

## THE **SAYFAHS**\* OF THE TRANSLATION AND **TAFSEER** OF THE NOBLE QUR'AN INTO ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

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### Özet:

Kur'an'ın Arnavutça'ya Tercümesi ve Tefsirinin Sayfaları çalışması üç bölüme ayrılmıştır: Siyasi ve kültürel – dinî koşullar; Kur'an'ın Arnavutça'ya tercümelere ve Arnavutlarda Kur'an tefsiri geleneği.

Eserin birinci bölümü dinî kültürün gelişmesini engelleyen meşakatli zamanları değerlendirmektedir. Bahsekonu vahim dönem dinî kültürün gelişimini egellediği gibi, onu fakirleştirmiş, yıkmış ve unutulmaya terk etmiştir. Bu dönem ardından ciddi sonuçlar bırakmıştır. Kur'an tercümelere bu zor dönemin üstesinden geldi ve Müslüman Arnavutlar büyük bir ihtimam ve sevgi ile önce kısmen, sonraları ise Kur'an-ı Azîmüşşan'ın tamamının tercümesine başladılar. Tercümelere ilişkin entelektüel kesimlerde ve İslâmi kurumlar nezdinde önemli münazaraların gerçekleştiği gözlemlenmektedir. Doğal olarak ilk başlarda kısmi tercümelere tamamlanıp yayınlandı, akabinde ise Kelamullah'ın tamamının tercümesi yayınlanmıştır. Aynı zamanda bu bölümde Kur'an'ın Arnavutça'ya tercümesini gerçekleştiren mütercimlerin isimleri de zikredilmektedir.

Arnavutlarda tefsir geleneğini değerlendiren bölümde ise müfessirlerin isimlerinden başlayarak onların tefsirlerinin sayfalarının kısmi ve sistematik olarak tamamına dek detaylı bir tasvir sunulmuştur. Arnavut müfessirlerin konuları ele alma yöntemi, farklı tefsir ekollerinin etkisini gün yüzüne çıkarmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Osmanlı ekolü, Arap ekolü ve Arnavut ekolü temayüz etmektedir. Aynı zamanda bu bahsi kanıtlayan kaynaklar da arz edilmiştir.

İşbu çalışmada başlıca Arnavutların anadillerinde yazmış olduğu kaynaklar kullanılmıştır. Bunun amacı, bahsekonu edebî kaynakların Kur'an tefsiri edebiyatının bir parçasını teşkil etmeleri ve Müslüman Arnavut müfessir ve mütercimlerin fedakârca gayretlerini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kur'an, Arnavutça Tefsir, Müfessir, Mütercim

\* The word sayfah (ar. saḥifah; pl. suḥuf; saḥfa and saḥaḥat), or "page", has importance in the tradition of God's Revelation, because even before the great holy books, suḥuf have been revealed to earlier prophets. Thus, the sayfahs of translation and tafseer of the Qur'an in Albanian language are sacred. As for the word saḥfa or saḥaḥat, it bears the meaning of stage(s), periods. On the meaning of the word sayfah, see: Tahir M. Dizdari, Fjalor i orientalizmave në gjuhën shqipe (A Dictionary of Orientalisms in Albanian Language), AIITC, Tirana 2015, p. 862.

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**Abstract:**

This paper, namely The Sayfahs of Translation and Tafseer of the Qur'an al-Kareem into Albanian Language, is divided in three parts: Political and Cultural-Religious Circumstances; Translations of the Qur'an into Albanian Language; and The Tradition of the Tafseer of the Qur'an among Albanians.

The first part deals with the difficult times that have prevented the development of religious culture, not only by hindering this culture, but also by impoverishing, destroying and throwing it into oblivion, and that historical period left consequences for the future too.

Translations of the Qur'an have overcome that difficult phase, and Albanian Muslims with a particular care and love began the partial and latter the complete translation of God's Word. Regarding the issue of translation one may notice important debates in Muslim intellectual and institutional circles. Of course, at the beginning only partial translations were done and published, and much latter the complete ones. Also, in this part names of the translators of the Qur'an into Albanian language are presented.

The tafseer tradition is presented in detail, beginning with the names of of mufassirs up to the sayfahs of their tafseers, partial and complete – systematic. The ways of dealing with the subjects by Albanian mufassirs show the influence of various schools of tafseer, that of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab and the Albanian religious school. Sources that prove the aforementioned are also given.

In this work mainly the literature of the Albanian people written in their own language has been used, intending to make that literature a part of the literature of the tafseer of the Qur'an as well as to present the tireless work and efforts of Albanian Muslim translators and mufassirs.

**Key Words:** Quran, Albanian Tafseer of Quran, Mufassir, Translator

Un Kur-ani Qerimin e due; ai është libri i Perendis. Ky libër i është sjellë Pejgamberit t'onë kohë mbas kohe. Pejgamberi i ynë Kur-anin nuk e ka folë prej mendes së vet, as nuk e ka shkruar ndonji tjetër. Fjalët e Kur-anit i Madhi Muhammed i ka ndigjue prej Xhibrilit, mbandej është permbledhë të gjithë edhe është shkruar. Kur-ani është fjala e Perendis. Permban urdhëna që na rrëfejnë udhën e drejtë, e na bëjnë me pshtue në dy jetët. Tue ndigjuem Kur-anin më çelet zëmra. Kur-ani është themeli i besimit t'onë. Kur-anin pa abdest nuk e marr në dorë; gjithmonë e nderoj. Ata që i a dijnë vleften Kur-ani Qerimit edhe nuk i mbajnë urdhnat e Tij janë njerëz të këqijë.\*\*

At the very beginning allow me to say that although the subject treated in this work is not the history, but the tradition of Qur'anology, namely translation (tarjamah)<sup>1</sup> and exegesis (tafseer)<sup>2</sup> of the Qur'an among the Albanians, it would not be possible to say what should be said about that very important tradition, both for the subject itself as well as for the tradition of a people, without saying something about the history of the period when first translations and tafseer of the sayfahs of the Qur'an in Albanian language appeared. This because at that time, and afterwards, things happened that are nothing else but an important argument that proves the experiences of the soul of this people and obstacles it encountered, both from within and from outside. We have, unfortunately, remained "forever" on the crossroad and always guilty through centuries.

Of course, even after this writing many questions will remain unanswered, the main one being that why the Qur'an was not translated and commented or interpreted in Albanian language earlier, as well as other reasons as the cultural-religious ignorance, devastation of the material

\*\* "I love the Qur'an al-Kareem; it is a God's Book. This Book was brought to our Prophet time after time. Our Prophet hasn't spoken the Qur'an from his own mind, nor did anyone else write it. The Great Muhammad has heard the words of the Qur'an from Jebreel, than it was all gathered and written. Qur'an is the Word of God. It contains decrees that show us the right path, and make us saved in both worlds. While listening to the Qur'an my heart opens. The Qur'an is the foundation of our belief. I don't Qur'an in my hands without ablution; I always respect it. Those who know the worth of the Qur'an al-Kareem and do not obey to its commands are bad people."

In this short excerpt the very content of the Qur'an is summarized, as presented both in the books of Usul al-Tafseer and the tafseers of the Qur'an, as well as in the practical teachings of a high politeness required vis-a-vis the Book of God. For more, see Dijeni pratike. Besimtare (Practical knowledge), No. 1. Shkodra, "Ora e Shkodrës" Press, 1927, p. 21.

