts.

Translating activity of Islamic books specially the Quran, the Hadith, the Fiqh and other religious books is, no doubt, a challenging task and of serious nature because it deals with the transfer of knowledge from one language into another language. It becomes more serious while transferring the sacred words of God and His Prophet (PBUH).

It's worth-mentioning that a good number of women have devoted their lives to converting these complex and overloaded texts into other languages utilizing their full faculty for the true and faithful transfer of the message of God, His Prophet and other scholarly works. In the present time, we see some prolific female figures who have accomplished this challenging task of translation in a pretty way which sometimes surpass the renderings of men.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The study aims at describing the translational contributions of women rendered in converting Arabic Islamic books into English language. Its main focus is to carry out a critical textual analysis of the Translations of the Holy Quran rendered by some selected women. For textual analysis and features, examples have been taken from the Quran translations of the scholars.

3. METHODOLOGY:

The study is qualitative in nature as the data about the translational contributions has been collected. As for textual critical analysis, one verse of the Holy Quran has been selected to find out a) the ideational intervention of the translator, b) the applications of translation strategies and procedures for converting the message of Allah.

4. TRANSLATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN

4.1. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley:

Aisha Bewley is a renowned woman scholar of the United States of America in the current century. She is the most prolific and powerful translator who engaged herself more than thirty-five years in translating the classical Islamic literature for native English speakers in a communicative way.¹(Mustafa Howard: Diwan Press) She was born in a strong Christian family

¹ -Diwan Press: Classical and Contemporary Books on Islam and Sufism; Mustafa Howard, Dallas, Texas, US:
<http://www.diwanpress.com/shop/the-core-collection/muhammad-messenger-allah/>

of USA in 1948. She got married with Hajj Abdalhaqq Bewley with whom she often translated various Islamic books.² She obtained a B.A. in French and M.A. in Near Eastern Languages from the University of California, Berkeley. She spent one year at the American University in Cairo where she attended a seminar on Sufism and Islamic Philosophy at Dar al-'Ulum. She remained the student of Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Murabit and she studied Ibn 'Arabī from Sidi (Sayyidi) Fudul al-Hurawi in Fes, Morocco.³ She converted to Islam in 1968, after searching for spiritual satisfaction going through Zen Buddhism and other philosophical figures such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Kant and Hegel.⁴ She adopted the Fiqh of Imam Maliki and the Ash'ari school of thought and Habibiyya branch of the Sufi way of Shadhili Darqaawi.⁵

A) Translation Contributions:

She is the most voluminous, fluent and smooth translator of Islamic books having credit of translating a vast range of Islamic religious and classical books including Quran, Quranic sciences, Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, Mysticism (Tassawuf) and the science of logic (IlmulKalaam). Her translational contributions can be categorized as under:

a) Quranic Sciences: (9)

1. New translation of the Noble Qur'an with her husband, Abdalhaqq Bewley
2. The Subatomic World in the Qur'an, Diwan Press, 1980
3. Journey through the Quran: The Content and Context of the Suras by Muhammad Al-Ghazali,
4. Tafsir al-Qurtubi: Classical Commentary of the Holy Quran Volume 1.⁶
5. Science of the Quran: Selections from the Introduction of Tafsir al-Qurtubi. To be published by Dar-al-Taqwa soon.⁷
6. Tafsir of Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi (Kitab at-Tas-hilli'Ulum at-Tanzil)
7. The Science of Qur'an Recitation ('Ilmtajvid al-Qur'an) by Shaykh Muhammad Hisham al-Burhani
8. Tafsir al-Jalalayn : Complete English Translation (Jalalu'd-Din al-Mahalli, Jalalu-d-Din as-Suyuti) Dar al Taqwa Ltd. (2008)⁸
9. Tafsir Al Qurtubi classical Commentary Of The Holy Quran Volume 1 Translated By Aisha Bewley⁹

² -The Murabit Blog. Interview for the Islamic Society of Brooklyn College in 1998:

<https://murabitblog.wordpress.com/2009/11/21/biography-aisha-bewley/>

³ - Interview for the Islamic Society of Brooklyn College in 1998. Murabit Blog:

<https://murabitblog.wordpress.com/2009/11/21/biography-aisha-bewley/>

⁴ - Interview for the Islamic Society of Brooklyn College in 1998. Murabit Blog:

<https://murabitblog.wordpress.com/2009/11/21/biography-aisha-bewley/>

⁵ -ibid.

