


Book Review

George Sale's Pioneering Translation: Unveiling 'The Koran' – A Critical Exploration of Early English Interpretations

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Abstract. This book review critically explores George Sale's pioneering translation of the Qur'an, focusing on its historical significance, linguistic nuances, and enduring relevance. Sale's translation, first published in 1734, remains a seminal work in English-language interpretations of the Qur'an. The review delves into Sale's dedication and introductory sections, highlighting his acknowledgment of the Qur'an's importance amidst differing religious perspectives. Drawing from Sale's own words and insights from orientalist like Edward Denison Ross, the review elucidates the Qur'an's role in shaping

Islamic civilization and its impact on diverse cultures. Additionally, Sale's meticulous translation, influenced by earlier works such as Lewis Marracci's Latin translation, reflects the elegance and purity of the Arabic language, further underscored by its canonical status among Arabic-speaking communities. The review also examines Sale's comprehensive approach, encompassing not only translation but also contextual explanations and historical references. Furthermore, it discusses Sale's discourse on pre-Islamic Arabian society, the emergence of Islam, and the fundamental doctrines expounded in the Qur'an. The review concludes by advocating for the inclusion of Sale's preliminary discourse in future editions, emphasizing the enduring relevance of the Qur'an's truths for contemporary readers, both Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Keywords: Arabic language, Historical Context, Islamic Civilization, Orientalism, Religious significance, Translation Studies.

INTRODUCTION:

George Sale's translation of the Qur'an, published in 1734, marks a significant milestone in the history of English interpretations of Islamic scripture. Sale's work not only facilitated access to the Qur'an for English-speaking audiences but also sparked scholarly interest in the religion of Islam. Previous research on Sale's translation has underscored its lasting impact on Western perceptions of Islam and its role in shaping early Orientalist scholarship. Building upon this foundation, this review aims to delve deeper into Sale's translation, examining its nuances and contributions to the field.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH:

Prior studies on George Sale's translation have lauded its scholarly rigor and linguistic precision. Sale's meticulous approach to translating the Qur'an, informed by his deep understanding of Arabic and Islamic theology, sets his work apart from contemporaneous translations. Moreover, scholars have highlighted the broader cultural and intellectual context in which Sale's translation emerged, noting its significance in the European Enlightenment's engagement with non-Western religious texts.

RESEARCH METHODS:

This review draws upon a variety of primary and secondary sources, including Sale's translation itself, historical documents, and scholarly analyses of his work. The primary data source is Sale's translation of the Qur'an, supplemented by critical commentary from eminent scholars such as Edward Denison Ross. Secondary sources include academic publications, biographical accounts of Sale, and analyses of early Orientalist scholarship.

RESULTS:

The examination of Sale's translation reveals its enduring value as a scholarly resource and a testament to the complexity and beauty of the Qur'an. Sale's introductory discourse provides invaluable insights into the historical and cultural context of the Qur'an, shedding light on its reception in the Western world.

Furthermore, Sale's meticulous attention to detail in translating the Qur'an ensures both accuracy and accessibility for contemporary readers.

MAIN SUMMARY:

George Sale (1697-1736) was a British Orientalist scholar and practicing solicitor. He is best known for his English Translation of the Holy Qur'an 1734. In 1748, after having read Sale's Translation, Voltaire wrote his essay "*De l'Alcoran et de Mahomet*" ("*On the Quran and on Mohammed*").¹ The Book of Sale's Translation² has been published many times by various publishing houses since 1734; however, there is no preliminary discourse in some editions published recently. Herein, the book entitled "*The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*" has been reviewed to emphasise the importance of the truths of the Holy Qur'an for Muslim and non-Muslim people. Sale noted the following in the dedication section of the book:

My LORD, NOT WITH STANDING the great honour and respect generally, and deservedly, paid to the memories of those who have founded states or obliged a people by the institution of laws which have made them prosperous and considerable in the world, yet the legislator of the Arabs has been treated in so very different a manner by all who acknowledge not his claim to a divine mission. By Christians especially, that was not your Lordship's just discernment sufficiently known, I should think myself under a necessity of making an apology for presenting the Translation.³

In the section "to the reader", Sale noted that he was much obliged to Lewis Marracci's Latin Translation of the Qur'an, a precious book published in 1698.⁴ Luigi Marracci (1612-1700), also known as Louis (or Ludovico) Maracci, was an Italian Oriental scholar and professor of Arabic at the College of Wisdom at Rome. He is chiefly known as the publisher and editor of "*Quran of Muhammad in Arabic*".⁵ In this section of the book, Sale wrote the following paragraphs about the religions of Christianity and Islam.

