Reference Works on the Qur'an in English: A Survey

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Introduction

Reference works are an indispensable scholarly tool. They meet many needs: providing an updated view of scholarship on an academic discipline, guiding students to further study and facilitating readers quest in making an intelligent selection of reading material. In Western scholarship reference works are found aplenty on every conceivable subject or area of interest.

It goes without saying that the Qur'an lies at the heart of Islamic faith and practices. For Muslims, the study of the Qur'an is not a mere religious duty; they find its study morally and spiritually rejuvenating and intellectually invigorating. They turn fervently to the Qur'an for seeking guidance in all walks of life. Notwithstanding their unflinching commitment to the Qur'an, there are millions of Muslims who do not possess knowledge of Arabic and study the Qur'an in translation. English speaking readers of the Qur'an have registered a dramatic increase in Qur'an related reading material in the twentieth century as a result of closer interaction with the West, and more importantly, owing to the marked presence of millions-strong Muslim communities in the UK, USA, South Africa, Australia, Canada and other parts of the world.

As early as the 16th century, Westerners, including the English speaking countries, have been intrigued by the phenomenon of the Qur'an. They have been attempting to fathom it, though often with polemical motives.

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By all accounts, their interest in the study of Qur'an has also resulted in the production of a plethora of works on the Qur'an in English. The first English translation appeared in 1649. Sale's English translation (1734) has been reissued, at least, 150 times. Since early twentieth century, Muslim scholars have also been contributing to the Qur'an studies in English. Many versions of the meanings of the Qur'an by Muslim translators in recent times are on record. In sum, the tradition of writing in English on the Qur'an is a robust one. To guide readers to this rich scholarship many reference works have appeared, of which a survey is attempted below. To the best of my knowledge, no evaluation of these reference works has been attempted so far. This survey seeks to introduce these works, which are produced over the period from the late 19th century up to 2005, in terms of their content and academic value, with occasional comments on the strengths and drawbacks of the more important titles.

I Bibliographies

1. W. Woolworth's "A Bibliography of Koran Texts and Translations", published in the *Muslim World* 17: 3 (1927), pp. 279-289, Colorado, USA, is one of the earliest Qur'an bibliographies. It contains publication details of around 100 Qur'an translations in world languages, mostly European, up to 1923.

2. *Books in English on Islam, Muhammad and the Quran: a selected and annotated bibliography* compiled by C.L. Geddes was brought out in 1976 by the American Institute of Islamic Studies, Denver, USA. It lists six translations of the Qur'an in English, four critical studies on the Qur'an and four books which deal with the supposed Judeo-Christian influence on the Qur'an. It is a woefully thin work in that all the above material relates to only fourteen titles.

3. J.D. Pearson's "Bibliography of translations of the Qur'an into European languages" features in the volume, *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, edited by A.F.L. Beeston, published in 1983 by the Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 502-520. It is not a comprehensive bibliography, as many English translations, especially by Muslims, do not find mention in it. Compared to it, OIC's bibliography is much more accurate and all-embracing. (Details of this bibliography will follow).

4. Adil Usmani's *Islamic Studies: Literature on the Quran in the English Language - A Bibliography* came out in 1986 from the University of Karachi, Pakistan. Divided into six sections: Bibliographies and Catalogues, Concordances, Indexes, Glossaries, Tafsir works, and Theses. It lists bibliographic details of 524 works in English produced up to 1983. Both in its coverage and analysis this work is not greatly substantial. It does not present much new material, previously hard to track down. Equally regrettable is the exclusion of the rich material on the Qur'an in periodicals. Moreover it does not contain annotations on the entries. Several important works on the Qur'an appear to have escaped Usmani's attention. Likewise, many theses and dissertations on the Qur'an have gone unnoticed. As a result, both the scope and usefulness of this reference work are limited. Those looking for material on the Qur'an will have to supplement their reading, even after consulting this *Bibliography.*

5. An unlikely source of reference on Qur'an translations is an appendix in M. Hamidullah's French translation of the Qur'an, *Le Saint Coran* published in 1985 by Amana, USA. It contains a wide-ranging bibliography of the translations of the Qur'an, both complete and partial, in 45 European languages. It represents an updating of his earlier bibliography of the translations of the Qur'an which he had compiled in 1947 in Urdu entitled *Alamgir Tahrik-e Quran.* Hamidullah's familiarity with relevant material is deep, as he succeeds in tracking down the translations of the Qur'an in almost every European language. His bibliography is, however, outdated, as it covers material only up to 1981.

