

Mufti Muḥammad Taqī ‘Usmānī and his scholarly contribution to the Qur’anic studies

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ABSTRACT

Mufti Taqī ‘Usmānī of Pakistan is one of the most prominent contemporary Muslim scholars from Deobandi and Waliyullah’s School of Thought. He is not only a leading living scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence and Islamic finance, but also a scholar and an intellectual of the Quran, the Hadith, Islamic law, and comparative religion. He has always been placed among the top fifty in “The 500 Most Influential Muslims” in the world from 2009 until 2016. His works on the sciences of the Quran and the interpretation of the Holy Quran show his scholarship in this field. The writing of “Ulūm Al-Qur’ān” (An Approach to the Quranic Sciences in Urdu), “The Meanings of the Noble Qur’ān” (English translation of the Quran) and “Āsān Tarjamah Qur’ān” (The simple translation of the Quran with notes in Urdu) are his major works in the field of Quran. His supervision of translating the “Ma’ārif al-Qur’ān” of his father, Maulānā Mufti Shāfi’, from Urdu to English is considered as his magnificent endeavor and contribution to this field. This paper aims to discover the biography of Mufti Taqī ‘Usmānī and his scholarly contribution towards the interpretation of the Holy Quran in the above-mentioned works. The paper uses a descriptive-analytical approach to discuss his biography and his contributions. The analysis shows that Mufti Taqī ‘Usmānī is a continuity of Waliyullah’s tradition and Deobandi scholars’ in contributing Quranic teaching to ordinary people as well as scholars through his writings and his other scholarly works.

Keywords: *Tafsīr, Translation, Deobandi, Indian Sub Continent, Urdu*

(Mufti Muhammad Taqī 'Usmānī dan sumbangan ilmiahnya dalam bidang al-Quran)

ABSTRAK

Mufti Taqī 'Usmānī merupakan tokoh ulama Pakistan kontemporari yang paling menonjol di kalangan ulama aliran Deobandi yang mendokong pemikiran Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi. Beliau bukan sahaja seorang ulama terkemuka dalam bidang Feqah dan kewangan Islam, bahkan seorang ulama dan intelektual yang juga menguasai bidang al-Quran, Hadis, undang-undang Islam, dan perbandingan agama. Beliau telah disenaraikan dalam kalangan 50 individu teratas daripada seramai "500 Individu Muslim Paling Berpengaruh di Dunia" semenjak tahun 2009 sehinggalah tahun 2016. Karya beliau dalam bidang 'Ulūm Qur'ān dan penglibatan beliau dalam bidang tafsir menunjukkan kehebatan keserjanaan beliau dalam bidang ini. Tiga penulisan beliau iaitu "Ulūm Qur'ān" (Satu Pendekatan Dalam Memahami Ilmu al-Quran dalam bahasa Urdu), "The Meanings of the Noble Quran" (terjemahan al-Quran berbahasa Inggeris) dan "Āsān Tarjamah Qur'ān" (terjemahan ringkas al-Quran beserta nota dalam bahasa Urdu) adalah sumbangan utama beliau dalam bidang al-Quran. Termasuk sumbangan beliau dalam bidang ini ialah penyeliaan yang beliau lakukan dalam penterjemahan kitab tafsir Urdu "Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān" yang ditulis oleh bapa beliau Maulānā Mufti Shāfi', ke dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan biografi Mufti Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī dan sumbangan ilmiah beliau dalam bidang pengajian dan tafsiran al-Quran menerusi karya-karya yang telah disebutkan. Metode yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah analisa diskriptif. Analisa menunjukkan bahawa Mufti Taqī 'Usmānī adalah penyambung kepada legasi pemikiran Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi dan Ulama Deoband dalam memberikan sumbangan pendidikan al-Quran kepada golongan awam dan juga golongan ulama dalam bentuk penulisan dan lain-lain sumbangan ilmiah beliau.

Kata Kunci: Tafsir, Penterjemahan, Deobandi, Benua India, Urdu

1. Introduction

The commitment of Indian religious intelligence towards the quest for common Muslims, guided by the Quranic teaching was shown predominantly by ShÉh Waliyullah's (1702-1763) tradition from as early as the eighteenth century. Beginning from ShÉh Waliyullah himself who translated the Holy Qur'Én into Persian language and wrote *Fauz Al-KabÉr*, a Persian booklet of the principle of the Qur'Énic science, the work was continued by his progeny ShÉh RafÉÑuddÉn (1750-1818) and ShÉh ÑAbdÉl QÉdir (1753-1814) who had translated the Qur'Én into Urdu language (QÉdrÉ, 2007: 23). There came ShÉh ÑAbdul ÑAzÉz Mu'addith DehlawÉ (1745-1823) who wrote *FatÁ Al-ÑAzÉz* or *Tafsir ÑAzÉzÉ* in Persian by revising, updating and annotating ShÉh ÑAbdÉl QÉdir DehlawÉ's translation of the Qur'Én.

Later, their works have been inherited by the so called Deobandi ÑUlamÉ' who were inspired by Waliyullah's movement and gained their title from the *madrasah* of Darul Ulum Deoband which is located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, northern India (Rizvi, 1981: 1: 69-77, 98). Darul Uloom Deoband's influence had produced more than eight thousand *madrasahs* in India alone (Ansari, 1997: 11). Such

Urdu works like *Tarjamah Sheikhul Hind* of MaulĒnĒ MaĒmĒd ĵasan DeobandĒ (1851-1920), *BayĒn Al-Qur'Ēn* of MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ĒAlĒ ThĒnawĒ (1863-1943) and *TafsĒr-e-ĒUsmĒnĒ* of MaulĒnĒ SyabbĒr ĒĒmad ĒUsmĒnĒ (1886-1949) portrayed the contribution of Deobandi scholars in the field of Qur'Ēn.