1 E. W. Lane, An Arabic English Lexicon, edited with a memoir, by Stanley Lane Poole, London 1863, vol. I, p. 802.

2 This word is used among the speakers of Albanian language too, although is considered as a word of Oriental origin. See, Tahir N. Dizdari, op. cit., AIITC, Tirana 2005, p. 1008.

and spiritual culture of the believers and the war for the disintegration of the Albanian state and creation of new states.<sup>3</sup>

This work is divided in three chapters, first, a brief outline about the political and cultural-religious situation of the Albanians; the second a summary of the translation of the Qur'an in Albanian language, and the third on the tradition of tafseer (Qur'anic exegesis).

## I

### POLITICAL AND CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Albanians have a long period of their history closely related to the Ottoman Empire<sup>4</sup> and are among the peoples of the Balkan region that in majority embraced Islam.<sup>5</sup> The Ottoman government too had its greatest reliance the Albanian people, which is proven by Sultan Abdulhamid II's saying that the Ottoman Empire "is holding on Albanians and Arabs"<sup>6</sup>. During that period the religious institutional culture was established, the new architecture originated and prominent personalities appeared in various fields.<sup>7</sup> Of course, one cannot claim that all demands of the Albanians were fulfilled at that time, because there was not an Albanian written language as we know it today, although a new genre was developed, namely Albanian literature written in Arabic letters, or better known as the "Aljamiado literature"<sup>8</sup>.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire our lands witnessed nothing but wars and creation of new national states. The Albanian vilayets

3 For more see, Sami Frashëri, *Shqipëria dhe shqiptarët* (Albania and Albanians), published by Dajti 2000, Tirana 2002.

4 For more about the cultural-religious situation during the Ottoman period see, Muhamed Emin Isevic, *Ahvali Bosna* (manuscript), Istanbul University Library, item no. 6647. The photocopy of the same can be found at the Oriental Institute of Sarajevo.

5 Much is written about this period not only by Turkish or foreign authors, mainly Westerners, but by Albanians as well. See, for example, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* ("Ottoman History"), Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1988; Halil İnalcik, *Perandoria Osmane* ("The Ottoman Empire"), Skopje 1992; Jozef fon Hammer, *Historija Turskog* (Osmanogog) *Cartsva* ("The History of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire"), Zagreb 1979; *Historia e popullit shqiptar I-II* ("The History of the Albanian People I-II"), Institute of History and Linguistics (edited by S. Islami – K. Frashëri), 2nd edition, Prishtina 1969.

6 See, Roberto Morocco dela Roka, *Kombësia dhe feja në Shqipëri* ("Nationality and Religion in Albania"), Tirana 1994, p. 22.

7 Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri* ("Ottoman History Writers and Works"), Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1992.

8 Hasan Kaleşi, "Albanska alamiado knjizevnost" ("Albanian Aljamiado Literature"), *Prilozhi za Orijentalnu Filologiju*, XVI-XVII / 1966-67, Sarajevo, 1970, pp. 49-76; Mahmud Hysa, *Alamiada shqiptare I & II* ("Albanian Aljamiado"), Logos-A, Skopje 2000; also, Hasan Kaleshi, "Kur'ani - kryevepër e letërsisë arabe" ("The Qur'an - the Masterpiece of the Arab Literature"), in *Edukata Islame*, n. 3, pp. 27-32, Prishtina 1980-1981.

were torn to pieces and occupied by the Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians, who established their own independent states while the Albanian state was barely created.<sup>9</sup> This was during and after the Balkan Wars<sup>10</sup>. Then comes the time of Prince Wilhelm Wied<sup>11</sup>, appointed and sent by the great

- 9 November 28, 1912 marks the declaration of Independence of Albania and formation of the first Albanian government headed by Ismail Bey Qemali, and hence a new period in the history of the Albanian people. The Albanian Government of Vlora (Valona), where the independence was declared, began its activity in rather difficult international circumstances, because at the beginning of December 1912 the entire Kosova, Northern, Eastern and Central Albania up to the Shkumbin River were occupied by Serbian and Montenegrin armies. In the South, Greek troops had surrounded Yanina, occupied Çameria and aimed at other parts of Southern Albania, and their fleet had blocked the entire southern coast. Hence, the Vlora Government initially extended its power on a very limited territory that included Vlora, Fier, Lushnje, Berat and Gjirokastra where in fact there were still Ottoman soldiers. The great powers, as well as the Balkan monarchies, didn't recognize Albania's independence, and the people were forced to offer resistance against these powers and to defend their territory and independence. For more, see *Historia e popullit shqiptar II*, p. 361-402.
- 10 This war (1912-1913), like all wars, was tragic, full of treason, when the Orthodox powers, consisting of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, aware of the situation of the Ottoman Empire, waged a war against it; and thus the Balkan Muslims lost their greatest supporter. With the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and with its debacle favorable conditions were created for the realization of occupying plans of the Christian Orthodox powers of the Balkans against Albania and Macedonia. Their armies occupied many parts of the Albanian territory, inflicting massacres upon the population, mainly Muslim. During that time a hard fragmentation of the Albanian lands was done mainly through the decisions of the Conference of the Ambassadors in London in December of 1912. Regarding Albania, the Conference in its first session decided this country to be bordered with Montenegro in the North and with Greece in the South. But, at the Conference it was also decided that Serbia should be allowed to have access to the Adriatic Sea. The Balkan Allies, without considering the rule of nationality, presented great territorial pretensions that touched primarily upon the lands inhabited by Albanians. On this occasion the draft-chart was presented by Austro-Hungary and Russia, leaving many territories out of the Albanian state borders. The situation of Albania at that time was very difficult; it was the most backward country in Europe both in economic and cultural aspect, due to the difficulties of the Ottoman Empire. For more, see *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, *ibid.*; *Fjalori enciklopedik shqiptar* ("Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary") (henceforth FESH), Tirana 1985, p. 639; *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, textbook for secondary schools, Tirana 1994, pp. 136-141. Also, Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Boulder, New York & London, 2011, pp. 25-45.
- 11 On 29 July 1913 at the Ambassadors' Conference, the Great Powers decided to dispatch to Albania a Prince from European countries. For this purpose, on the same year a German, Wilhelm Wied, proposed by Austro-Hungary and Italy, was sent to Albania. After many uprisings, particularly the one of 1914-15 in Central Albania, and with the departure of Prince Wied on 5 September 1914, rebels entered in Durres where they established their "General Council" headed by Mustafa Ndroqi. First decision taken there was the dispatch of a delegation to Istanbul for demanding from the Sultan the union of Albania with Turkey, or sending a Muslim prince as his vicegerent. But, this was not implemented due to the occupation of Albania by the Serbs. For more, see, *ex.*: *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, textbook..., pp. 145-148; *Historia e popullit shqiptar II*, pp. 403-417.

European powers, and reigned as a sovereign for a short period of time. The World War I and II<sup>12</sup>, as well as the period of reign of King Ahmet Zogu<sup>13</sup>, were times of instability for the Albanian people, being deprived of the support by the great powers of that time. Several years after the end of the World War II, the period of communist rule<sup>14</sup> began, which in Albania was enforced in its “mythical” form.<sup>15</sup>

Albanians are a Balkan people belonging to three religious confessions, with the majority being Muslims, namely followers of ahl al-sunnah<sup>16</sup> of the Hanafi legal school and Maturidi dogmatics; followed by Orthodox and Catholic Christians.<sup>17</sup>

12 About the World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) on Albanian territories, see, ex.: *Historia e popullit shqiptar II*, pp. 417-444 and 633-785; FESH, p. 635 and 639. In the period between these two wars, namely on 24 February 1923, the Muslim Community of Albania was established.