6. Munawar A. Anees's "Islamic Studies: Publish or Perish? Book and Periodical Citations on Tafasir al-Quran in Western Languages" published in 1985 in the *Muslim World Book Review*, Leicester, UK, 5: 2 (1985), pp. 55-72 is a piece of sound, insightful scholarship. Apart from citing the material on the Qur'an, mainly in English, it provides helpful annotations, guiding readers to the contents and academic value of most of the works.

7. In contrast to Usmani's limited scale bibliography, *World Bibliography of Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran: Printed Translations*

1515-1980 is an exhaustive reference work brought out by the OIC's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul in 1986 under the supervision of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. Containing 2672 entries, it places at readers' disposal definite information about both complete and incomplete translations of the Qur'an in 65 world languages - Asian, African and European. Highly useful material about publication details and location of the numerous editions of the Qur'an translations has been assiduously culled from a variety of sources. The work is meticulous in providing details of the sources of information about each translation of the Qur'an and its availability in libraries around the world.

Ihsanoglu's historical survey of the first translation in each language (pp. xxvii-xxxvi) stands out as a piece of sustained scholarship. Notwithstanding the editor's best efforts, the *Bibliography* suffers from some gaps in its coverage of translations, particularly in English, Urdu and Persian. Some editions are not included and publication details in some instances are not accurate (pp. 73 and 142). These lapses do not, however, in any way, undermine the worthiness of this work, which is an eminently sound contribution to assess the range of Qur'an translations in every language of the world. It is indeed an indispensable reference work, rich in the fruits of extensive research. Needless to add, this work which covers the Qur'an translations up to 1980 stands in need of updating. The publishers have, for some time, been working on an updated edition.

8. *World Bibliography of Translations of the Holy Qur'an in Manuscript*, Vol. I (2000), published by OIC's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, lists bibliographic information of about 293 Qur'an translation manuscripts in 58 languages and dialects excluding Turkish, Persian and Urdu, which are planned to be published in a separate volume owing to their great number. Useful information about each manuscript by way of identifying its author, features and location are provided.

It is gratifying to note that Qur'an translations in manuscript form exist in almost all world languages, especially European ones such as Bohemian, Corse, Estonian, Gaelic, Icelandic, Lapp, Latvian, Provençal

and Welsh. The quality of notes about the manuscripts is remarkable in that no effort has been spared in tracking down all there is to know about them. Equally valuable is Ihsanoglu's introduction to the work (pp. xiii-xxxv), which delves deep into the evolution of Qur'an translations in manuscript form.

9. *The Holy Koran in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography* compiled by Fawzi Mikhail Tadros, published in 1993 by the Library of Congress, Washington, USA, is another valuable reference guide. Though it is restricted to the holdings of a particular library, namely, Library of Congress, Washington, USA, it gives a fair idea of the material on the Qur'an in the various world languages. It underscores also the richness of the Qur'an collection in this particular library. In all, it lists more than three thousand entries on the Qur'an in the form of Manuscripts, Translations, Microfilm, Sound Recordings, Books, Articles, and Doctoral Dissertations.

10. A.R. Kidwai's "Quranic Studies in English (1985-1992): An Annotated Bibliography" published in 1993 in the *Muslim World Book Review*, Leicester, UK, Vol. 13: 3 (1993), pp. 57-69 updates and enlarges Anees's earlier bibliography published in the same journal. Apart from critically analyzing around 150 books on the Qur'an published in English in the period under study, this bibliography contains also information on reviews on these books. This additional information may be used with much profit by researchers.

II Concordances

1. Originally published in German in 1842, from Leipzig, Germany, Gustav Flugel's *Concordance of the Quran* was reprinted by al-Biruni Publishing House, Lahore, Pakistan in 1978. This *Concordance* is introduced as "a carefully compiled, alphabetically arranged Concordance and according to roots of words" (Title page). It merely lists Qur'anic words according to their root and identifies the *ayah* or *ayahs* in which these occur. It makes no attempt to explain any word. Proper nouns are lumped together in this mass.

2. *Miftah-ul-Quran: Concordance and Complete Glossary of the Quran* compiled by Rev. Ahmad Shah in two volumes by the Book House,

Lahore, Pakistan, in 1906, is produced as

> *... a ready means of reference to the contents of the Quran. It seeks to redress the two main shortcomings in Flugel's earlier Concordance (1842). i) ... the principle on which it* [Flugel's Concordance] *is based restricts its use to those who can claim a minute knowledge of Arabic. ii) Flugel has adopted an unusual surah and ayah number, which differs from the one commonly used by Muslims.* (Preface)

Volume 2 of the work constitutes a glossary of the Qur'an in the alphabetical order. In compiling the glossary, the author has drawn on the Orientalist writings of Sale, Palmer, Rodwell, Lane some Muslim authorities.

