

The Quran along with the Muslim perspective: An Analysis of Modern Western Scholars

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Abstract:

Polemic themes have largely guided Western study on the Qur'an, as seen by its history. The book had such deeply ingrained roots in rage and hatred that it had two long-lasting repercussions. On the one hand, modern western writings on the Qur'an bear resemblances to the works created at the time. However, they had a negative impact on Muslim thought, leading them to mostly reject Western academic knowledge and replace it with the same antiquated model of orientalism and ancient argumentative traditions. The modern Western interpretations of the Qur'an aim to reassure Muslims that it has broken free from the long-standing bonds of prejudice and bigotry. Scholars from the West and the Muslim world are debating this matter. Academicians from the West attempt to instill the notion that the field of Islamic studies has been impacted by the development of objectivity and scientific procedures in the West. Therefore, they assert a shift and in the most current western Qur'anic research.

Keywords: West, Orientalism, Objectivity, Qur'an, Muslim

Introduction

There is a long and rich history of studying Islam in the West, most of which has been shaped by contentious themes.¹ Due to their perception of the Qur'an's centrality, western academics have been working in a variety of Qur'anic studies with varying focuses and methodologies. Over 60,000 works on Islam and the Qur'an have been authored by Western authors between the 19th and mid-20th centuries.² It is easy to see that the majority viewpoints expressed in this literature occasionally diverge from the views held by the majority of Muslims who study Islam. Furthermore, Muslims frequently connect it to orientalism, which has its own set of religious, political, and imperial goals. Therefore, the majority of Muslim academics see the position of western Qur'anic research as highly suspicious, despite the availability of a massive corpus addressing Islam and especially the Qur'an. Conversely, academics from the West contend that although earlier attempts to study the Qur'an in the West were influenced by political arguments, more scientific and unbiased research has been done recently.³ Rather, they advocate for a change in western Islamic, and specifically Qur'anic, studies because they attempt to instill the notion that the development of objectivity and scientific procedures in the West has impacted the genre of Qur'anic studies as well. Thus, according to western experts, Muslims shouldn't discount modern research because it is based on orientalism. Within the context of this conversation, the current piece will look at several historical phases of Qur'anic studies in the Western world in order to evaluate the concept of change. It also aims to clarify the matter of how the Muslim world views western research on the Qur'an. It will be said that while there have been some encouraging developments in Western Qur'anic studies, the treatises of more recent studies still represent ideas that date back hundreds of years. As a result, the Muslim world has a negative opinion of the western study on the Qur'an. It is intended that this study will attempt to give some remedies to the issue as well as a better

¹ Bennet, Clinton, "New Directions". In Clinton Bennet, ed. *The Bloomsbury companion to the Islamic studies* (Bloomsbury: New York. 2013), p. 260. And Rippin, Andrew, "Western scholarship and the Qur'ān", in *The Cambridge companion to the Qurān*, p.236.

² Said, Edward, *Orientalism; Western Conceptions of the Orient with New Afterwards* (London: Penguin books, 1995), p.64

³ Voll, John, " Changing Western approaches to Islamic Studies" in Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari and Sulayman Nyang, eds. *Observing the Observer, the State of Islamic Studies in American Universities*. (London: The international institute of Islamic thought, 2012), p.29

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understanding of the factors that contribute to the general Muslim perspective of western Qur'anic studies.

The following concerns will be the article's main focus while doing so. In order to provide a solid analysis of the current situation, the author will examine the fundamental elements that led to the creation of concern in this subject by providing a succinct but thorough history of western research on the Qur'an. Diverse ideologies and attitudes were displayed by the Muslim world, in response to differing perspectives on the Qur'an, which is considered a holy text of Muslims.

The current study will examine such viewpoints and emphasize the contributing variables. Toward the end, a few recommendations will be made.

Basis for the study of Islam in the West:

Given that the majority of western literature on Islam is seen as a component of Orientalism⁴, it is imperative to briefly review Orientalism's past. As stated by many other western academics in their treatises and by the late Edward Said (d. 2003) in his well-known book, the underlying objective of Orientalism was founded with political, religious, and military goals. Said refers to people who study the East & Islam as "Orientalists" a lot. Additionally, he explains that oriental philosophy has its own goals and purposes. Many writers in the West condemn him because of this. However, a number of Muslim scholars concur with his claims. It was an act of hatred that sprang from frustration, and it has been a strategy to remove the magnificent scripture from its securely established place in the Muslim world, to use the words of Muslims.⁵

Acknowledging the shortcomings of traditional Orientalism, Western intellectuals and academic establishments make an effort to set themselves off from their forebears. Consequently, during the twenty-ninth international conference of Orientalists in 1973, western intellectuals gave up on the practice⁶. Instead, phrases like religion studies and, more lately,

⁴ The term Orientalism was coined in 1769 and denotes to both the artists who represented the Orient in their paintings and the scholars who specialized in the Eastern cultures, religions and languages.

