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The First Quranic Translation in Pushto: an Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

The Holy Quran is the last divine book that revealed as the sacred heart of last Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This book is the list of past books revealed on different Prophets for the guidance of particular territories and nations but the Holy Quran is meant for the whole human and everlasting having a universal message of God and guidance. With the expansion of Islam other than Arabs, the utility of Quranic translation was felt direfully. Consequently, the scholars of Islam worked for this purpose. Subsequently in the Sub-Continent Pak-o-Hind, first of all, Shah Wali Ullah Mohadas Dehlvi, an eminent scholar translated the Quran from Arabic to Persian. However, he was criticized by the other Muslims but he did not care for it. Although it was a new initiation in Islam it was felt to be very necessary and fruitful for Non-Arabic people to learn the lessons of the Quran easily. It was a good start to Quranic translation in the Sub-continent. Later on, the Quran was translated into different local languages. Therefore, Quran was also translated into Pashto first time. Syed Rukan-e-Aalam is the pioneer of the Pashto Translation of the Holy Quran. During the 18th century, Molana Rukn-e-Aalam, a follower of Syed Ghulam Qadir Shah Batalvi translated Quran into Pashto. King Ahmad Shah Abdali was also a fan and follower of Gulam Qadir Shah Batalvi and sought his prayers. Syed Gulam Qadir Shah Batalvi was a unique scholar and saint of said period {2} Ehsanullah khan Danish wrote that Molana Rukn-ud -Din famed as Rukn-e-Aalam was head of his family tree trile named as mian family belonging to Moza Musa adjacent Hazarkhani city near Peshawar, His shrine is in the graveyard famous as 'Haji Mian Sahib' appellation of his younger brother Haji Qutah-ud-Din. He was a sincere and true follower of Hazrat Ghulam Qadri Shah Batalvi. A Historian Elphinstone wrote that king Ahmad shah Abdoli when came to

Punjab he must visit Lahore and Batala to say Salam {3} Then Governor Lahore was his follower and used to go to Batala often king Ahmad shah Abdali was also his dedicated follower and stated that he had visited sestion to Dakhan but has not seen any piceous and saint-like Hazrat Ghulam Qadri shah Batalvi having appellation" Ghulam". At certain times he requested to pray while attaching an invasion to other countries for victory and won the battles of the war. Syed Ghulam Qadri shah Batalvi wrote many books and Ramzul Eshaq is the most famous book many scholars wrote its explanation in different languages.{4}

Keywords: Prophet, Quran, Tafseer, Translations, Peshawar, Pashto, Batala, Qadir, Library, Manqbat Ghous-e-Azam, Scholars.

Introduction

As per the opinion of some Historians Hazrat Adam peace be upon him started writing in Saryani and Arabic. Subsequently, Hazrat Adree's peace be upon him had been writing. Hazrat Ismaeel's peace be upon him was guided by Hazrat Jabreel to learn Arabic and he is the first to write in Arabic. Hazrat Hood peace be upon him also wrote in Arabic. However, Hazrat Ismael's peace be upon him invented how to write which reached Arabic society. Afterward, the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad peace was upon him taught his followers, and tried his best to expand education and writing he is the first who get served as of prisoner of the enemy in the war of Badar to coach for reading and writing. Resultantly Usmani calligraphy came into existence which is still in practice. In the ymama (H-11) war with Muselma a large number of followers of the last Prophet peace be upon him were mastered and Hazrat Umer advised Hazrat Abu Bakar first caliph to get the Holy Quran in written shape for its preservation kufi calligraphy was also developed in the period of Abbasi caliphs.