3. *A Concordance of the Quran* compiled by Hanna E. Kassis, published in 1983 by the University of California Press, Berkley, USA is an authoritative work in the field. It is

> *... meant primarily for those without any knowledge of Arabic. The main distinction of this Concordance is that it utilizes the semantic structure of Arabic vocabulary itself in revealing the meaning of the Quran. All the entries for these Arabic roots, all the derivative forms are shown ... and the verses are listed in translation*. (p. ix)

Appended to the work are helpful notes on the language of the Qur'an (xxv-xxxiv). Another valuable element of this reference work is the inclusion of separate sections on the Divine Names and Attributes and proper nouns. The editorial assiduity and painstaking attention to detail are other prominent features of this meticulous work, complete in academic apparatus.

4. John Yahya Cason's *An Extensive Concordance to the Meaning of the Quran* came out in 2000, published by the Islamic Education and Community Development Foundation of Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Let this be clarified at the outset, as is evident also from the subtitle of the work, that this *Concordance* is specifically "based on the translation

of Abdullah Yusuf Ali". In other words, only the Qur'anic terms and concepts as featuring in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English translation of the Qur'an find place in this work. Entries are arranged according to English alphabets and encompass all that is discussed by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his translation. In his zeal to list everything, the compiler has gone too far. As a result, such inane and general expressions have found their way into this concordance to the Qur'an: "Into" (pp. 423-424), "Something" (pp. 737-738), "Therefore" (p. 834), "When" (pp. 974-979), and "Yet" (pp. 1069-1070). This concordance is thus useful for only those who intend to study Yusuf Ali's work in depth.

III Subject/Contents Guides

1. Altaf Ahmad Kheri's *Index-cum-Concordance for the Holy Quran*, published first in 1974 by Adam Publishers, New Delhi, India, is another massive reference work. However, its presentation is not reader-friendly. Only under twelve generalized chapters have all the Qur'anic *ayahs* been placed, without assigning to these any sub-headings. It does not follow the standard format of a concordance in listing and explaining entries in an alphabetical order.

2. A more ambitious and helpful reference work is, however, Afzalur Rahman's *Subject Index of Quran* brought out in 1983 by Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan. It provides an alphabetically arranged guide to the contents of the Qur'an. Equally useful are its sub-sections within every major section/theme. For example, "al-Kitab" (the Book), which carries different shades of meaning, is categorized under various heads (pp. 5-12). This reference work succeeds in meeting the needs of the ordinary students and specialists alike.

3. Faruq Sherif's *A Guide to the Contents of the Quran*, published in 1985 by Ithaca Press, London, introduces itself as

> *... a compendium of the Quran arranged systematically in which all the themes appear in a concise form. This book provides such a guide by arranging the themes into 67 sections. Each section contains the sum of the relevant ayahs concerned. In this all-inclusive recapitulation, no subject has been left out so that the reader can be sure to find within complete knowledge of the*

contents of the Quran, albeit in a condensed form. (Flap jacket)

The work is divided into the following main chapters: The Creator and His Creatures; The Prophet and the Qur'an; The Previous Bearers of the Divine Message; Some Historical Events; Faith and Religion; The Other World and Commandments. Under each Chapter several sub-themes, concepts and terms are mentioned. Equally helpful is the comprehensive index at the end of the work, guiding readers to the specific Qur'anic *ayahs* on a subject. However, at times, Sherif's comments on the import of the contents of the Qur'an appear somewhat tendentious. Take the following as examples:

> *The verses of the Quran containing references to wine do not appear to be self-consistent*. (p.112)

> *Nor is there any substance in the argument which is sometimes advanced to the effect that* Jihad *should be understood primarily in the sense of moral endeavour and self-discipline in the cause of service to Islam, and only secondarily in that of holy war. The verses quoted below will show that the emphasis is distinctly on warring against non-believers with the object of propagating Islam, this being, by the express injunction of the Quran, one of the primary duties of Moslems*. (p.113)

On usury or interest his contention is:

> *It cannot, however, be inferred that the Quran condemns unconditionally the concept of giving in the expectation of receiving more than what is given. Indeed such transaction, strongly forbidden in the relations between man and man, is recommended, or even commanded, as between man and God.* (p.119)

Such comments are more likely to confound readers, rather than help them gain a better understanding of the meaning and message of the Qur'an. There is not a single authentic Muslim source cited in his bibliography (p. 148) which mentions only the Orientalists and sectarian writings on the Qur'an.

4. M.M. Qureshi's *Quranic Ayat Containing Reference to Science and Technology* produced in 1987 by Pakistan Science Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan, stands out as a valuable selection of the Qur'anic *ayahs* with bearings on aspects of science and technology. Needless to say, however, that one cannot just get too carried away by such theories and judgment has to be applied when it comes to reading them in the Qur'an.