⁵ Manzur, Pervaiz, "Method against Truth: Orientalism and the Qur'ānic Studies". *Muslim world book reviews* 7, no. iv (1987), p.35

⁶ Lewis, Bernard, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.103

local studies are being employed⁷ Many contemporary Western scholars believe that the Orientalism era is now over due to advancements in scholarship and science. Furthermore, the conventional framework for comprehending Islam has changed as a result of the introduction of new approaches and techniques for studying the religion starting in the 20th century. They claim that whereas the study of Islam was approached from a theological scholasticism standpoint throughout the Middle Ages, a more religiously devoted approach emerged during the Age of Enlightenment. Furthermore, Muslim academics are now a prominent component of the western academic community and have contributed significantly to the growth of an unbiased and scholarly methodology for the investigation of Islam.⁸ The history of orientalism shows that there has been conflict between the East and the West, and more especially between Islam and Christianity, since very early times. According to Schimmel, despite the fact that Christianity has interacted with many religions, Islam is the one that is most misunderstood and targeted for attacks. She goes on to say that it has been an imminent danger to Europeans for over a millennium. It was believed that Muslims and Christianity were mutually incompatible.⁹ The earliest encounters between Islam and Christianity marked the beginning of this hostile relationship. It engaged in a fierce and prejudiced battle with Islam rather than seeking the truth inside it.¹⁰ It's also true that the intellectuals of Judaism and Christianity bear some of the blame because they were unable to eradicate the root causes of animosity and hatred. Rather, they have mostly been a significant, if not the primary, element in raising that.¹¹ Consequently, a great deal of misinformation was spread on their behalf. Islam was the most misunderstood faith in the West, according to research on the medieval era. It was labeled as a heretical and pagan religion. The prophet was well-known for being a fraud and a false prophet who used magic to rule the entire globe. He had a thirst for both ladies and

⁷Despite the fact that Western scholars have abandoned the term and changed their strategies and methods, many Muslim scholars still consider Occidental scholarship of the Qur'ān as a new weapon for old war. See for instance: Adbul Halim Uwais, "Al Isteshrāq Fī Ghazwa Jadīda." *Al Dirasat al Islāmīa* 18, no. 6, (1983), p.65

⁸ Voll ,Changing western approaches, p.28-33

⁹ Schimmel, Annemarie, *Islam an Introduction* (New York Colombia University Press, 2012), p.1

¹⁰ Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1958), p.63

¹¹ Tibavi, A,L, "English Speaking Orientalists" *The Muslim World* L111 (1963): 185-204. p.196

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power and was ruthless towards his opponents. Muhammad could not have existed as the man he was without a sword, whose sole intent was to either conquer or murder his enemies. He was accused of idolatry and paganism as well. There were legendary tales of a bull with the new legislation tucked between his horns.¹² In literary works, his followers were shown as idolaters. They worshipped Tervagan, Mahomet, and Apollo, the three gods mentioned in the Ballad of Roland.¹³ It was believed that the holy Qur'an was immoral, ludicrous, and untrue. It was ruled to be irreconcilable with disclosures from other sources and reason. It was seen as an odd, foreign, and bizarre object.¹⁴ The murder of the characters of Muhammad & Muslims has grown into their sacred duty in this conflict. Muhammad Giubert of Nogent, one of his early biographers, once said, "It is safe to express the evil of one who malignity exceeds anything ill can be spoken"¹⁵. This demonstrates the era's unfavorable attitude toward Islam. A brief overview of western literature from the Middle Ages to the present reveals that literature has also played a role in spreading misconceptions about Islam and Muslims among the general public. Several scholars, including in the West, have recently addressed the early medieval depiction of Islam and its Prophet¹⁶. The majority of the written works were created to uphold and promote Christianity. Information was taken from sources of information, whether Christian and Islamic, occasionally just for entertainment, but more frequently to further the lofty goals of the Church, in the writings of Norman Daniel.¹⁷ The polemical writings of Peter the Venerable, Petrus Alfonsi, and John of Damascus (1094–1156) had a significant impact on how medieval ideas of Islam were formed. Their assaults were directed on the Qur'an and Muhammad as a person.¹⁸ The accounts of his life were contrived or made up. People were shown a skewed image of Islam in an attempt to denigrate a noble faith. Norman summarizes his examination of individual writers by saying that medieval

¹² Southern, R.W, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (England: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp.29-31

¹³ Ibid, p.32

¹⁴ Daniel, Norman, *Islam and the West (the Making of an Image)* (Oxford: One World,1997), p.7

¹⁵ Southern, p.32

¹⁶ For detail of the works related to the image of Islam in the West see: Masood, Hafiz Abid. "Islam in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature; a Select Bibliography." *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2005).