After the partition of the Indian Sub Continent and the formation of Pakistan in 1947, many Deobandi scholars moved to Pakistan and continued to call themselves Deobandis, making the influence of Waliyullah's tradition networks expanding speedily to the South Asia and later to all over the world through the production of thousands of *madrasahs* in Pakistan (Jamal Malik, 2008: 87). Hence, the work of Mufti Muhammad SyafiĒ (1897-1976), the grand Mufti of Pakistan, *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* had once again showed the intimacy of Pakistani ĒUlamĒ' with Shah Waliyullah and Deobandi's tradition.

MaulĒnĒ Mufti TaqĒ ĒUsmĒnĒ, the son of Mufti Muhammad SyafiĒ is one of the prominent Deobandi products of Pakistani *madrasah* of Darul Uloom Karachi. His rising fame in the Islamic finance which is known all over the world exemplifies the Waliyullah tradition in modern days. Beside economic and law, he is also an expert in *ĒadĒth* where he holds position as *Sheikhul ĵadĒth* in his *madrasah* and has produced several books in this field. Many prominent scholars such as Professor YĒsuf Al-QarlĒwĒ, Sheikh Abd Al-FattĒĒ AbĒ Ghuddah, Sheikh Muhammad Al-MukhtĒr (the Grand Mufti of Tunisia) and Sheikh Abu Al-ĵasan ĒAlĒ Al-NadwĒ extol his works in the field of *ĒadĒth* and Islamic jurisprudence (Muhammad TaqĒ, *Takmilah*, 2004: 3-21). However, his contribution towards the Qur'Ēn is unfamiliar to many. MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ ĒUsmĒnĒ having a background in the Qur'Ēnic sciences is undoubted. He has been working and teaching in the *madrasah* of Darul Uloom Karachi since his graduation from it at the age of only sixteen. In Deobandi seminary, a lecture is obliged to teach and master Qur'Ēnic sciences first before being given a chance to teach *halĒth* sciences or to give *fatwĒ* in Islamic Jurisprudence (Zunaidah, 2016: 44, 50). Thus, this paper will disclose his association with the work of the Qur'Ēn aiming to reflect his dedication to educating the mass to the teaching of the Qur'Ēn. The paper will use a descriptive analytical approach to discuss his biography and his contributions.

2. The Biography of Sheikh Mufti TaqĒ ĒUsmĒnĒ

2.1 His Background

Justice Mufti Muhammad TaqĒ ĒUsmĒnĒ's full name is Muhammad TaqĒ ĒUsmĒnĒ Ibn Muhammad SyafĒĒ. Justice because he served as a judge of the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan from 1980 to 1982 and the Shari'a Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan from 1982 to 2002. Sheikh TaqĒ was born in 5th Syawwal 1326 A.H corresponding to 3rd October 1943 A.D, in Deoband, India. His father took him and his family to Pakistan in May 1948, after the Independence of Pakistan in 1947. He was just five years old at that time. He was the youngest of five children. His mother was a housewife, and his father, Mufti Muhammad SyafĒĒ, the late Grand Mufti of Pakistan was a son of Syeikh Muhammad Yaseen, a famous teacher of Persian language in Deoband Madrasah (Luqman, 2001: 11-24).

He studied Urdu and Persian language from his parents from an early age. Formally, he received an Islamic education through NizĒmi Curriculum (*Dars -i-NiĒĒmi*) when he was eight in Madrasah Darul Ulum Karachi, a religious Deobandi

educational system. At this level, he studied primarily all subjects of traditional Islamic studies, like *Tafsîr*, *ʿadâth*, *ʿIlm Kalâm*, *Fiqh* and *Uʿl al-Fiqh*, *Farʿid* and Arabic literature. He graduated from this school in 1959 excellently. He had developed his interest in reading since he was young. During his school time, he spent his school holiday in reading or lending his hand in academic matters to his father (Luqman, 2001: 25).

His enthusiasm in higher learning is proven when he gained a Bachelor Degree in Economy and Politics in 1964, and Degree of Law in 1967 from the University of Karachi. Then, he pursued his Master Degree in Arabic Language and Literature with First Class Honor from University of Punjab in 1970. His main aim in pursuing modern higher learning is not solely for certificates. Rather, he was eager to have a deep knowledge in coping with current issues which he could not gain from his previous study level. Therefore, he has made an extensive reading in Economy, Law, and Politic besides his formal study of those fields (Luqman, 2001: 26).

Since he was originated from Deobandi school of thought, he follows the path of Deobandi Ulama to be guided spiritually by a guided *sheikh* of *tasawwuf*. By the instruction of his father, he finally pledges allegiance to Dr. Abdul Hayy NŌrifĒ, a *khalifah* of MaulĒnĒ Ashraf NĀIĒ ThĒnawĒ. Dr. Abdul Hayy NŌrifĒ was a homeopathic doctor by profession and a former lawyer. After his *sheikh* passed away, he took *baiʿnah* from MaulĒnĒ Maseehullah KhĒn who was staying in India and also a *khalifah* of MaulĒnĒ Ashraf NĀIĒ ThĒnawĒ (Muhammad TaqĒ, 2005). He was authorized by both of his mentors in *Silsila Ashrafia*: Chistiyyah, Naqshbandiyah, QĒdiriyah and Suharwardiyah. Despite his busy schedule, he himself became a mentor to numerous spiritual aspirants all over the world. Recently he has been a vice president of Madrasah Darul Uloom Karachi where he is teaching *QāʾĒh BukhĒrĒ* to the final students and holds the position of *Sheikhul Hadith*.