5. Another work in the same vein is Muhammad Sharif's *A Code of Teachings of al-Quran* published in 1988 by Fazal Haque and Sons, Lahore, Pakistan. It is a compilation of the Qur'anic *ayahs* on a large variety of subjects. A valuable element of the work is that at places, Prophetic Traditions, which amplify some of these *ayahs*, are also included.

6. K.A. Majid's *Quranic Injunctions: Do's and Do Not's* published in 1989 by the author from Karachi, Pakistan, is a compendium of the Qur'anic commands, compiled subject-wise. It initiates readers into the Qur'anic worldview, though not very satisfactorily. It cites only few Qur'anic passages on topics, and that too without offering any explanation. Moreover, it passes in silence over many Qur'anic commands, perhaps because of the constraints of space. The whole work consists of only 84 pages.

7. Chawdhary Nazr Mohammad's *Commandments by God in the Quran* published in 1991 by Message Publications, Jamaica, is an attempt to compile the Qur'anic commandments thematically under 31 broad subject headings. All the citations are properly documented in terms of indicating the *surah* title and the *ayah* number or numbers. It is an exhaustive work in its coverage.

8. Muhammd Ferdouse Khan's *What is al-Quran: An Exposition for Non-Muslims* published by Ahsania Mission, Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1992 is essentially an anthology of Qur'anic *ayahs* on moral and social issues and Prophets.

9. Abdul Hakeem Malik's *Quranic Prism: Trilingual Subject Index of Holy Quran* which came out in 1996 from Aamir Publications, Muzzafargarh, Pakistan, seeks to avoid the shortcomings in earlier subject guides. One of its commendable features is its exhaustive alphabetical coverage of around six thousand subjects. It is by far the most comprehensive guide to the Quran with extensive information.

10. Fathi Osman's *Concepts of the Quran: A Topical Reading* published in 1997 by ABIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is a definitive subject guide to the Qur'an. Divided into 9 chapters, it provides a very helpful overview of the Qur'anic contents which are placed in these main categories: articles of faith, worship, moral values and manners, law and supplications. Osman's treatment is both detailed and lucid, giving readers a clear idea of the Qur'anic worldview. Contained in the work are copious, relevant quotations from the Qur'an. The inclusion of an elaborate index would have added to the value of this work.

11. *An Index to Quranic Teachings* by Abdur Rauf Khan, published from Pakistan, is also conceived on a large scale by including most of the themes, concepts and proper nouns in the Qur'an. The compiler, however, makes no attempt to explicate these. Cross-references to related items are, at times, too many and hence irksome.

IV Catalogues

1. *The Koran Illuminated* contains a hand-list of the manuscripts of the Qur'an in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland. Compiled by the renowned Orientalist, A.J. Arberry, it was published by the Chester Beatty Library in 1967. Since this European library has a rich Oriental collection, the catalogue enables readers to gain a fairly clear picture of the various stages of the art of illumination and calligraphy, as is evident from the manuscripts of the Qur'an down the centuries, discussed in this work.

2. *The Quran* compiled by Martin Lings and Yasmin Hamid Safadi, published by the British Library, London and World of Islam Festival publishing company in 1976 from London, provides a catalogue of the exhibition of Qur'an manuscripts displayed at the British Library, London, between 3 April and 15 August 1976. Apart from the British

Library collections, the exhibition had contributions from national and private collections in Europe and the Middle East. The volume illustrates the main developments of the art of Qur'an illumination and calligraphy from the 8th to the 19th century. One of the striking features of this work is the authoritative description of major schools of calligraphy. There is also a useful note on the Qur'an bindings.

3. *Qurans of the Mamluks* was brought out by Thames & Hudson, London, UK in 1988. It details the rich collection of the Qur'anic manuscripts of the Bahri Mamluk period (648/1250-792/1390). It also provides notes on the calligraphy, major scribes and the art of illumination of that time.

4. *The Holy Quran in Manuscript*, collection formation by Bernard Qurartich Ltd. of London. It was published from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1991. It provides a selection of fine and rare Qur'an leaves and manuscripts exhibited by the National Commercial Bank of Saudi Arabia. Also, it contains an account of some international exhibitions on the Qur'an.

5. *The Holy Quran through the Centuries* contains a catalogue of the manuscripts and printed editions of the Qur'an preserved in the SS Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia, Bulgaria. It was brought out by al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, London in 1995. Included in this catalogue are specimen pages and accounts of the manuscripts of the Qur'an from 1271 to 1870. The description of each manuscript is well-written, identifying its calligrapher, patron and other bibliographic details. The catalogue describes also some of the printed copies of the Quran which had appeared between 1708 and 1905. The inclusion of a glossary (p. 63) has enhanced its academic value.

