



Contribution of Kanzul Iman in Qura'nic Translation and Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

Imam Ahmad Raza popularly known as AlaHazrat (born in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh in North India) is said to have been one of the great Sufi-Sunni revivers of Islam, the jurist belonging to Hanafi school of thought. Let alone Muslim academicians, even non-Muslim Researchers have counted more than fifty branches of Knowledge in his academic account. (See "Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilwi: In the Path of the Prophet" by Dr. UshaSanyal PhD Colombo University, Oxford University, Press, New Delhi). The great poet of the East, Dr. AllamaIqbal, remarked, "Such a genius and intelligent jurist did not emerge". Among his Sufi-Sunni followers, Alahazrat is remembered as a lover kindling the hearts of others with the flame of true love for Allah Almighty and his beloved prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. Far from rumours about him, an unbiased academic study at his contributions has brought me to embrace his researched treatises produced in the last century, on scholarly Islamic and rational grounds, which also deter the Sunni-Sufi Muslims from being deluded by the current violent jihadist narratives. As a result, we have witnessed more than a million of people including clerics condemning ideologies of the terrorist organizations like Taliban, ISIS, Al-Qaeda etc at annual Urs-e-Alahazrat, (December 19, 2014). The Times of India reports it "On the last day of annual Urs-e-Razwi of Imam Ahmed Raza, Muslim clerics condemned the terrorism practiced by the Taliban, and the orthodoxy of the Wahhabi sect. The clerics said the world should come together to protest the killing of innocent people in the name of Islam. Ulemas should launch a campaign against the Taliban and the Wahhabis, said clerics, cheered by a large number of people at the Islamia ground" in Bareilly.

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Introduction

1. Now a day, most of Muslims are unfamiliar with Arabic meaning of Quran and hence they are unable to understand the Quran. So, in order to let them understand the genuine meaning of Islam many books of interpretation and translation works have been written. But as a matter of fact, some of them contain invalid and unjustifiable meanings which affect the framework of Quran interpretation. And Ahmed Raza -the renowned Islamic revivalist of the 14th century- came with meaningful, justifiable and valid translation of Holy Quran to set the difference among these books of translation and distinguish the right translations from misplaced ones.

Kanzul Iman has got reputations among the orthodox Sunni Muslims for its uniqueness in interpreting the Holy Quran. This widely accepted Urdu translation titled 'Kanzul Iman' has succeeded with greatest regard in resolving the obstacles in interpreting the Quran, with a unique demonstration of its inner Sufi meanings.

Many research papers have been published about this book. Many commentaries have been written on this too and the best one is Khazain-ul-Irfan of Naeemudin Muradabadi.* In the course of Islamic history, though the contribution of many scholars in interpreting Quran has been profound, but the Qura'nic Tafseer of Hazrat Imam Raza Khan has imparted an authentic and credible commentary of the Holy Text, at a time when the impure ambience of misinterpretations of Quran was on rise. Quran was revealed on Prophet Peace be upon him as a master model for a better religious guidance and moral teaching. The revelation of this sacred text itself proved to be a distinctive figure from the literary books, calling the community, who were deeply subscribed to worse vicissitudes and uncivilized practices to the best human potentialities and the perfection in character building. Along with that, the translation and explanation for this scripture also occupies a prime position to this with high remarks which render the text easily understandable. However the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the sacred texts have required the need for a necessary attention to these traditional translations, in particular, giving attention to its genuineness and authenticity. Kanzul Iman, the most read exegesis of Hazrat Imam holds an effective stance among the traditionally held pluralist and beautiful interpretation of Quran.

This explanatory translation of the Holy Quran was completed in 1912. A true commentary of the Holy Qur'an requires a deep knowledge of Arabic grammar, semantics, lexicology, tradition, jurisprudence as well as numerous other branches of knowledge. A'la-Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Khan surely mastered in all the required branches of Islamic theology.

Being one of the highly recognised translations of the Holy Quran in the Muslim world, Kanzul Iman registered its distinctiveness with enormous features. A'la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan defined and described esoteric and exoteric meanings of each verses of Quran with its very aesthetics. Without doing any distortion of even a single word as per the traditional way of *tafseer*, especially in explaining the divine names, he could give a fascinating rendition for the Quran with its beauty and sacredness. It stands as one of the most received and genuine explanations for the Quran in Urdu. The Kanzul Iman has reached its voice in front of a vast community by its further translations into lot of other local and globally accredited dialects.