⁶ <https://ia801302.us.archive.org/13/items/TasirAlQurtubiclassicalCommentaryOfTheHolyQuranVolume1TranslatedByAishaBewley/TasirAl-qurtubiclassicalCommentaryOfTheHolyQuranVolume-1TranslatedByAishaBewley.pdf>

⁷ -<http://bewley.virtualave.net/ulum.html>

⁸ -<http://www.onlineislamicstore.com/b9739.html>

⁹ - The Murabit Blog. Interview for the Islamic Society of Brooklyn College in 1998: <https://murabitblog.wordpress.com/2009/11/21/biography-aisha-bewley/>; <https://archive.org/details/TasirAlQurtubiclassicalCommentaryOfTheHolyQuranVolume1TranslatedByAishaBewley>

b) Hadith/Seerah Sciences: (16)

1. The Islamic Book of the Dead (Hadith on the Garden and the Fire), Diwan Press, 1977
2. Muwatta' of Imam Malik (joint translation with Ya'qub Johnson), Diwan Press, 1982. New revised edition, Kegan Paul International, 1989;
3. Muhammad Messenger of Allah (ash-Shifa' of Qadi 'Iyad), Madinah Press, 1991 Al-Shifa: This translation is the first English translation; a master piece and the best translated creation of a very precious and important book on Seerah served by Qazi Iyad (476 – 544 AH/1083 – 1149 CE) of Ceuta during the time of the Murabitun. The translation really enlightened the English community by the essence created by Qazi Iyad in his book. (Mustafa Howard, Dallas, Texas, US.¹⁰
4. Shumaili Tirmizi,
5. Sahih al-Bukhari (to be completed);
6. Khullasa-A Summary of Abu Isa At-Tirmidhi Shama'il Muhammadiyya: the summary is written by a Moroccan scholar Shaikh Muhammad Abd al-Hayy al-Kattani (born in 1302 AH in Fez and died in France 1382 AH in exile) with the title: Munityat al-Saa'il. This is a very precise and complete summary of Shumaili Tirmizi.¹¹
7. Bidayat as-Sul fi Tafdilar-Rasul: The Beginning of the Quest of the High Esteem of the Messenger. By 'Izzibn 'Adbal-Salam. Translated by Aisha Bewley. The Arabic work is a very concise work of Izzibn 'Abdul-Salam (Shafi'i school of thought) that narrates forty distinctive features of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) characteristics.¹²
8. RiyazulSalihien by Nawawiranslated by Aisha,
9. The Soul Journey after Death by Ibn al Qayyim al-Joziya translated by Aisha,
10. Bustan al-'Arifin by Imam an-Nawawi
11. Dala'il al-Khayrat of al-Jazuli; The Hikam of Ibn 'Ata'llah
12. The Defense of the Sunna by Muhammad b. AbiMadyan ash-Shinqiti
13. Adab al-Mufrad by Imam al-Bukhari;
14. Mukhtasar at-Tarhibwa't-Tarhib by IbnHajar.
15. Stories of the Prophets, Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi, UK Islamic Academy, 1993
16. Muhammad, the Last Prophet, Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi, UK Islamic Academy, 1993

c) Fiqh: (6)

1. Muhammad Abu Zuhara's book 'the four Imams, their lives, works and schools of thought,
2. Handbook on Islam, Iman, Ihsan (a translation of KitablUsul ad-Din and Kitab 'Ulum al-Mu'amala by 'UthmandanFodio), Diwan Press, 1980, Madinah Press, 1996
3. The Sunnah of the Prophet: The People of Fiqh versus the People of Hadith by Muhammad Al-Ghazali,
4. SihhatUsulMadhhabAhli'l-Madina by IbnTaymiyya

¹⁰ -<http://www.diwanpress.com/shop/the-core-collection/muhammad-messenger-allah/>

¹¹ -https://kitaabun.com/shopping3/product_info.php?products_id=5403

¹² -<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/10385328-bidayat-as-sul-fi-tafdil-ar-rasul>

5. Risala of IbnAbiZayd al-Qayrawani (jointly with Yasin Dutton)<https://bewley.virtualave.net/Risalatitl.html>
6. Al-Fiqh al-Muyassir by Ahmad ‘Ashur;

d) Tasawuf: (15)