The Holy Quran is the only scripture that pertains to the original word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S.A) through the archangel Jibraeel (A.S.). As soon as he received he learned it by heart and dictated it to his companions. Some of them wrote it and others learned it by heart. They were called Qaris and Hafiz. The practice continued throughout and generation after generation produced innumerable Hafiz in the Muslim community. The order and the placing of surahs (chapters) were all revealed and are

according to the direction of the Prophet (S.A.). After Him a panel of his companions joined together and after comparison agreed on an authorized version. They preserved every word and letter and even the accent in which it was heard from the Angel. Since then the Book is unchanged and undisturbed. Quran claims to be in a very clear, simple, and easy-to-understand Arabic, although the language is very forceful, impressive, and heart-moving. It is miraculous since it is the word of a perfect Being it is very difficult to translate it into any other language. However, so far it has been translated into about 150 languages around the world. English translations have been tried by many scholars. Certain Quranic translations are available in Urdu also but these translations are not free from mistakes. It must be learned that Quran had been compiled in Quresh dialect as it is the dialect of our Holy Prophet (PBUH), therefore, it is recited and translated as per Quresh dialect only (5)(6). It is the last divine book revealed on the sacred heart of the last Holy Prophet (PBUH). Almighty Allah has taken responsibility to save this sacred book till the day of judgment [7]. Almighty Allah has repeatedly indicated the importance and utility of the Holy Quran in the said book. Our beloved Holy Prophet [S.A] also preached the same. The significant scholars of Islam spent their lives spreading the message of the Quran through its translation and explanation into their respective languages but it is very vivid that no translation is comprehensive and complete in all respects. In the Sub-continent, almost Quranic translations are in the Urdu language which is popular and well famed amongst the people. It is manifested that no other language can substitute or alternate Arabic by its meanings and thoughts. Holy Quran has distinguished and unparallel semantics, semiotic, pragmatics, symbolic, and symmetry education[2]. No language other than Arabic has the capacity for translation of the Quran in true spirit. Other books like Anjeel, Zabur, and Torayt were revealed in the Serani language but later on, translated into Arabic is a rich language and it would be out of mentioning that there is no substitute for the Arabic language. Keeping in view the above-mentioned discussion, an analytical study regarding Quranic translation into Pushto is required.

Analytical Study Of Quranic Translations

The translation of the Quran is not an easy task to meet its true spirit. But it does not mean that Quran should not be translated. Consequently, it was develop ignorance and refrained from learning the teachings and lessons of the Quran. Therefore, the motive of the Quran will be diminished. However, it may be translated keeping in view the true meanings of every word. It is felt necessary for the translators to follow the under-mentioned principles duly described by a famous scholar Syed Naeem-ud-Din Muradabadi for the purpose:

1. Translator must be a scholar fully equipped with Islamic Studies, Arabic language, grammar, and vocabulary as as well the language in which Quran is going to be translated.
2. While translating the dialogue of the Quran, the respect towards Mighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) must be kept in view so that love with Allah and Holy Prophet (PBUH) may be uplifted as per Verse No. 27:50 Surah Al-Naml.
3. Such words must be used which are proper and befitted as per the status of dignified personalities to enhance their respect and reverence as per Verse No.8:30 Surah Al- Anfal.
4. Reference to context may be kept in view while choosing the suitable meanings of Arabic words.
5. Some time meanings of some words are changed from one to another verse as per the change of personalities and circumstances for the appropriate version to meet the true spirit as per Verse No.93:7Al-Doha.
6. Some- where God had used the hard words for his beloved Prophets but the Translator must use respectful words being a follower to refrain from damaging his belief as per Verse No. 80:1 Al-Abasa.
{6}
7. Sometimes, God used similar words for sinful, common, and beloved people, therefore, the translator must maintain distinction there.