Kanzul Iman registered its stance as an outstanding and remarkable Urdu paraphrase translation for the Quran by the renowned Islamic revivalist of the 14th century, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan as mentioned above. This Urdu translation of Quran is precisely an explanatory translation. It is the most known, highly read and widely accepted Urdu translation among the global Sunni community. The significant thing to be highlighted regarding this translation is that A'la Hazrat has tried to assign such meanings to the words of holy Quran that there could not be any contradiction between the meaning of the translated words, and that of the verses of the Holy Quran. Moreover, the other thing he has kept in his mind while translating the sacred text was that any translation should not offend and scorn the status and dignity of the Almighty and his Prophet.

I. Kanzul Iman: A Sublime Translation of Qur'an

As mentioned earlier, Kanzul Iman which means "Treasure of Faith" is paraphrase translation of the Quran by Ahmed Raza Khan which was completed in 1912 A.D. /1330 AH. Now It is regarded as one of the most depended and authentic translation of the Quran in Urdu language.

Kanzul Iman was translated into Urdu to defy the negative meanings and unethical interpretations of some Urdu translations in the Indian subcontinent. Kanzul Iman has got reputations among the orthodox Sunni Muslims for its uniqueness in interpreting the Holy Quran.† This widely accepted Urdu translation titled 'Kanzul Iman' has succeeded with greatest regard in resolving the obstacles in interpreting the Quran, with a unique demonstration of its inner Sufi meanings.

A'la Hazrat's translation is not merely a word by word translation of the Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an, rather it is a conceptual translation backed by authentic tafseer. Therefore, the focus throughout working on this project is to capture the conceptual understanding of the

* Maulana Sadrul Afazil Maulana Naeemuddin Muradabadi And His Contemporaries, By Ghulam Rasool Dehlvi, 2016.

† Kanzul Iman aur Maruf-e- Tarajime-Quran, Dr. Majidullah Qadri, p 78.

Qur'an as provided by A'la Hazrat.‡

II. Translation of Kanzul Iman Into Other Languages

1. English

The Holy Qur'an (Treasure of Faith) was rendered into English by Professor Shah Faridul Haque.

2. Dutch:

De Heilige Qoraan, it was translated into Dutch by Goelam Rasool Alladien.

3. Turkish:

4. **Kur'an-i Karim**, it was rendered into Turkish by Ismail Hakki Izmirli.

How Kanzul Iman was written

Ahmed Raza was a very prolific scholar who was well-versed in both Islamic as well as contemporary studies. And that is why he was very busy all round the clock and did not get enough time even to sleep more than three hours.

He kept writing several books. And once, one of his disciples mufti Amjad Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), raised before him the necessity of Quranic translation. A'la Hazrat assured him of translating the Quran. But due to his much engagement, he could not fulfill this work. Then, in order to render this magnificent service, he directed Amjad Ali to come to him with pen and papers before going to bed for sleep. And, after that, the magnificent work of Kanzul Iman took off fiercely.

According to the details shared by Amjad Ali, almost all translations of Kanzul Iman were written at nights before sleeping. Most of time, the work at night was on regular basis but sometimes there some gaps due to some other engagements of A'la Hazrat. And, at last, Kanzul Iman fi Tarjamatil Quran كنز الإيمان في ترجمة القرآن was completed in 1912/1330. A'la Hazrat named this work on the basis of Ilmul A'adad (knowledge of calculations).

III. Kanzul Iman: A Miracle (Karamat) of A'la Hazrat

To translate the Holy Quran, it takes much courage and deep knowledge of Islam and traditional studies of *tafseer* with instant looking into them. But defying all odds, Ahmed Raza dictated the meaning of Holy Quran will all correctness without even looking into *tafseer* books. It was because; he was already laden with Islamic knowledge. This was the

miracle of A'la Hazrat and that is why Kanzul Iman has been the most accepted translation book of holy Quran in Indian subcontinent and other countries.

IV. Methodology of Kanzul Iman§

Before A'la Hazrat, many translations were published like that of Mahmudul Hasan Deobandi, but all lacked the clarity and accurate translation while dealing with ambiguous verses. But Kanzul Iman dealt with them very sharply and fairly, considering the necessity of good faith and Iman protection as well as safeguard of Aqeedah.

Kanzul Iman's methodology was based on eight important perspectives:

- **Mutual-Interconnection of Translation of Holy Verses.**

While translating the Quran, A'la Hazrat maintained the connection between previous and later verses in order to not lose the connectivity while reciting the Holy Quran and understating its meanings. In many cases, while translating, the connection is lost, but Ahmed Raza kept his special gaze on this matter.