¹⁷ Islam and the west, p.271

¹⁸ Islam through western eyes, pp.66-71

writers misrepresented Muhammad and Islam by using even Islamic texts.¹⁹ Literary works such as Dante's "The Divine Comedy," John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Chaucer's "Man of Law," and John Lydgate's "Fall of Princes" also portray an absurd and mocking image of Islamic beliefs, their founder, and their adherents²⁰. It is widely acknowledged that the writers' distortion of Islamic realities was a consequence of the religion's fast spread. They continued to act in an ignorant and hostile manner in response to Islam's swift westward advance. Additionally, they supported the emergence of an intricate web of myths and disparaging misrepresentations that distorted truth and portrayed the Messenger of Allah Muhammad as Christianity's greatest foe.²¹

One may understand the influence of literature written at that time on subsequent centuries by looking at contemporary writing. The writings of contemporary authors like Voltaire and Humphrey Prideaux (d. 1724) bear the echoes of earlier combative works. It is still challenging for people to shed these unfavorable perceptions and see Islam as a holy religion because of the warped image of Islam that medieval monks and clergymen propagated throughout Europe. In summary, contemporary and postmodern writers have been attempting to reframe the old black to contemporary white and the old arguments in new ways since the influence of medieval works has been so strong that they were unable to break away from those inherited notions. Paret explains this predicament by saying that a lot of what occurred in past ages, as well as what people said and accepted at the time, still has an impact on people now.²²

The western Qur'ānic Studies' origins:

The Qur'an holds a key position in the Islamic world. Not just by the Islamic community, but also by several experts in the West who recognize its impact on the course of global history. "Its influence on the

¹⁹ ibid, pp.261-264

²⁰ For critical study of these works, see: Johnson, Galen, *Muhammad and ideology in medieval Christian literature* in *Islam and Christian –Muslims relations*, Vol 11, No 3, 2003. pp.333-346

²¹ Ibid, p.91

²² Arberry, Arthur, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: George Allen &Unwin, 1995), vol, 1, p.33

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development of history is obviously immense, and will certainly continue to be exceedingly great," as Arthur Arberry put it.²³ A significant number of them think that in order to comprehend Islam, one must consult the Qur'an²⁴. Due to their recognition of the Qur'an's significance, scholars from the west have been working in a variety of Qur'anic subjects using a variety of perspectives and methodologies. Many acknowledge the fact that Eastern Christianity had a significant influence in shaping the western Christianity's perspective on the Qur'ān. Two notable writings that had a significant impact on western Christianity were those of John of Syria (d.749)²⁵ and Abdul Masih b. Ishaq al-Kindi²⁶. In his Risala essay, Al-Kindi attempted to demonstrate the Qur'anic text's lack of authenticity and originality. In his writings, he also made reference to the tale concerning the Christian monk Sergius. John of Damascus's work constituted the second. His writings had the same impact of Risala of Al-Kindi. In the West, his creations are regarded as "stock in trade."²⁷ The first interpretation of the Qur'an, published in the 12th century, served as the foundation for western studies on the text. In an attempt to disprove Islam, Christian scholars started researching it. In actuality, they attempted to make credible attacks against Islam by closely examining its core scriptures, especially the Qur'an. Rather than putting up a fictitious image of the Prophet holding a bull in his hand, it was resolved to destroy Islam on the grounds of reason and intelligence.²⁸ The original rendering's purpose was to provide a reasoned justification of Christianity. Even though the result could be identical as in the past, they at least acknowledged that knowing the Qur'an was valuable. This readiness might be considered a positive step toward self-defense. In order to counter the Islamic danger, Christian priests in medieval times had to conduct a

²³ Ibid, p.91

²⁴ Endress, Gerhard, *Islam an Historical Introduction*. Trans: Carole Hillenbrand (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p.22

²⁵ 25Abdal Mahiḥ al-Kindi is pseudo-name of an Iraqi Christian writer of the 10th century. His work has been known as Risalat al Kindi (letters of al-Kindi).he wrote these letters to his Muslim friend who invited him to accept Islam. In these letters, he made a detail refutation of Islam and he invited his Muslim friend to convert to Christianity. The Arabic text of these letters had a significant impact on Latin European views of Islam via its translation by Peter, The Venerable.

²⁶ Tolan, "European accounts", pp.233-234

²⁷ Shryock, Andrew, *Islamophobia/Islamophilia*: (Indiana University Press), p.30

²⁸ Tolan, "European accounts", p.232

methodical study of the Qur'an.²⁹ A significant turning point in the history of the eastern project in Qur'anic studies occurred in the first part of the twelfth century. Like the predecessor of John of Damascus, Peter the Venerable (the d. 1156) took the initiative to conduct this action because he believed that Islam was a heresy that needed to be refuted. He attempted to defend the translation effort by claiming that it would benefit Christendom. He gave his academics the task of translating the early anti-Islamic polemics by John of Syria and Al-Kindi, which are today known as the Toledan Collection. In addition to such publications, the English scholar Robert of Ketton (the d. 1160) translated the Qur'an into Latin for the first time at his own expense, finishing the translation in July 1143³⁰. Additionally, Robert translated a few additional Islamic scholarly texts pertaining to other scientific fields.³¹ The translation's title, *Lex Mahumet pseudoProphete* (The Religion of Muhammad, false Prophet), betrays its polemical fervor.³² According to scholars, nearly all of the important European critics of Islam accepted this translation as a primary source, and it served as the model for additional translations up to the seventeenth century³³. There are many absurd notes to be found when perusing the translation's pages. The language employed in these notes makes the animosity evident³⁴. The preferred noun is "liar," *mandex*, while the preferred adjective is "extremely stupid," *stultissimus*³⁵. Numerous Western experts have condemned the translation due to its numerous technical errors.³⁶