8. Often translators did not care for it which has created disputes among the readers and followers.
9. It is regretted that Shah Abdul Qadir, Shah Rafi-ud-Din, and Ashraf Ali Thanvi did not care for it. There are many examples to be quoted but it will prolong this discussion. However, the comparison of Quranic translations is a separate topic (8)

Brief History of Pashto Translations

Northern and Western areas of Pakistan are called Frontier and now Khyber Pakhtoon Khawh Province. The local language of this area is Pashto. Certain scholars have served the Islamic literature in Pashto but enough work was not done regarding translation and explanation of the Holy Quran in Pashto due to many reasons. One of the biggest reasons is political affairs and perturbation. In the 18th century, the people of the said area were disturbed by the invasion of Durrani. Sometimes they faced mutual tribal affliction and sometimes fought against the Sikhs. During these unrested circumstances and a non-peaceful atmosphere, the scholars did not work satisfactorily. Later on, the said circumstances were changed and then scholars made efforts for Quranic translation into Pashto. Some scholars translated individual and partial Surahs which became very popular amongst the people. After this perpetual and continuous work started. Consequently, many translations and explanations of the Holy Quran came into existence. Introduction of some popular translations and explanations are given as under:

1. Complete Qur'an Translation in Pashto (word by word) by Allama Syed Abdussalam.
2. Translation of the Quran in Pashto by Abdulwali Khan.
3. Pashto Translation by Shafeeq-ur-Rehman.
4. The Holy Quran with Pashto Translation published by Islam International Publication.
5. Tafheem-ul-Quran Pashto published by King Fahad Complex.
6. Pashto Translation by Allama Mahmoodul Hasan and explanation by Allam Shabbir Usmani. {8}

7. Tafseer Yaseer: Maulana Murad Ali s/o Maulana Abdur Rehman Al-Seelani R/O Jalalabad written in 1282 Hijri and took two years for its completion. It is to be the first explanation and Tafseer. However, the first translation and explanation of the Holy Quran in Pashto are discussed here.
8. Makhzan-ul-Tafseer: Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Peshawari Kochyani had written it by giving meanings to each word along with footnotes. It was published in 1313 Hijri but it could not achieve fame.
9. Translation by Maulana Abdul Haq: After Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kochyani, an eminent scholar Maulana Abdul Haq Dar Bhangvi, translated the Holy Quran into Pashto by using only easy, worldly, and comprehensive words instead of Persian and difficult words. It got better fame rather than others. It was consisting of one thousand pages.
10. Tafseer Hussaini: It is a Pashto translation of Tafseer-e-Hussaini written by Mullan Muhammad Hussain Abu Wyz Alkashfi. Maulana Muhammad Abdullah and his student Maulana Abdul Aziz Aadil- Garhi translated the said Tafseer. A landlord Qazi Muhammad Hussain carried its expenditure for publication in 1930.
11. Translation by Shaikhul Hind: It is a Pashto translation of Urdu translation by Maulana Mahmood ul Hassan published in Afghanistan.
12. Tafseer-e-Wadoodi: After the Independence of Pakistan Maulana Fazal Wadood translated 15 Parts of the along with explanations. He left this task and Maulana Raheem Alasmari completed it.
13. Kashaful Quran: Maulana Hafiz Muhammad Idrees has written it on the reason to bring useful and easy translation and explanation for common people. However, it has many traits {9}.
14. Free Pdf file of the Pashto Translation of the Holy Quran is available at Peshawar Library and No.1 Virtual Library.