2.2 His Scholarly Contribution and Position

From his background, we may summarize that his main source of scholarly contribution is influenced by his scholarly lineage. His major contribution is in Islamizing economics and laws. He has produced many writings on this field. Some of the important works written by him in this field are “Introduction to Islamic Finance” and The text of the Historic Judgement on Riba (Interest). Most of his writings are in Urdu, and some have been translated into English or Arabic. He was actively involved in seminars and conferences as to highlight and promote Islamic values and frameworks worldwide.

Worth to mention, he is not only among the main figures of Islamic Economics and Finance, but he is an all-encompassing scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence, *ʿadâth*, *Qurʿn*, and *Talawwuf*. He has 16 positions in Islamic Finance institution till 2010 (Murat Hasan, 2010: 6). The Important works of him in the field of Islamic Jurisprudence include *BuhĒth Fi QalĒyĒ Fiqhiyyah Muʿalirah* (in Arabic), *Ahkam az-ZhabĒi*, Rules of *IʿntikĒf* (originally *AhkĒm IʿntikĒf* in Urdu) and the Legal Status of Following a *Madhab* (translated from Urdu *Taqleed Ki Sharaʿee Hesiyaat*). Among his writings in the field of *ʿadâth* are *Takmilah Faʿl al-Mulhim* (in Arabic), *Dars Tarmizi* (in Urdu), *TaqrĒr Tarmizi* (in Urdu) and Authority of Sunnah (in English). His writings in the Sciences of the Quran which are to be discussed in this paper in detail are *NUIĒm al-QurʿĒn*, *The Meanings of the Noble QurʿĒn*, an English translation of the Holy *QurʿĒn* and *ŌsĒn Tarjamah QurʿĒn*, a translation of the Holy

Qur'Ēn in Urdu. He wrote more than a dozen of books on the field of *Talāwwuf* all of which are in Urdu language like *Zikr -o- Fikr*, *Fard kĒ IslĒĒ* and *IslĒĒi MajĒĒlis*, to name a few (Zunaidah, 2016: 61-63, 67-70, 74-77). Apart from that, he is also known for his comprehensive excellent personality of Islamic preaching and writing. He is a prolific writer and has a capability to write in Urdu, Arabic and English. He wrote more than forty books in Urdu. His famous Arabic book is *Takmilah Fath Al-Mulhim* in six volumes, a complement of MaulĒnĒ SyabbĒr AĒmad UsmĒnĒ's *Fath Al Mulhim* which is a commentary of ØahĒh Muslim.

His wide knowledge and big contribution deserves him to be placed in a high position. He has always been placed among the top fifty out of 500 most influential Muslims, and at 22nd place in 2016 (John Esposito, 2016: 80-81). His national and international influence and contribution is the main factor of his being ranked among the world figures.

Despite a bounty of praises having received by him, there are still some who have criticized his writing and thought. The example of critic towards his writing is the critic by Syekh Gibril Fouad Haddad on his fatwa on the illegality of celebrating *mawlid* (Haddad, 2017). There was also some misquotation of his writing due to misunderstanding of his objective of writing as shown in an article published by Mc.Cormick Foundation to prove that he supported violent jihad against non-Muslim states (Mc.Cormick, 2008: 10-11). Nevertheless, he does not like to be involved in controversy.

3. Sheikh Mufti TaqĒ UsmĒnĒ's Contribution to the Interpretation of the Holy Qur'Ēn

MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ UsmĒnĒ's contribution to the interpretation of the Qur'Ēn lies in the presentation of four major works related to the Qur'Ēn for readers of different background. Firstly, translating the Urdu version of *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* into English. Secondly, writing a book of principles of the Qur'Ēnic sciences, *ŅUĒm Al-Qur'Ēn*. Thirdly, writing an English translation of the Qur'Ēn. Fourthly, writing an Urdu translation of the Qur'Ēn. All these works will be discussed below.

3.1 MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn

3.1.1 A synopsis of MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn.

The *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* of late Mufti Muhammad SyafĒŅ is considered a magnificent work of Urdu commentary of the Holy Quran by Deobandi Ulama in modern days. Born in 1896 at Deoband India, Mufti SyafĒŅ was educated in Darul Uloom Deoband, where he studied all branches of Islamic sciences, especially *tafsĒr*, *hadith* and *fiqh* under eminent scholars such as Sheikul Hind MaulĒnĒ MahmĒd xasan DeobandĒ, MuĒaddith AnwĒr ShĒh KashmĒrĒ, MuĒaddith xusain AĒmad MadanĒ, Mufti ŅAzĒzu RaĒmĒn and MaulĒnĒ ShabbĒr AĒmad ŅUsmĒnĒ. He was elected as the grand mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband in 1926 when he was just 35 years old. In the field of *tasawwuf*, he became the successor (*khalifah*) of MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ŅAlĒ ThĒnawĒ, the author of Urdu TafsĒr *BayĒn Al-Qur'Ēn*. After the formation of Pakistan, he left India and settled in Pakistan until his death. He was the founder of the *madrasah* of Darul Uloom Karachi, and became the grand Mufti of Pakistan (Muhammad TaqĒ, *Al-BalĒgh, BiyŌd -i- FaqĒh*, 2005). After *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* was

complete in 1972CE/1392H, it has been widely admired by the Urdu-knowing Muslims throughout the world and is proven to be beneficial for an average Muslim as well as for a scholar. The fact that it is widely accepted is shown by it being reprinted many times with thousands of copies by various publishers, both in India and Pakistan with colorful size of books.