13 About this 14-year period (1925-1939) there are also sufficient information in almost every book on Albanian national history. On 6 January 1925, Ahmet Zogu formed the new Government. With Ahmet Zogu, Albania from Republic on 1 September 1928 became a Kingdom. Italy was the most interested for the establishment of monarchy in Albania, because it wanted to secure its economic, political and military positions in the country and thus the position of the king was strengthened. The new government was recognized by many European countries, with the exception of the Turkish government led by Mustafa Kemal. The state, from the legal aspect, undertook many measures to implement in Albania the modern legislation of the Western countries. Thus, on 1 January 1928 the Penal Code taken from Italy was enforced; on 1 April 1929 the Albanian Civil Code was enforced, thus replacing the Ottoman Civil Code, where amendments and changes were made regarding marriage, divorce, etc., according to the Swiss Civil Code, where polygamy was prohibited, and divorce on equal terms was permitted, and marriage of nationals of different religions was permitted too, etc. See, ex.: *ibid.*, pp. 546-630.

14 As far as this period is concerned (1948-1990), which was the most artificial, the most dangerous both from the political as well as the cultural and religious perspective for the Albanian people, a lot can be said. During this period the religion as such and religious activity were not only obstructed, but they were also systematically destroyed and interpreted according to government's whims. This was the reason for the Albanian people to experience the spiritual darkness of the religious culture. It is surprising that almost everything written about this period up to 1990 was not based on facts of the very spirit of the Albanian people, regardless of their religious affiliation. This is not true only of authors from Albania, but also of many Albanian authors from Kosovo and Macedonia.

15 Nathalie Clever, *Në fillimet e nacionalizmit shqiptar – Lindja e një kombi me shumicë myslimane në Evropë* (“At the Beginnings of the Albanian Nationalism – Birth of a Nation with Muslim Majority in Europe”), *“Marin Barleti” – Tirana 2009*, pp. 39, 551-554.

16 In a short depiction given by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu in his work *Patriotizma në Tiranë*, the author gives statistics about the number of religious objects and amongst others states that: “The entire population were Muslims ahl al-sunnah”. See, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Patriotizma në Tiranë* (“Patriotism in Tirana”), republished. Tirana 1995, p. 19.

17 See, Nerkez Smilagić *Leksikon islama* (“Lexicon of Islam”), Svjetlost, Sarajevo 1990, p. 27.

In the atmosphere of national sovereignty gained in 1912, Albanian Muslims also seem to have found the necessary energy for restructuring. Hence, in 1921 "Albanian Muslim National Alliance" declared its emancipation from the Sheikh al-Islam in Istanbul, long time before the Turkish government in 1924 eventually suspended the important Islamic institution of khilafah (caliphate).<sup>18</sup> Officially the Muslim Community of Albania will be separated from the khilafah in March of 1923, in its first Congress held in Tirana, electing the Mufti of Tirana as a Grand Mufti of Albania. Nevertheless, this decision was generally not accepted by the Albanians.<sup>19</sup>

In October 1923, begins the publication of the first official journal of the Muslim Community of Albania, *Zani i Naltë*.<sup>20</sup> The journal dealt with multifaceted cultural and religious problems like, for instance, the debate initiated in its pages in 1924 between the supporters and opponents of the unveiling of women. It also gave emphasis to the issue of creation of

18 Before this period a rather messy political and religious atmosphere prevailed, to that extent that even government officers of the Ottoman Empire didn't implement the orders coming from Istanbul. This was noticeable in the conflict between the Young Turks who entered the scene at that time. The Young Turks' movement made great resistance to the religious reforms in education, and even arrested many of the theologians. Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu was among them. (This alim (religious scholar) was beaten at the city square of Tirana, before a wide mass of people, and his turban was thrown to the ground and he was offended in the lowest possible way.) For more, see Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, op. cit. Also: R. M. dela Roka, op. cit., p. 28.

19 "In a French diplomatic report it is stated that this novelty in the hierarchy of the religious institution, such as the khilafah, was not welcomed by the Muslims of the then Islamic center in Albania, namely Shkodra, who considered the institution of khilafah as sacred, although their number was insignificant compared with the rest of the country..." Ibid., p. 28.

20 *Zani i Naltë* – 'Religious journal, deals with philosophy, morals, national literature, sociology, monthly. For more, see Viron Koka, *Mendimi fetar e kombëtar në revistën "Zani i Naltë"*, "(Religious and National Thought in the journal 'Zani i Naltë') in "Feja, kultura dhe tradita islame ndër shqiptarët" ("Religion, Culture and Islamic Tradition among Albanians") (International Symposium), Prishtina 1995, pp. 419-425. Here too we notice an absurd, because though the majority of Albanians were Muslims, nonetheless the first Islamic publication came one decade later than the Catholic journal *Hylli i Dritës*. The same is true for the establishment of the Muslim Community of Albania that also came later.

It was in 1980 when I and a friend of mine visited the city of Dibra, where an Orientalist discretely told me that he had collected some copies of *Zani i Naltë* and *Kultura Islame* journals and some fascicles of *Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit*, by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu. Of course, curious as I was, and still remain to be, for that kind of literature I asked him to show them to us. He agreed after we insisted, but under one condition that we should not discuss about them, because otherwise the Yugoslav police would confiscate them from him and would sentence him. After much insisting he agreed to give me all he had to photocopy them, but since we didn't have any friend who could do the job, we had to divide the materials and to photocopy them with a friend of ours in Sarajevo who had a photocopy machine. His name was Dzihan Bukvic. After photocopying the materials we left a copy of them to our friend in Sarajevo, and took the others with ourselves to Skopje. This is a dalil about the madness of that time.

the Albanian state. *Zani i Naltë* continued to be published until 1939.<sup>21</sup> It was followed by the official newspaper of MCA *Kultura Islame*.<sup>22</sup>

As previously mentioned, to talk about the Albanian issue is rather complicated, because apart from the Albanian state there is another Albanian Muslim part living mainly in Kosova and Macedonia, of course with their own Islamic Religious Communities, which in different historical periods remained initially under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and latter of the Yugoslav Federation. Macedonia for a while passed under the jurisdiction of Bulgaria too.<sup>23</sup> All these historical periods were in no sense easy, because not only culturally, but physically too they crippled the body of Muslims. In Kosova in 1952 the “Alauddin” Madrasah was established and the publication of the journal of the Islamic Community of Kosova, *Edukata Islame*, began. In Macedonia the “Isa Beu” Madrasah was established in 1987, with the newspaper of the Islamic Community, *Hëna e Re*, which started its publication the same year.<sup>24</sup>

Religious circumstances in Albanian lands evolved with difficulties, first of all due to the overall difficulties created with the termination of the Ottoman Empire, which brought to a huge wave of migrations, not only of the general population, but the religious clergy as well. Another difficulty was the absence of Islamic religious literature in mother tongue. Disagreements among the religious clergy and leadership created various forces where everyone defended its own “ideas”, so a struggle between classical and modern theologians began, and all those who presented new ideas were accused of heresy.<sup>25</sup> At different historical period, each of

21 The *Zani i Naltë* journal states not without a sense of triumphalism the truths of the Islamic faith, while emphasizing its spread throughout the world. The insistence of the journal regarding the spread of Islam in the West, in Europe that had lost God, must be noted. “The religious thought of the West is shaken in its foundations and Islam has attracted the attention of the people in an unrestrained manner. Men like Bernard Shaw understand that at most within one hundred years Islam is destined to be the religion of the West, of England in particular”. *Zani i Naltë*, May-June 1932.