I IMAGINE it almost needless either to make an apology for publishing the Translation or to go about to prove it a work of use as well as curiosity. They must have a mean opinion of the *Christian* Religion, or be but ill grounded therein, who can apprehend any danger from so manifest a forgery: and if the religious and civil Institutions of foreign nations are worth our knowledge, those of *Mohammed*, the lawgiver of the *Arabians*, and founder of an empire which in less than a century spread itself over a greater part of the world than the *Romans* were ever masters of, must needs to be so; whether we consider their extensive obtaining or our frequent

¹Sale, George. (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Sale.

²Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>.

³Ibid., p. A.

⁴Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>.

⁵Maracci, L. (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludovico_Maracci.

intercourse with those who are governed thereby.⁶

I shall not here inquire into the reasons why the law of *Mohammed* has met with so unexampled a reception in the world (for they are greatly deceived who imagine it to have been propagated by the sword alone), or by what means it came to be embraced by nations which never felt the force of the *Mohammedan* arms, and even by those which stripped the *Arabians* of their conquests, and put an end to the sovereignty and very being of their *Khalifs*: yet it seems as if there was something more than what is vulgarly imagined in a religion which has made so surprising a progress.⁶

Sir Edward Denison Ross (1871-1940), an orientalist and linguist specializing in languages of the Far East, added an introduction to the 1909 reprint of Sale's Translation.^{7,8,9} Ross stated the following paragraphs about Sale's Translation, the Holy Qur'an, and Islam in the introduction section of the 1909 reprint of Sale's Translation.

THERE is surely no need today to insist on the importance of a close study of the Koran for all who would comprehend the many vital problems connected with the Islamic World; and yet few of us, I imagine, among the many who possess translations of this book have been at pains to read it through. It must, however, be borne in mind that the Koran plays a far greater role among the Muhammadans than does the Bible in Christianity in that it provides not only the canon of their faith but also the textbook of their ritual and the principles of their Civil Law.¹⁰

It is well for all who study the Koran to realize that the actual text is never the composition of the Prophet but is the word of God addressed to the Prophet and that in quoting the Koran, the formula is "He (may he be exalted) said" or some such phrase. It would probably be impossible for any Arabic scholar to produce a translation of the Koran that would defy criticism, but this much may be said of Sale's version: just as, when it first appeared, it had no rival in the field, it may be pretty claimed today that no subsequent translations have superseded it. Despite the vast number of eminent scholars who have worked in the same field since the days of George Sale, his preliminary discourse remains the best Introduction in any European language to the study of the religion promulgated by the Prophet of Arabia.¹¹

It must not, however, be forgotten that the central doctrine preached by Muhammad to his contemporaries in Arabia, who worshipped the Stars; to the Persians, who acknowledged Ormuz and Ahriman; the Indians, who worshipped

⁶Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p. iii.

⁷Ross, E. Dension. (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Denison_Ross.

⁸Sale, George. (1909). *The Koran. Translated into English from the Original Arabic with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross*. London, Frederick Warne Publishers.

⁹Sale, George. (n.d.), *The Koran. Translated into English from the Original Arabic with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross*. London, Frederick Warne Publishers. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/korantrintoenglloosaleuoft>.

¹⁰George Sale. (n.d.), *The Koran. Translated into English from the Original Arabic with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross*. London, Frederick Warne Publishers. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/korantrintoenglloosaleuoft>, p. v.

¹¹Ibid., p. vi.

idols; and the Turks, who had no particular worship, was the unity of God, and that the simplicity of his creed was probably a more potent factor in the spread of Islam than the sword of the Ghazis. Islam, although seriously affecting the Christian world, brought a spiritual religion to one half of Asia, and it is a fantastic circumstance that the Turks, who on several occasions let loose their Central Asian hordes over India and the Middle East, though irresistible in the onslaught of their arms, were all conquered in their turn by the Faith of Islam, and founded Muhammadan dynasties. Thus, through all the vicissitudes of thirteen hundred years, the Koran has remained the sacred book of all the Turks and Persians and of nearly a quarter of the population of India (This sentence was included in the *Risale-i Nur Collection*, a tafsir of the Holy Qur'an, written by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi¹²). Indeed, such a book deserves to be widely read in the West, especially when space and time have been almost annihilated by modern invention and when public interest embraces the whole world.¹³

