

Research Paper

The Impact of Muhaddith Dehlavi's Theological Orientations on His Translation of the Qur'an

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The translation of the Qur'an is a process through which concepts are transposed from the linguistic system of the Qur'an into the target language. The evolution of Persian translations of the Qur'an in the twelfth century AH culminates in *Fath al-Rahman bi-Tarjamat al-Qur'an*, authored by Muhaddith Dehlavi, which represents a pivotal point in Qur'anic translations, particularly within the Sunni community of the Indian subcontinent. Since its composition, it has garnered attention from Qur'anic scholars and the general Muslim audience in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan,

and eastern and southeastern Iran. *Fath al-Rahman* is a complete translation of the Holy Qur'an, which the translator characterizes as a middle ground between literal and interpretive translation. The present study focuses on examining the intellectual and theological foundations of Muhaddith Dehlavi in his translation of the Holy Qur'an. In reality, the translator's understanding and expression in the target language are influenced by his theological beliefs, and this is one of the reasons for differing opinions and viewpoints in the field of Qur'anic translation. Theological and intellectual orientations influence the translator's perspective on the verses of the Qur'an, and this influence provides a suitable basis for critiquing and analyzing

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a translation. Although Muhaddith Dehlavi has generally been faithful in providing equivalent translations and has avoided mentioning interpretations, explanations, *asbab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), etc., within the body of the text as much as possible, this element of non-interference of interpretation in the translation does not mean that he had no theological or doctrinal foundations. Rather, despite his efforts to find accurate equivalents for Qur'anic words, he injected his theological and doctrinal orientations into the translation. His theological inclination sometimes manifests itself in the middle of the main text or sometimes in the margins of the translation, with references to *asbab al-nuzul* and commentary on the verse. This article examines the theological and doctrinal foundations of Muhaddith Dehlavi in *Fath al-Rahman bi-Tarjamat al-Qur'an*.

2. Methods

This research employed a qualitative methodology. Data collection was conducted through library research, involving the gathering and note-taking of relevant information about the research topic. Subsequently, the data were processed, categorized, and classified using descriptive-analytical methods.

3. Result

The research findings indicate that the translation of *Fath al-Rahman bi-Tarjamat al-Qur'an* by Shah Vali Allah Dehlavi is influenced by his theological views. This influence is clearly discernible in the translation of verses about divine attributes, particularly the *sifat khabariyyah* (descriptive attributes of God) such as *yad* (hand) and *wajh* (face), as well as in the treatment of the issues of determinism and free will, the infallibility of the prophets, and the *ayat al-Vilayah* (the verse of guardianship).

4. Conclusion

In sum, *Fath al-Rahman* reflects the translator's adherence to Ash'ari and Ahl al-Hadith's theological orientations. These views are evident both in the translation itself and in the marginalia and supplementary exegetical additions. Verses about divine attributes, free will and determinism, the infallibility of prophets, and the *ayat al-Vilayah* (the verse of guardianship) reveal Dehlavi's theological perspectives rooted in *muhaddith* (hadith scholar) traditions. In translating *sifat khabariyyah* (descriptive attributes of God), such as 'hand' (*yad*) and 'face' (*wajh*), as well as regarding the 'vision of God' (*ru'yat Allah*), the translator, in line with Ash'ari-leaning *Ahl al-Hadith*, adheres to the literal meaning of the words, resulting in a translation that suggests corporeality (*jismaniyyah*). However, in translating such terms, the translator is compelled to employ a *ta'Vili* (interpretive) meaning. In translating verses concerning the guidance and misguidance of humans, Dehlavi, consistent with the Ash'ari viewpoint, focuses on the literal meaning in a way that evokes a sense of determinism (*jabr*). Moreover, in interpreting verses related to the prophets, the translator relies on a conventional, almost instinctual (*irtikazi*) understanding of terms, even when this understanding diverges from their meanings in classical lexicons, leading to the attribution of improprieties to the prophets. For instance, he translates 'غوى' (*ghawi*) in the verse concerning Adam (peace be upon him) as 'misguided,' which is inconsistent with his dignity and contradicts their infallibility (*'ismah*). In the verse of *Vilayah*, the translator interprets (*Valiyy*) as a 'friend' and considers the circumstantial clause (while they are bowing) as connected to the preceding clause. This translational lapse stems from his particular viewpoints and underlying intellectual and theological premises.

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Conflict of interest

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