



Kanz al-Īmān fī Tarjamat al-Qur'ān

The finest Urdu translation of the Qur'ān

Ghulam Mustafa Ridawi

Translated by Abu Hanzala

The Qur'an is the fountainhead of all knowledge and wisdom. Those who ponder over its meanings derive pearls of insight from therein. A translation of the Qur'an helps people to understand its true meaning. The majority of translations of the Qur'an that were done in the Urdu language are those that demolish correct Islamic thought and due to which the translators moved away from the Prophet ﷺ. This is because the translators were fixated upon the literal meanings of words instead of focusing on the spirit of the Qur'an. This is why the aspects of respect and reverence are not found within their translations.

Hence, getting a real understanding of the denotation of the Qur'an is not possible using such translations and an accurate picture of the spirit of the Qur'an cannot be portrayed. This is why it was necessary to have a cautious translator who could render the authentic meaning of the Qur'an and make its connotation clear. The *Kanz al-Īmān fī Tarjamat al-Qur'ān* of Imam Ahmad Rida Muhaddith Barelwi is one such translation.

It is not enough to have knowledge of the Arabic language and grammar to translate the Qur'an. One must also account for the status of Allah; the reverence which is due to the Prophets and Messengers and the love of the Prophet ﷺ. Muhaddith Barelwi had all these characteristics in him alongside which he was an expert in Arabic prose, syntax and etymology. Sayyid Atiq al-Rahman Shah Bukhari has compiled a research paper on the mastery of Muhaddith Barelwi in Arabic language at the Arabic Faculty of the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Similarly, Dr. Husain Mujīb al-Misri has written an essay entitled *Mawlāna Aḥmad Ridā Khān wa'l Lughat al-Ārabīya*. In 1323 AH, whilst in Makka Mukarrama, Muhaddith Barelwi compiled *al-Dawlah al-Makkīya bi'l Māddat al-Ghaybīya* regarding the knowledge of the unseen possessed by the Prophet ﷺ. At the time of writing the book, he had no books with him to refer to yet after analysing the manner and quality of the Arabic, one can judge his mastery of the language.

Those translations that were available before *Kanz al-Īmān* were void of the manners that are befitting the beliefs of Tawhid and Prophethood and damaged true Islamic doctrines. However, because these translations were connected with the Qur'an, their publications

inadvertently caused people to go astray. Therefore, Sadr al-Shari'ah Mawlana Amjad Ali A'zami – khalifa of Imam Ahmad Rida and author of *Bahar-e-Shari'at* – made a request to Muhaddith Barelwi to write a translation which the Imam accepted. Muhaddith Barelwi did not have time for a formal effort to be made in this regard due to his other activities. Hence, Mawlana Badr al-Din Ahmad Qadri writes:

“When Sadr al-Shari'ah's insistence grew, then A'la Hazrat said that because I do not have proper time for this, you can come at night or in the day at the time of siesta. Hence, Sadr al-Shari'ah came one day with paper and a pen and inkpot and this religious job was started.

The method of translation was that A'la Hazrat would utter the translation of verses and Sadr al-Shari'ah would write them down. However, the translation was not such that he would first read books of tafsir and lexicons and then think about the translation and then utter it. Rather, he would utter the translations immediately like an accomplished Hafiz does without placing any strain on his memory. Then, when Sadr al-Shari'ah and other scholars compared the translation with books of tafsir they were astounded to see that this translation of A'la Hazrat that he uttered immediately is totally according to relied upon books of tafsir. Hence, in this short span of time, the job of translation continued until that auspicious day came when Sadr al-Shari'ah got A'la Hazrat to complete the whole Qur'an.”¹

Mawlana Abdul Mubīn Nu'mani has seen the handwritten manuscript of Sadr al-Shari'ah. He has briefly mentioned it in one of his papers and talks of the completion thusly:

“We can judge from the dates of beginning and ending the translation that *Kanz al-Īmān* was begun on Jamadi al-Akhir 1330 AH and finished on 28th Jamadi al-Akhir 1331 AH. However, the work was not continuous. Some pages are also missing from the manuscript whose dates are difficult to discover. However, it is easily known that this unique and magnificent translation known as *Kanz al-Īmān fī Tarjamat al-Qur'ān* was completed in a matter of months and did not even take a whole year. And that too in the night after Isha apart from those days about which there is evidence that work was done before Isha. We can guess that it was completed in four or five months. To write such a superlative translation in such a short time is from the unique attributes of A'la Hazrat.”²