1. The Tawasin of Mansur al-Hallaj, Diwan Press, 1974\
2. Self-Knowledge (Commentaries on Sufi Songs), Diwan Press, 1978
3. The Darqawi Way (Rasa’ilMawlay al-‘Arabi ad-Darqawi), Diwan Press, 1979
4. The Daraqawi Way by ShaykhMawlay al-‘Arabi ad-Darqawi, Proofs of Prophethood by Shaykh Abdel Haleem Mahmoud Muhammad Isa Waley.
5. Seals of Wisdom by IbniArabi,
6. Al-Wasiyya of Imam IbnQudama al-Maqdisi,
7. Tartib al-Madarik by Qadi ‘Iyad
8. The Diwans of the Darqawa, Diwan Press, 1980
9. The Invocations of Shaykh al-’Alawi, Diwan Press, 1980
10. The Seals of Wisdom, translation of Fusus al-Hikam by Ibn al-‘Arabi, Diwan Press, 1980
11. Defense Against Disaster, Qadi Abu Bakribn al-‘Arabi, Madinah Press, 1996
12. The Chess Game of the Gnostics (ranj al-‘Arifin) by Muhammad ibn al-Hashim at-Tilmansani
13. Various Letters of Ibn al-‘Arabi; Futuhat al-Makkiyya of Ibn ‘Arabi (All of volume 1 and part of 2 of the 4 volume edition)
14. The Crown of the Bride (Taj al-‘Arus) by Ibn ‘Ata’llah
15. The Dropping of Management of Affairs (Isqat at-Tadbir) by Ibn ‘Ata’llah

e) Miscellaneous: (33)

1. The Meaning of Man by ‘Ali al-Jamal of Fez, DiwanPess, 1977
2. Signs on the Horizons: The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, Zahra Publications, 1981
3. Women of Madina, translation of TabaqatIbnSa’d Vol. 8. Ta-Ha 1995
4. Men of Madina, translation of TabaqatIbnSa’dVol. 7, TaHa 1997
5. IbniSeerin’sTawilRuya.
6. Hand book on Islam by Shaikh UthmandanFodio
7. Major Sins by Shamsuddin al-Thahabi,
8. Fate and Predestination by Mutawali al-Sha’arawi,
9. Good and Evil by MuhammadMutawali al-Sha’arawi
10. World of the Angels by Abdul Hamid Kashak
11. Al-Arba’in of AbdAr-Rahman IbnAsakir: On the Memorable Qualities of the Mothers of the Believers by AbdAr-Rahman Ibn ‘Asakir,
12. Governance according to the Prophet (at-Taratib al-Idariyya) by ‘Abdu’l-Hayy al-Kattani
13. The Book of the Ismu’l-Mufrad by Ibn ‘Ata’llah
14. Tadhib al-Akhlaq by ‘Abdu’l-HayyFakhru’d-din al-Hasani;
15. The Soul’s Journey After Death, Ibn al-Qayyim, Dar at-Taqwa, 1987
16. The Jinn in the Qur’an and the Sunna, MustafaAshour, Dar at-Taqwa, 1989
17. Stories from Islamic History for Children, Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi, UK Islamic Academy. 1992

18. Fate and Predestination, Muhammad al-Sha'rawi, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
19. Good and Evil, Muhammad al-Sha'rawi, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
20. The Interpretation of Dreams, IbnSirin, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
21. How Allah Provides, Muhammad al-Sha'rawi, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
22. Magic and Envy, Muhammad al-Sha'rawi, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
23. The World of the Angels, 'Abdu'l-Hamid Kishk, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
24. The Laws of Marriage in Islam, Muhammad Rafit 'Uthman, Dar at-Taqwa, 1994
25. Dealing with Lust and Greed, 'Abdu'l-Hamid Kishk, Dar at-Taqwa, 1995
26. The Water of Zamzam, Dar at-Taqwa, 1996
27. Yajuj and Majuj, Dar at-Taqwa, 1997
28. The Mahdi, Dar at-Taqwa, 1997
29. The Day of Rising, Layla Mabruk, Dar at-Taqwa, 1997
30. Muslim Women; a Biographical Dictionary. Aisha Bewely and AbiaAfsar Siddiqui. Page 232. Published in 2004 by Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.¹³
31. The Islamic Will-A Practical guide for being prepared for death and writing your will according to the Shar'ia of Islamic and English Law. Aisha Bewely , Ahmad Thomson and AbdulhaqqBewley. Published in 2012 Dar al-Taqwa.¹⁴
32. Mu'awiya: Restorer of the Muslim Faith. Page 97. Published 2002 by Dar al-Taqwa.¹⁵
33. Glossary of Islamic Terms. 1988. TA-HA Publisher Ltd. UK. Pages 283.: editorial review confirms the soundness of Aisha not only in Arabic language but in the nature of teachings and history of Islam which gained through practical experience during her stay for learning among the Arabs in Morocco. Main features of the book include its unique indices that provide the reader detail of key text, author and people. The book is a special and easy reference for the researchers in the field of Islamic terminology.¹⁶