First Quranic Translation in Pashto

It has been mentioned in Manaqab Ghous-ul-Azam that a manuscript of translation with footnotes of the Holy Quran in the Pashto language written in the 12th Hijri i.e. 18th century is available in the Pashto Academy, Peshawar University, Peshawar. This Quranic Translation with footnotes named Tafseer Afzalia was written by Maulana Syed Rukn-ul- Din Qadri Fazli resident of Moza Musa Zai near Hazarkhani, Peshawar. Although the said scholar comes from Peshawar he was Justice of Dakkan and Dehli, therefore, he spent his life there. He was a follower of Syed Ghulam Qadir Shah (RA) s/o Syed Abul Farah Muhammad Fazil ud Din Qadri as revealed in his book Hifzul Adab. Another manuscript is also available in the British Library, London. As unindent Dr. Ganda Singh author of "Ahmed Shah Abdali" in English language wrote regarding a Historian Elphinstone that King Ahmed Shah Abdali when came to Hindostan he used to go to Batala Shareef to see Syed Ghulam Qadri Shah Qadri for prayers. Maulana Syed Rukn-ul-Din was well known as Rukn-e-Alam and Fazil Mian Sahib. His younger brother Maulana Syed Qutab-ud-Din well known as Qutab-e-Alam achieved good fame instead of his elder brother Maulana Syed Rukn-ul-Din who spent his life at Dakkan and Dehli and wrote the above-mentioned books there. It is worth mentioning that that is the sole manuscript of Tafseer-e-Afzlia which was gifted by Akhtar Muneer Khan Sahib to Pashto Academy, Peshawar University but starting pages were not available. It was very difficult to ascertain the name of the Author of said Translation. However, the Author wrote his brief biography in his third book named Manaqab Ghous-e-Azam wherein he mentioned his book Tafseer Afzlia in Pashto. As such the name of said Author was discovered and confirmed. The Government of NWFP now Khyber Pakhnoon Khah published this Pashto Translation (Tafseer Afzlia) in the shape of a Photocopy. Molana Syed Rukn-ud- Din was a good poet of the Pashto language. He translated the Holy Quran into the Pashto language about 250 years ago. Later on, it was proved that it is the first translation of humans in the Pashto language. He also wrote two magazine books regarding Qirat and Tajweed in Pashto. He mentioned these books in the Tafseer Afzlia at its start. He praised very much Syed Ghulam Qadri shah Batalvi and his further Hazrat Abu-al-Farah Syed Muhammad Fazil-ud-Din Batalvi in his

poetry. He was a saint soofi, poet, translator, and great scholars Government of PKP formerly NWFP allocated an amount for its publication in photostat. consequently, some mistakes are in the photocopy. publication of the said translation in the shape of a photocopy is not sufficient for wide publication. It might be a few copies that do not serve the purpose.

Analytical Study Of Tafseer Afzlia

The exact date when Syed Rukan-ud-Din started writing his Tafseer Afzalia is not known. Prof. Ghulam Rasool wrote that Tafseer Yaseer is the first Quranic Translation in Pashto as it has been written in 1282 Hijra i.e. 13th century and it took two years for completion whereas Capt. Ihsan Ullah Khan Danish stated in the preface of Manaqab Gous-e-Azam published by the Government of NWFP now Khyber Pakhtoon Khah that Tafseer Afzlia has written in the 3rd week of the 12th century Hijra preserved in the shape of photo-copy in the Pashto Academy, Peshawar University. He further stated that there are some mistakes in the original script, therefore, it can be kept as blessing of God but it is not good for recitation. As it is a sole manuscript, therefore, no comparison can be made. Unless this manuscript is re-written and published publically, no comments can be offered. As it is a hand written translation, therefore, it is not readable easily.

Mr. Zia Mohiy-ud-Din Son of Ehsanulla Khan Danish(late) (a prominent scholar) writes in his article that Almighty, Glorious, and Supreme Allah Subhana-Wa-Talah (SWT) is quite more merciful and kind to human beings by blessing them with Holy Quran. In the entire Universe / Galaxy no event, no change, no movement, no transform, no movement and even no imagine and even no think can take place without the will and pleasure of Allah the Glorious, the Supreme. Maulana Rukn-ud-Din (RAA) mentioned that The Holy Quran's interpretation/rendering/exegetics was in Arabic language only. Afterward, Persians translated and interpreted/exegetics in the Persian language for their Persian public. To facilitate Pathans (Pushtoons), thereafter Allah (SWT) sent a man of wisdom with power who was famous for his acuminous, acquaintance, and comprehension of his knowledge over end-to-end territory and areas of Pathans (Pushtoons). The Holy Quran is a glorious source of blessing and guidance for both Muslims and non-Muslims. The Tafseer-e-Afzalia

