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## **Aisha Bewley's Literary Endeavors: an in-Depth Review and Scholarly Analysis**

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***Abstract:** Aisha Bewley is a British Muslim author and translator who has made significant contributions to the field of Islamic literature. She has translated over 20 books on various topics related to Islam, including the *Quran*, *Hadith*, and *Islamic jurisprudence*. In this article, we will discuss her literary endeavors and analyze her work from a scholarly perspective. Bewley's translations are known for their accuracy and clarity, making them accessible to readers of all levels of understanding. She has also made an effort to use modern English language and avoid archaic or outdated terminology, which can make Islamic texts difficult to understand for contemporary readers.*

***Key words:** Muslim, Islam, Islamic literature, the *Quran*, *Hadith*, literary endeavors, a scholarly perspective.*

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### **Introduction**

Aisha Bewley is known as a reverted-Muslim Islamic translator. She has been associated with the art of translation for almost five decades and has translated 73 Islamic (Arabic) books so far and published many of her works, she can not only speak and understand the Arabic language but is also well aware of the ancient Arabic language and its Islamic history.

Apart from translating the Tafseer and Arabic literature into English, she has also translated the Qur'an Majeed Furqan Hameed. As a woman, this effort of hers deserves tribute, she is promoting the mystical style of Islam in America. On account of her work, she holds an important position among the contemporary reverted-Muslim scholars.

Apart from this, she is also a part of Tehreek Murabatoon for women's freedom and is working hard for it. According to the RISSC report, she has also been delivering lectures at Dallas College and Lady Ayesha College, Cape Town. She traveled to Nigeria, Bermuda, Germany, Spain and various countries and preached Islam.

The book “Definition of **Al-Shifa**”, is a famous book written on the blessed life of the Holy Prophet. In this book, the circumstances, characteristics, and miracles of the Holy Prophet are mentioned very beautifully. Qazi Ayaz wrote this book in 1149. . A book written on his biography was well received in the Muslim world, it is said about Kitab al-Shifa that “It is a house into which a sick person enters and gets well after reading it.” “Kitab al-Shifa” on the blessed biography is undoubtedly an important source, Ayesha Abdul Rahman Bewley has translated it into the English language so that the European world can be aware of the blessed biography of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

**Al-Ilam Baqawaal-e-Islam** (Qazi Ayaz) translated by Ayesha Bewley. Qazi Ayaz, who is a famous scholar of Maliki jurisprudence, has written this book on the five foundations of Islam, in which the main pillars of Islam are discussed in detail. Qazi Ayaz bin Musa is considered one of the seven Sufi sages of Morocco. He spent his entire life spreading Islamic teachings through his pen. Ayesha Bewley has translated this book in a concise manner to inform the new Muslim world about the foundations of Islam and to re-introduce the fundamental pillars of Islam to Muslims.

**Tafsir Jalaluddin Suyuti**, which is called a thick and important exegesis (explanation) of the Holy Quran. This exegesis was done by “Jalaluddin Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Mahli”, but he had only written half of the exegesis, after his death, his student “Abd al-Rahman bin Kamaluddin Abi Bakr Ibn Muhammad Ibn Aqisuddin Jalaluddin Al-Masri al-Suyuti al-Shafi'i” completed it. He is known as Jalal al-Din Suyuti, he holds the highest position in Islamic history as a Mujtahid and Muhaddith. He wrote this book to complete the work of his respected teacher and wrote a commentary on the Holy Qur'an from Surat al-Kahf to Surat al-Nas. He did this at the age of only 22.

**Jalal al-Din Suyuti's** exegesis is read as a source for the interpretation of the Qur'an in Islamic institutions. In view of the importance of Tafsir Suyuti and its usefulness for understanding the Qur'an, “Ayesha Abdul Rahman Bewley” translated it into English. This exegesis has been fully translated into the English language for the first time. The translation of “Tafseer Suyuti” into English language was undoubtedly inevitable to explain the concepts and demands of the Holy Quran and this need was well fulfilled by Ayesha Abdul Rahman. In this regard, she also got the support of her husband “Abdul Haq Bewley”, who supported her in this good work.

**Al-Insan al-Kabeer bin Al-Arabi**. This book of Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi about the creation of man has a unique beauty. In this book, he has drawn an excellent map of the creation of man and then how because of his intellect, man defeated the angels has also been described beautifully. God sent man as his vicegerent in the world and among all the creatures, man was given the status of Ashraf al-Mukhaluqat. Ayesha Bewley translated Ibn al-Arabi's book into English language so that the western world could gain knowledge as being a Muslim.

**Sufis and Sufism: A Defense**. This book written on Sufism, the reality of Sufism, its beginnings and the opinions of various scholars about Sufism, the introduction of famous Sufis Ikram and the relation of Sufism to Islam are presented in this book with arguments. This book was written by “Sheikh Abdul Karim Murad” and “Sheikh Abdul Haya Al Marwai”. “Ayesha Abdul Rahman Bewley” being a believer in Sufism, she translated this book into English to make the truth of Sufism accessible to English reverted-Muslims. She translated the entire book very well to bring out the reality of Sufism.

**Riyaz al-Saliheen: The Garden of the Good by Yahya bin Sharaf al-Navi**.

Riaz al-Saliheen is a famous book about the hadiths of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his biography, which has been translated into many other languages. In this book, especially those hadiths are mentioned which are related to the pursuit of sincerity and piety, Ayesha

Abdul Rahman is the only translator who has translated this book into English language. It is like a garden for righteous people as expressed by its name (Riyadh al-Saliheen: Garden of the Good). This book was written by “Abu Zakaria Yahya bin Sharaf al-Navi Ashqi Shafi'i” in about 667 AD.