B) Critical Analysis of Her Translations:

Aisha Bewely and her husband Hajj AbdulRehmanBewely rendered the Quran in an easy and simple English for the common people to have a direct access to the words of Allah. In the preface of the translation, they precisely concluded that "we can only admit along with all our predecessors that the result falls far short of being anything like a complete exposition of the meanings of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, we hope that this rendering will give people of this time, and in particular English speaking Muslims, a more direct access to the meaning of the Book of Allah and encourage them to go further and discover from the original Arabic the inexhaustible fund of light and wisdom it contains."¹⁷

¹³ -<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9137370-muslim-women-a-biographical-dictionary>

¹⁴ -<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/21319572-the-islamic-will--a-practical-guide-for-being-prepared-for-death-and-wr>

¹⁵ -<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3403904-mu-awiya>

¹⁶ - Amazon Review:https://www.amazon.com/Glossary-Islamic-Terms-Abdurrahman-Bewley/dp/1897940785/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1519382874&sr=1-1&keywords=aisha+bewley

¹⁷ - Ahmad Thomson. Review of The Noble Quran: A New Rendering of its Meaning in English by Aisha Bewely:
http://www.black-stone.net/books/Quran_Review.html

The main objective of this new rendering of the Holy Quran, as mentioned by the Aisha Bewely and her husband, that “to allow the meaning of the original, as far as possible, to come straight through with as little linguistic interface as possible so that the English used does not get in the way of the direct transmission of the meaning”.¹⁸

She has generally adopted the communicative approach to convey the message of Allah to native speakers of English language. But she preferred literal method in rendering metaphor or figurative words. However, the language is easy which successfully conveys the true essence of the words of God.

She applied in her Quran Translation many strategies including the strategy of transliterations such as the words: ‘Allah’ (the opening), ‘taqwa’ (the Cow verse 2), ‘iman’ (the Cow v. 3-4-6), ‘salat’ (the Cow verse 3), ‘kafir’ (the Cow verse 6).¹⁹ These alien words, for English community, are not distinguished with any explanatory note or capitalization of the words or by writing them in italic form with the intention to open a door of Arabic learning to the people and save them from being indulging in the extensive semantic domain of terminologies.

Critical Analysis:

a)-Example from the Quran, the Cow (2:7):

Translation	Analysis
“Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment.”	The verse contains a metaphor which the translator has rendered in its literal form applying the literal method of translation. The verb ‘sealed’ has been used for ‘hearts and hearing’ and ‘blindfold’ for ‘eyes’. These organs cannot be sealed. The Quranic language is figurative, whereas the secondary meaning of the verbs and nouns has not been rendered in the target text.

b)-Example from the translation of Tafsir-e- Qurtabi V.1. (2003:18 Dar al-Taqwa)

Translation	Analysis
In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful We seek His help and may Allah bless our master Muhammad, his family, Companions <u>and</u> grant them abundant peace.	She translated the preposition (بِ) in the beginning with preposition (in). She differentiated between the two exaggerated forms of “Rahman” and “Rahiim” by just affixing “All” and “Most”. The translation is clear and literal style is visible in the usage of “and” in spite of using commas according to the style of English

¹⁸ - Ahmad Thomson. Review of The Noble Quran: A New Rendering of its Meaning in English by Aisha Bewely: http://www.black-stone.net/books/Quran_Review.html

¹⁹ - Dr. Rebecca B. Molloy. 2016. The Noble Quran: A New Rendering of its Meaning in English, Translated by Abdulhaq Bewley and Aisha bewely. 651 pages, glossary, Norwich, UK, bookwork, 1999 ISBN 1-874216-36-3

<p>Praise belongs to Allah who began by praising Himself before any praiser praised Him!</p> <p>I testify that there is no god but Allah alone with no partner, the Lord who is One and Self-Sustaining, the Living, Self-Subsistent who does not die, the Master of Majesty and Nobility and immense gifts,</p> <p>He who has spoken the Qur'an, He who created the human being and blessed him with faith and sent His Messenger Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with the clarification.</p>	<p>language.</p> <p>This translation is beautiful, according to the sentence structure of ST and contains the full sense of the ST.</p> <p>The translation of sentences with compound phrases 'no partner', the singular words with full sentences 'the Lord who is one', missing the word 'al-Samad'. The words have wisely been selected.</p> <p>The active participle with full nominal+verbal sentences.</p>
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4.2. Laleh Mehree Bakhtiar