It may, in any case, be claimed that the present work presents to the Western student all the essentials of a preliminary study of Islam, for Sale's Translation and footnotes will give him as clear an idea as can be obtained without laborious years of study in Arabic, of what is regarded by so many millions of men from Fez to the Far East as the revealed word of God and the unshakable basis of their faith.¹⁴

The book has two parts: The Preliminary Discourse and Al-Koran. The preliminary discourse includes eight sections as follows: I. Of the Arabs before Mohammed, or, as they express it, in the time of ignorance; their history, religion, learning, and customs; II. Of the state of Christianity, particularly of the Eastern churches, and of Judaism, at the time of Mohammed's appearance; and of his methods to establish his religion, and the circumstances which concurred to it; III. Of the Koran itself, the peculiarities of that book, the manner in its being written and published, and the general design of it; IV. Of the doctrines and positive precepts of the Koran which relate to faith and religious duties; V. Of certain negative precepts in the Koran; VI. Of the institutions of the Koran in civil affairs; VII. Of the months commanded by the Koran to be kept sacred; and of the setting apart of Friday for the especial service of GOD; and VIII. Of the principal sects among the Mohammedans and those who have pretended to prophecy among the Arabs in or since the time of Mohammed. The preliminary discourse will acquaint the reader with the most material particulars to be known previously to the entering on the Koran itself and which could not so conveniently have been thrown into the notes.¹⁵ Sale mostly quoted Pocock's "Specimen Historiae Arabum" book, a useful and accurate work, in

¹²Nursi, B. S. (2007). *From the Risale-i Nur Collection. Fountain Nur (in Ottoman Turkish)*. Istanbul: Envar Nesriyat. <https://www.risalekulliyati.com/kulliyat/nur-cesmesi/fihrist-9>, p. 250.

¹³Sale, George. (n.d.). *The Koran. Translated into English from the Original Arabic with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross*. London, Frederick Warne Publishers. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/korantrintoenglioosaleuoft>, p. vii.

¹⁴Sale, George. (n.d.). *The Koran. Translated into English from the Original Arabic with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross*. London, Frederick Warne Publishers. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/korantrintoenglioosaleuoft>, p. ix.

¹⁵Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p. vii.

the preliminary discourse and notes. Edward Pococke (1604-1691) was an English Orientalist and biblical scholar. In 1649, he published the "*Specimen Historiae Arabum*", a short account of the origin and manners of the Arabs, taken from Bar-Hebraeus (Abulfaragius), with notes from many manuscript sources that are still valuable.¹⁶

Section I:

In this part, Sale gave extensive information about the history, religion, education, and customs of the Arabs before Muhammad called the time of ignorance. Sale noted that he might mention several superstitious rites and customs of the ancient Arabs here, some of which were abolished and others retained by Mohammed. However, he apprehended it would be more convenient to notice them hereafter, occasionally, as the negative or positive precepts of the Koran, forbidding or allowing such practices, shall be considered.¹⁷ Some notable paragraphs in section I are as follows:

The inhabitants of this spacious country, which they have possessed from the most remote antiquity, are distinguished by their writers into two classes: the old lost Arabians and the present. The former were very numerous and divided into several tribes, which are now all destroyed, or else lost and swallowed up among the other tribes, nor are any certain memoirs or records extant concerning them; tho' the memory of some very remarkable events, and the catastrophe of some tribes have been preserved by tradition, and since confirmed by the authority of the Koran.¹⁸

The most famous tribes amongst these ancient Arabian were Ad, Thamud, Tasm, Jadis, the former Jorbam, and Amalek. The tribe of Ad was descended from Ad, the son of Aws, the son of Aram, the son of Sem, the son of Noah, who, after the confusion of tongues, settled in al Ahkaf, or the winding sands in the province of Hadramaut, where his posterity greatly multiplied. Their first king was Shedad, the son of Ad, of whom the eastern writers deliver many fabulous things, notably that he finished the magnificent city his father had begun, wherein he built a fine palace, adorned with delicious gardens, to embellish which he spared neither cost nor labour, proposing thereby to create in his subjects a superstitious veneration of himself as a GOD. This garden or paradise was called the Garden of Irem, is mentioned in the Koran, and is often alluded to by oriental writers. The tragical destructions of these two potent tribes (Ad and Thamud) are often insisted on in the Koran, as instances of God's judgment on obstinate unbelievers.¹⁹

Travellers commonly call them Christians of St. John the Baptist, whose

¹⁶Pococke, Edward. (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Pococke.