Theoretically, regardless of any specific qualities, one *tafsĒr* emerges dominant over another when communities change the ways it was presented before. This is another reason why *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn* took its popularity. Long before the advent of *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn*, Urdu TafsĒr of *FatĀ al-MannĒn* known as *TafsĒr HaqqĒnĒ* by Abdul ᵂaq HaqqĒnĒ (d.1820) has represented a new methodology of writing Urdu *tafsĒr* which leads to its remain survival with the advance of the time (Yusuf Ali, 1989: xviii; Hafiz Iftikhar, 1996: 6). Despite its abundant information and being accepted by Deobandi scholars, no work has been done to render it into English language or at least rewrite it in contemporary Urdu language as what has been done to *MazĒhir -e- ᵂaq* of NawĒb Muhammad Qutubuddin KhĒn (d. 1872), an Urdu commentary of the book of hadĒth *MishkĒt Al-MasĒbih*. NawĒb Muhammad Qutubuddin KhĒn was a disciple of ShĒh Muhammad IsĒq who was a grandson of ShĒh Abdul ĤAzĒz, the son of ShĒh Waliyullah DehlawĒ. His book of *MazĒhir -e- ᵂaq* was first revised with a new language in 1960 and published gradually in portions. Its new revised edition in the shape of complete book was later published in 1979 after 19 years of struggle (Qutubuddin KhĒn, 1986: 3-4). On a contrary, this has not happened to *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn*.

One way to understand how *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn* gains such popularity among Deobandi followers is from the close relationship between its author and MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ĤAli ThĒnawĒ, an important figure and the most respected teacher of Deobandi School. MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ĤAli ThĒnawĒ's influence throughout India-Subcontinent and among Urdu-speaking people all over the world is undoubtedly recognized by western modern researchers (Fuad, 2009: 439). He is not only considered as a spiritual master (*sheikh* or *mursyid*) by Deobandi scholars, but also a *mujaddid* (revivalist) who mastered many Islamic sciences, especially *Fiqh*, *TafsĒr* and *Tasawwuf* (Fuad, 2009: 439). He produces almost one thousand books on those fields and other subjects. Like other Deobandi Ulama, MaulĒnĒ Mufti ShafĒĤ grasped at this opportunity by taking *baiĤah* from MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ĤAli ThĒnawĒ and later became one of his successors (*khalifah*). During this relationship, beside his own talent, Mufti ShafĒĤ had acquired the skill of writing as a medium to serve the public from his *sheikh*. His talent on writing finally produces many scholarly books in collaboration with his *sheikh* (Muhammad TaqĒ, *Al-BalĒgh, BiyĒd -i- FaqĒh*, 2005: 1: 373, 487, 507, 590). Despite his *sheikh*'s demise, Mufti ShafĒĤ continues this scholarly relationship that was vividly portrayed through his choice to base his commentary on his *sheikh*'s *BayĒn Al-Qur'Ēn*. Thus, *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn* exists side by side with the continued *silsilah* (chain) between *sheikh* and his *murĒd*. Perhaps this is the hidden factor why *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn* won its laurels among those who admire MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ĤAli ThĒnawĒ's personality.

3.1.2 The Characteristics of *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn*

There are some exegetical characteristics mentioned by the author himself that make *MaĤĒriful Qur'Ēn* perhaps superior than other Urdu *tafsĒr* (Muhammad ShafĒĤ, 1991: 1: 14). It can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Its translation of the Qur'Ēn based on MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ŅĀĪĒ ThĒnawĒ's *BayĒn Al-Qur'Ēn*, and MaulĒnĒ MahmĒd ᵂasan *Tarjamah Sheikhul Hind* with slight changes where he felt necessary. For example, the translation of the first and second verse of the chapter of Al-Baqarah is given in Urdu as "Alif LĒm MĒm, is kitĒb men kuch shĒk nahin, rĒh batĒti hai darne walĒn ko". This translation is precisely the same as what is in the *Tarjamah Sheikhul Hind* (Muhammad SyafĒŅ, Urdu Version, 2008: 1: 105; MahmĒd ᵂasan, 1989: 3).
- 2) Introducing summary of the subject after the translation of a group of ĒyĒt. The summary is in fact of *BayĒn Al-Qur'Ēn* except that its language has been facilitated. The author introduces the summary of the *tafsĒr* under the title of *KhulĒsah -i- TafsĒr* (Brief TafsĒr). The *KhulĒsah* contains the translation of the ĒyĒt marked by a line drawn on it and then followed by a brief commentary marked by parenthesis. For example, after translating a group of verses containing verse 1 to 5 of SĒrah Al-Baqarah the brief *tafsĒr* given is like this: "This is such a book where there is no doubt in it (meaning the Holy Quran being from Allah, is being no room for doubt, although the ignorant is in doubt because in reality the truth will always be the truth even if one doubts it) (Muhammad SyafĒŅ, Urdu Version, 2008: 1: 105-106).
- 3) Explaining the vocabularies of the Quran by referring to the classical Arabic lexicons and reliable books of tafsĒr. For example, the author writes in SĒrah Al-FĒtiĒh: "The word *MĒlik* has been derived from the root, *milk* (مَلِك) which signifies possessing a thing in such a manner that one has the right and power to dispose of it as one likes (*see Qamus*)" where after giving the meaning of the word *MĒlik* he mentions its source as from *Qamus* which refers to Al-QĒmus Al-MuhĒi of Al-FairuzĒbĒdĒ, a classical Arabic lexicon (Muhammad SyafĒŅ, English Version, 2009: 1: 66).
- 4) Following the principle of *UsĒl al-TafsĒr* precisely. For example, the author constantly follows the principal of *ŅĒsikh* and *MansĒkh* throughout his work. His explanation about the obligatory of making will or *waliyyah* in verse 180 of SĒrah Al-Baqarah as being abrogated by "the verse of inheritance" shows that he agrees with the fact that there are such ĒyĒt in the Quran that are subjected to abrogation (Muhammad SyafĒŅ, English Version, 2009: 1: 450).
- 5) Relying on the opinion of *ĪĀĒbah* (companions) and *tĒbiŅĒn* (successors) in giving commentary to the verses of the Qur'Ēn. For example, the author relies on the opinion of companion AbĒ AyyĒb al-AnĒrĒ in explaining the meaning of the word *التَّوَلَّى* from the verse of 195 of SĒrah Al-Baqarah which means *abandoning jihad*, then he continues saying that "The same approach to the meaning of this verse has been reported from the earliest authorities in TafsĒr, such as,