6. *The Quran Manuscripts in the al-Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Jerusalem*, compiled by Khader Salameh and brought out jointly in 2001 by Garnet Publishing, UK, and UNESCO, Paris, France, introduces well the precious holdings of the Islamic Museum, especially Qur'an manuscripts. The work throws ample light on the script, illumination, binding and other features of the collection.

V Dictionaries and Glossaries

1. Arthur Jeffery's *Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, published by the Oriental Institute, Baroda, India, in 1938, is true to the Orientalist tradition as it identifies the use of some non-Arabic words in the Qur'an and claims on this flimsy basis that the Qur'an is composed of borrowed material.

2. William Montgomery Watt's *Companion to the Quran* published first in 1967 by Edinburgh University Press, UK, seeks "to provide the English reader with the chief background material needed to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the Qur'an in translation" and hence addresses "questions of translation and interpretation" (p. 10). Unlike Penrice's glossary, Qur'anic terms and concepts are not arranged alphabetically. Rather, it takes up the key words and terms occurring in each *surah*. For example, in Surat al-Fatihah, his focus is on "In the name of God", "Lord of all being", "the straight path" and "those against whom thou art wrathful". In his elucidation Watt often dismisses the traditional Muslim interpretation in preference to his own. For example, he insists that "Ummi" means non-Jewish, not "unlettered". His stance is:

> *Later Muslim apologetics, to enhance the miraculous character of the Quran, insisted that Muhammad was illiterate and supported this by interpreting* ummi *as illiterate.* (p. 23)

Some of his comments are more outlandish. For example, his assertions that one cannot find any satisfactory or exact explanation for *ayahs* 3-4 of Surat al-Masad and *ayah* 4 of Surat al-Falaq (pp. 331 and 333) or that the Prophet "failed to notice when Satan introduced two (or three) further verses permitting intercession at the shrines of al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat" (p. 245). In other words, he is convinced of the authenticity of the alleged Satanic verses, as reflected in his comment on *ayahs* 19-20 of Surat al-Najm. At many places, he cites Biblical references, leaving the odd impression of the alleged borrowings in the Quran. Equally unpardonable is his suggestion that the Quran maintained "confusion and vagueness" about certain things such as "sakina" (p. 43) or Mary (p. 49).

Not surprisingly Watt's sources are Orientalists, namely, Richard Bell, Arthur Jeffrey, and Noldeke-Schwally.

3. John Penrice's *A Dictionary and Glossary of Koran* was published from London in 1873. Since then it has been reprinted several times. The author introduces his work as an

> *... aid to Koranic studies... compiled with the intention of its proving of service to the beginner in mastering some inevitable difficulties, and also to the more advanced Arabist in resolving some problems. Thus it provides a clue of elucidation to the more intricate passages of the Koran.*

Contained in it are grammatical references and explanations of the Qur'anic text. Arranged alphabetically, it seeks to explain many key Qur'anic expressions, along with their textual references. For example, under the main entry "*harama*", its following derivatives as employed in the Qur'an are briefly elucidated: *haram, hurum, haram, al-muhrramat, mahrum, harrama, tahrim* and *muharram* (p. 33). While dealing with the recurrent Qur'anic word "*hamd*" and its variations, Penrice takes up "Ahmad". His comment is, however, patently polemical:

> *By a perversion of the Gospel, the Mussulman Doctors teach that the comforter promised under the name was the Renowned Muhammad.* (p. 38)

The author's Christian credentials are betrayed also by his elucidation of the Qur'anic expression "*shubbiha lahum*" (*ayah* 156 of Surat al-Nisa) thus:

> *... it being believed by the Muhammedans that Judas or some other person was substituted for our Blessed Lord, and crucified in his stead.* (p. 75)

Proper names occurring in the Qur'an receive scant attention from him. He speaks of "various readings of disputed [Qur'anic] passages" (p. viii), though he does not substantiate this sweeping statement. His main sources are De Sacy's *Grammaire Arabe* and George Sale's English translation of the Qur'an. In sum, this out of date work with its marked

Christian bias has little to recommend itself as a Qur'anic aid.