¹⁷Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p. 21.

¹⁸Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p.5.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 6 and 8.

disciples also they pretend to be, using a kind of bap chin, which is the most significant mark they bear of Christianity. This is one of the religions, the practice of which Mohammed tolerated (on paying tribute,) and the professors of it are often included in that expression of the Koran, those to whom the scriptures have been given, or literally, people of the book.²⁰

Of the angels or intelligences which they worshipped, the Koran makes mention only of three, which were worshipped under female names; Allat, al Uzza, and Manah. These were by them called goddesses, and the daughters of GOD; an appellation they gave not only to the angels, but also to their images, which they either believed to be inspired with life by GOD, or else to become the tabernacles of the angels, and to be animated by them, and they gave them divine worship because they imagined they interceded for them with GOD.²¹

Section II:

In this section, Sale described the State of Christianity, the Eastern Churches, and Judaism at the time of Muhammad's appearance, the methods Muhammad took for establishing Islam, and the circumstances that concurred with it. Sale noted that the scheme of religion which Mohammed framed and the design and artful contrivance of those written revelations (as he pretended them to be) which compose his Koran should be the subject of the following sections: I shall, therefore, in the remainder of this relate, as briefly as possible, the steps he took towards the effecting of his enterprise, and the accidents which concurred to his success therein.²²

Since then Mohammed was certainly himself persuaded of his grand article of faith, which in his opinion was violated by all the rest of the world; not only by the idolaters, but by the Christians, as well those who rightly worshipped Jesus as GOD, as those who superstitiously adored dying Virgin Mary, faints, and images; and also by the Jews, who are accused in the Koran of taking Ezra for the son of GOD it is easy to conceive that he might think it a meritorious work to rescue the world from such ignorance and superstition; and by degrees, with the help of a warm imagination, which an Arab seldom wants, to suppose himself destined by providence for the effecting that great reformation.²³

Hitherto Mohammed had propagated his religion by fair means, so that the whole success of his enterprise before his flight to Medina, must be attributed to persuasion only, and not to compulsion. For before this second oath of fealty or inauguration at al Akaba, he had no permission to use any force at all, and in several places of the Koran, which he pretended were revealed during his stay at Mecca, he declares his business was only to preach and admonish, that he had no authority to compel any person to embrace his religion; and that whether people believed, or not,

²⁰Ibid., p. 15.

²¹Ibid., p. 17.

²²Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p. 42.

²³Ibid., p. 39.

was none of his concern, but belonged solely unto God.²⁴

Section III:

In Section III, detailed information is given about the Qur'an's peculiarities, the manner of its being written and published, and its general design. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi²⁵ (1877-1960) included Sale's following statements about the Holy Qur'an under the title of "Testimony of Foreign Philosophers on the Confirmation of the Qur'an" in *İşaratü'l-İ'câz*²⁶ from the *Risale-i Nur Collection*²⁷, a tafsir of the Holy Qur'an: The Koran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, in the dialect of the tribe of Koreish, the most noble and polite of all the Arabians, but with some mixture, tho' very rarely, of other dialect. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue, and as the more orthodox believe, and are taught by the book, itself, inimitable by any human pen, and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, more significant than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its divine original. Moreover, to this miracle did Mohammed himself chiefly appeal for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most eloquent men in Arabia, which was at that time stocked with thousands whose sole study and ambition it was no excel in elegance of style and composition, to produce even a single chapter that might be compared with it. I will mention but one instance out of several to show that this book was admired for the beauty of its composure by those who must be allowed to have been competent judges. A poem of Labid Abu Rabia, one of the most excellent wits in Arabia in Mohammed's time, being fixed up on the gate of the temple of Mecca, an honour allowed to none but the most esteemed performances, none of the other poets durst offer anything of their own in competition with it. However, the second chapter of the Koran was fixed up by it soon after; Labid himself (then an idolater), on reading the first verses only, was struck with admiration and immediately professed the religion taught thereby, declaring that such words could proceed from an inspired person only. The style of the Koran is generally beautiful and fluent, especially where it imitates the prophetic manner and scripture phrases.²⁸ Tho' I have freely censured the former translations of the Koran, I would not, therefore, be suspected of a design to make my pass as free from faults: I am very sensible it is not, and I make no doubt but the few who can discern them, and know the difficulty of the understanding, will give me a fair quarter.²⁹ Sale recorded the following regarding the great doctrine of

²⁴Ibid., pp. 48-49.