SayyidinÉ Ibn ÑAbbÉs, ×udhayfah, QatÉdah, MujÉhid and ŐÁÍÉk” (Muhammad SyafÉÑ, English Version, 2009: 1: 488).

- 6) Mentioning the books of *tafsÉr* or *hadÉth* quoted as references. For example, while discussing about *ribÉ* the author mentions the book of *tafsÉr* by saying that “AbÉ ×ayyÉn al-GharnÉtÉ, the famous commentator from Andalusia (Spain) has, in his commentary, *Al-BaÍr Al-MuhÉÍ*, reported the same form of *ribÉ* prevailing in pagan Arabia...” and further mentioning that “The same subject has been authentically narrated in all reliable books of *TafsÉr* such as *TafsÉr Ibn KathÉr*, *al-TafsÉr al-KabÉr*, *RÉÍ al-MaÑÉnÉ*, etc.” (Muhammad SyafÉÑ, English Version, 2009: 1: 686).
- 7) Referring to some books of *TafsÉr* such as *TafsÉr Al-QurtubÉ*, *AhkÉm Al-Qur´Én* by *JaÍÉÍ*, *AhkÉm Al-Qur´Én* by Ibn ÑArabÉ, *TafsirÉt AÍmadiyah*, *Al-BaÍr Al-MuÍÉth* by Ibn HayyÉn, *RÉÍ Al-MaÑÉnÉ*, *TafsÉr Al-MaÐharÉ* and *BayÉn Al-Qur´Én* in explaining verses containing legal judgments. For example, while determining the legal status of marrying the women from among the People of the Book in verse 5 of SÉrah Al-MÉ´idah the author refers his view from the book of *AhkÉm Al-Qur´Én*, *JaÍÉÍ* and *MaÐharÉ* (Muhammad SyafÉÑ, English Version, 2009: 3: 77-78).

As the author of *MaÑÉriful Qur´Én* was a jurist, he touches many problems of *fiqh* in various lengths in his *tafsÉr*. However, there are 25 contemporary issues in Islamic Jurisprudence discussed in detail by the author. Among those legal judgments issued and discussed by Mufti SyafÉÑ in *MaÑÉriful Qur´Én* are: 1) hunting with bullet, 2) blood donation, 3) western allopathic medicine, 4) women’s position in Islam, 5) the different between Islamic politics and others, 6) divorce rule in Islam, 7) interest or *riba* 8) liquor or alcohol, 9) gambling, 10) nationalism (Muhammad TaqÉ. *Al-BalÉgh, BiyÉd -i- FaqÉh*, 2005: 609).

3.1.3 Factors behind the work of translation

In his foreword to *MaÑÉriful Qur´Én* in English version, MaulÉnÉ TaqÉ UsmÉnÉ portrays that there are three main factors that had driven him to undertake the task to render *MaÑÉriful Qur´Én* into English language (Muhammad SyafÉÑ, English Version, 2009: 1: xvii). They are as follows:

- i. There is no comprehensive commentary of the Holy Qur´Én despite a huge number of its translation in the English language available in the market. Some brief footnotes found with some English translations cannot fulfill the need of a detailed commentary.
- ii. The English translations of the Holy Qur´Én are generally written by the people whose backgrounds are not in the Qur´Énic sciences; hence their explanatory notes do not always reflect the authentic interpretation of the Holy Qur´Én, thus, may mislead common readers. On the other hand, MaulÉnÉ TaqÉ UsmÉnÉ ability and experience in the field of the

Qur'Ēn and other Islamic sciences as previously mentioned in the introduction of this paper may be regarded as a safeguard against any wrong interpretation of the Holy Qur'Ēn.

- iii. The correct message of the Holy Qur'Ēn in an authentic manner which conform the standardized principles of *tafsĒr* (the exegesis of the Holy Qur'Ēn) will give much benefit to the increasing population of Muslims in English speaking countries. This is because the *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* has been proven to be beneficial for a layman as well as for a scholar. Therefore, it has been advised by different circles that its English translation may fulfill the need of detailed commentary of the Holy Qur'Ēn in English language.

It is important to note, however, that Deobandi scholars are not in favors of the commentary written by MaulĒnĒ AbĒ Al-AĒĒa Al-MaudĒdĒ (1903-1979). His *TafĒĒmul Qur'Ēn*, though an exegetical commentary of the Holy Qur'Ēn, and is also available in English version, has been criticized by Deobandi scholars especially of having disputing the Prophets` infallibility. There are at least six important points mentioned by Deobandi scholars about the errors committed by *TafĒĒmul Qur'Ēn* of MaudĒdĒ, one of which is about the ambiguous language used by him to show the weakness side of the prophets as human beings that can lead to the rejection of the prophetic infallibility (Abd Al-KhĒliq, 1415H: 17). Moreover, he was also considered by Deobandi as not a pure traditionalist scholar. Thus, perhaps, MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ`s statement of “*There is no comprehensive commentary of the Holy Qur'Ēn despite of a huge number of its translation in the English language available in the market* (Muhammad SyafĒĒ, English Version, 2009: 1: xvii)” refers to unavailability of the work of reliable traditionalist scholars.