Muhaddith Barelwi had an in depth knowledge of the science of tafsir too. There are various places in *Fatawa Ridawiyah* that discussions in tafsir are present. Prof. Dr. Mas'ud Ahmad writes:

“Apart from the translation of the Qur'an, Mawlana Barelwi also wrote a partial tafsir too. Hence, when he travelled to Badāyūn for the 'Urs of Mawlana Shah Abdul Qadir Badayuni, he lectured for six hours about Sura al-Duha and stated that I have written a

¹ Sawānih A'la Hazrat, p.376

² *Kanz al-Īmān aur Sadr al-Shari'ah*, Monthly Ashrafia, Sadr al-Shari'ah number, Oct-Nov. 1995, p.211

tafsir of some verses of this chapter that stretch to 80 *juz* and then left it. Where will I find time to write the tafsir of the whole Qur'an?"³

Mawlana Amjad Ali A'zami says:

"After *Kanz al-Īmān*, I had wished that A'la Hazrat would review it and write marginalia. Hence, after much perseverance, this task began. After two or three days of writing, it was envisaged that this would turn into a substantial tafsir of the Qur'an which would be at least 10-12 volumes. It was then thought that what need of such a voluminous work? For every page, short marginalia should be written and therefore, the initial project was abandoned and the second never began."⁴

Ustad al-Ūlama Állama Áta Muhammad Bandyālwi says:

"Hazrat Barelwi wrote around a thousand books and whichever subject he lifted his pen upon, he left it complete. The *magnum opus* of these books is his translation of the Qur'an, *Kanz al-Īmān*, which is second to none. This translation can only be truly appreciated by those who have the highest books of tafsir in their sights. The difficulties and their solutions which have been solved very strenuously by many commentators using many pages, this benefactor of Ahlu's Sunnah has revealed as much in only a few words in his translation."⁵

The manuscript of *Kanz al-Īmān* was taken by Sadr al-Afāḍil Sayyid Na'im al-Din Muradabadi [d. 1948] to Muradabad in order to be published. According to Mufti Muhammad Athar Na'imi, its very first publication was undertaken by Mufti Muhammad Umar Na'imi at Na'imi Press Muradabad and was handwritten by Munshi Irshad Ali. Its second publication was alongside the marginalia by Sadr al-Afāḍil Sayyid Na'im al-Din Muradabadi entitled *Khazā'in al-Īrfān* from Ahle Sunnat Barqi Press Muradabad and the third time from al-Maktaba Karachi. The fourth publication was from Azhar Book Depot Ārām Bāgh Karachi.⁶

Mawlana Abdul Mubīn Nu'mani writes:

"I remember well that after the separation of India, the first time the translation of A'la Hazrat was published was from Kutub Khāna Isha'at-e-Islam Delhi."⁷

Mawlana Mubarak Husain Misbahi writes:

"The name and work of Imam Ahmad Rida has become so accepted that even the opponents are publishing his books abundantly. There are approximately 25 publishers in

³ Hayat Mawlana Ahmad Rida Khan Barelwi, p.104

⁴ Tadhkira-e-A'la Hazrat Bazabaane Sadr-e-Shari'at, Muhammad Áta-ur-Rahman Qadri, p.44-5

⁵ Hayat Mawlana Ahmad Rida Khan Barelwi, p.21-2

⁶ Monthly Jahan-e-Rida, Lahore, Sept-Oct. 1999, p.23, Mufti Muhammad Athar Na'imi

⁷ *Kanz al-Īmān aur Sadr al-Shari'ah*, Monthly Ashrafia, Sadr al-Shari'ah number, Oct-Nov. 1995, p.213

Delhi who are publishing *Kanz al-Īmān ma'a Khazā'in al-Īrfān* and sending them all over the country.”⁸

Apart from Delhi, *Kanz al-Īmān* is being published by printers in Lahore and Karachi.

The publication of *Kanz al-Īmān* has been highly successful and demand for it has grown. However, typing errors began to occur and no great attention was paid to this. Mawlana Muhammad Abdul Mubīn Nu'mani wrote numerous articles on the subject and eventually took it upon himself to correct these errors. He writes:

“With great ambition, I adopted this difficult task and when I started, I found that the job was more complicated than envisaged. It was not a task for one man rather it needed a group of researchers who will manage the assignment with great care and attention.”⁹

After strenuous efforts during days and nights, the work of correction was completed by Mawlana Abdul Mubīn Nu'mani. A few years ago, the corrected version was published and since then, dozens of editions have been published. It is imperative for those publishers who are printing the old edition to now publish the revised one.