²⁵Nursi, Said. (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Said_Nurs%C3%AE.

²⁶Nursi, B. S. (2012). From the *Risale-i Nur Collection*. *İşârâtü'l-İ'câz (in Ottoman Turkish)*. Istanbul: Söz. <http://www.ERISALE.COM/#content.tr.6.369>, p. 298.

²⁷Risale-i Nur (2024). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risale-i_Nur.

²⁸Sale, George.(1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, pp. 60-61.

²⁹Ibid., p. lx.

the Holy Qur'an in this section:

The great doctrine then of the Koran is the unity of God; to restore which point Mohammad pretended was the chief end of his mission; it is laid down by him as a fundamental truth, that there never was nor ever can be more than one true orthodox religion. For though the particular laws of ceremonies are only temporary, and subject to alteration according to the divine direction, yet the substance of it being eternal truth, is not liable to change but continues immutably the same. The other part of the Koran is taken up in giving necessary laws and directions, in frequent admonitions to moral and divine virtues, and above all to the worshipping and reverencing of the only true GOD, and resignation to this will; among which are many excellent things intermixed not unworthy even a Christian's perusal.³⁰

That Mohammed was the author and chief contriver of the Koran, is beyond dispute; though it be highly probable that he had no small assistance in his design from others, as his countrymen failed not to object to him; however they differed so much in their conjectures as to the particular persons who gave him such assistance, that they were not able, it seems, to prove the charge; Mohammed, it is to be presumed, having taken his measures too well to be discovered.³¹ The Koran is the Mohammedan rule of faith and practice, it is no wonder its expositors and commentators are so very numerous. And it may not be amiss to take notice of the rules they observe in expounding it.³²

Section IV:

This section contains the Holy Quran's doctrines, positive faith, and religious duties' precepts. Sale noted the following about faith in Allah in Islam: That both Mohammed and those among his followers who are reckoned orthodox had and continue to have just and accurate notions of GOD and his attributes (always excepting their obstinate and impious rejecting of the Trinity) appears so plain from the Koran itself and all the Mohammedan divines, that it would be loss of time to refute those who suppose the GOD of Mohammed to be different from the true GOD and only a fictitious deity or idol of his creation.³³ He also noted the following paragraphs in this section:

The existence of angels and their purity is required to be believed in the Koran, and he is reckoned an infidel who denies there are such beings hates any of them, or asserts any distinction of sexes among them. The devil, whom Mohammed names Eblis from his despair, was once one of those angels who are nearest to GOD's presence, called Azazel and fell, according to the doctrine of the Koran, for refusing to pay homage to Adam at the command of GOD.³³

As to the scriptures, the Mohammedans are taught by the Koran that GOD, in divers ages of the world, gave revelations of his will in writing to several prophets, the

³⁰Ibid., p. 63.

³¹Ibid., p. 64.

³²Ibid., p. 68.

³³Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, pp. 71-72.

whole and every word of which a good Moslem must believe. The Jews in particular are frequently reflected on in the Koran for falsifying and corrupting their copies of their law and some instances of such pretended corruptions, both in that book and the two others, are produced by Mohammedan writers wherein they merely follow their prejudices, and the fabulous accounts of spurious legends. The Mohammedans have also a Gospel in Arabic, attributed to St. Barnabas, wherein the history of Jesus Christ is related in a manner very different from what we find in the true Gospels, and correspondent to those traditions which Mohammed has followed in his Koran.³⁴ Mohammed has, in his Koran and Traditions, been very exact in describing the various torments of hell, which, according to him, the wicked will suffer both from intense heat and excessive cold.³⁵

The sixth great point of faith, which the Mohammedans are taught by the Koran to believe, is GOD's absolute decree, and predestination both of good and evil. Of the four fundamental points of religious practice required by the Koran, the first is prayer, under which, as has been said, are also comprehended those legal washings or purifications which are necessary preparations thereto.³⁶ The giving of alms is frequently commanded in the Koran, and often recommended therein jointly with prayer; the former being held of great efficacy in causing the latter to be heard by God: for which reason the Khalif Omar Ebn Abd'alaziz used to say, that prayer carries us halfway to God, fasting brings us to the door of his palace, and alms procures us admission.³⁷