Laleh Mehree Bakhtiar is best known as an author, translator, book publisher, editor and clinical counselor.²⁰ She was born in New York City in July 29, 1938.²¹ Her father was Abol Ghassem Bakhtiar who came to America to study medicine and her mother Helen Jaffreys was the second Christian American who married an Iranian Muslim.²²

Just after Laleh's birth, the couple divorced and Laleh grew up as a Christian girl studying in Catholic Church, in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. She then graduated from Chatham College in Pennsylvania. She got master degree in Philosophy, master degree in Counseling Psychology and Ph.D. in Educational Foundations with a Nationally Certified Counselor.²³

She married an Iranian architect grown up in America. After having three children, she took divorce from her husband in 1976 and returned to America in 1988 and started living in Chicago heading an Institute of Traditional Psychology and Scholar-in Residence at Kazi Publications.²⁴

Conversion to Islam:

She moved to Iran with her husband where they met with Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University, and on his introduction 'Islam through Sufism' she converted to Islam in 1964.²⁵ She died on October 18, 2020, in Chicago.

²⁰ <http://www.sufienneagram.com/biography.html>

²¹ <http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/religion/Disobedient-Muslim-Women.html>

²² <http://www.iranian.com/May96/Arts/Bakhtiar.html>

²³ - the bridge between two cultures: <http://www.sufienneagram.com/biography.html>

²⁴ <http://www.iranian.com/May96/Arts/Bakhtiar.html>

²⁵ <http://www.iranian.com/May96/Arts/Bakhtiar.html>

A) Works:

She translated thirty Islamic books and authored ten books including her recent book ‘Sufi Women of American: Angles in the Making’²⁶.

Quran Translation:

She is the first American Muslim woman who translated Quran from a feministic perspective contradicting with the 1400 years’ man dominant approach under the title ‘The Sublime Quran (2007)’. Her most controversial translation of the Arabic word “Idhribohunna” ‘beat them’ with its basic translation ‘go away’ which is for the first time a bold step by a woman in rendering the word of Allah to English speaking communities.²⁷ She viewed that how can God harm women? To find out the answer and solve the controversy of the word “dh r b” in the verse 4:34, she spent 2 years and sometimes she thought to leave translating the Holy Quran.²⁸ She defended the women from the patriarchal view that men have the right to discipline their wives through this translation.²⁹

She has dressed Quranic terms and vocabulary with new meanings such as:

	Quran Terms	Laleh’s Translation	General Translation
	الكافرون kāfirūn	those who are ungrateful	unbelievers" or "infidels
	الرجال قوامون على النساء نشوزهن	supporters of wives resistance	
	daraba in Chapter 4, Verse 34 dealing with a rebellious wife: فاضربوهن fadribohunna	Go away from them	Beat them

Critical Analysis

Her translation of the Holy Quran has been criticized by the scholars of Azhar University, Cairo and Muslims circles of America due to her new interpretations and her feminist approach. In response, she viewed that by such interpretation she intends to bring closer the American non-Muslims to the study of Quran.³⁰

Scholar’s Views:

The translation of Dr. Laleh Bakhtiar has been admired by a number of renowned scholars. His Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad³¹ admired the consistency, the method, the attention to

²⁶ - the bridge between two cultures: <http://www.sufienneagram.com/biography.html>

²⁷ - Manuela Badawy. 2007. Woman re-interprets Koran with feminist view: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-koran-feminist/woman-re-interprets-koran-with-feminist-view-idUSN2129015920070323>

²⁸ - Neil MacFARQUHAR. 2007. New Translation Prompts debate on Islamic Verse: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/us/25koran.html>

²⁹ - Luise von Flotow & Farzaneh Farahzad. Etd. 2017. Translating Women: Different Voices and New Horizons. Rim Hessian. P.32. Rutledge.