22 *Kultura Islame* – Publication of the Albanian Muslim Community, monthly religious, philosophical, literary, moral and social, No. 1, Tirana 1939.

23 Dragan Novaković, *Islamska Verska Zajednica na Jugoslavenskom prostoru 1878-1991* (“Islamic Religious Community in the Yugoslav territory 1878-1991”), JUNIR, Nish 2015, pp. 15-16, 59, 93 and 97.

24 *Edukata Islame* – Religious Quarterly, No. 1, Prishtina, 1971; *Hëna e Re*, No. 1, May, Skopje 1987.

25 Ismail Hakki Bursevi (lived between the second half of 17th century and the first quarter of the 18th century), served as religious preacher and interpreter of the Qur’an in Skopje as well. Fatih Oruç, *Ismail Hakki Bursevi'nin Ruh'u'l Beyan Tefsirinde Harikulade Olaylar* (Master thesis), Sakarya 2008, p. 8. I have heard from old theologians of Skopje a story that testifies to the great opposition between young thinkers and scholars, to whom belonged the late Ismail Hakki, and the traditionalist, conservatives.



the ruling circles demanded religion to serve them, so in the journals of the religious communities one may encounter rather "absurd" moments.<sup>26</sup> Despite all vicissitudes which Albanians Muslims passed through, they nonetheless tried to leave their mark in various fields of Islamic culture: they wrote about Islam, translated the Word of God into Albanian and even commented on it, thus creating the tradition of tafseer.

## II

### TRANSLATIONS OF THE QUR'AN IN ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

The Qur'an is the Sacred Book of Muslims, and they consider that it precedes the creation of the world and of the Arabic language itself. The Mother of the Book (Umm al-Kitab), mentioned by the Qur'an in a mysterious way, is the uncreated Qur'an, its Platonic archetype written in the Heaven not as work of God, but as His attribute or emanation. Hence, the language of the Qur'an is the arch-form that cannot be imitated. Not a prose, nor poetry, but a "perfect dictate" and "linguistic miracle" (i'jaz)<sup>27</sup>. It is a book from which all Muslim values emerge<sup>28</sup> and the newest of epochal books;<sup>29</sup> a symbol that every recipient should decode. This is the wisdom behind the well-known expressions: "Qur'an cannot be translated, but it must be translated", because each translation of the Qur'an is an inevitable reduction of its meanings, doomed to be deprived of a good portion of aesthetic values of its marvelous syntax-intoning structures,<sup>30</sup> because "it has always retained its virginity" (B. Shapati).<sup>31</sup>

The wider acquaintance with Qur'an's original and its listening and reading, its ceremonial reciting, amazes even people for whom the Qur'an is not the Word of God. The Sacred Scriptures, with their content related

26 The absurd that we mention is that at the time of the Italians, the support of Albanian Muslims for fascism was required; during communism they were required to support socialism.

27 "Revelata Hyjnore" ("Divine Revelation"), in *Kultura Islame*, No. 16, year II, 1940, pp. 81-83; Džemaludin Latić, *Stil Kur'anskog izraza* ("The Style of Qur'anic Expression"), El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2001, p. 41.

28 Paul Ricker, *Različnost kultura i različnost vremena* ("Diversity of Cultures and Diversity of Time"), *Kultura*, No. 36-37, Beograd 1977, p. 256.

29 Ibid.

30 The very fact that the Qur'an, along with the Bible and the Talmud, is the most important Scripture in the history of human culture indicates its stylistic unusualness. The Qur'an is a linguistic monument and, hence, is always a challenge for translation into any language. The Qur'an up to the present days is a literary unknown for us too, primarily due to the stylistic specifics it has, but for other reasons as well, which we do not intend to discuss at present. For more, see Ismail Bardhi, *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu dhe ekzegjeza e tij Kur'anore* ("Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu and His Qur'anic Eegesis"). "Logos-A", Skopje 1419/1998, p. 108-110.

31 Reply to the question: "A është Kur'ani Fjalë e Zotit apo jo?" ("Is Qur'an the Word of God or Not?"), in *Kultura Islame*, No. 16, year II, 1940, p. 86.

primarily to the transcendent and formally diverse world can be hardly classified within literary genres. They are sacred not because of the subjects they treat, but because of the level of inspiration, because they possess absolute certainty and because they escape to the understanding and investigation of the simple human mind.<sup>32</sup> Within the texts of those books we are facing uncertainty, allegedly incoherence, repetition, tautologies and much meaningful allusions. Their sayings, fountains of metaphysical and eschatological wisdom, can be interrupted, continue and evoke each-other. God speaks laconically, say the rabbis. "God", according to St. Augustine, "has deliberately left obscurities within the Sacred Books to which He is the inspiration – so we could be exhorted to read and study them with the greatest caution and to submit ourselves with humility due to the salvation knowledge about the limited capacities of our understanding", says Schuon.<sup>33</sup> "As if God", continues Schuon, "intending to express thousands of truths, had only tens of words at His disposal".<sup>34</sup> The Qur'an for itself, among others, says that it is a coded book (kitab markum, 83:9), and elsewhere it says that it is a clear book (kitab mubin, 5:17), and book of salvation (huden, 2:3).

The influence of the Qur'an on the life of Albanians is present since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the spread of Islam in the Albanian territories reached its momentum. Nevertheless, compared with other European peoples, the Qur'an among Albanians and Bosnians, though in majority Muslims and though not without experts in this field, was translated relatively late.<sup>35</sup> For this, let us recall, several factors played major role, among which the most important were the lack of a common alphabet; lack of the tradition of translation; religious jahiliyyah, namely the issue of permission or prohibition of the translation of the Qur'an; lack of professional institutions, etc.<sup>36</sup>

32 Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding of Islam*, London 1965.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ismail Bardhi, 1918-1988 Yılları arasında Bosna Hersek ve Kosova'da tefsir sahasında yapılan çalışmaların değerlendirilmesi, (Master thesis, unpublished), Ankara 1992.

36 The translations of the Qur'an have been a subject of great debate among Muslims, not only Albanians but of the entire Balkans. Muslims, fearing from making any errors, avoided the task of translating the Qur'an, and hence the delay in this regard. Of course, such sincerity by them was "misused" by non-Muslims, because first translations of the Qur'an in Bosnian as well as in Albanian language were made by Christians. The first incomplete translation into Bosnian (Serbian) language was done by certain Jan Čaplović in 1819, and for the complete translation in that language as first is considered Mićo Ljubibratić in 1895. The translation of the Qur'an into Bosnian language, including its commentary, yet incomplete, done by a Muslim, is that of 40 years later, in 1931 by Šukrija Alagić. For more regarding the translations of the Qur'an in Bosnian (Serbo-Croatian) language, see Mr. Feti Mehdiu, O prevodima

### *II.a. Partial Translations of the Qur'an into Albanian Language*

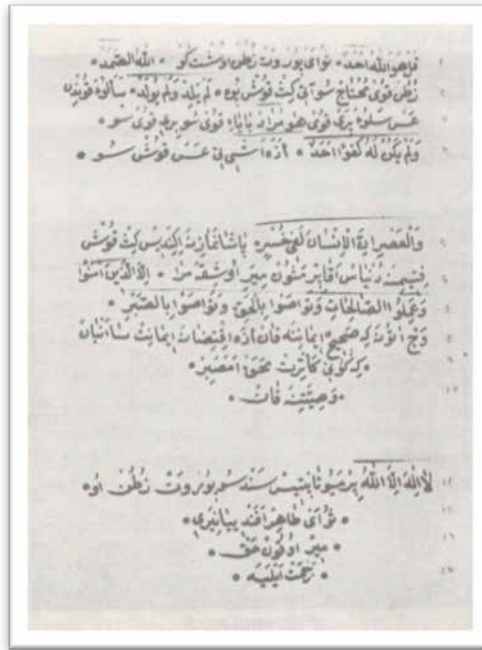
Among Albanians the oral translation of the Qur'an was present at early stage, namely its verses were translated in the folk language in religious lectures, but in written that tradition started somewhat later and we initially find the translation of only few ayahs (verses), and latter of some surahs (chapters). The complete translations of the Qur'an appeared only in recent times, i.e. at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

More recently there are many scientific researches about the translations of the Qur'an in Albanian language, and we see the emergence of names up to now unknown in this field. According to the researcher Nehat Krasniqi, the first translation ever of the Qur'an into Albanian language, remained as manuscript, is that of Tahir Efendi Gjakova.<sup>37</sup> Peculiar for this translation of 1835 is that the author has translated only two chapters, al-Asr and Ikhlas, but with Ottoman letters.