In any event, it was the disgraceful start of English translations of the Islamic Holy Book that were motivated by animosity.³⁷ On it, several subsequent translations were built, including those into Italian (1547),

²⁹ Rehman, Fazlur, "Some Recent Books on the Qur'ān by Western Authors." *The Journal of Religion* 64, no. 1 (Jan, 1984): pp.73-95

³⁰ Southern, Western views, pp.34-5

³¹ Burman, Thomas, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom; 1140- 1560* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press. 2007), p.15

³² Burman, Thomas, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom; 1140- 1560* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press. 2007), p.15

³³ Endress, *Islam*, p.7

³⁴ Bobzin, Hartmut, "A Treasury of Heresies". In Wild, Stefan, ed. *The Qur'ān as Text* (New York: E. J. Brill)

³⁵ Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, 60

³⁶ Arberry, *The Koran*, p.7

³⁷ *ibid*, p.7

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German (1616), and Dutch (1641)³⁸. On the directives of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (d. 1247), Mark of Toledo (d. 1216) completed another translation into Latin approximately a year after this one³⁹. This rendition also sought to disparage Islam. The project was initiated with the expectation that it will serve as a tool to support Christianity⁴⁰. Liber Alchorani, or "The Book of the Qur'an," was the title given to it. Its introduction attempted to provide a brief history of Islam's spread as well as an overview of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. However, his preamble included nothing positive to say about Islam⁴¹.

Another significant character in Qur'anic research emerges in the next century. During the final five years of his life, Spanish theologian John de Segovia (d. 1458) translated the Qur'an into Latin. Southern claims that translation is no longer possible⁴². It's important to remember that John shared the belief that Muslims should convert based on intellectual principles. Thus, he believed that a careful and in-depth study of the Qur'an was crucial⁴³.

The Qur'an's Arabic text was first published in Venice in 1537. Theodor Bibliander, a scholar from Zurich who also edited the printed Qur'an, released Robert's Latin translation in 1543. Bibliander passed away in 1564. He was among the ardent supporters of the methodical examination of the Qur'an for rebuttal. He was granted permission to print the Qur'an following a protracted and difficult dispute⁴⁴. Martin Luther, who passed

³⁸ Zwemer S. M, "Translations of the Koran." *The Muslim World*, V, (1915): pp.244-61

³⁹ José and Martínez, Andrew Gray, "Translations of the Qur'ān and Other Islamic Texts before Dante": (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries). *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*. 125 (2007.): p.85

See also: Burman, Reading the Qur'ān, p.17

⁴⁰ José and and Andrew, Translations of the Qur'ān, p.87

⁴¹ Burman, Reading the Qur'ān, pp.17-23

⁴² Southern, Western vies of Islam, pp.86-7

⁴³ Burman, Reading the Qur'ān, pp.178-182

⁴⁴ Bell, Introduction to the Qur'ān , p. 173. See also: Clark, Harry, "The Publication of the Koran in Latin a Reformation Dilemma" *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. 15, no. 1 (1984): 3-12. p.3

away in 1546, held ideas that were quite similar to his when he said the following about the Qur'anic translation:

*"It has occurred to me that bringing the Muslims' Koran to the light of day would allow the Christians to see how completely cursed, awful, and in need a book it is—full of lies, fables, and all the wickedness that the Turks hide and gloss over. This would be a more grievous act toward Mohammad and the Turks than using all available weapons combined. They are opposed to the translation of the Koran into other languages because they most likely believe that doing so will cause all rational people to become apostate."*⁴⁵

As the holy fathers wouldn't be able to take action against the heretical book's secret poison if they hadn't been able to obtain the necessary paperwork here, it would have eventually come to light. If such a book ought to be kept under wraps by you (which in turn God may forbid), we will find this somewhere that and still release it⁴⁶.

Alexander Ross (the d. 1654) translated anything for the first time in English in 1649. However, this translation did not start from Arabic. Rather, it relied on Du Ryer's (1660–1687) French version⁴⁷. Turkish, although there are many errors in his translation as well⁴⁸. The errors in Ross' translation are thought to be an extension of Du Ryer's.⁴⁹

severe and penetrating titles. Using phrases like "A gallimaufry of errors," "Misshaped issue of Mahomet's brain," or "Corrupted puddle of Mahomet's

⁴⁵ Lutherana den Rat zu Basel, October 27, 1542 as quoted by Hagenbach, in "The Publication of the Koran in Latin: A Reformation Dilemma", p.299

⁴⁶ "The Publication of the Koran in Latin: A Reformation Dilemma", p.29

⁴⁷ World bibliography of translations, xxiv

⁴⁸ Moher, The Qur'ān, p.327

see also: Sale, The Koran, viii

⁴⁹ Sale, The Kora, viii

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invention" to describe the Qur'an clearly demonstrates his polemical interpretation of the text⁵⁰.

It's important to note that Sale's version was the first Qur'an in America when it was published in the state of Massachusetts around 1806 and had a wide circulation before becoming the accepted translation.⁵¹

Abraham Wheelock, a teacher of Arabic who passed away in 1653, later produced a translation and rebuttal of the Qur'an⁵². Under the title "Refutation of the Qur'an," the Italian cleric Ludovico Marracci (the d. 1700) translated the Qur'an with great care, combining it with the Arabic text⁵³.