³⁰ - <https://www.amazon.com/Sublime-Quran-Laleh-Bakhtiar/dp/1567447503>

³¹ - Chief Advisor for Religious and Cultural Affairs to H. M. King Abdullah II, Author of Love in the Holy Quran

tense, root, case and detail in a lovely and smooth English considering this translation the blessing of God to Dr. Laleh.³² Prince Ghazi John Esposito³³ considers it a major translation in clear, direct effectively accessible language to English speaking audience.³⁴

4.3. Amatul Rahman Omar

Amatul Rahman Omar, wife of Abdul Mannan Omar, an Ahmadiyan woman who contributed in translating Quran with the title: ‘The Holy Quran- Arabic Text and English Translation’ in 1990 as a co-translator with Allamah Nooruddin and Abdul Mannan Omar.³⁵ She died in Germany after completing the final revision of her Quran Translation.³⁶

Critical Analysis

The translator used Biblical names in translation such as “Abraham”, “Mary”, “John”, “Moses” inside the text. Hence to convey the sacred message accurately, she applied a number of translation strategies such as ‘addition’ for explanation and ‘transliteration’ for the word of dignity “Allah” inside the text and writing (God) in brackets most of the time.³⁷

4.4. Tahereh Saf farzadeh

Tahereh Saffarzadeh is best known as a professor, poet, author and translator of the Holy Quran into Persian and English. She was born in Sirjan-Iran in 1936. She died in 2008 in Tehran-Iran. She received B.A. in English language and literature, visited USA for English language 1960, and accepted as a member of International Writing Program. She got enrolled for M.F.A. Program for enabling the writers, poets and the painters for better teaching in their fields of arts. She excelled in practical literary criticism and translation workshops.³⁸

Voluminous Works:

She has the honor of publishing 14 volumes of poems along with authoring ten books regarding literature, Quranic texts, principles of Quranic translation and scientific texts.³⁹ A very important contribution is her book “Translating the Fundamental Meaning of the Holy Quran-1999” in which she presented her new theory “the Scientific Progression via Translation”. She carried out this research on her bilingual Persian and English translations of the Quran.⁴⁰

Bilingual Translation of the Quran:

³² - Review by Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Sublime-Quran-Laleh-Bakhtiar/dp/1567447503>

³³ - Head of Georgetown University Center for Muslim/Christian Understanding

³⁴ - Review by Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Sublime-Quran-Laleh-Bakhtiar/dp/1567447503>

³⁵ - <http://www.bangladesh2000.com/quran/ebook/English-Amatul-Rahman-Omar.htm>

³⁶ - About the Author. Islamusa.Org: <http://www.islamusa.org/Authors/>

³⁷ - <http://www.islamawakened.com/quran/14/st9.htm#21>; <http://www.bangladesh2000.com/quran/ebook/English-Amatul-Rahman-Omar.htm>

³⁸ - <https://alchetron.com/Tahereh-Saffarzadeh>

³⁹ - http://zamaaneh.com/news/2008/10/post_6780.html; <https://alchetron.com/Tahereh-Saffarzadeh>

⁴⁰ - <https://alchetron.com/Tahereh-Saffarzadeh>

She published her bilingual Quran Translation (Persian and English) in 2001 which is the first of its bilingual nature by a Muslim Iranian woman in fluent languages.⁴¹ Nahj-ul-Balagha of Imam Ali (RA) into Persian and English.⁴² The translation is the result of 27 years of extensive study of Quran and compiling comments on it.⁴³ Her translation of Quran is characterized with faithfulness avoiding the literal translation as she claimed in her introduction, “through conveying the meaning” as quoted Habibeh.⁴⁴ Furthermore, she used the annotation within the text in brackets, focusing on rhyme, alliteration and conventional literary elements career of ecstasy, while she avoided the rhetorical aspect of Quran in her translation just to make it easier for the target readers.⁴⁵

4.5. Martha Schulte- Nafeh

Martha is a retired professor of Arabic Language at the University of Arizona. She has contributed in translating the Holy Quran into English with EdipYuksel and Layth Saleh al-Shaiban under the title: Quran: A Reformist Translation.⁴⁶

Features of Translation:

This translation is based on logic avoiding the exegetical explanation of the verses and words claiming that the Quran is a universal book which should be translated according to the needs of the people of the time. The translators mentioned its main features in the introduction in the following words: “It is a progressive translation of the final revelation of God to all of humanity – a translation resonates powerfully with contemporary notions of gender equality, progressivism, and intellectual independence. It is a continuation of the modern monotheist movement that started an era of paradigm change and reform in 1974 with the fulfillment of Quranic prophecy based on the number 19 mentioned in chapter 74.”⁴⁷

“Quran: A Reformist Translation offers a non-sexist understanding of the divine text; it is the result of collaboration between three translators, two men and a woman. We use logic and the language of the Quran itself as the ultimate authority in determining likely meanings, rather than previous scholarly interpretations.”⁴⁸

Criticism:

The scholars criticized this translation for various reasons such as:

⁴¹- <https://alchetron.com/Tahereh-Saffarzadeh>

⁴²- <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/181087/Art-News-in-Brief>

⁴³-HabibehKhosravi& Dr. Majid Pourmuhammadi. (2016). Influence of Translator’s Religious Ideology on Translation: A Case Study of the English Translations of the Noble Quran. International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies. 4 (4). 151-163. www.eltsjournal.org.