Kur'ana na srpskohrvatski jezik u odnosu na arapski tekst ("On the Translations of the Qur'an into Serbo-Croatian Language Relative to the Arabic Text"). ZBORNIK FF, XIV, Faculty of Philosophy, Prishtina 1980. From the same author see also, Srpskohrvatski prijevodi Kur'ana (Serbo-Croatian Translations of the Qur'an") (thesis at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade), which includes a wider Table regarding the translations of the Qur'an into Serbo-Croatian language. See, also, Ismail Bardhi, op. cit., pp. 28, 37-57.

- 37 Nehat Krasniqi, "Tahir Efendi Gjakova – Nismëtar i përkthimit të pjesshëm të Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe" ("Tahir Efendi Gjakova – Pioneer of the Partial Translation of the Qur'an into Albanian Language"), in Kur'ani te shqiptarët – 30 vjet nga përkthimi i parë i Kur'anit në shqip ("The Qur'an Among Albanians – 30 years from the First Translation of the Qur'an into Albanian"), Headship of ICK, Prishtina 2016, pp. 27-41 (see facsimile 6 and 7).



The first published partial translation of the Qur'an in Albanian language is considered that of Naim Frashëri, who in his work *Mësime*<sup>38</sup> has titled one Chapter "Thelb'i Kur'anit"<sup>39</sup> ("The Essence of the Qur'an"), where translation of some verses is to be found, more like an effort for poetical translation, rather than correctly; more like an inspiration rather than a translation of the verses.<sup>40</sup> Thereupon we will present bellow few examples of comparison between the translation by Feti Mehdiu and Naim Frashëri:

38 Naim Frashëri, *Mësime* ("Lessons"), Bucharest 1894. For more, see Nexhat Ibrahim, *Dimensionet kur'anore* ("Qur'anic Dimensions"), Logos-A, Skopje 2003, p. 56.

39 Naim Frashëri, *Vepra 5*, "Faik Konica", Prishtina 2000, p. 192-208; see, also, Mahmud Hysa, *op.cit.*, vol. II, Logos-A, Skopje, 2000, pp. 39-79. Naim Frashëri is one of the most renowned Albanian writers: educated in Istanbul, he was an expert in Oriental languages and used to write in those languages; he and his family were renowned with writings and translations; his brother being Sami (Shemsettin) Frashëri, author of the famous *Qamus al-A'lam*.

40 Something similar we notice later by the renowned Bosnian man of letters Mehmed Meša Selimović, who in his work "Dervish and Death" has used as a motto an excerpt of Qur'anic verses translated into Bosnian. Yet, it is very difficult to term it as translation, because the definition of the Qur'an is widely known, i.e. what does a Qur'anic verse mean and what the translation of the meanings of the Qur'an.

(Al-Fatihah: 4, 5)

“Vetëm Ty të adhurojmë, dhe vetëm nga Ti ndihmë kërkojmë.” (F.M.)

(“Only Thy we worship, and only from Thy we ask for help.”)

“Ty të falemi dhe Ty të lutemi.” (N.F.)

(“We worship Thy and we pray to Thy.”)

“Drejtona në rrugën e drejtë.” (F.M.)

(“Guide us to the Right Path.”)

“Fal-na udhën e drejtë.” (N.F.)

(“Show us the Right Path.”)

(Al-Baqarah: 111)

“Ata thonë, në xhennet nuk do të hyjnë të tjerë përveç kush është hebre ose i krishterë.” (F.M.)

(“They say, none shall enter Jannah, except who is a Jew or a Christian.”)

“Parajsa s’është vetëm për Israelinjtë, a për të Krishterëtë.” (N.F.)

(“Paradise is for none but for the Israelites, or for Christians.”)

Yet, the first, systemized translation into Albanian was done by a Christian Albanian, Ilo Mitkë Qafzezi<sup>41</sup>, and published in 1921 in Ploesti, Romania.<sup>42</sup> This translator of the Qur'an dedicates its translation to the National Compatriots of the United States of America, and in his Foreword, titled To the Albanians, which is very brief, he makes a presentation

41 Ilo Mitkë Qafëzezi (1882-1964); lived for a long time in migration. After returning to homeland, he worked as a teacher. Translated, adapted, elaborated and compiled in a folk language various historical, literary, folklore etc. works, and popular scientific brochures. Made a systematic research for documents, writings, and figures of Albanian history and culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, particularly of those centers like Voskopoja, Berat, Vithkuq, Korça; he discovered copies of manuscripts of Th. Kavalioti etc. He compiled the study “Kontribut në historinë e arsimit dhe të kulturës në Shqipëri në shekujt XVII-XIX (1617-1902)” (“Contribution to the History of Education and Culture in Albania in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries (1617-1902)”), which was published (1926) along with the comedy “Dhaskal Gjoka”. For more, see Fjalor Enciklopedik Shqiptar, Tirana, 1985, p. 886.

42 It is a phenomenon of its kind the fact that translation of the Holy Scripture among the peoples of the Balkans was initially done by non-Muslims. This is not so odd considering the translations made in other European languages, since they are spoken by Christian peoples. This was the case with Bosnian Muslims, with Pomak Muslims of Bulgaria, as well as with Albanian Muslims. For more, see Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu..., pp. 121-125.

of the method used for the translation, presenting his objectives too. This translation of 6 chapters of the Qur'an, beginning with al-Fatihah up to the chapter al-An'am, whose titles he gives in Albanian, as he does with the translation of the verses without their original in Arabic, has 126 pages.<sup>43</sup>

At the beginning of his Foreword the translator wants to bring to the attention of the reader that, allegedly, he has undertaken the translation because "it is time to know what is that mysterious 'onionskin'<sup>44</sup> that separates religiously the Mohammedan Albanians from their Christian brethren."

I. M. Qafzezi, nonetheless, admits that his translation of the Qur'an, "will have certain shortcomings, since it was not done directly from its original in Arabic", but, instead, according to his words, from English<sup>45</sup> and French<sup>46</sup>, from which he says to have taken the method of enumeration of the verses, since "Mr. Sales has not used (such method), which loses the poetic spirit of the Holy Book."<sup>47</sup> The translator notes that the Holy Book-Gospel was translated 50 years before the Qur'an. Non-translation of the Qur'an he attributes to the attitude of certain people that "translating the Qur'an in other languages is a great sin", an opinion which he personally rejects by saying that "to the present day the Qur'an can be found translated in a dozen of other languages".<sup>48</sup>

43 In common for all translated chapters is that their titles are given in translation, except for al-Fatihah which he leaves as it is and translates it as Interposition, then comes the place of descent of the chapters and the translation of Bismilah, like: In the Name of the Most Merciful God, where he has omitted the translation of one of God's attributes. Also, on this page we encounter the first note, where the transliteration of Bismilah is given in Albanian, but with flaccidities. Within the text, at the bottom of pages, the translator gives other notes as well. See Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu..., pp. 121-123.