has the unique worth/value of being the first and oldest translation/rendering of the Holy Book of Allah (SWT) in the Pushto (Pakhtoo) language. This is unique in the sense also that this has been translated/rendered by one of the best-learned personalities of all time in the Pushto (Pakhtoo) language i.e. Hazrat Maulana Rukn-ud-Din (RAA) who was the Qazi-ul-Quza (Chief Justice) with famous Afghan emperor Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Tafseer-e-Afzalia is a more than 250 years old manuscript, which was published in facsimile, printed from “positives”. All by this date research on Pushto (Pakhtoo) reveals that this is the first-ever translation/rendering of the Holy Quran i.e. no older copy of the Holy Quran translation has been discovered so far.

This fact has also been established that Pathan (Pushtoon) became/converted to Islam as a whole nation and not singularly became Muslims. Again by all-time era only Pathan / Paktoon / Pushtoon has this distinction that they were converting to Islam as a nation worldwide. This is another fact that this manuscript was published with the idea that the people of this territory will be benefitted but due to limited resources it has been kept only to the access of different libraries. Hazrat Maulana Rukn-ud-Din (RAA), the author of a historic, all-time-old, and rare manuscript of the Holy Quran was a resident of the village Musa-zia located presently on the outskirts of the historic City Peshawar. For almost 250 years or so it has been believed that Peshawar city was more jubilation/bustle/stir in an old historical area known as Hazar Khwani next to Musa-Zai territory. Hazrat Maulana Rukn-ud-Din was a soofi scholar of repute during his lifetime and research history regarding Maulana Rukn-ud-Din reveals that he belongs to Quadria Fazlia Order of Soofi-ism. His presence has been noted during the second Sajjada-Nashin (Gadda-Nashin) Hazrat Syed Gulam Qadir Shah, the eldest son and successor to the founder of this order of Soofi-ism Hazrat Muhammad Faaziluddin Gilani. The history of that era also reveals that whenever Afghan King Ahmad came to Punjab to put an end to the Sikh-Jaat atrocities upon Muslim communities of north-west India attended the Darbars Qaudira Fazaalia at Batala Sharif and Lahore to pay his homage. Maulana Rukn-ud-Din in his other manuscript book Manaqib-e-Ghaus-ul- Azam

refers that Ahmad Shah Abdali as the savior of Muslims in the northwest of India.

The publication of this manuscript of the Holy Quran valued for its historic and literary importance, would not have been possible but for the will of the Glorious Allah (SWT) during 1173 after the hijra (AH) i.e. year 1759-60 AD. It was believed that all Pathan (Pushtoon) who cannot understand the meaning of the Holly Quran in original or through its translation in any other language will benefit greatly from the rendering done by Maulana Rukn-ud-Din (RAA) under the title Tafsir-e-Afzalia. By the grace of Almighty Allah (Jala-Jla-Hoo), this translation has been proven of immense help in spreading Holy Quranic teachings among people living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, the Merge District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Karachi, the Emirates and various other parts of the Globe. Unluckily, particulars of Maulana's life history are not yet fully known. Nevertheless as mentioned above, in another book written by Maulana Rukn-ud-Din, the "Manaqib-e- Ghaus-ul-Azam", he refers to his place of residence as "Hazar Khwani", once a well-known town that went by the name of Musa-Zai too. This fact has been further strengthened by internal evidence that Hazar Khwani and Musa-zai were contiguous areas. Musa-Zai has been mentioned in the land settlement report compiled by Col. Hastings during the year 1878 AD in which he also refers to Haji Mian Sahib who was Maulana Rukn-udDin's (RAA) younger brother, Maulana Qutb-ud-Din (RAA). The shrine/tomb of both brothers exists even nowadays in the Musa-Zai area. – the reason for emphasizing the territory of Musa-Zai. It will also be not out of place to mention that Munshi Gopal Das in his "Tarikh-e-Peshawar" speaks of a well with cold potable water in Musa-Zai. The well still exists in the area of Musa-Zai. Hafiz Muhammad Munir father of Maulana Rukn-ud-Din excavate / dig this well adjacent to his centre of learning (Madrassa / academy), where students from around the sub- continent comes for seeking Islamic education / religious disciplines. Maulana Rukn-ud-Din writes in the first pages of Tafsir-e-Afzalia, clearly states that He started writing this Tafsir during 1173 AH (i.e. 1759-69 AD) by the persuasions of Nawab Afzal-ud-Dawlah. Famous Rohela Chief Nawab Najeeb-ud-Dawlah and Nawab