It is said that he devoted a quarter of his life to studying the Qur'an. He studied Islam with the goal of using its own weapons to attack it, which made his goal very controversial.⁵⁴

The majority of the earliest translations were named "Mohamed's Qur'an," "The Qur'an of the Turks," or "Book of the Turks," which is rather unusual. A significant observation is that a majority of translations include a preamble or discourse, wherein the translators attempt to engage the reader and instill certain assumptions about Islam & the Prophet (S). One example is seen in the translation of John Rodwell, who passed away in 1900 and focused on the Islamic tradition's origins, making every effort to demonstrate that its teachings are a combination of Christian and Jewish ideas⁵⁵. There is an anti-Islamic sentiment in these writings, even among

⁵⁰ See: Ross, Alexander, "*A needful Caveat*," appended to the translation of the Alcoran of Mahomet, (1649) cited in Henry Stubb, *An account of the rise and progress of Mahomatenism*, ed. Shairani, H. M. K. Lahore: Orientalia. 1954: p.253

⁵¹ Kalin, Ibrāhīm, "Roots of misconception by Ibrahim" In E. B. Lombard, Joseph, ed. *Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Lahore: Suhail academy, 2007), pp.157-8

⁵² Saeed, The Qur'ān, p.103

⁵³ He entirely followed in his edition the Islamic system of numbering of the surahs and Āyāt. <https://exhibitions.cul.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/Qur'ān/Qur'āns/printed>

⁵⁴ Bernard, *Islam and the West*, p.88

⁵⁵ Rodwell, The Qur'ān, p.9

academics from the west.⁵⁶ George Sale was the one who advised Christians to steer clear of hurtful and disparaging language in order to make a lasting impact. He clearly points out the shortcomings of previous translations of the Qur'an, emphasizing their polemical overtones, in the introduction to his translation.⁵⁷ Beyond the translation, the literature from the West may be divided into three primary groups: (1) works that attempt to track the effect of Jews and Christians on the Qur'an; (2) works that reconstruct the Qur'anic chronology; and (3) works that analyze the Qur'anic text or substance.⁵⁸ Known authorities in these domains were Gustav Flugel (the d. 1870) and H. Ewald (d. 1875). The following people passed away: Fr. Schwally (1919), G. Bergstresser (1933), H. Hirschfield (1934), Ignaz Goldziher (1921), William Muir (1905), Theodore Noldeke, J. Wellhausen (1918), and Springer. They wrote their books on the sciences of the Qur'an⁵⁸. The timetable of the Qur'an was extensively studied in this century by Orientalists. The three academics studying this genre were Noldeke, Hirschfield, and Aloys Springer. The application of textual criticism science to studies of the Qur'an was initially carried out by H. Ewald. Additionally, he founded the Islamic and Qur'anic sciences critique school. J. Wellhausen and Theodore Noldeke were two of his distinguished pupils.⁵⁹ Gustav Flugel (the d. 1870) produced a second edition of the Arabic text of the Qur'an in 1834. It included a notable translation⁶⁰, which Arthur Jeffrey (d. 1959) subsequently criticized for lacking a scientific foundation⁶¹. In 1842, he also released an agreement of the Qur'an⁶². Scholars later assessed and criticized both of his works for his rejection of the conventional surah organization and verse numbering method in his translation of Arabic text, which had a significant influence on his

⁵⁶A Bausani, "On Some Recent Translations of the Qur'ān". Nuwmen 4, no. 1 (1957): pp.75-81

⁵⁷ Sale, The Qur'ān, viii

⁵⁸ Rehman, Major Themes, p.v

⁵⁹ Khlifā, dirāsatul Qur'ān, 10

⁶⁰ Saeed, Qur'ān, 105

⁶¹ Jeffery, Arthur, *Materials for the history of the text of Qur'ān* (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1973)

⁶² Flugel, Gustav, *Concordance of the Koran* (Lahore: Al Birūnī. 1978)

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concordance⁶³. Gustav Weil's work on the arranging of Qur'anic chapters was produced in 1844. Historische-kritische Einleitung in den Koran was his attempt to set the Qur'an in historical perspective.⁶⁴

After living in India for a considerable amount of time, Muir wrote a book about the Qur'anic evidence to the Bible. It is said that he attended several disputes between Muslim and Christian scholars in India, which led to the creation of this work. He had the notion to write a book titled "The testimony given by Coran about the Jewish & Christian Scriptures" after observing Muslim arguments about Bible modifications. His goal was to produce a study that used Qur'anic allusions to support the Bible's veracity⁶⁵. Theodore Noldeke earned first place in a contest that same year for an essay he authored about the background of the Qur'an.

His work was later published as Geschichte des Qorans (The History of the Qur'an) in 1960⁶⁶. His contributions are regarded as a breakthrough in Western academia, bringing about a shift in the field of Qur'anic studies. The centuries-long history of Qur'anic Studies, from the Middle Ages to the Present, has demonstrated its worth as a foundation for future generations. The priests' and clergymen's fervent quarrel took center stage. Gradually, scholars with a blend of intellectual fervor and polemic joined the commotion.