44 It seems that with this remark the translator intends to say that the Qur'an in fact is so unimportant, like an "onionskin" and it should not be the reason for division on religious grounds of the Albanians, a fact that from the very beginning casts doubt on his sincerity or correctness in translation.

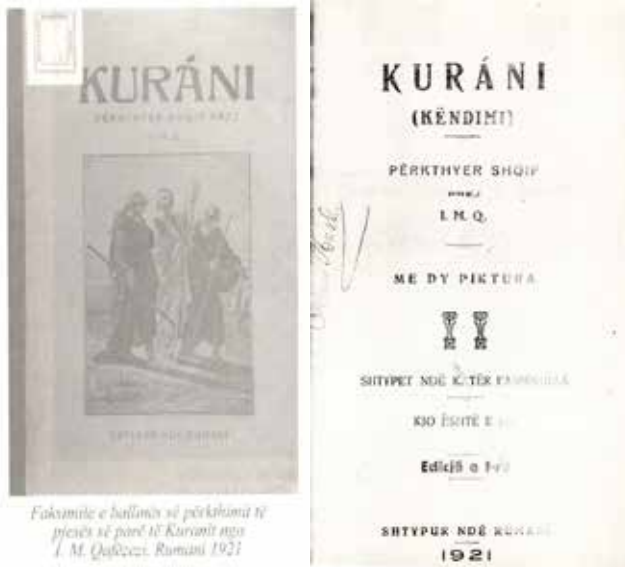
45 As a source material for his translation, I. M. Qafëzezi mentions the English translation of the Qur'an by George Sales, according to him an "experienced translator of the Holy Writ". See I. M. Qafëzezi, op. cit., p. 3.

46 From French he has used the translation by M. Savary. Ibid.

47 After admitting that he doesn't know the Arabic and that "unsurprisingly" the translation will have shortcomings, he presents indirectly the Albanian Muslim believers as "vested thickly with religious fanaticism", adding that those who are not such would forgive his errors. This expression of the translator somewhat transcends the intellectual norms and disregards the identity feeling of the Albanian believer, which of course doesn't facilitate the reading of the holy writ, i.e. its understanding. See *ibid.*

48 The translator in this Foreword shows that he had no sufficient knowledge about the history of the translation of the Qur'an by mentioning the figure of a "dozen" (equal to 12) of languages, a number which is inconsistent with the facts of the bibliography

In one of the pages of the translation of the Qur'an I. M. Qafzezi we see a picture of "The Prophet (piyamber) Muhammad with Khalid Ibn Waleed and Abu Baqr on their way to al-Madinah", which is not a tradition in the Islamic culture. Furthermore, the picture has typical Church features.<sup>49</sup>



As for the language used by the translator, it is obvious that it differs a lot from today's literary Albanian, given the fact when the translation was done. Feti Mehdiu in this regard says: "it is a little old, even for the time when this translation was published... he has used neologisms which more burden rather than enrich the Albanian language." A critical survey of this translation was also made by Xhevat Korça, according to whom "his (translator's) sentence doesn't even resemble to Albanian language." Thus, Xhevat Korça criticizes the translator for impoverishing the Albanian language as well as for insufficient knowledge of English language.<sup>50</sup>

of the translation of the Qur'an. Regarding the number of translations of the Qur'an, see O.I.C., World Bibliography of Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Qur'an from 1515-1980. See also Ymer Riza, Ç'asht Kur'ani ("What is the Qur'an"), përkthyer nga Shefqet Daiu, Elbasan 1938, pp. 63-74.

49 Something similar can be noticed with the translation of the Qur'an in Serbian language by Mićo Ljubibratić, in whose covers there is a cross. See Muhamed Hadžijahić, Bibliografske bilješke o prijevodima Kur'ana kod nas ("Bibliographical Notes about the Translation of the Qur'an among us") ("Islamska Misao"), Sarajevo 1986, No. 2; also, see Ismail Bardhi, 1918-1988 Yılları arasında..., p. 26; Halil Mehtić, "Mehmed ef. Handžić i njegov doprinos tefsirskoj znanosti" ("Mehmed ef. Hadzic and his Contribution to the Science of Tafseer"), Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, pp. 37-44., University "Zaytuna", Tunis, 2007.

50 Feti Mehdiu, Përkthimet e Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe ("Translations of the Qur'an into Albanian Language"), Logos-A, Skopje, 1996, p. 19.

Of course, that translation has raised reactions within the Muslim Community of Albania, for which the best proof is the declaration of the Grand Mufti, Haji Vehbi Dibra, which states:

“Në këto ditë, më ra me e pa e përshkue së kënduemi një përkthim nën titullin “Kurani tyrqisht”, si ky ashtu dhe një përkthim shqip që kisha lexue ma parë, më duket se janë të nxjerrë prej një përkthimi në gjuhë të huej, se përndryshe nuk ka se si të ekzistojn në to aq shumë gabime të randa e të mjerushme, sa mos u pajtue asfare me qëllimin perëndiore të Kur’anit. Sikurse dihet, Kur’ani asht Fjala e Madhnushme e Krijuesit të Gjithsisë, prandaj lypset me u përkthye madhnisht, e nuk asht pun që mbarohet me pendën e mefshtshme të mendshkurtënve. Një punë aq e rëndë ashtë kjo që edhe të ditshmit me famë e të njoftun edhe në Europë si Fahreddin Raziu me shokë kanë mbet të dridhueshëm në përmbushjen e saj. Pra, ua njoftojm atyne muslimanëve që shtyhen nga islamizma e atyne me këndue kësisoj librash, se gabimet qi duken sheshit në përkthimet e përmenduna mund t’u ngatërrojn besimin e prandaj i porositim që mos u napin randësi dhe mos t’i këndojnë fare.”<sup>51</sup>

(“These days, I saw and read a translation titled “The Qur’an in Turkish”; both this and another translation into Albanian that I had read before, seem to me that are drawn from a translation in a foreign language, otherwise there cannot be so many grave and deplorable errors, to the extent that they do not comply at all with the Providential goal of the Qur’an. As it is well known, the Qur’an is the Sublime Word of the Creator of the Universe, so it needs to be translated sublimely, so it is not a task that can be attained by a poor pen of the half-witted. It is so difficult task that even the famous men of knowledge known in Europe too, like Fahrudin Razi and his fellows, have remained quivered in fulfilling that task. Hence, we would like to notify those Muslims who are driven by their Islamism to read such books, that manifest errors in aforementioned translations could confuse their belief, so we instruct them not to give any importance to them and not to read them at all.”)

At that time among the pioneers in translating the Qur’an into Albanian language we find the most distinguished personalities in the field of Islamology, like Hafiz Ali Korça<sup>52</sup> and Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, who were

51 Ali M. Basha, *Rrugëtimi i Fesë Islame në Shqipëri (1912-1967)* (“The Journey of Islam in Albania (1912-1967)”), Tirana 2011, p. 375.