4. A substantial work in the field is by Abdullah Abbas al-Nadwi entitled as *Vocabulary of the Holy Quran*, published in 1983 by Dar al-Shuruq, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Arranged according to Arabic alphabetical order, it brings into sharper relief grammatical, lexical and etymological features of the Qur'anic expressions. More remarkably, it cites the Qur'anic *ayahs* illustrating their usage. For example, "*umm*" is defined with both its primary and secondary significances. "*Umm al-Qura*" is elucidated thus:

> *Primarily and in the first instance "umm al-Qura" is the mother of the towns, particularly Makkah; because it is asserted to be the centre of the earth; or because it is the* Qiblah *of all men; and thither they repair or because it is the greatest of towns in dignity.* (p. 46)

Other entries too, are extensive in coverage, authentic in details and well documented. For example, as many as thirty derivatives of a certain root word are discussed, with apt illustrations (pp. 206-208). The Qur'anic allusions and proper nouns are explicated on the authority of standard *tafsir* works and represent the traditional Muslim stance. Take his explanation of "*sidratul muntaha*" as an instance in point:

> *The lote-tree at the boundary beyond which neither angels nor prophets can pass, and which is the ultimate point of access for created beings.* (p. 263)

In the same vein, the Qur'anic term "*zihar*", a pre-Islamic social custom, is adequately elucidated (p. 387). The most remarkable feature of the work is the listing of all words in an easy-to-use table for the benefit of those not familiar with Arabic root words and etymology (pp. 755-845). His main sources are al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Kathîr, al-Qurṭubî, Ibn Manẓûr and al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî.

5. *Dictionary of Quranic Terms and Concepts* by Mustansir Mir, published in 1987 by Garland Publishing, New York, USA, is a comprehensive, well-arranged reference work for gaining a proper understanding of the Qur'an. Almost all the major Qur'anic terms and

concepts are explained on the authority of leading Islamic scholars with a view to presenting before readers the Qur'anic worldview. Although the material is arranged in English alphabetical order, Arabic words are also explained with the help of cross-references. Mir's elucidation enables readers to learn much of all what there is know. For example, his extensive description of the most recurrent Qur'anic term, "God" throws ample light on His Name, and Attributes, and His mercy and justice (pp. 9-13). In a similar helpful manner, he brings out the concept, nature and functions of angels as envisaged by Islam. Reading this entry, one realises also the significance of the belief in angels in Islam (pp. 14-15). At places, however, his elucidation is not so adequate, as for example, his explication of the terms of abrogation (pp. 4-6), gratitude (pp. 85-86) and justice (p. 116). His coverage of the Qur'anic term "ansar" (pp. 93-94) is only partial. Notwithstanding some shortcomings, it is a major, authoritative aid to the study of the Qur'an. Mir's sources are: al-Ghazâlî, Shah Waliullah, Saiyyid Mawdudi and Amin Ahsan Islahi, representing an amalgam of both classical and recent works on the Qur'an.

6. Muniruddin Ahmad's *Dictionary of the Holy Quran* published in 1992 from London, claims to be "a specifically Qur'anic Arabic dictionary to complement the English translations of the Qur'an" (Preface). This slim, modest work is, however, confined to listing Qur'anic expression in an alphabetical order, with very brief, often unsatisfactory explanations. For example "Musa" is merely defined as "name of prophet Moses" (p. 157). Likewise "*siyam*" receives this cursory, insufficient attention: "fasting" (p. 107). The author makes no attempt to relate these Qur'anic expressions to the Islamic scheme of things, nor does he make any effort to shed light in any degree on the Qur'anic allusions and proper names. This work is written out of the author's pious wish that it may contribute to a better understanding of the Qur'an.

7. Abdul Mannan Omar's *Dictionary of the Holy Quran* published by Noor Foundation, Hockessin, DE, USA, 2005 (3rd ed.), is a recent addition to the field. Contained in it are two sections – Section 1 lists alphabetically arranged Qur'an words, with cross references to their roots; Section 2 is on these words. Arabic alphabetical order is followed in both sections. Appended to the work are appendixes on some of the

distinctive features of Arabic. Among Omar's sources are al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî, Ibn Manẓûr and other classical Arab lexicographers and grammarians.

It is an extensive work, covering almost all of the Qur'anic words. However, the work is vitiated by Omar's pseudo-rationalism. Without much discernment he cites classical authorities, often preferring his whimsical meaning to the standard, generally accepted one of the Qur'anic terms. So doing, he seeks to impose his erroneous views on the Qur'an. For example, he presents this convoluted view on *jinn*: "Such things or beings that remain aloof from the people as if remaining concealed from eyes of the common folk, as kings and other potentates generally do. Thus by calling *Jinn* and *Nâs* (human beings) as a single community clears that here *Jinn* and human beings are not two different kinds of beings" (p. 105). He denies the miracle that Allah had raised the mountain over the children of Israel in order to press home the solemn covenant which they had made with Allah (p. 552). Likewise, he rejects the existence of magic (p. 570). *Zaqqûm* is explained by him in symbolic terms as a "bitter medicine to treat spiritual diseases" (p. 232). At places, he inserts irrelevant material, as for example, an extensive note on the medicinal properties and benefits of ginger (p. 236). The work is marred by numerous typographical errors and incorrect transliteration.