- **Constant Speed of Language**

While translating the Quran, Ahmed Raza succeeded in maintaining the speed of each verses' translation with no lapses in speed. He went ahead with translation and interpretative works with constant pace which will be well fit for the readers.

- **Sweetness of Language**

One of the major features of Kanzul Iman is that it uses very beautiful and sweet words while maintaining the seriousness of each verse and their meanings.

- **Current Urdu's Usage**

While translating the Holy Quran, A'la Hazrat utilized the day-to-day usages of Urdu which paved the way for easy understanding of holy Quran according to the current period. He did not delve into the depth of chaotic and tough Urdu words and phrases which may not serve purpose of people and instead will baffle them.

- **Consideration of Allah and His Prophet's Status and Respect**

Most importantly, A'la Hazrat took all care in translating the ambiguous verses. He translated them with all consideration of Allah's and His Prophet's respect. He did not translate every verse based on overt

‡ Kanzul Iman aur Maruf-e- Tarajime-Quran, Dr. Majidullah Qadri, p 80.

§ Kanzul Iman Ka Lisani Ja'eza, Dr. Sabir Sanbhli, p 13- 20.

meanings, instead he would write the proper meanings fit for that.

- **Thorough Carefulness In Translation**

Those verses which are not easily understood, he dealt with them very carefully and thoroughly and did not display the meaning what did come in the way. Instead, he took all efforts to fix appropriate meanings.

- **Abstaining Form Un-Civilized And Markets-Orientated Words**

As Quran is the holy book revealed on Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, its honor and prestige should be allotted to it. And for that, A'la Hazrat did not use the words which were against the spirits of Islamic traditional and resembled to uncivilized words.

- **Based On Unattainable Easiness**

While reading the translation of Kanzul Iman, it would seem as if its languages and contents are easy to written by anyone. But in reality, that becomes a mirage in desert, and proves to be unattainable and difficult to be achieved. This uniqueness has earned Kanzul Iman much praised the domain of Muslim community.**

V. Comparison Between Kanzul Iman And Other Translations††

In order to understand the significance of Kanzul Iman, here are few comparisons between some verses of Holy Quran.

1. **وَ يُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ**

And He will teach you to take out result from matters. (anjam nikalna sikhayega) (Kanzul Iman)

Others say

And He will teach you to express the dreams (Maulvi Depty Nazir Ahmed Dehlvi)

And He will teach you deliver the matter to the destination (Shah Rafeuddin Dehlvi Tarjam Quran)

A'la Hazrat clearly and meticulously translated the verse in simple and complete sentence that Allah will teach you how to bring out a

good result out of a matter. (anjam nikalna sikhayega).‡‡

2. **وَ الْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ**

And by the moon in her fullness, you shall surely travel from stage to stage. What then is the matter with them that they believe not?§§

The choice of word in “from stage to stage” and “with them” clearly states that men in group (3 astronauts) will travel to the moon and they will be of course non-believers.. This was the accurate translation of Ahmed Raza***

3. **الرَّحْمَنُ**

The most gracious! Who taught his beloved (Muhammad) the Holy Quran?

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ

It is He who has taught the Quran.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

He has created the main reason of mankind, (Prophet Muhammad).

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

He has taught him the knowledge (of past and future).

Ibn Kasabi says: it is narrated by Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them), that **الْإِنْسَانَ** is the Prophet Muhammad. Several other scholars support this quote. Ibn Jouzi, Imam Bagwi and Allama Naishaburi also support this.

Others translate: Rahman taught the Quran. He created the human being.

Then He taught him the speaking ability (Ashraf Ali Thanvi)

Rahman taught the Quran. He created the human being. Then taught him to speak (Depty Nazir Ahmed)

The most gracious is the god! He taught the Quran. He created the human being. And taught him to speak. (Maududi).†††

4. **الْمَ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ** : This is the “highest” book which has no place for any doubt. (Kanzul Iman)

Others translate it as:

It is the book in which there is no doubt. (Aashique Ali Merathi)

This book that no any doubts in it. (Maulvi Abdul Majid Daryabadi)

This book is such that it has no doubt. (Maulvi Mahmudul Hasan)

** Kanzul Iman Ka Lisani Ja'ez, Dr. Sabir Sanbhli, p 20.

†† Suratuzuha Ke Tarajim Me Kanzul Iman Ka Maqam, Sabir Husain Shah Bukhari, p10-20