Section V:

In Section V, Sale gave information about certain negative precepts in the Holy Qur'an. Sale noted that having in the preceding section spoken of the fundamental points of the Mohammedan religion, relating both to faith and to practice, he shall in this and the two following discourses, in the same brief method, of some other precepts and institutions of the Koran which deserve peculiar notice, and first of certain things which are thereby prohibited.³⁸ He stated some of the negative precepts in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

The drinking of wine under which names all sorts of strong and inebriating liquors are comprehended, is forbidden in the Koran in more places than one.³⁸ Opium and beng, (which latter is the leaves of hemp in pills or conserve) are also by the rigid Mohammedans esteemed unlawful, though not mentioned in the Koran, because they intoxicate and disturb the understanding as wine does, and in a more extraordinary manner: yet these drugs are now commonly taken in the east but they who are addicted to them are generally looked upon as debauchees. Gaming is prohibited by the Koran in the same passages, and for the same reason. Another

³⁴Ibid., pp. 73-74.

³⁵Ibid., p. 92.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 103-104.

³⁷Sale, George. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, p. 110.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 122-123.

practice of the idolatrous Arabs forbidden also in one of the above-mentioned passages, was that of divining by arrows.³⁹

Sale discussed institutions of the Koran in civil affairs in Section VI. Sale summarized the subjects relating to marriage and divorce, inheritances, wilful murder, theft, and the laws of war in Islam. Mohammedan civil law is founded on the precepts and determinations of the Koran, as the civil laws of the Jews were on those of the Pentateuch, yet being variously interpreted according to the different decisions of their civilians and especially of their four great doctors, Abu Hanifa, Malec, al Shafei, and Ibn Hanbal, to treat thereof fully and distinctly, in the manner the curiosity and usefulness of the subject deserves, would require a large volume: wherefore the most that can be expected here, is a summary view of the principal institutions, without minutely entering into detail of particulars.⁴⁰

Section VI:

In this section, Sale discussed the months commanded by the Koran to be kept sacred and of the setting apart of Friday for the particular Service of God. The months that the Arabs held sacred were al Moharram, Rajeb, Dhu'lkaada, and Dhu'lhajja; the first, the seventh, the eleventh, and the twelfth of the year. The observance of the months as mentioned earlier seemed so reasonable to Mohammed that it met with his approbation, and the same is accordingly confirmed and enforced by several passages of the Koran which forbid war to be waged during those months against such as acknowledge them to be sacred, but grant, at the same time, full permission to attack those who make no such distinction, in the sacred months as well as in the prophane.⁴¹

Section VII:

In this, Sale presented detailed information about the principal sects among the Mohammedans and those who pretended to prophecy among the Arabs.⁴²

Lastly, the Al-Koran part contains an English translation of 114 chapters of the Holy Qur'an with many notes. There are numerous footnotes both in the preliminary discourse and in Al-Koran. Sale's footnotes provide the literal Translation, which differs from the idiom of the body text; he gives alternate variant readings and supplementary historical and contextual information.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we would like to emphasise that Sale's Translation, with the preliminary discourse, is a work of first-class importance, and Edward Denison Ross wrote an introduction, which reflects and enriches the book's content, in the 1909 reprint of Sale's Translation. Secondly, we firmly believe that all further new editions

³⁹Ibid., pp. 124 and 126.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 132 and 134.

⁴¹Sale, George. (1734). The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed. London, C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/Sale1734Koran/page/n1/mode/2up>, pp. 147-149.

⁴²Ibid., p. 151.

of Sale's Translation must include the preliminary discourse because, as mentioned by Sale, the preliminary discourse will acquaint the reader with the most material particulars proper to be known previously to the entering on the Koran itself, and which could not so conveniently have been thrown into the notes.⁴³ Lastly, despite the passage of 1440 years, the Qur'an maintains its freshness and currency as if it were a new revelation. The Holy Qur'an truths are valid until the Day of Judgment and appeal to all people. So, we strongly suggest that every person, Muslim or not, should read the Qur'an once in their lifetime. Sale's Translation is one of the best Qur'an translations that can be read.

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⁴³Ibid., p. vii.

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