52 With his work *Kur’ani i Madhënushëm e thelbi i tij* (“The Glorious Qur’an and its Essence”) in 1926 Hafiz Ali Korça begins the publication of the translation of the Qur’an partially. Hafiz Ali Korça completed this major and important work, not only in the field of Islamology but wider, in 1920, but, due to financial reasons he didn’t begin its printing. This is made clear by himself in the Foreword of this book, where



well acquainted with Islamic sciences, as well as with the secular sciences. In the case of Hafiz Ali Korça, it must be mentioned that apart from his endeavors for translating the Qur'an and publishing it in its entirety, he has published translations of Qur'anic verses in the Islamic periodicals, like *Zani i Naltë*.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, here we will discuss more specifically the translation of the Qur'an by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, titled *Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit* ("The Creme of the Meanings of al-Qur'an al-Kareem"), as the second systematized translation in Albanian language.<sup>54</sup>

On the cover of the tafseer *Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit*, it writes: "red, reviewed and accepted by the High Council of the Shari'ah"<sup>55</sup>,

he says: "... perpara pata shkruar gjër e gjatë mjaft tefsirë. Por për qitjen e tij në dr-itë më duheshin më tepër se dy mijë napolona; pra shtypjen e këti e lashë për një kohë më vonë dhe tani e pashë më convenable (munasib) shtypjen e thelbit të H. Kur'anit." ("...earlier I had written widely a lot of tafseer. But, for bringing it to light I needed more than two thousand Napoleons (coins); so I left its printing for later and for now I saw it convenient (munasib) the printing of the essence of H. Qur'an"). This is a digest of only 15 pages. He began the publication of the translation of the Qur'an with the complete translation of the first chapter (al-Fatihah), and continued with the second chapter (al-Baqarah), by publishing only 37 ayahs. For more, see Ismail Ahmed, Hafiz Ali Korça – Jeta dhe vepra 1 ("Hafiz Ali Korça – His Life and Work 1"), Logos-A, Skopje.1999.

- 53 Translator of the Qur'an into Albanian language and a well-informed student, in a bibliographical manner, of writings and translations dealing with the Qur'an, Prof. Feti Mehdiu, says that we cannot give any opinion regarding the Translation of the Qur'an in Albanian, by Hafiz Ali Korça, which has 2.000 pages, because so far we know only about those surahs which are published in *Zani i Naltë*. See Feti Mehdiu, op. cit., pp. 30 and 44. Nonetheless, in *Zani i Naltë* there are some surahs that apart from being translated are also interpreted by Hafiz Ali Korça. See the APPENDIX at the end of this work. See also, Faik Kasollja, Bibliografi e revistave "Zani i Naltë", "Kultura Islame" dhe "Njeriu" ("Bibliography of the Journals 'Zani i Naltë', 'Kultura Islame' and 'Njeriu'"), Alsar, Istanbul 2007, pp. 129-130.
- 54 For more about Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, see Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu ve Tefsirdeki Metodu (Ph.D. thesis), University of Ankara, Theological Faculty (Ilahiyat Fakultesi), Ankara 1997. Also, Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu...
- 55 As for the importance attached to the translation of the Qur'an, we can see it from this decision by the Albanian Muslim Community: "Këshilli i Naltë i Sheriatit vendosi se është e nevojshme që përkthimi i Kur'ani kerimit në gjuhën shqipe prej z. Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, të studjohet e të shqyrtohet si në pikëpamje të kuptimit fetar dhe të përkthimit, pastaj të fillojë sa më parë të marrë masat e duhura për sigurimin e shqyrtimit dhe në pikëpamje gjuhësie. Kur të bëhet shqyrtimi i parë, do të ndodhet edhe përkthyesi, z. Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, i cili duhet të jetë i prtanishëm në çdo ditë e orë që të caktohet. Kryesia e këtij Këshilli ngarkohet me zbatimin e këtij vendimi." Myftiu i Përgjithshëm: Vehbi; Anëtarë: H. Ali e H. Ismet; Drejt. Përgj. Vakfeve: S. Vuçiterni. ("The High Council of the Shari'ah decided that it is necessary the translation of the Qur'an al-Kareem into Albanian language by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu to be studied and reviewed both from the aspect of the religious meaning as well as that of translation, than necessary measures to be taken for providing a review from the linguistic aspect. During the first reviewing, Mr. Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu must attend as well, who should be present at any determined day and hour. The Headship of this Council is obliged with the implementation of this Decision". General Mufti: Vehbi; Members: H. Ali e H. Ismet; Dir. Resp. for the Waqf: S. Vuçiterni"). See Ali M. Basha, op. cit, p. 370.

which adds to the importance of this work, since “permission” was given to it by the highest instance which was in charge for Islamic religious issues within the Muslim Community of Albania. This translation and tafseer was printed in 1929 by “Ora e Shkodrës” Press.



This work may be also found in fascicles, but latter it was published as a collection with hard cover and titled Tefsiri i Kur’ani Qerimit (“The Tafseer of al-Qur’an al-Kareem”), ornamented with a Qur’anic writing.

When we talk about this translation of the Qur’an in Albanian language and about Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu as a translator, it must be considered that he was educated in the Islamic theological schools, meaning that he learnt Ottoman (Turkish) and Arabic, a fact the proves that this is a translation from the original.

During my research in Albania I found a printed material of this work up to the page 1572 in a form of a book, which begins from page 1, i.e. the surah al-Fatihah, up to page 699, where the surah Ali-Imran ends. The second part, which I have collected in one place, begins with the first ayah of the surah al-Nisa, i.e. from page 701, and ends on page 1316, with the last ayah of the surah al-An’am. The third part begins on page 1317 with

the first ayah of the surah al-A'raf and ends on page 1572 with the 16<sup>th</sup> ayah of the surah al-Tawba, although this is not the last page of the complete tafseer.<sup>56</sup>

The translator of the Qur'an, beside not writing his name on the text, has not included any Introduction or Foreword, nor any other note that would explain the method of his work, the difficulties of the translation and alike, except on page 449, namely at the end of the surah al-Baqarah, where under the title Declaration he gives a brief note, in an effort to say something about a novelty in the method, which he would employ from that point onwards.

## Deklaratë

Për mos me ngelë gojëthatë nga të kënduemit fjalët e shëjta të Kurani Qerimit edhe ata që s' i dinë shkrojat Arabishte, ndashti e mbas këndeje, po i shkruejmë ajetet edhe me shkrojat e gjubës s' onë, sikur se e kanë bërë dhe dijetarët mysliman Hindjan. Për ata shkroja që s' i kemi, të cilat janë tetë, ju kemi vënë shëja sipër atyne që i kemi dhe që afrohen në zë m'ata që na mungojnë :

« ء »	« ë »	وَأَمْرٌ	Ve-ëmurr
« ح »	« h' »	إِفْتَحَ	Iftah'
« خ »	« H' »	بِالْحَيْرِ	Bil-aH'ajr
« ص »	« s' »	وَأَصْبِرْ	Vas'bir
« ض »	« Dh' »	فَأَضْرِبْ	FaDh'ribú
« ط »	« t' »	صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ	S'irat'al-ledhífe
« ظ »	« dh' »	الظَّاهِرِ	Edh'dh'ahir
« ع »	« à »	نَعْبُدُ	Naábudu

Për artikull «ال» Elif Lam, që shkruhet por diku nuk këndohet fare dhe diku këndohet vetëm Lami, edhe për (ا) Elifat që shkruhen e s' këndohen, kimi shkruen shëjen (') apostrof, për të shënue se aty, diçka mungon.

Për shembëll :

« وَالشَّمْسِ »	Ve'sh-shemsi
« وَالْقَمَرِ »	Ve'lfexhri
« وَادِّعُوا اللَّهَ »	Ve'dàu'll-llahe

56 Beside the aforementioned parts of the Qur'an, translated by Hafiz I. Dalliu, we have the translation by him of the 22 last surahs of the Qur'an, which this translator had published in the book Libri i së falmes ("The Book of Prayer"), with transliteration in Albanian letters, namely with the new method that he explains in a particular place in Ajka e kuptimeve..., for which it will be discussed in following. See, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Libri i së falmes, Tirana 1937.