‡‡ Kanzul Iman aur Maruf Tarjuma Quran, p 552

§§ Kanzul Iman

*** Kanzul Iman aur Maruf Tarjuma Quran, p 556

††† Kanzul Iman aur Maruf Tarjuma Quran, p 561

A'la Hazrat pointed on the word **ذَلِكَ** which is used to indicate distant things. So Quran is very nearer to us, but here **ذَلِكَ** is used to describe the highness of this book, and for that reason A'la Hazrat translated it as “this is the highest book” which has no room for doubts.***

5. **وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ** and he found you immersed in his love, so he led you the right path.

Here A'la Hazrat translates the **ضلالة** as the love and affection instead of “wandering” and this translation is also supported by other verses and quotes of other scholars. §§§ Mulla Ali Qari says “He found you as His beloved”.

Muhammad Sadruddin Naqshbandi may (Allah be pleased with him), says “We found you rounding in the valley of our love” and several others are of the determined view that this **ضلالة** has nothing to do with “wandering in wrong path” **تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ** By Allah, indeed you are in the old-lasting love (of your son). Here, the **ضلالك** does not mean wandering directly.

But others translate this verse very differently:

And He found you lost in wrong path, so he showed you the way. (Aashique Ali Merathi)

He found you lost, so he led you to the path (Maulvi Mahmudul Hasan)

And He found you unaware of right path, so He led you the right way (Maulvi Fath Muhammad JA'landhri)

And He found you lost and misled, so He showed you the way. (Wahiduzzaman)

All these kinds of translations mislead the people regarding the respect of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace is upon him), and that is why Kanzul Iman symbolizes the authentic translation of Holy Quran.****

VI. 100 years of Kanzul Iman; a journey of Quranic interpretation

Right after its first completion in 1912, Kanzul Iman has completed 100 years of its excellence in diversifying the meaning of Quran in good-styled translation coupled with sound interpretation. Since its inception, Kanzul Iman has dominated the hearts of people of Sunni school of thoughts. Many institutions and organizations are being run in the name of this paramount Kanzul Iman with Kanzul Iman research institute being at the heart of core importance.

With the rise of Wahabis and several Salafi-led translations of the Holy Quran, the importance of Kanzul Iman has become highly needed one of

this era. As Quran is to survive till the last moment as promised by Almighty Allah, **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ** (Verily We have revealed the holy Quran and certainly We would take care of it), in the same way this Kanzul Iman will survive the spate of all enemies, Insha Allah!

Conclusion

Ever since Islam appeared in India, it has played vital role in disseminating the teachings of Quran to wider segments of society. The phenomenon of Quranic translation in India was very different from other parts of the world, for, numbers of translations in regional languages were translated here with most of them being unauthentic due to non-mainstream Sunni path allegiance such as Wahabism and Maududism. Under such harsh circumstances, Ahmed Raza did the profound work of Quranic translation namely Kanzul Iman, which proved to be very authentic and thus has been widely accepted among the Indian subcontinent's large Muslim community. The personality of Ala Hazrat is very apt for any Muslim to learn the lesson from. The tremendous works done by him for Islam give Muslims a lesson; always hold the rope of Islam and render the service to Ahlul Sunnah.

1. Sadurl Afazil Naemuddin Muradabadi, *Khazainul Irfan*
2. Muhammad Ilyas Ghuman, *Analytical view of Kanzul Iman*
3. Allama Yaseen Qadri, *Ahmed Raza as an Interpreter*
4. Dr. Majidullah Qadri, *Kanzul Iman aur Maruf-e-Tarajime-Quran*.
5. Sabir Husain Shah Bukhari, *tuzzuha Ke Tarajim Me Kanzul Iman Ka Maqa*.
6. Imam Ahmed Raza. *Malfuzat-e-Raza, Rasail-e-Razawiyya*,
7. Imam Ahmed Raza. *Kanzul Iman fi Tarjamatil Quran*.

Dr. Sabir Sanbhli, *Kanzul Iman Ka Lisani Ja'eza*

*** Kanzul Iman aur Maruf Tarjumatil Quran, p 568

§§§ Suratuzzuha Ke Tarajim Me Kanzul Iman Ka Maqam, Sabir Husain Shah Bukhari, p 15,16

**** Suratuzzuha Ke Tarajim me Kanzul Iman Ka Maqam, Sabir Husain Shah Bukhari, p 18, 19.