Scholarship on the Qur'ān in the 19th and 21st centuries:

As previously stated, Sale recommended intellectuals to study the Qur'an using a fresh approach in his introduction. Many scholars adopted his method in the centuries that followed. Montgomery Watt also

⁶³ Alkaf, Abdul Rehman, "A Critical Study of Gustav Flugel's Concordance of the Koran." *Radiance Views Weekly*, no, 1, (2010)

⁶⁴ Rippin, Andrew, "Western scholarship and the Qur'ān", In McAuliffe, Jane Dammen, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

⁶⁶ Powell, A. Avrill, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre- mutiny India* (New York: Routledge Corzon, 2003), p.162

⁶⁵ Bell, Introduction to the Qur'ān, p.174 ⁶⁸ Bell, Introduction, p.v

⁶⁶ Asad, Muhammad, *The Message of Qur'ān* (Dārul Anduls: Gibraltar. 1980), p.3

recommended that his colleagues modify their approaches to the Qur'an. Furthermore, he clarifies that the reason Western authors have stopped claiming that the Qur'an is Muhammad's own work is not since they have adopted the Muslim viewpoint but rather because Christian-Muslim interactions and commerce have grown.⁶⁸ Watt was absolutely correct when he said that Islamic studies underwent a significant shift as a result of the growing interactions between Muslims and the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In their writings, intellectuals from the 20th century forward introduce a change in style. It is also important to note that a growing number of academics have recently worked to develop translations with true academic significance in the subject of qur'anic translations.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the polemical tone in the prefaces and introductions of modern renditions is hardly discernible.

In this context, it is important to acknowledge "The Muslim World's" contribution to the subject of Qur'anic studies. As was previously mentioned, Samuel Zwemer (the d. 1952) introduced it in 1911. The publication, which was started with a missionary's passion, has hundreds of articles about the sciences and the Qur'an. However, as of right now, it has adopted a friendly but critical position toward the way that Muslims are portrayed in the west⁶⁷.

Intellectuals hold the belief that, in light of intellectual globalization, the traditional standards of western studies are being questioned and altered, ushering in a new age for Qur'anic studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Moreover, the active participation of Muslim academics in scholarly pursuits can serve as a catalyst for change⁶⁸. Despite this, we occasionally notice the persistence of antiquated and deeply rooted beliefs in contemporary writings on Islam as a whole and Qur'anic studies in particular. Despite their claims to impartiality, many intellectuals were unable to free themselves of the preconceived ideas of the classical age.

⁶⁷ For further detail: Abdul Karīm, Abdullah and Aābi, Mustafa, "Egocentric or Scientific: The Christian Perspective of the Qur'ān." *Journal of Qur'ānic Research and Studies*. 1, no. 1 (2006): pp.1-16

⁶⁸ Voll, "Changing Western approaches, p.29

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It is important to note that there are relatively few works by Orientalists that discuss the text of the Qur'an, despite the corpus of their studies being fairly large⁶⁹. The scholars attribute this to their indulgence in the history and history of the Qur'anic text itself. He goes on to suggest that the western intellectuals' fascination with the Qur'anic history and sources only led to a type of stasis in their output⁷⁰. They are now so interested in the history of the Qur'an that they are not interested in any other topic⁷¹. It is also evident that, despite the abundance of previous works on the Qur'an, very few have made an effort to assess the text's practical value by carefully examining its themes and contents. The Qur'an's profound impact on both individual and societal life has received the least attention in debates of Western literature. Currently, some academics have called attention to researchers studying Qur'anic topics, which has led to the publication of several extensive works⁷².

Muslim world's reaction to Western scholarship:

As it is previously said, the majority of Muslims view the modern western study on the Qur'an as a component of Orientalism, a term that carries the negative connotations. As such, it was never able to achieve recognition and respect among Muslim communities. The Sub-Continent, especially India, is at the forefront of the list of nations facing the West on the particular matter of defending Islamic narratives. In response to the academic challenge posed by what was then known as Orientalism, Indian Muslim intellectuals created a large body of work utilizing a variety of aggressive and defensive tactics⁷³. Rehmatullah Kairanvi (the d. 1891), Shibli Naumani (the d. 1914), Amir Ali (the d. 1928), and Sulaiman Nadvi (the d. 1953) are a few of the eminent intellectuals who were among them.

⁶⁹ Manzur, "Method against Truth",

⁷⁰ Khalifa, *The Sublime Qur'ān*, p.58

⁷¹ Shaib, Khidhar, Nubuwwatu Muhammad Fil Fikril Isteshrāqī Al Muā'sir (Riyadh: Maktaba tul Abika, 2002), p. 280

⁷² Andrew Rippin, "Qur'ānic Studies". In Clinton, Bennett, ed. *The Bloomsbury*, p.68-9

⁷³ Nadvi, Abu ul Hasan Ali, *Islamic Studies, Orientalism and Muslim scholars*. Tran: M. Ahmad (Luchnow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1983), p.18

Their writings are primarily concerned with the Sira and disproving the orientalist on this point. The topic of Qur'anic studies is central to the writings of Manazir Ahsan Gilani (1892–1892), Abdul Majid Darya Abadi (1977–2002), and Muhammad Hamidulla (2002)⁷⁴.