3.1.4 The genesis of the translation

An early attempt to translate *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* was made while its author Mufti SyafĒĒ was still alive. The work of translation in the beginning involves three leading characters, MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ himself, Prof. Muhammad Hassan Askari and Prof. Muhammad Shamim including Muhammad Wali Razi as their assistant. Thus, the translation of *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* was not the effort of MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ alone. Prof. Muhammad Hassan Askari and Prof. Muhammad Shamim were well-known scholars of English literature and criticism. In fact, they were the main translators of *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn*, while MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ stood as their supervisor. The work was entrusted to Prof. Muhammad Hassan Askari at the beginning. Later on, it was interrupted by the hurtful tragedy of his sudden demise in 1977. His work reached only 400 pages of the original Urdu *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* which covered 156 verses of the *SĒrah Al-Baqarah*.

After twelve years of interval, the work of translating *MaĒĒriful Qur'Ēn* resumed in 1989 when Prof. Muhammad Shamim had offered to MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ his service to continue the translation from where Prof. Askari had left it (Muhammad SyafĒĒ, English Version, 2009: 1: xvii-xviii). It was he who had brought the translation of the first volume into its final station. Prof. Muhammad Shamim continued to translate second, third, fourth, fifth and most part of seventh volume. Another part of seventh volume was translated by ShamshĒd SiddĒqĒ and AĒmad KhalĒĒ ĒAzĒz (Muhammad SyafĒĒ, English Version, 2008: 7: 20). Due to Prof.

Muhammad Shamim's illness, the sixth volume was translated by Muhammad Ishrat Husain. After Prof. Muhammad Shamim passed away in 2002 Aġmad Khalġl ĆAzġz took the task to translate the eight volume, i.e the last volume of Urdu *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn*. By 2004 the whole volumes of *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn* had been completely translated and published after more than thirty years of struggle.

3.1.5 Methodological contribution

The methodology of translation *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn* worked by the team led by Maulġnġ Taġġ can be briefly divided into three categories:

1. Methodology of translating the Holy Qur'ġn.
2. Methodology of translating *Khulġs-e- Tafsġr* of the text.
3. Methodology of translating the main text.

The above-mentioned methodologies will be discussed as below.

1. Methodology of translating the Holy Qur'ġn

One of the important contributions made by Maulġnġ Taġġ and his colleagues while translating *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn* was preparing a new English translation for the Holy Qur'ġn on their own instead of translating the existing Urdu translation of the Holy Qur'ġn in *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn*. This was because the author of *MaĆġriful Qur'ġn* had adopted the Urdu translation *Tarjamah Sheikhul Hind* of Maulġnġ Mahmġd ġassan Deobandġ and *Bayġn Al-Qur'ġn* of Maulġnġ Ashraf ĆAli Thġnawġ instead of his own. Though their translations are remarkable to some extent, to depend to a secondary translation of the *Qur'ġn* would have made the English translation become more complicated and distant from the closeness to the *Qur'ġnic* text. This is a contrast to their aim of translation for the easiness of the readers. Fortunately, this effort has yielded another separate book of the translation of the *Qur'ġn*, which later being named as *The Meanings of the Noble Qur'an* by Maulġnġ Taġġ. This translation will be counted as another contribution of Maulġnġ Taġġ in the field of the Qur'ġn.

To fulfill the task of preparing a new translation, with the hope of being authentic and more accurate, the team formulated guidelines to help them throughout their work. Their regards are as follows (Muhammad SyafġĆ, English Version, 2009: 1: xx):

- i. The translators have tried their best to preserve not only the literal sense of the Holy text, but also the order of words and sentences, yet, while translating the idiomatic expressions, it is sometimes felt that the literal translation may distort the actual sense or reduce the emphasis embodied in the Arabic text. At such places effort, has been made to render the Qur'ġnic sense into a closer English expression. For example, the translation given in verse 93 of Sġrah Al-Baqarah is "And when We took pledge from you, and raised high the (Mount of) Tur above you: "Hold fast to what We have given you, and listen" – they said, "We have heard and disobeyed." And, on account of their denial, they were soaked with love of the calf in their hearts (Muhammad Syafi, 2009: 1: 256)" where the translation of "they were soaked with love of the calf in their

hearts” is a translation for the idiomatic expression of the Qur’an that many translators fail to accurately give its meaning.

- ii. Both in the translation of the Holy Qur’Ēn and in the commentary, a uniform scheme of transliteration have been adopted. The transliteration scheme is summarized in the beginning pages of the book. For example, the translation of verse 58 of SĒrah Al-Baqarah which contains the word *×iġġah* written in transliteration as: “And when We said, “Enter this town, and eat there to your heart`s content wherever you will. And enter the gate prostrating and say: *×iġġah* (we seek forgiveness) so that We forgive your errors. And We shall give much more to those who are good in deeds. (Muhammad Syafi, 2009: 1: 217-221)” and in the section of commentary, this verse and other Arabic words are written with transliteration throughout five pages of its discussion.
- iii. The names of the prophets have been transliterated according to their Arabic pronunciation, and not according to their biblical form. However, in the names other than those of the prophets, like Pharaoh, their English form has been retained. For example, the biblical name of Joseph is written as YĒsuf and Jacob as YaŇqĒb in the whole of SĒrah YĒsuf in *MaŇĒriful Qur’Ēn* while the name of FirŇaun in verse 103 of SĒrah Al-AŇrĒf and others is used as Pharaoh (Muhammad Syafi, English Version, 2008: 5: 1-177; 2009: 4: 9-10).