Many researchers have written papers and essays about the beauties of *Kanz al-Īmān*. In 1993, Prof. Dr. Majīdullah Qadri – under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Mas'ud Ahmad – wrote a thesis entitled *Kanz al-Īmān aur dīgar mārūf urdu tarājim kā taqābuli jā'iza* at Karachi University. At Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (U.P.), Miss Hamida is writing a thesis entitled *Urdu nathr aur Mawlana Ahmad Rida Khan*. The fourth part of the doctorate is regarding the linguistic brilliance of *Kanz al-Īmān*.

In 1982, the opponents used the *Rābta 'Ālam Islāmi* (Jeddah) to place a ban on *Kanz al-Īmān ma'a Khazā'in al-Īrfān* in Saudi Arabia. They claimed it contained objectionable passages but they did not specify any one objection. This was extremity and a vulgar plan whose aim was to stand against the truth. But, the truth always comes out. Prof. Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmad writes:

“When hundreds of thousands of copies of *Kanz al-Īmān* reached the East and West, it caused solicitude. By making false accusations, it was attempted to ban it at least in the Arab world and they eventually succeeded. Whereas a ban was not incurred on the translations of those people who did not understand the secrets of the Qur'an and were not aware of the subtleties of translation.”¹⁰

The *Rābta 'Ālam Islāmi* succumbed to the mischief of the opponents and enforced a ban. They did not know Urdu and could not read *Kanz al-Īmān*. If they could, they would have been aware of its excellence. One must read in order to form an opinion. It is not honest and conscientious to form an opinion on the basis of hearsay. According to Prof. Dr.

⁸ Monthly Jahan-e-Rida, Lahore, Oct-Nov. 2000, Hakīm Muhammad Musa Amratsari number, p.230

⁹ Khātimat al-Taba' Mashmūla *Kanz al-Īmān Jadīd Nuskha*, Delhi

¹⁰ Ā'īna-e-Razwīyāt, vol.4, p.43, Abdul Sattar Tahir

Mas'ud Ahmad: "It is reading that turns an enemy into a beloved and distinguishes truth from falsehood."¹¹

Letters were written to Arab leaders urging them to lift the ban on *Kanz al-Īmān*. Now, light is reaching the Arabs and research on Muhaddith Barelwi is being undertaken in an organised manner.

Imam Ahmad Rida Muhaddith Barelwi translated the Qur'an upon the foundations of love and respect. Reverence was his focal point and indeed it is this that makes a man worthy of respect himself. Those who exhibited respect became known and those who showed disrespect remained unknown. *Kanz al-Īmān* teaches respect and veneration.

I met with Mawlana Shams al-Huda Misbahi, teacher at al-Jamiat al-Ashrafia (Mubārakpūr), and he told me that during his visit to Dubai, Faḍīlat al-Shaykh Isa bin Mānī al-Humayri announced the distribution of *Kanz al-Īmān* and affixed the seal of his office on 500 copies.

A few years ago, *Majmá al-Bahūth al-Islāmīya*, which runs under the patronage of Shaykh al-Azhar, Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, declared *Kanz al-Īmān* to be a reliable Urdu translation of the Qur'an after they had undertaken much in depth research. They also called for its publication. This is all due to the efforts of al-Jamiat al-Ashrafia.

Similarly, the president of Idara Tahqiqat Imam Ahmad Rida, Sayyid Wajahat Rasul Qadri, went to Egypt in 1999. He presented 350 books to the Shaykh al-Azhar which included *Kanz al-Īmān aur Márūf Tarājim-e-Qur'ān* by Prof. Dr. Majīdullah Qadri.

The news of the certification of *Kanz al-Īmān* in Egypt was reported in the weekly *al-Dáwah* newspaper of 26th Rabi' al-Awwal 1421 AH. It is published by *Jam'iyat al-Dáwat al-Islāmīya* (Libya) in Arabic, English and French.

Mawlana Badr al-Din Ahmad Qadri has listed some of the distinctions of *Kanz al-Īmān*. He writes:

"From all the published Urdu translations of the Qur'an in present times, there is only *Kanz al-Īmān* which is the 'true translation of the Qur'an'. Alongside this:

1. it is according to relied upon books of tafsir
2. it is a representation of the true creed of the people of authority
3. it is an adherent of the madh'hab of the scholars of ta'wīl
4. it is unparalleled in the flow of words
5. it is free from common language and words used by the lay public
6. it delivers the true message of the Qur'an
7. it recognises the tone of speech of various verses
8. it specifies the idioms in the verses
9. it is an unleashed sword against those who attribute defects to the Creator

¹¹ Ibid, p.121

10. it protects the sanctity of Prophethood
11. for the common Muslim, it is an easy translation in idiomatic Urdu
12. for the scholars and spiritualists, it is an ocean of realities and spirituality¹²

Another unique aspect of *Kanz al-Īmān* is that it has been translated into many languages and reports of further translations are being received. Until now, it has been translated into English; Bangla; Dutch; Turkish; Hindi; Creole; Gujrati and Sindhi.