Afzalud-Dawlah were cousins. Rohela Chief Nawab Najeeb-ud-Dawlah accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali in the 3rd (third) Battle of Panipat.

As discussed above another book namely “Manaqib-e-Ghaus-ul-Azam” also written by Maulana Rukn-ud-Din, the manuscript of this is available with Pushto Academy, Peshawar University, Peshawar. In “Manaqib-e-Ghaus-ul-Azam” Maulana Rukn-ud-Din includes his eulogy on the famous Afghan King, Ahmad Shah Abdali. The introductory pages of Tafsir-e-Afzaliala too have many references to Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Third Battle of Panipat. According to my father Mr. Ihsanullah Khan Danis, this uniformity of style and historical references in the “Manaqib” and the “Tafsir-e-Afzaliala” is a clear indicator of the fact that Maulana Rukan-ud-Din, the religious scholar of Musa-Zai, alone was the author of both the book “Manaqib-e-Ghaus-ul-Azam” and the “Tafsir-e-Afzaliala”. It is pertinent to mention here that the “Manaqib-e-Ghaus-ul-Azam”, in which Maulana Rukn-ud-Din has very assiduously verified the biography of Hazrat Sayed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (RAA).

As a matter of fact regarding the unnecessary use of Mobile Phone technologies, wherein every researcher and incumbent of research institutes and Universities, the subjects of the research has been diverted to other easily available research material and almost none of the researchers are taking interest in subjects of archeological importance, including literary archeology. Nevertheless, by the time when the “Tafsir-e-Afzaliala” has been printed from the manuscript, the learned scholar at that time (almost 30 years before i.e. during the 1990s) strongly urge research scholars of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in particular, to undertake research on Maulana’s life history and enable the Pushtoon (Pakhtoon) community about their ancestor’s scholars and learned personalities. Certain Photographs of the Tafsir-e-Afzaliala are attached for perusal:

While studying/reading the “Tafsir-e-Afzaliala” it has been revealed that during 18th Century Tafsir was just a small explanation of the Quran verses (at least in the Pashto Language). Whereas the Tafasir of these days and centuries old are larger explanations and descriptions, epically including events and circumstances of the time of verses when these

were revealed/befallen. The attached pictures from Tafsir-e-Afzlia easily clarify the circumstances. (11)

Conclusion

Pashto Academy, Peshawar University may not only preserve this manuscript as an old heritage of their Province but they should get it published through their Academy or it may be assigned to some business parties on a price basis by calling quotations. First of all, it may be made approachable to the public and scholars then critical or research work can be carried on. Then scholars can comment upon it. The said Academy may pay attention to this aspect and it should be made useful for the public.

1. Pashto Academy, Peshawar may get it published so that interested religious people may have it for recitation and knowledge understanding.
2. Pashto Academy may sell it to private and business people through auctioning so that it may be available in the market for every interested person.
3. Reward fellows get an approach to the said manuscript for research and critical studies.
4. Pashto Academy may give vast publicity about its availability of historical and culturally important.
5. It may serve language, spiritual and religious activities.
6. As the Tafseer Afzlia has been written before the establishment of Wahabi Deobandi and Brailvi school of thought, therefore it might be pertaining right path and true spirit of Islam and ancient creeds and lessons. Therefore, it must be published publically for the awareness of common people.
7. Research scholars may be in touch with this translation for deep analytical critical studies and Pushto Academy may provide an easy opportunity for interested scholars.

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