2. Methodology of translating *KhulĒs-e- TafsĒr* of the text

Another noteworthy aspect of Urdu *MaŇĒriful Qur’Ēn* is its *KhulĒs-e- TafsĒr* which functions as summary of every group of ĒyĒt that the author has chosen to render his commentary. This *KhulĒs-e- TafsĒr* is actually taken from *BayĒn Al-Qur’Ēn* of MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ŇAliĒ ThĒnawĒ. A little scrutiny may show that *KhulĒs-e- TafsĒr* is not totally different from the main translation of the Qur’Ēn except that it has been adorned with some explanation. Perhaps this is the main reason why it has not been translated by the translators. However, those of important points in *KhulĒs-e- TafsĒr* which are not expressly mentioned in the commentary has been inserted in the main commentary as to ensure the readers may not be deprived of them (Muhammad SyafĒŇ, English Version, 2009: 1: xxi). For example, in verse 49, SĒrah Al-Qalam, the translator has inserted a note from *KhulĒs-e-TafsĒr* in explaining the meaning of the Ēyat concerning the condition of prophet YĒnus being cast by the fish by saying that “According to the explanation given to this verse by MaulĒnĒ Ashraf ŇAli ThĒnawĒ, `Favour from His Lord` means the acceptance of his repentance, and `wilderness` refers to the place where he was thrown by the fish..... (Muhammad SyafĒŇ, English Version, 2008: 8: 548)”.

3. Methodology of translating the main text

Since the translation began when the author of *MaŇĒriful Qur’Ēn* was still alive he himself had given instruction and guidance of how the translation of his *tafsĒr* should be done (Muhammad SyafĒŇ, English Version, 2009: 1: xix). The translators

themselves also have their own guideline to be followed. The agreed guidelines upon methodology of writing are:

- i. The translation should not be too literal to keep the natural flow of the text. For example, it has been translated in the first paragraph of *MañÉriful Qur'Én* in SĔrah Al-NĔs as “This SĔrah, the second of the *Muñawwadhatain*, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in SĔrah Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek refuge with Allah against hardship and privations of life in this world, while in the current SĔrah protection is sought from the trials and tribulation of the Hereafter (Muhammad Syafi, English Version, 2008: 8: 926)”. The translation given is in fact longer than original text and some words are added like “the second of the *Mu`awwadhatain*” perhaps, like what has been claimed, to ensure the natural flow of the text.
- ii. To keep in mind the requirement of English readership by avoiding some discussions and paragraphs where necessary. For example, there are many paragraphs being left by the translator while translating eleven qualities that make the Qur'Én a miracle especially from the first quality under the explanation of verse 23, SĔrah Al-Baqarah (Muhammad Syafi, English Version, 2009: 1: 143 -147).
- iii. To authorize MaulÉnÉ TaqĔ to decide on crucial matters, especially of no ii above. For example, the above-mentioned example shows that the translation has been made brief and comprehensive. Such a work surely cannot be done except by consulting a scholar like MaulÉnÉ TaqĔ.
- iv. To be strict in translating juristic discussions of the book as to avoid distortion of the accurate connotation of Islamic injunctions. For example, the translator has translated all the explanation of the injunctions regarding the thing that has been made unlawful (*ÍarÉm*) mentioned in verse 173 of the SĔrah Al-Baqarah with careful consideration, for example, in regard to the Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) terminology by preserving its Arabic terms throughout the discussion (Muhammad Syafi, English Version, 2009: 1: 423 - 438).

3.1.6 An overview of the English version of *MañÉriful Qur'Én*

The English version of *MañÉriful Qur'Én* has eight volumes and first published fully in Pakistan by Maktaba -e- Darul Uloom Karachi in 2004. Concerning the general contents of the book, the specific contents of every volume are given at the beginning of the pages, whereas its indexes are found at the end of every volume of *MañÉriful Qur'Én*. However, Foreword, Preface, Introduction and Transliteration scheme are all mentioned in its first volume. All these have been systematically structured to make it user-friendly.

In the preface, MaulÉnÉ TaqĔ has mentioned the contents of the Introduction. The Introduction of *MañÉriful Qur'Én* is written by MaulÉnÉ TaqĔ by the request of his father, the author of *MañÉriful Qur'Én* himself. In fact, his father

wanted to write it by himself, but due to his other involvements and his deteriorating state of health, he was not able to do so. Therefore, he asked MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ to write it. The Introduction is very lengthy covering forty-nine pages. It touches some basic information about the Holy Quran which stands as a brief knowledge about *UsĒl Al-TafsĒr* which the readers are expected to know before reading *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn* or other exegeses. The translators also provide some valuable notes, especially those of MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ to the original text of *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn*.

3.2 *ĒUIĒm Al-QurĒn (An Approach to the Quranic Sciences)*

While writing the introduction of his father`s *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn* which touched the knowledge of QurĒnic sciences, MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ felt the necessity to write a separate Urdu book of this field which would serve as a reference to those who wanted to know detailed discussions on the subject. Perhaps, it is the first comprehensive modern Urdu book on the treatise of *UIĒm Al-QurĒn* after Abdul ᵑaq HaqqĒanĒ`s *Muqaddimah Al-BayĒn fĒ UIĒm Al-QurĒn*, which contains lengthy discussions covering many important topics which are not found in Haqqani`s *Muqaddimah* (Muhammad TaqĒ, *UIĒm Al-QurĒn*, 2006: 19). Now the book has already been translated into English by Dr. Muhammad Swaleh SiddĒqĒ making MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ`s collections of contributions in the field of Quran doubled. The book is divided into two parts:

- i. The Holy QurĒn. It contains eight chapters i.e. Introduction; History of the descent of the QurĒn; The seven readings of the QurĒn; Abrogator and Abrogated; History of preservation of the QurĒn; Doubts about preservation of the QurĒn and their answers; Truthfulness of the QurĒn, and Subjects of the QurĒn.
- ii. The Science of TafsĒr. It contains four chapters i.e. The science of *TafsĒr* and its sources; Unreliable sources of *TafsĒr*; Some important principles of *TafsĒr*; Some *MufasssirĒn* of early era.