VI Encyclopedias

1. An extensive encyclopedia of the Qur'an is *Encyclopedia of the Quran* edited by Jane D. McAuliffe. It has been brought out by Brill, Leiden, Holland in 5 volumes. This major publication in the field can be better evaluated in an independent, full-length article. It must be nonetheless pointed out that it retains, rather resurrects most of the Orientalist misperceptions about the Qur'an. Many contributors to the volumes are found harping on the alleged borrowings in the Qur'an from the Bible and the political and this-worldly overtones of the Madinan *surahs*. Take the following as illustrative:

> 1. "The Meccan material identifies enemies in mythic terms, usually placing the word within a context that finds parallels with biblical narrative…. In Madinan verses the term takes on a more direct political and worldly tone…. What is new in Madinan verses is that God is enemy to unbelievers" ("Enemies", 2, 24).

2. "After the Muslim victory in the battle of Badr the Quran started to promote the idea of religious uniformity in the Arabian peninsula…. Despite the apparent meaning of 2: 256, Islamic law allowed coercion of certain groups into Islam" ("Tolerance and Coercion", 5, 292-3).

3. Here is another charge against the Qur'an: "Perhaps the most mysterious textual problem in the Quran is the name Isa…. The fact that Isa has no satisfactory derivation and no pre-quranic history should have suggested to scholars that the word might be a mistake" ("Textual Criticism", 5, 250).

4. Even the self-evident Qur'anic command for enjoining right and forbidding wrong is projected as something confounding: "Just what is intended in the relevant Qur'anic passages is somewhat unclear… we are not told to whom the commanding and forbidding are to be addressed and there is no further specification of the right and wrong to which they are to relate" ("Virtues and Vices", 5, 436-7).

5. The Qur'anic prohibition of wine is made to appear as dubious: "… dissensions over what constitutes 'wine', or whether the substance itself or only its effects are prohibited, can be detected in legal discussions surrounding the beverage" ("Wine", 5, 482).

6. The Islamic formula of testimony (*kalima tayyaba*) is presented as a replica of a biblical source: "…this formula can be traced back indirectly – via a supposed Jewish-Arabic version of Aramaic translations – to Deuteronomy 6:4 – the Jewish creedal prayer…" ("Witnessing and Testifying", 5, 500).

Such pernicious observations about the Qur'an apart, one is struck by the wide range of its coverage. For example, volume 5 includes such diverse topics as "Social Sciences and the Quran" (pp. 66-76), "South Asian Literatures and the Quran" (pp. 94-98), "Sufism and the Quran" (pp. 137-159), "Taxation" (pp. 191-199), "Teeth" (pp. 231-232), "Turkish Literature and the Quran" (pp. 390-395), "Vehicles" (pp. 411-412) and "Weather" (pp. 470-471).

2. *Encyclopedia of the Quran*, edited by N.K. Singh and A.R. Agwan

(Global Vision, New Delhi, 2002. 5 Volumes. Pp. 1679 + Index). This work is fairly good in its presentation, scholarly tools and level of English. However, its modernist agenda to "lift the veils" on the Qur'anic thought is irksome. This apologetic stand is to the fore in its repudiation of the "substitution legend" related to Prophet Jesus's crucifixion. Classical Qur'anic scholars are accused of having fabricated this so-called legend (pp. 254-262). Too much focus is placed on Christian historyand symbols which strikes a jarring note in this reference work on the Qur'an. What is enlightening about this is that many of the entries, particularly those with a Christian connection, have been written by Orientalists like Basetti-Sana, Pederson, J. Burton, D.B. Macdonald, N. Robinson and others. Not only have key Islamic beliefs been refuted, but certain Qur'anic texts have been cited as proving the Christian stand on issues.

The gender issue is also given a markedly modernist slant while discussing, for instance, "Adam's wife (*Ḥawwâ*)." Once again the blame of taking no account from the Qur'an is laid at the doors of traditionalist Qur'an scholars: "… the exclusion of women from public sphere thereby remains fully valid. Indeed, conservatives and also fundamentalists both brand as subversive the demand that the principle of absolute gender equality be applied in the social, political and economic areas" (pp. 68-69). Concerns of the day, with a contrived effort to relating these to the Qur'an, feature prominently in this work. Little wonder that one notes in it, inter alia, such entries on Biodiversity, Ecological Crisis and its Solution, Mathematics, Industry, Numerological Findings, Psychotherapy and Spiritual Universe, etc. In sum, due to the usurpation of the work by the modernist agenda it does not advance much one's understanding of the Qur'an.

