

## A Comparison between English Translations of Meanings of the Quran

مقارنة بين ترجمات إنجليزية لمعاني القرآن الكريم

{English – إنجليزي}

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143١-20١٠

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{باللغة الإنجليزية}

جمع وترتيب وترجمة ومراجعة: أبو أدهم أسامة عمارة

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## Introduction

This comparison is almost based on the Arabic research of Dr. Wajeeh Hamad Abdurrahmaan *English Translations of the Quran Meanings in the Islamic Balance*<sup>1</sup> and his book *A Pause with Some English Translations of the Quran Meanings*. All information mentioned in the second column is by me (Osama Omara). I tried to summarize and arrange the information mentioned in these two books in this table. If I find any additional information about this topic in the future, I will immediately write it. Dear reader! You should know that scholars' efforts are to translate meanings of the Quranic verses not the verses. So their translations vary due to their level in Islamic sciences and English language.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.qurancomplex.com/Display.asp?section=8&l=arb&f=wrong\\_trn3001&trans=3](http://www.qurancomplex.com/Display.asp?section=8&l=arb&f=wrong_trn3001&trans=3)

No.	Translation's Title	Translator	Publishing Date	Advantages	Disadvantages	Notes
1	The Alcoran of Mahomet	Alexander Ross (1590 - 1654): He was a prolific Scottish writer and controversialist.	It was published in 1718 in London. There is a copy at the British Museum.		The writer claims that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the author of the Quraan and the Prophet of the Turkish.	It's the first translation of the Quraan into English. It is indeed respected by the Orientalists.
2	The Alcoran of Mohammed	George Sale (1697–1736, London, England): He was an Orientalist and practicing solicitor.	The first edition was in 1734.		This translation is not accurate and contains mistakes. The translator shows through the translation that the Prophet Muhammad's message was confined to the people of Macca and the Arab.	
3	The Koran	John Medows Rodwell (1808–1900): He was an English non-Muslim Islamic scholar.	The first edition was in 1886.		He arranged the Quranic <i>suras</i> chronologically unlike the real arrangement.	To achieve this work, he depended on the English translation of George Sale and the Latin translation of Louis Maracci and a German translation. His translation was presented by the famous Orientalist G.Margoliouth.

4	The Quran (for <i>The Sacred Books of the East</i> series)	Edward Henry Palmer (August 7, 1840 –August 1882): He was an English Orientalist.	It was published in Oxford, Britain in 1880.		There is no doubt that Palmer wrote this translation in the same way of George sale's translation concerning he showed that the Prophet Muhammad's message was confined to the people of Macca and the Arab. He arranged the Quranic <i>suras</i> (chapters) chronologically unlike the real arrangement because he thought it's more suitable to show the intellectual development of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).	He translated the Quran to meet the demand of a German Orientalist who was the Chairman of the Department of the Oriental Studies in Oxford University.
5	The Qur'an	Richard Bell (1876 - 1952): He was a British Arabist at the University of Edinburgh.	It was first published in 1937 in New York and reprinted in 1960.		He arranged the Quranic <i>suras</i> chronologically unlike the real arrangement. Before translating any <i>sura</i> , he presented detailed criticism of date and reasons of its revealing. He wrote his own comments and criticism inside the translation! He claimed that <i>ayah</i> 26 in <i>sura</i> al-Imraan is a complete <i>sura</i> .	He translated the Quran when he was an Arabist at Edinburgh University, Scotland. He was a follower of John Medows Rodwell.
6	The Koran Interpreted	Arthur John Arberry (1905 - 1969): He was a scholar of the Islamic Studies at Cambridge University		It's a good translation in comparison with other Orientalists' translations. It's characterized by its contemporary and clear style. Arberry did his best to translate the Quran without increasing or	There is no doubt that this translation contained mistakes.	