MaulĒnĒ TaqĒ`s work in collaboration with his father in the field of *tafsĒr* cannot be well conceived by many without referring to the work of ShĒh Waliyullah DehlawĒ, the founder of Deobandi`s thinking of the same field. It was he who first translated QurĒn into Persian language. He also wrote *Fauz Al-KabĒr*, a booklet of *UIĒm Al-QurĒn* designed for his teaching to the public which later became a textbook in Deobandi *madrasahs* for more than one hundred years. This denotes the influence of Shah Waliyullah`s endeavor on Deobandi`s scholars in educating the public to the teaching of the QurĒn.

3.3 *The Meanings of the Noble QurĒn*

By comparing *The Meanings of the Noble QurĒn* with the English translation of the Holy QurĒn in *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn*, it is clear that the former is a reproduction of the latter. Thus, his work in translating the Quran in *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn* produces a separate translation of the QurĒn. However, several changes in substituting words are found in his work without altering its original. He also adds sufficient explanatory notes. This is consistent with his statement in his introduction to the English translation of *MaĒĒrifful QurĒn* that he wanted to provide a new translation

of the Holy Qur'ân instead of translating the Urdu translation from *MañÉriful Qur'ân*. The translation was published by Maktaba-e-Darul Uloom Karachi, Pakistan in 2007 in two volumes. This is perhaps the first translation of the Qur'ân into English ever written by traditionalist scholars of Deobandi School. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, all translations of the Qur'ân by non-Muslims century were biased against Islam. Later, Muslims began to take over their job (Yusuf Ali, 1989: xix-xx). But majority of the translators came from a non-religious background or from different sectarians like Ahmadi, Beralwi and Syiah. This is why MaulÉnÉ TaqÊ's translation is very important for readers who are looking for such an authentic work by traditionalist Deobandi scholars.

3.4 *ÓsÉn Tarjamah Qur'ân: A translation of the Holy Qur'ân in Urdu*

The book was written by the author after completing the translation of the Holy Qur'ân into English. As was mentioned, the work of rendering the Qur'ân into Urdu began as far back as the end of the 18th century by ShÉh RafÉñuddÉn (d. 1817)) and ShÉh ÑAbdul QÉdir (d.1814) of ShÉh Waliyullah's progeny though there were untraceable work of others prior to them (QÉdrÊ: 2007: 23). From there on, the activities of translation have been accelerating. Hence, we found more than hundreds of Urdu translations of the Qur'ân available in India Subcontinent which were written by translators of different background of education and sectarian (QÉdrÊ: 2007: 24). Among the translations some are rare founded nowadays and some are still widely circulated among Urdu-speaking people. Even the classical translations of ShÉh RafÉñuddÉn and ShÉh ÑAbdul QÉdir to some extent are still of current demand by certain publishers, probably due to the destitute of translations by reliable Deobandi contemporary scholars (Yusuf Ali, 1989: xviii). However, their prosaic dated language and difficult verse structure prevent them from being widely used by not only common readers but also scholars. Similarly, those of Deobandi scholars such as *BayÉn Al-Qur'ân* by MaulÉnÉ Ashraf ÑAlÊ ThÉnawÊ and *Tarjamah Sheikhul Hind* of MaulÉnÉ MalmÉd xassan DeobandÊ contain the same problem as their elders (Muhammad SyafÉñ, Urdu Version, 2008: 68). In the wake of this circumstance, MaulÉnÉ TaqÊ's translation appears to fill the need for such an easy translation of the Holy Qur'ân that can be comprehended by many people and can offer new linguistic orientations to the contents of the revelation.

The translation comes in three volumes. As promised by the author, the translation is not absolutely literal or too liberal. It keeps scrupulously close to the original in elegant by using appropriate idioms and paraphrases, but is still in a very plain language. It provides explanatory notes where necessary by avoiding extensive and controversial discussions. Every *SÉrah* has been adorned with brief introductions which serve as its background information. The translation has kept its style of running link between verses (Muhammad TaqÊ, *ÓsÉn Tarjamah*, 2009: 8). *ÓsÉn Tarjamah Qur'ân*, on the other hand, is only written mostly while on travelling as told by the author himself. Surely, his experience in preparing *MañÉriful Qur'ân* and *The Meanings of the Noble Qur'ân* contributes such a fast and relaxing way of writing.

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, MaulÉnÉ TaqÊ's supervision of translating *MañÉriful Qur'ân* and his writing of three books concerning the Qur'ân as mentioned above could be regarded

as a continuity of Waliyullah's tradition and Deobandi scholars' in this field. His contributions to the Qur'Ēn are somewhat expected to alter wrong attitude of the people towards the traditionalist Islamic scholars who are said to be engaged only in teaching classical *tafsĒrs* in *madrasahs*' circles (Ansari, 1997: 123-126, 128-130). His works bridge over difficulties in finding modern traditionalist Islamic works on the Qur'Ēn in English language. Apparently, his work is of another approach to attract many people of different background to rely upon reliable works of the *ŅUlamĒ* on Qur'Ēn and hence ensuring the inherited fact that "The vast majority of Muslims worldwide, including 46% in Pakistan, turn first and foremost to local religious leaders for guidance in matters relating to Islam (Peter Madaville, 2010)".

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