There have been scores of articles and essays written about it and Mawlana Abdul Mubīn Nu'mani writes that writing about the beauties of *Kanz al-Īmān* has itself become a separate subject.¹³

Mawlana Yasin Akhtar Misbahi writes:

“Through his translation of the Qur’an, Imam Ahmad Rida has blessed the Muslims of India and the Urdu language. This fact is now being accepted slowly but surely. As the scholars and thinkers read *Kanz al-Īmān* and understand its beauties, recognition of its importance and stature will continue to escalate.”¹⁴

Details of 20 books and 36 essays on *Kanz al-Īmān* can be seen in the annual *Yādgar-e-Ridā* of 2005, p.77-80. The periodical is published by Raza Academy, Mumbai.

Kanz al-Īmān has been praised by researchers, thinkers and scholars alike. This is what some people of knowledge say regarding it:

Mawlana Abdul Hakīm Akhtar Shahjahanpuri

Muslims! Oh lovers of the Prophet! If Allah bestows you with the ability, then to understand the Qur’an read only and only *Kanz al-Īmān*. This is the most correct translation of the Qur’an in Urdu. Most other translations in Urdu are of the heretics who have translated many verses against the divine meaning and thus created a branch of un-Islamic beliefs in the tree of Islam. Allah forbid that you or your family read these translations and destroy your Iman.¹⁵

Mawlana Yasin Akhtar Misbahi

The heart of Imam Ahmad Rida was granted an understanding of the Qur’an by Allah. His sights were upon the relied books of tafsir and whenever he lifted his pen, he would first derive blessings from the ocean of wisdom of the Qur’an and undertake his journey of investigation in its shade of mercy. Due to these blessings, it is possible that he never erred on any issue.”¹⁶

¹² Sawānih A’la Hazrat, p.366

¹³ Paigham-e-Rida, Imam Ahmad Rida number, 1998, p.491

¹⁴ *Kanz al-Īmān aur Āzmat-e-Tawhīd*, Monthly Hijaz Dehli, Sept. 1992, p.10

¹⁵ Annual Ma’arif-e-Rida, Karachi, 2003, p.138

¹⁶ *Kanz al-Īmān*, Urdu kā sab se mīyāri Tarjuma-e-Qur’ān, *Kanz al-Īmān* revised edition, p.984

Prof. Dr. Mas'ud Ahmad

Muhaddith Barelwi was a well informed, alert and respectful translator. After reading his translation, one can see that he did not translate with his eyes shut. Rather, when he translated any verse, the whole Qur'an and its subjects were before him. His translation contains years of painstaking thought and it is the favour of Allah that He grants His servant with such insight due to which all the oceans of knowledge and thought gather at one point.¹⁷

Dr. Abdul Na'im Azizi

There is absolutely no other translation in Urdu that is so refined and precise and replete with linguistic qualities and knowledge.¹⁸

Dr. Jamil Ahmad (Chairman Dept. Arabic, Karachi University)

The translation of Imam Ahmad Rida is careful, exemplary, idiomatic and easy.¹⁹

Muhammad Ashfaq Chughtai

The *Kanz al-Īmān* of Imam Ahmad Rida shows his magnanimity of knowledge, power of speech, insight and understanding, wisdom, his awareness of the secrets of the Qur'an, his recognition of the status of divinity, his fear of Allah and wanting to please Him, his love for the Prophet ﷺ and is a demonstration of his respect for the Prophets and it is unique in all these aspects.²⁰

Kanz al-Īmān is a 'treasure of faith'. Those who delve into this treasure will continue to prosper. Its rays of light will persist in enlightening the otherwise dark land. It will continue to grant the true Islamic creed and the journey of investigation will go on.

¹⁷ Chashm-o-Charāgh Khāndān-e-Barkātīya, Annual Ma'arif-e-Rida, 2004, p.87

¹⁸ A'la Hazrat, A'la Hazrat kyūñ? p.13

¹⁹ Monthly Jahan-e-Rida Lahore, Hakīm Muhammad Musa Amratsari, Oct-Nov. 2000, p.132

²⁰ Ibid