There are several very good reasons for the continued hostility against western scholarship⁷⁵. Muslims believe that the western interpretation of the Qur'an is founded on stereotypes, and that Islam is continually misunderstood because of this flimsy foundation⁷⁶. Muslims viewed intellectual pursuits as a springboard for real-world application aimed at gaining control over the Orient⁷⁷. Eventually, one of the outcomes is the Muslims' rejection of western Qur'anic studies⁷⁸.

According to Jeffrey Lang's examination of western academia, Muslims view Orientalists as opponents of Islam because of the positions taken by these academics. Despite this, he respects the contemporary scholarship's attempts at impartiality and fairness⁷⁹. Many non-Muslim experts also note that earlier west studies have consistently misrepresented Islam. Scholars assess that for several centuries, the Western world's conventional perception of Islam was solely derived from the exaggerated accounts of zealous Christians. What they perceived as Muhammad's shortcomings were emphasized, while his virtues were completely disregarded⁸⁰.

According to Abdul Rauf, they frequently attempt to minimize the standing of the lengthy history of Muslim research by limiting the use of the phrases

⁷⁴ One can easily find the expressions like Makar (deception), Iftera(falsehood or slander), and dhahadh(falsification) in the titles of the Arabic books.

⁷⁵ Namla, Ali bin Ibrāhim, Ishāmatul Musteshreqin Fi Nathr Et Turāth Al „Arabīa (Riyadh: Maktabatul Malik Fahad al Wataniyya, 1996), p.15

⁷⁶ See for example: Ibrahim, Ishāmāt, p.15. See also: Adnan, Wazzan. Alisteshrāq waal musteshreqūn, Introduction

⁷⁷ Zein, Christianity, Islam and Orientalism, p.165

⁷⁸ Saeed, Qurʾān, p.98

⁷⁹ Lang, Jeffery, *Struggling for Surrender* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), p.94

⁸⁰ Sale, The Koran, p.vii

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"objective," "scientific," and "scholarly" to their own works. They also take a critical and doubtful stance toward Muslim literary creations⁸¹.

Regarding the mistreatment of Islam and the Holy Book by the west intellectuals, even the objective non-Muslim academics have the same opinions. Schimmel, a renowned scholar in Islamic studies known for her impartiality and understanding demeanor, expresses her opinions about this misperception by stating that while the West has dealt with a variety of religions, Islam is most commonly misunderstanding and targeted⁸². According to the conclusions of a leading contemporary expert in the issue, "Qur'ān has been, for generations, subject to the Christian bias⁸³. Another notable modern researcher, Carl Ernest, presents his results and claims that English-language study has followed Oriental scholarly conventions or pursues polemical theological agendas, and it still does so poorly⁸⁴. It should not be overlooked while talking about the unfavorable reaction that many Muslim academics have acknowledged the benefits of western academia's understanding of Islam. Hasan Ali Nadvi mentions the efforts of objective academics and notes that many of them have served Islam well, with some studying Islam to satiate their scholarly interests. They have aided in the advancement of research and study, and several Arab experts have also emphasized this⁸⁵. Indeed, many of them have contributed significantly to the enrichment of the Islamic library, and numerous unbiased scholars have worked to emphasize the role that Islamic civilization has played in the pursuit of knowledge. Even Muslim scholars who oppose the attacks by Western academics acknowledge this⁸⁶. In this regard, Muslims are confident that a limited number of trustworthy non-Muslim Western academics have existed throughout history, their

⁸¹ Abdul-Rauf, Muhammad, "Outsider's interpretation of Islam: A Muslim's point of view". In Martin, Richard C., ed. *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Oxford: One World. 2006), p.185

⁸² Schimmel, Islam, p.1

⁸³ Neuwrith, Angelika, "Orientalism in Oriental Studies? Qur'ānic Studies as a Case in Point." *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies*. 9, no. 2 (2007): 115-27, p.120

⁸⁴ Reading strategies, p.2

⁸⁵ Nadvi, Islamic Studies, p.5

⁸⁶ Abdul-Rauf, Outsider, p.185

sincerity, compassion, and goodwill being without question⁸⁷. It is important to note that this truth has also been acknowledged by contemporary western research. Numerous academics have remarked that Muslims are becoming more aware of Islamic studies within the Western world⁸⁸. In addition, Rippin highlights this point and makes an effort to defend Western study from criticisms made by Muslim scholars⁸⁹. Concurrently, he states that Toshihiko Izutsu's scholarship has been accepted by the Muslim world without assessment and that no one has questioned the veracity of his writings⁹⁰.

It is true that it will take time for the centuries-old reservations to disappear. Islam in the Middle Ages was greatly influenced by the polemical writings of Peter the Venerable, John of Damascus, and Petrus Alfonsi (d. 1110)⁹¹. Even literary masterpieces such as Dante's "The Divine Comedy," John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress," Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale," and John Lydgate's "The Fall of Princes" painted an absurd and mocking image of Islam, its creator, and its adherents⁹².