**The Flight of Souls after Death Hafiz Ibn Qayyim.** “Hafiz Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi” has described the reality of man (after death till the Hereafter) in this book. In this book, the seizure of the soul and its conditions in the grave are described in detail. “Ayesha Abdul Rahman Bewley” has translated this book into English and has explained the reality of death and the soul in a very good way. This is the English translation of Ibn Qayyim's “Kitab al-Ruh”.

**The Sunnah of the Holy Prophet** (peace be upon him) and the jurists and scholars of hadith (Muhammad al-Ghazali). It is a translation of the book of Imam Muhammad Ibn al-Ghazali, which he wrote on the biography of the Holy Prophet, “Sunnah al-Nabawiyah ban Ahl al-Fiqh wAhl al-Hadith”, which is translated into English by Ayesha Abdul Rahman Bewley.

**Tafsir Qurtabi: A Classical Quran Tafsir.** The commentator of this exegesis/commentary is “Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Farrukh Ansari Khazraj Al-Andalusi Shams al-Din al-Qurtubi”. He has written an exegesis on the Holy Qur'an under the name of “Al-Jaami Al-Ahkam Al-Qur'an” which is called “Tafseer Qurtubi”. Among the interpretations of the Holy Qur'an, this commentary holds an important position, it mentions recitations, Arabs, poems, evidences, lexical discussions, syntax and usage points.

Apart from this, the excellence of the Surah has been explained from the blessed hadiths, the reasons for the revelation of the surahs and verses have been explained in the light of the blessed hadiths. Arabic poetry has been used to explain the literal meaning, the opinions of the jurists and their differences regarding the rulings of the verse have been discussed. And knowing its necessity in the English language, it has been translated into the English language by Ayesha Abdul Rehman Bewley, in fact, the book is (Regarding Qur'anic Sciences) a scholarly encyclopedia.

“Ayesha Bewley” and her husband “Abd al-Haq Bewley” occupy a prominent place among the modern translators. Especially among the reverted-Muslim translators, since both of them accepted Islam in 1968. They continuously worked hard for forty years to introduce the teachings of Islam and “Sufism” to the European world. This is a clear proof of their selfless service to the religion of Islam. They introduced many ancient books related to Islamic history, Sufism, Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh and that which were in ancient Arabic language to the whole world through translation, and in this way, they did a good job of spreading the teachings and rules of Islam in the world.

**The Holy Qur'an** is the Furqan Hameed Kitab Larib, which was revealed to the Prophet Akhtar al-Zaman, peace be upon him, in the form of the last inspired message. In view of the need, many translations were done in different languages of the world, especially the translation in the English language started in the seventeenth century AD and then in the eighteenth, nineteenth and especially in the twentieth century, there were countless English translations which were done by translators from different countries living in the world. Among these translations, the English translations of reverted Muslims received a lot of attention, including the well-known translations of “Muhammad Mar Madiuk Pakhthal” and “Allama Muhammad Asad” English translations of the Qur'an.

“The Noble Qur'an” has been written keeping in mind the requirements of the present age. Rather than conveying the meaning, more emphasis is placed on its superficial and literal meanings and an attempt is made to explain the meaning of the verses in as few words as possible. Thus, this translation of the Qur'an is a source of attraction for the youth of today, because the choice of words in the old

translations and the choice of words according to the glory of the Qur'an made the translation difficult and complicated for the readers. "Ayesha Bewley" has chosen simple words to remove the difficulty for the readers and has placed new words in it. For example, verse number 2 of Surah Baqarah has been described by Ayesha Bewley as follows:

**"This is the book, without any doubt It contains guidance for those who have taqwa."**

Allama Muhammad Asad, whose translation was published almost twenty years before him, has translated this verse as follows:

**"His Divine writ-Let there be no doubt about it is (meant to be) a guidance for all the God-conscious."**

The difference in the translation is significant both in terms of style and manner; Ayesha Bewley has done a literal translation while Allama Muhammad Asad has done a meaningful and interpretive translation. In some blessed verses whose meaning is clear, the literal translation is appropriate while for some verses to access the true meaning requires more depth than only going for its surface meaning.

"Ayesha Bewley" has used the method of "literal translation" while translating. Apart from this, she has preferred translation with brevity. She has not highlighted the "principles and procedures" of her translation while leaving behind the writing accessories. It also shows glimpses of translations and interpretations in its translation. "Aisha Bewley" has used easy and simple language in translation and has neglected the meaning to some extent in an attempt to bring the meaning closer to the meaning of the word.

**In conclusion,** Aisha Bewley's literary endeavors have made significant contributions to the field of Islamic literature. Her translations are known for their accuracy and accessibility, and her books provide valuable insights into Islamic topics. From a scholarly perspective, her work is highly respected and widely used in academic research. One of Bewley's most notable translations is her version of the Quran, which she completed in 1999. Her translation is widely regarded as one of the most accurate and reliable English translations of the Quran available today. She has also translated several collections of Hadith, including Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, which are considered among the most authoritative sources of Hadith in Islam. In addition to her translations, Bewley has also authored several books on Islamic topics. Her book "Islam: The Empowering of Women" explores the role of women in Islam and challenges misconceptions about the religion's treatment of women. She has also written a biography of the Prophet Muhammad titled "Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources."

From a scholarly perspective, Bewley's work is highly respected for its accuracy and attention to detail. Her translations are often cited in academic research on Islamic topics, and her books are considered valuable resources for anyone interested in learning more about Islam.

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