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The Message Of The Qur'an



Synopsis

This is the legitimate translation of and commentary on the Qur'an by Muhammad Asad offered by The Book Foundation, copyright holder of Muhammad Asad's work. As a translation it is one of the most respected. As commentary, it is unsurpassed. Muhammad Asad, born Leopold Weiss, was a towering intellectual figure and lived most of his adult life in Arabia and the Muslim world. He drew upon his extensive knowledge of classical Islamic texts to provide an illuminating commentary founded upon extensive linguistic, cultural, and historical knowledge.

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Customer Reviews

I have compared key passages of Surah 2,40,36 and other important interpretations like dealing with al-muqattat as well as dealing with root words in forming the meaning of various translations they include: Professor Abdel Haleem (fatal mistakes in translating key words, which he does not reference to either explanations by the Prophet or any proper source). The text is good to introduce concepts to people unfamiliar with the Islamic context however it does significantly deviate from the Islamic context by incorporating the ideas of another religion in its translation. Haleem in another text (Understanding the themes of the Quran by Haleem) mentions and forwarns of comparative translations; an error that he is susceptible to himself. However considering this is the first edition I

am referring to, I would think it would be somewhat lacking of intense revision. I found lacking in the translation of the first 19 verse of Surah Gaffir/Mumin and also Key verses of Al-Baqarah such as the Aayat-Al-Kursi and even verses of Surah Al-Anaam. I like his explanations, his translation is more about explaining key issues of the Quran in a very basic way to suite a person reading the Quran just to get an Idea of what the scripture teaches and what it means in "Plain English". However all generalizations are susceptible to serious error. Al Amana version of Yusuf Ali and also Dar-UI Furqan version (OK but once again has a lot of lackings and errors). These individuals are too arrogant in their translation where they interpret certain surahs with absolutely no authentic basis. They claim that the Surah Ikhlas was to debase the Christian trinitarian beliefs...

I have read the translations by Yusuf Ali, Arberry, and Dawood. Muhammad Asad's translation and interpretations stands above all. It is the Quran translation I recommend to non-Muslims to get a true (in my view) understanding of Islam. I am an American born Muslim (Pakistani descent). I have been raised here, and schooled here, and so have a western perspective of events and history. What I like about Asad's translation is that it is written by a "westerner," who was formerly a Viennese Jew. As such, he carries the gestalt of the West (rationalism, the Enlightenment, evolution, etc.). In contrast, Yusuf Ali, carries a certain cultural baggage derived from his experiences in India. The effects of British colonialism probably colored his world view, and my recollection (I read his translation many years ago) is that this coloring displays itself in his translation. I guess I would characterize his translation and commentary consistent with liberation theology-which is fine, but is of a certain view that many in the West may not identify. Asad's translation and commentary, on the other hand, incorporates many of our modern understandings of the world into his explanation. So for example, evolution is considered a natural process operating as part of the ordered universe just as the laws of gravity, electricity, etc. These are the signs of God, that Muslims are required to believe. Many Muslims who are not from the West, cannot reconcile modern understandings of science with faith. Just like the fundamentalist Christian community, they cannot integrate evolution (and its theological ramifications) into their faith (as a corollary, it is worthy to note that many scientists-call them darwinian fundamentalist- cannot integrate religion into science).

If you're sincerely after an understanding of the Qu'ran, either learn Arabic and read it (translations are not technically "The Qu'ran"), or buy this book! Like many of the translators of the Qu'ran, Asad was not born into the religion and was not a native speaker, but unlike the rest, he spent many years living among the Bedouin who are the only ones still speaking the Arabic in which the Qu'ran

was written down. Modern Arabic is taught in schools and spoken by millions, but many of the words in the Qu'ran have fallen out of common usage, so even the best of scholars may almost be forgiven for not always getting it quite right. But in translating the Qu'ran, it HAS to be right. The multiple meanings of the original words of the Qu'ran make faulty translations and confusion altogether too prevalent for Western readers. Asad was born a Polish Jew who discovered Islam and spent most of his life researching Qu'ranic language. He became a highly respected scholar, even in the Islamic world. He was a close friend of King Abdul Aziz (Ibn Saud), a confidant of the Indian poet Iqbal, and was appointed to represent Pakistan to the United Nations after India's partition. His translation and abundant footnotes are invaluable to anyone who is really looking to penetrate this 1400 year-old text. The Prologue by the English Islamic scholar Charles Le Gai Eaton is fascinating, the footnotes are a joy to read and extremely helpful in understanding the nuances of the words and context in which the verses were brought forth, and the book itself, with its gorgeous insertions of calligraphic art, is beautiful to look at. In many footnotes, Asad compares his own translations to that of Pickthall and several other translators and explains his choices and leaves the decision to the reader to accept or reject them.

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