A reader may easily become acquainted with the fact that, starting in the medieval era, feelings of anger have been deeply embedded in western thought by taking a cursory look at the works produced by European intellectuals over the portrayal of Islam⁹³. It is evident that there is opposition to and rejection of the western Qur'anic research as a result of prejudiced publications. Manzur's essay provides a convincing example of

⁸⁷ Akhter, Shabir, *The Qur'ān and the secular mind; a philosophy of Islam* (Oxon: Taylor and Francis group. 2008), p.5

⁸⁸ Adam, Charles, *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard Martin (One World: 2001), Forward

⁸⁹ Rippin, Andrew. "The Reception, pp.1-8

⁹⁰ Rippin, Reception, p. 1, 7

⁹¹ Lyons, Islam through Western eyes, pp.66-71

⁹² For critical study of these works, see: Johnson Galen, "Muhammad and ideology in Medieval Christian literature". *Islam and Christen Muslims relations* 11, no, 3 (2003), pp.333-346

See also: Jamal, Image of the Prophet, Introduction.

⁹³ Masood, Hafiz Abid, "Islam in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature; A select bibliography". *Islamic Studies*. 4, no, 44 (winter, 2005).

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Muslim skepticism in European Qur'anic studies. Furthermore, he avoided writing from a Western viewpoint and managed to disassociate himself from the Orientalism tradition that has long dominated Islamic studies in the West⁹⁴. The knowledgeable among the followers of both faiths have the burden since they were never able to eradicate the root causes of animosity and hatred. Rather, they have mostly been the cause of that growth⁹⁵. Intellectuals and professors from the Muslim world are both appraising and criticizing of this new approach to research and objectivity. Some academics exhibit an open attitude toward fresh initiatives. They view their efforts as a first step toward a fresh, impartial strategy⁹⁶. They believe that western research has just reformulated old notions and that their current endeavors are only another manifestation of the long-standing animosity and hatred towards Islam & the Qur'ān. They also believe that western effort is still more propagandist than educational⁹⁷.

Certain books are genuinely exceptional and make a significant contribution to the academic analysis of the Qur'an. In addition, a few of them are working to advance the idea that Muslims should learn Islam through its own sources. They are urging others to read the Qur'an independently and understand it in order to build harmonious relationships with Muslims and dispel long-held, prejudiced ideas about the religion⁹⁸. Furthermore, long-standing animosity toward Islam and Muslims which has influenced European culture overall is the root cause of Islam phobic in

⁹⁴ Albayrak, Ismail, "The Reception of Toshihiko Izutsu's Qur'ānic Studies in the Muslim World: With Special Reference to Turkish Qur'ānic Scholarship". *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 14, no. 1. (2012.): pp.73-116. 80

⁹⁵ Tibavi, English Speaking Orientalists, p.196

⁹⁶ Hussain, Sana Ullah, Qur'ān E Hakīm or Musteshreqīn (Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University, 2010), p.201

⁹⁷ Salim, Ismail, "Al Musteshreqūn wa Al -Qur'ān." *Dawatul Haqq* 104 (1990): pp.15-17 See also: Doi, Abdur Rehman, *The Sciences of the Qur'ān* (South Africa: Dar al-Salam Islamic Research Centre), p. 295-6, and Wasti, The Qur'ān, p.242

⁹⁸ See for instance the preface of „The Essential Qur'ān“ as the author advises his contemporaries to adopt just approaches in the study of Islam. p.viii

the West. Therefore, any intellectual paradigm that attempts to eliminate Islamophobia must have a thorough understanding of that elements⁹⁹.

Conclusion

The Qur'an was distorted and misunderstood, as evidenced by the history of medieval western Qur'anic research, which was affected by the highly polemic works of Eastern scholars. The Christian missionaries' greatly skewed perceptions of Islam led to hostility that pervaded the East-West interaction throughout its whole history.

The western Qur'anic studies mostly began with the publication of the first Qur'anic rendering, which was followed by an extensive translation project. It is true that the interpreters of the Qur'an, from the Middle Ages to the present, are among the most responsible for the distortion process, as the majority of them provided a negative image of Islam through their introductions and prefaces. The degree of resentment and animosity in the writing styles of western scholars decreased significantly with the advent of academic procedures in the contemporary era. Early in the twenty-first century, the involvement of Muslims in a number of projects began to change western academia. It is a known truth that the majority of Muslims believe that Western studies are neither impartial nor scholarly because of how the Qur'ān has historically been treated. There aren't many academics, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who are upbeat about this, though. According to them, the more Muslims participate in western educational institutions and the more collaborative efforts there are, the more it is anticipated that western scholars will shed their preconceived notions and gain a deeper understanding of the Qur'an, which will ultimately lead to positive and productive outcomes. The efforts of western intellectuals to put a stop to centuries-old competition and resentment can have an impact on the views of think tanks, policy makers, and image builders in general. In this context, collaborative efforts by prominent Muslim academics might yield significant results.

⁹⁹ Andrew Shryock, *Islamophobia/Islamophilia*: (Indiana University Press)