Concluding Remarks

Notwithstanding the availability of the above mentioned works, there is a pressing need for more extensive, well focussed and user friendly aids for promoting a better understanding of the meaning and message of the Qur'an. Along the lines of the *World Bibliography of the Quran Translations* (Istanbul, 1986), the publication of a comprehensive, up-to-date bibliography with critical notes on the books, articles and dissertations on the Qur'an in English will be of immense help for

literature review for researchers and for prompting fresh studies on the Qur'an. Likewise, *The Holy Koran in the Library of Congress* (Washington, 1993), should be replicated by way of producing similar volumes on the relevant holdings of major libraries in the world, guiding students to the location of the material.

Although the bibliographical quarterly journal, *Index Islamicus* (Cambridge, UK) lists the latest material on the Qur'an, it often tends to take no account of the material originating from the Muslim World. Only few entries on the Qur'an appear in this journal. In contrast, other sections, for example, the ones on area studies in the Muslim World are well represented. As a result, students fail to get a complete picture of scholarship on the Qur'an. The earlier this imbalance is set right, the better it would be.

As to subject guides, it would be a useful service to the cause of the Qur'anic studies, if thematically arranged volumes on Qur'anic teachings are produced for readers. Such volumes prepare readers better for grasping the message of the Qur'an. This objective may be realized also, and more effectively, by bringing out a series of handbooks on the Qur'anic terms, concepts, allusions, events, personalities and worldview. These volumes should be designed for a variety of readers – the young, the lay and the specialist.

In sum, much needs to be done in the field for a rewarding study of the Qur'an for the English speaking readers.

List of Surveyed Reference Works

I Bibliographies

- W. Woolworth's "A Bibliography of Koran Texts and Translations"
- C.L. Geddes's *Books in English on Islam, Muhammad and the Quran: a selected and annotated bibliography*
- J.D. Pearson's "Bibliography of translations of the Qur'an into European languages"
- Adil Usmani's *Islamic Studies: Literature on the Quran in the English Language - A Bibliography*
- M. Hamidullah's intodcution to his *Le Saint Coran*
- Munawar A. Anees's "Islamic Studies: Publish or Perish? Book and Periodical Citations on Tafasir al-Quran in Western Languages"
- OIC's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture's *World Bibliography of Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran: Printed Translations 1515-1980*
- OIC's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture's *World Bibliography of Translations of the Holy Qur'an in Manuscript*
- Fawzi Mikhail Tadros's *The Holy Koran in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*
- A.R. Kidwai's "Quranic Studies in English (1985-1992): An Annotated Bibliography"

II Concordances

- Gustav Flugel's *Concordance of the Quran*
- Rev. Ahmad Shah's *Miftah-ul-Quran: Concordance and Complete Glossary of the Quran*
- Hanna E. Kassis's *A Concordance of the Quran*
- John Yahya Cason's *An Extensive Concordance to the Meaning of the Quran*

III Subject/Contents Guides

- Altaf Ahmad Kheri's *Index-cum-Concordance for the Holy Quran*
- Afzalur Rahman's *Subject Index of Quran*
- Faruq Sherif's *A Guide to the Contents of the Quran*
- M.M. Qureshi's *Quranic Ayat Containing Reference to Science and Technology*

- Muhammad Sharif's *A Code of Teachings of al-Quran*
- K.A. Majid's *Quranic Injunctions: Do's and Do Not's*
- Chawdhary Nazr Mohammad's *Commandments by God in the Quran*
- Muhammd Ferdouse Khan's *What is al-Quran: An Exposition for Non-Muslims*
- Abdul Hakeem Malik's *Quranic Prism: Trilingual Subject Index of Holy Quran*
- Fathi Osman's *Concepts of the Quran: A Topical Reading*
- Abdur Rauf Khan's *An Index to Quranic Teachings*

IV Catalogues

- Chester Beatty Library's *The Koran Illuminated*
- Martin Lings and Yasmin Hamid Safadi's *The Quran*
- Thames & Hudson's *Qurans of the Mamluks*
- Bernard Qurartich Ltd's *The Holy Quran in Manuscript*
- Sofia's SS Cyril and Methodius National Library's *The Holy Quran through the Centuries*
- Khader Salameh's *The Quran Manuscripts in the al-Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Jerusalem*

V Dictionaries and Glossaries

- Arthur Jeffery's *Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*
- William Montgomery Watt's *Companion to the Quran*
- John Penrice's *A Dictionary and Glossary of Koran*
- Abdullah Abbas al-Nadwi's *Vocabulary of the Holy Quran*
- Mustansir Mir's *Dictionary of Quranic Terms and Concepts*
- Muniruddin Ahmad's *Dictionary of the Holy Quran*
- Abdul Mannan Omar's *Dictionary of the Holy Quran*

VI Encyclopedias

- Jane D. McAuliffe's *Encyclopedia of the Quran*
- N.K. Singh and A.R. Agwan's *Encyclopedia of the Quran*