⁴⁴-2016: 151, referring to Saffarzadeh 2005:2138

⁴⁵-Habibeh 2016: 151-1630

⁴⁶-<https://www.linkedin.com/in/martha-schulte-nafeh-027b7b6>;<https://www.facebook.com/msnafeh>;<http://www.dailytexanonline.com/person/martha-schulte-nafeh>;<https://twitter.com/marthas19>)

⁴⁷-<http://benhvienphuchoichucnangninhbinh.com/pdf/quran-a-reformist-translation>

⁴⁸-p. 11: <http://benhvienphuchoichucnangninhbinh.com/pdf/quran-a-reformist-translation>

- It is the second translation of the Quran rendered under the influence of Rashad Khalifa's Quran: 'The Final Testament', in which they denied the Hadith as the source of Law whilst Yuksel and his colleagues Martha Nafeh as well rejected Ahadith the source of religious Law and Guidance and did not rely on it in their translation of the Quran. (Dr. Aisha Y. Musa. Florida International University: Quran: A Reformist Translation.⁴⁹
- Misinterpretation of words which were agreed upon among the exegetes. A question is mentioned in the Prelog, 'Was Muhammad Illiterate?' Edip says 'The Arabic word "ummy" describes people who are not Jewish or Christians.'⁵⁰
- A very literal translation of the Quranic metaphoric phrases such as in verse No (11:52): "My people, seek forgiveness from your Lord, then repent to Him; **He will send the sky to you abundantly**, and He will increase might to your might. So do not turn away as criminals."⁵¹

4.6. Maria Massi Dakake

A Muslim woman of American origin, she obtained her BA from Government Cornell University in 1990, MA in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University in 1998, and PhD in Near Eastern Studies Princeton University in 2000. She is currently the chair and Associate Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, and a founding member and director of the interdisciplinary Islamic Studies program.⁵²

Contributions:

- She contributed in translating Quran under the title: 'The Study Quran' as a team member with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, published from New York and San Francisco in 2015.
- She has translated a number of books on Shi'at doctrines, Sufi traditions, women's spirituality and religious experience.
- A comprehensive project the First Harper Collins Study Quran: A verse by verse commentary on the Quranic text (2015) in bilingual style Persian and English.
- She is currently working on a co-edited volume with Daniel Madigan: The Routledge Companion to the Quran.
- She contributed in preparing a Monograph about the concept of religion a universal phenomenon in the Quran and Islamic Intellectual Tradition.

Selected Works:⁵³

1. The Study Quran (with S.H. Nasr, C. Dagli, J. Lumbar and M. Rustom) published HarperOne, 2015
2. Writing and Resistance: The Transmission of Knowledge in Early Shi'ism, in the Study of Shi'a Islam: History Theology, and Law. Etd. F. Daftary and G. Miskinzoda, I.B. Tauris, 2013

⁴⁹ - <http://benhvienphuchoichucnangninhbinh.com/pdf/quran-a-reformist-translation>

⁵⁰ - Ijaz Chaudry. *Misinterpretations of the Reformist Translation*: http://www.al-muzzammil.com/general/Misinterpretations_Reformist.html

⁵¹ - http://www.al-muzzammil.com/general/Misinterpretations_Reformist.html

⁵² - Study Quran: http://enterprise.supadu.com/images/ckfinder/553/images/Study-Quran/StudyQuran_ExcerptFinal_updated.pdf

⁵³ - <https://religious.gmu.edu/people/mdakakem> ; <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/maria-massi-dakake>

3. Sacred Land in Quran and Hadith and its Symbolic and Eschatological Significance, *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, V. 10, No. 1, 2011.
4. Hierarchies of Knowing in MullaSadra's Commentary on the Usul al-Kafi. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* V.6, 2011.
5. *The Charismatic Community: Shi'ite Identity in Early Islam*, State University of New York Press, 2007.
6. Guest of the inmost Heart: Conceptions of the Divine Beloved among Early Sufi Women. *Journal of Comparative Islamic Studies*, V. 3, No. 1, 2007.