				decreasing anything.		
7	The Holy Quran	Abdul Hakim Khan: He embraced Qadianiyyah but he returned to Islam once again.	It was published in Patiala, India in 1905.			It's the first translation of the Quran done by a Muslim. Shaikh Abdulmaajid ad-Deryabaadi read this translation and said that he didn't find anything remarkable. But he confirmed that Khan had the virtue of being the first Muslim translator of the Quran.
8	The Meaning of the Glorious Quran	Marmaduke Pickthall (April 7, 1875 – May 19, 1936): He was a Western Islamic scholar.	It was first published in London in 1930 and in New York in 1931	The scholars who concerned about the translations of the Quran are unanimously agreed upon that Picktall's translation of the Quran is the best from the aspect of good style and eloquent language.	There is no doubt that this translation contains mistakes such as using words which are no longer used e.g. thou, thine, thy, thee, ye, Lo and increasing "th" instead of s/es to a verb in Present Simple Tense.	He is the first English Sunni Muslim translated the Quran. His literal and historical articles were published in the scientific newspapers issued in London and New York.
9	The Koran	N. J. Dawood: He was born in 1927 to an Iraqi Jewish family in Baghdad, Iraq. He emigrated to England in 1945 as an Iraq State scholar, and settled there.	It was issued in 1956.		He didn't translate the Quran in accordance with the well-known arrangement but invented a new arrangement going with his opinion that the Quran has poetic tones. So, he began with the suras which contained more tones and so on. Furthermore, He cancelled the suras' numbers.	
10	The Message of The Qur'an	Muhammad Asad (July 2, 1900 - February 20, 1992): He was			He denied completely the miracles mentioned in the Quran through	Muhammad Asad was not only good at the English but also Arabic language

		an Austrian Muslim. He converted to Islam after being Jew.			translating their Texts in a metaphorical way. No doubt that there are other mistakes.	because he learned it from Arabic teachers.
11	The Noble Quran	Muhammad Muhsin Khan & Muhammad Taqiyyuddin al-Hilaali	Shaikh Abdulaziz ibn Baaz gave permission for printing that translation in 1984.	It's the best translation of the Quran, particularly from the aspect of correct translation of the terms concerned about the Islamic Belief. In addition, it uses the contemporary English language. To achieve this work, the two translators depended on <i>tafaseer</i> <sup>2</sup> of at-Tabari, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Katheer in addition to <i>Sahih</i> al-Bukhaari (Hadeeth book). This translation indeed replaced the famous translation of Yusuf Ali.	They translated some words through transliteration.	It's always under review for presenting it in the best form.
12	The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an	Abdullah Yusuf Ali	It was first published in Lahore in 1934.	Many of the Islamic institutions published it because of its beautiful style and many comments and footnotes. No doubt that the beautiful style or many comments of a book don't necessitate the authenticity or correctness of that book.	Yusuf Ali described the last two parts of the Quran as poetry. He also followed in his translation the explanatory symbolic methodology and philosophical mental attitude, which diverted him and the readers away from the real understanding of the Quran. As a result of that, there is no doubt that this translation eliminates the Islamic belief.	
13	The Quran	Zufarullah Khan	It was published in London		It contained many mistakes concerning the Islamic Belief, which	The translator belonged to an Islamic Sect called al-Qadianiyah or al-

<sup>2</sup> *Tafseer*: A book authored by a Muslim scholar to explain the Quran e.g. *Tafseer at-Tabari*, *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, *Tafseer al-Qurtubi* and others.

			approximately in 1951.		seems clearly in the form of the irregular opinions.	Ahmadiyyah which claimed that the Prophethood continues and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) isn't the last prophet. They also denied angels, jinn and the miracles, and explained Paradise and Hell in a metaphorical way.
14	The Holy Quran	Maulana Muhammad Ali	It was published seven editions in England. The First Edition was in 1916		He didn't believe that Allah raised Jesus Christ up unto Himself but he believed he (Jesus Christ) died. He did so although he claimed that his translation didn't contradict scholars' views nor the unanimously agreed opinions by the <i>mufassiroon</i> <sup>3</sup> concerning the Islamic Belief. He supported incorrect opinions about angels, jinn, Paradise and Hell. In addition, he denied completely the occurrence of miracles.	The translator belongs to al-Qadianiyyah Sect.
15	A Running Commentary on the Holy Quran	Khawaga Kamaluddin	It was published in London in 1948		It contains an explanation for the Quran in the footnote in accordance with the translator's opinions. As a result of that, he explained the Quranic words in a wrong way.	It contains the Arabic Text then the Quran's text in Latin letters then the translation.

<sup>3</sup> *Mufassir*: A Muslim scholar who gives an explanation for the Quran.