

Pioneering Quran translation published in England — 100 years ago

Wednesday 30 August, 2017

A Vital Resource for Muslim Reform in the 21st Century

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In September this year, it will be one hundred years since the celebrated English Translation of the Holy Quran with Commentary by Maulana Muhammad Ali was published in 1917 — from Woking in Surrey, under the auspices of the Woking Muslim Mission.

This was the first ever widely accessible English translation by a Muslim and has had a pronounced effect on the way Islam is viewed in the West.

Without denying the greatness or utility of the work of earlier Muslim commentators, Maulana Muhammad Ali produced a translation and commentary presenting detailed refutations of the many misconceptions about Islam that were prevalent then, but which still persist and continue to impede rational public discourse.

In the light of these features, the contemporary relevance of the work of Maulana Muhammad Ali could not be more evident.

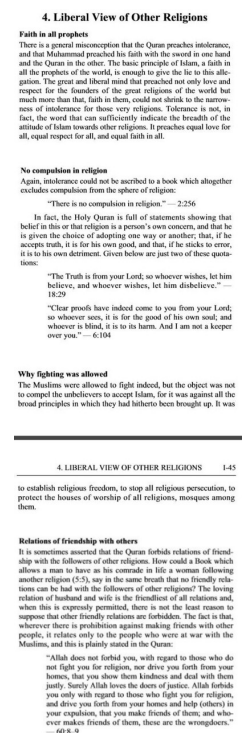
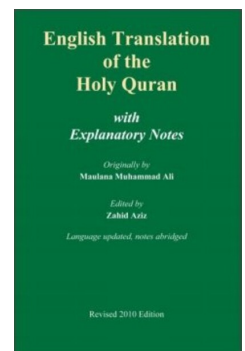
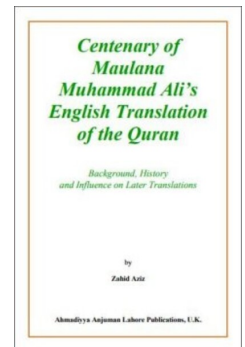
All subsequent translators have followed the path that he set. The second edition, published in 1951, featured an updated commentary reflecting the circumstances of the time. A [further revision](#) was recently undertaken by Dr Zahid Aziz (author of [Islam, Peace and Tolerance](#)) to simplify the language for contemporary readers, and was published in 2010.

Before and during the civil rights era it was mainly on account of this translation that African Americans began to embrace Islam. In 1978 the African American Muslim leader, the late Warith Deen Muhammad travelled to Lahore in order to pay his respects to the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and express his gratitude for the legacy of Maulana Muhammad Ali.

In today's world this work is valued as an authoritative presentation of Islam which effectively rebuts extremist ideologies and is effective in reviving the true spirit of the faith.

- To mark its centenary [a special publication is available](#) detailing its background, history and influence on later translations.
- A [Dutch-language version](#) of the First Edition was published in 1934. For the Spanish-speaking world, a [Spanish translation of the Second Edition was published in 1986](#) and a [French edition appeared in 1990](#).
- The [Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam](#) (Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam) was established in Lahore in 1914 to promote the informed understanding of Islam in the West. In the UK it operated the [Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking](#) until the early 1960s. Its new UK headquarters is at *Dar-us-Salaam*, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, HA0 4JQ, UK. In 1924, in Berlin, it built the first mosque in Continental Europe of the modern era. The [Berlin Mosque](#) is now recognised by the German government as part of the German national heritage. From its European and other centres around the world this organisation has taught that Islam promotes peace, harmony and mutual respect between all communities and nationalities.

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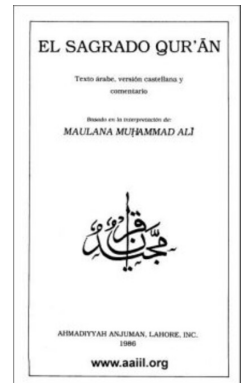
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No punishment for apostasy
It is generally thought that the Quran provides a death sentence for those who desert the religion of Islam. Anyone who reads the Quran will see that there is not the least ground for such a supposition. The Quran speaks repeatedly of people going back to unbelief after believing, but never once does it say that they should be killed or punished. For example:
"And whoever of you turns back from his religion, then he dies while an unbeliever — these it is whose deeds are fruitless in this world and the Hereafter." — 2:177
"Those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in disbelief, their repentance is not accepted, and these are they that go astray." — 3:90



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