The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary:

This latest translation is a collective commentary comprises 2000 pages by 15 editors including Maria MassiDakaki, led by Dr. Hussein Nasr. The work cited 41 exegeses in compiling this work.⁵⁴

Critical Analysis;

The translation received admiration due to being a "deep, rich and valuable study"⁵⁵ with critical consideration as it presents views of various Muslims communities such "as shia's ,sunni, mainstream and sometimes (the issue to perennialism-the 'universal validity of all religions') non-mainstream"⁵⁶ and in the views of ShaykhFarazRabbani, the reader should not consider it "the final word" or an authoritative reference on theology or law.⁵⁷ Imam Suhaib Webb admired it as "monumental task from the editors" emphasizing on that "the only valid path to God is through our beloved Prophet (SA) and there is no place for perennialism in orthodoxy".⁵⁸

The serious concern was recorded by Dr.ShadeeElmasry for being the provoker of perennialism and considered it 'dishonest with the evidence'.⁵⁹

Ali Imran, quoting the annotation of verse No. 2:85 "include others beyond the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Opinions seem to leave the interpretation open. IbnKathir, for example, understands a religion other than submission here to mean, "A path other than what God has laid down," which can include the people of the Book, while al-Zamakhshari says that in the verse Islam (submission) means recognizing Divine Unity (tawhid) and submitting one's face to God, attributes not limited to the followers of Muhammad".⁶⁰

5. Findings:

The finding of the discussion can be summarized in the following points:

- Women have contributed in translating the religious books specially the Quran, Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, mysticism and various other books.

⁵⁴ -Suhaib Webb: November 2015: <https://www.facebook.com/suhaib.webb/posts/10153704122928080?fref=nf>

⁵⁵ -ShaykhFarazRabbani 2015 :<http://seekershud.org/blog/2015/12/the-study-quran/>

⁵⁶ -ShaykhFarazRabbani 2015 :<http://seekershud.org/blog/2015/12/the-study-quran/>

⁵⁷ -ShaykhFarazRabbani 2015 :<http://seekershud.org/blog/2015/12/the-study-quran/>

⁵⁸ - November 27 2015:<https://www.facebook.com/suhaib.webb/posts/10153704122928080?fref=nf>

⁵⁹ - Do you recommend the Study Quran? 2015: <http://seekershud.org/blog/2015/12/the-study-quran/>

⁶⁰<https://www.facebook.com/DrShadeeElmasry/photos/a.487032824649954.119970.483602671659636/1096579083695322/?type=3&theater>

- There are women who translated Quran alone and there are women who contributed as co-translators of the Holy Quran.
- The most prolific among all is Aisha Bewely who translated a total number of 79 books including 9 books on Quranic sciences, 16 books on Hadith and Seraah, 6 books on Fiqh, 15 books on Tasawuf and 33 miscellaneous books.
- Tahireh Saffarzadeh is not only a translator but she presented her theory “the Scientific Progression via Translation” in her book about Quran Translation. Furthermore, she has the honor of bilingual (Persian- English) translator of the Holy Quran after a rigorous 27 years’ study of the Holy Quran.
- Dr. Laleh Bakhtiar has translated the Quran in a feminist way for the first time. She dressed Quranic specific terms with new translations that fit the western society and that bring them closer to the Quran.
- Maria Massi Dakaki contributed in a latest Quran Translation. She has a good profile of translating Shia’t Islamic literature into English.
- Martha Schulte- Nafeh contributed in the translation of the Quran that is under the influence of Rashid Khalifa, and based on the notion that Hadith is not the source of Islamic Law considering the Quran the only sole source of Islamic Law.
- Amatul Rahman Omar contributed in the translation of the Holy Quran along with her husband and another scholar of Ahamadiya community.

6. Conclusion:

We conclude the above discussion in the following points:

1. Women have contributed in translating the religious literature to world’s languages with their utmost intellectual faculties.
2. They dismissed the myth which narrates that only men can render the word of God and the sayings of His Prophet and other Islamic books to other languages.
3. The most voluminous translator is Aisha Bewely who has translated almost from all Islamic literature.
4. Women, in their translations, used various translation strategies such as transliteration, borrowings, additions, explanation, and annotation applying literal and communicative methods of translation.
5. Some Quran translations contain some controversial renderings that are criticized by the scholars.
6. Women of various schools of thought have contributed in the translation of the Quran.
7. Some translations contain some views that have not been accepted by the majority of Muslim scholars such as in the translations of Marth, Laleh, Mariawhich is considered manipulation.

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