

Question:

Dr Musharraf Hussain Al-Azhari has written an English translation of the Quran known by the name of 'The Majestic Quran', which was published within the last year. The Al-Azhari scholars from Dar Ul-Iftaa of Egypt have given the translation their seal of approval upon the basis of it being consistent with the popular translators and interpreters. Amongst the English readers, this translation has achieved great acceptance due to the comprehensive nature and readability. However, recently there have been disputes regarding the acceptability of The Majestic Quran as some scholars have identified 11 positions where they believe the translation from Arabic to English are inconsistent with the meanings. As this matter was brought to the attention of Dr Musharraf Hussain, he retracted his position with regards to the highlighted points, and immediately amended them in accordance to the recommendations and published an erratum on his website, and he has also committed to include the amendments in the next edition, which would be considered as improvements. Despite the corrective actions there are people who remain discontent with this translation and are not accepting that 'The Majestic Quran' is correct and therefore, consider the whole translation as revoked. I am therefore, seeking counsel and a legal (shari') ruling from our respectable religious scholars in the light of shariah regarding this matter?

Haji Abdul Jabbar (Nottingham)

Answer:

In the name of Allah, the Kind, the Caring

The Quran is the holy book of Allah and it is a means of guidance and salvation for humanity. Allah the Almighty says, "We made the Quran easy to learn and understand, so is there anyone who will pay attention?" (Qamar: 17).

Upon the authority of Uthmaan (r.a) it is narrated that our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "The best amongst you (Muslims) are those who learn the Quran and teach it." (Al-Bukhari 5027). It is stated in a further narration received upon the authority of Uthmaan (r.a) that our beloved master the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "The most superior amongst you (Muslims) are those who learn the Quran and teach it." (Al-Bukhari 5028)

Based on this, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to understand the Quran and make efforts to study its translations, tafsirs and the various sciences of this Divine book, through which humanity can really get to know their Lord and creator and consequently achieve eternal bliss.

Considering the guidelines for translating the Quran, it is important to understand that you cannot translate the words of the Quran, but you can possibly translate its meanings. This is why the experts of Tafsir, and translation have named it 'translation of the meanings of the Quran' (Tarjuma ma'ani Al-Quran).

To understand the original texts (Quran and Hadith), scholars have categorised them into four types:

1. Definite in transmission, definite in meaning; examples of these are the commandments (Muhkamaat verses), which give clear and conclusive meanings and the Mutawatir Ahadith.
2. Definite in transmission, speculative in meaning; examples of these are all verses, which hold more than one possible meaning and interpretation.
3. Speculative in transmission, speculative in meaning; examples of this are 'the khabr wahid'.
4. Speculative in transmission, definite in meaning; these are very rare.

With this in mind, apart from the verses of commandments, it is acceptable for other verses to entail differing interpretations provided they are in accordance to the underpinning consensual creedal beliefs of the Ahl Us-Sunnah.

I have read Dr Musharraf Hussain al Azhari's Quran translation thoroughly and I am very impressed

with its translation and design qualities. It is in accordance to the Al-Ash'ari and Maturidi creeds of the Ahl Us-Sunnah and it contains a deep essence of Tasawuf (inner dimensions of Islam). This translation makes it easier for the average person to read, comprehend and understand the rulings of the Quran. Furthermore, the section headings make the subject matter more apparent.

Prior to this, one of the works of Dr Musharraf is his English translation of S'ad ud-Din Taftazaani's (d 793 AH) commentary of the book titled 'Aqaid an Nasafi', written by the 12th Century scholar, Imam Abu Hafs An-Nasafi (d 573 AH) with regards to the authentic Islamic beliefs and doctrines. This proves Dr Musharraf possesses a thorough understanding of the beliefs of Ahl Us-Sunnah.

Dr Musharraf has written around 40 Islamic books in English by which Muslims living in the UK have developed their knowledge in the subjects of Fiqh, Tassawwuf, as well as Shariah and understanding the true essence of the Quran and Hadith.

Dr Musharraf's translation is in accordance with the creed and doctrine of Ahl Us-Sunnah. Furthermore, it has been approved by the Dar Ul-Iftaa of Egypt confirmed by the issuing of a certificate of verification, and many scholars have reaffirmed the aforementioned point in their video recorded statements, and also accept that in matters of beliefs and theology his position is in reconciliation with that of Ala Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan (rahimahullah) and he also acknowledges this.

However, the fact remains that, despite all efforts, there remains the prospect of errors and omissions in all human activities. On the basis of this, the scholars of Ahl Us-Sunnah have identified and recommended some necessary changes and consequently, Dr Musharraf accepted these recommendations and published them on his website www.majesticquran.co.uk, for the purposes of information. Furthermore, he has given an undertaking and shown a genuine willingness to adopt and implement any suggestions for further improvement that emanate from a more prominent position. This aforementioned action is in accordance to the righteous predecessors.

With due consideration to the above points, the thought of the complete Quran translation as being revoked is completely incorrect. This translation of the Quran is based on over 200,000 words and to regard the whole Quran translation as revoked due to a few inadvertent lapses is undoubtedly an incorrect position to uphold. The acceptable position of standing is, in relation to the verses where the scholars have highlighted a corrective guidance. Dr Musharraf should issue an erratum containing the necessary amendments and ensure it is attached to each of the current copies of The Majestic Quran and ensure these amendments are published in any further published editions.

Allah knows best

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