As a general pattern, at the beginning of the translation of each surah stands Bismillah in Arabic, including a note about the place of revelation, and somewhere even the reason for the revelation of a given surah. The translation sometimes takes one or more ayahs of a surah, which he has both in Arabic and translated into Albanian, and this is clear up to page 451, from where the surah Ali Imran begins, namely after the above-mentioned Declaration, from where alongside the original in Arabic the text of the ayah is also given in transliteration with Albanian letters, than follows the translation of the ayah and continues with explanations, in some places excerpts, and in others he gives the translation of the ayah under Thalbi i kuptimit (“Essence of the Meaning”). Also, it must be mentioned that the translator doesn’t enumerate the ayahs.

From the very beginning of the Declaration, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu makes it clear that in the following he would change the method of translation only for the sake of those Albanian Muslims who are not familiar with Arabic letters, and who are many in number, that they too might not remain dull, and so he begins to give the transliteration of the ayahs with Albanian letters. He found support for this new method, as he says, with the Indian Muslim scholars.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of this Declaration, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu mentions that with regard to the exactness of reading or beautiful reciting of the Qur’an (tajweed), he would fill this vacuum with a separate book. Here the translator surely means of his work Tajweed.<sup>58</sup>

It would be appropriate at this point to throw a glance to how Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu has translated some terms, which are often mentioned in the Qur’an.

To begin with, let see how he translates the noun Allah:

57 Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Ajka e kuptimevet të Kur’ani Qerimit*, p. 449. In this text, apart from what was said above, there are some other features about the writing and use of Arabic letters in their transliteration into Albanian, like, for instance Elif/Lam (in the Arabic writing), i.e. where they are to be read and where not. Further he explains that instead of y he has used u, based on the Arabic pronunciation, and instead of e in hard letters he uses a, and in light letters uses e. As for letters that are followed by voiced letters (hurufi sawtiyah), like Elif, Ya and Waw, the translator says that he would use a particular sign, by giving an example for that. Ibid, pp. 449-451.

58 *Texhvijdi i Përkthyt prej H. Ibrahim Dalliu* (“Tajweed translated by H. Ibrahim Dalliu”), published in Tirana in 1337/1921 at the Sanxhakçian Press, Tirana. The booklet has 16 pages. It contains systematization according to subjects and has a printed Arabic texts and letters (not-handwritten), with a drawing of the formation-place of each sound (letter).

By all means, this is a translation of the well known Tajweed in the entire Ottoman Empire, especially in the Balkans, namely the Karabash Tecvidi. For more, see Ismail Bardhi, op. cit., p. 94.

Allah: He sometimes translates it as God, Lord, and sometimes leaves it as it is – Allah.

“Mynafikët mundohen gjuja me gabue Zotin me dhëlpni edhe ata qi besojnë, por për veç vehtes së tyne s’mund gabojnë farë njeriu, mirë po këtë ata s’e kuptojnë”. (al-Baqarah, 9)<sup>59</sup>

(They (hypocrites) seek to deceive God and those who believe, but they deceive none but themselves, though they are not aware)

“Në zemër të mynafikvet ka një lëngatë, dhe Perëndija lëngatën e atyne ju a shtojë, edhe për ta ka një azab pikllues për shkak të rrenvet që flasin”. (al-Baqarah, 10)<sup>60</sup>

(In their (hypocrites’) hearts is sickness, and Lord has increased their sickness. They will have a painful punishment because of their denial)

“Prap kujtonja edhe atë kohe kur qi ju i thatë: Or Musa! Nuk të besojmë ty kurr se si pa mos e pa Allahun përfushë...” (al-Baqarah, 55)<sup>61</sup>

(And recall that you said, “O Moses, we will not believe in you unless we see Allah plainly.”)

He leaves the word Allah (lafzatu’l-Jalal) as it is while translating the Bismillah, namely: In the Name of Allah, but within the translation of the Qur’anic text we come across more frequently with the terms God and Lord.<sup>62</sup>

Ilah: This term is translated as the worshiped One.

“...Na do ta adhërojm t’adhëruemin t’at...” (al-Baqarah, 133)<sup>63</sup>

(We will worship the One you worship)

Rabb: At al-Fatihah he translates it as God and Creator, while at al-Baqarah: 131, he translates the same as Lord.

“Çdo lavd asht i posaçëm për Allahun, Zot i botavet mbarë” (al-Fatihah, 1)<sup>64</sup>

“Lavd’ i gjithë lavdruesvet asht i posaçëm për Allahun, Krijuesin e gjithsis”. (al-Fatihah, 1)<sup>65</sup>

(Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds)

“Njat herë e zgjodhi Perëndija Ibrahimin”. (el-Bekare, 131)<sup>66</sup>

59 Ibid., p. 48 (underlining is added).

60 Ibid., p. 50 (underlining is added).

61 Ibid., p. 124 (underlining is added).

62 In the Fjalori i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (“The Dictionary of Contemporary Albanian Language”), regarding the word Allah it is said: “Allah-u m. reg. outd., God” .... And for Zot (God): Zot-i ... “the highest supernatural being...” See: Fjalori ..., Tirana 1980, pp. 26, 1401-2.

63 H.I. Dalliu, Ibid., p. 201 (underlining is added).

64 Ibid., p. 4 (underlining is added).

65 Ibid., p. 7 (underlining is added).

66 Po aty., f. 199 (underlining is added).

(When his Lord said to him (Abraham), "Submit!")

Kafarah (K-f-r): He sometimes leaves it as it is qufr, and elsewhere he translates it as negation.

"... halbuqi Sylejmani nuk ka ba qyfer, por djejt bajshin qyfer..." (al-Baqarah, 102)<sup>67</sup>

(It was not Solomon who made qufr, but it was the devils who made qufr)

".. pra kush do qe të mohojë ..." (al-Baqarah, 256)<sup>68</sup>

(Whoever renounces evil and believes)

Kitab: We find this term somewhere translated as book, and elsewhere as Qur'an. He leaves the same term in original when talking about the People of the Book (ahl al-kitab):

"... asht nji libër..." (al-Baqarah, 2)<sup>69</sup>

(This is the Book)

"Ai Zot asht qi e ka zbritur Kur'anin mbi ty." (Âli Imran, 7)<sup>70</sup>

(It is He who revealed to you the Qur'an)

Eslemeh: This term can be found as submission, as well as stand and obedience:

"... por ai njeri qi e dorzon vehten e vet për Zotin..." (al-Baqarah, 112)<sup>71</sup>  
(whoever submits himself to God)

"... Qëndro mbi muslimani dhe vazhdo në bindje! Ibrahim tha: Ju bindish Zotit të gjithësisë." (al-Baqarah, 131)<sup>72</sup>

(When his Lord said to him, "Submit!" He said, "I have submitted to the Lord of the Worlds.")

These examples are only a brief illustration, showing the method of translation employed by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, namely his style which still remains attractive for reading. The aforementioned examples are by no means the only ones of this kind, but with regard to the translation of nouns, words, the translator uses the above methods, of course only for translation. Also, the author himself experiences the ambiguity of certain words, and in some places mentions for a certain word that it has other meanings too.<sup>73</sup>

67 Ibid., p. 161 (underlining is added).

68 Ibid., p. 396 (underlining is added).

69 Ibid., p. 29 (underlining is added).

70 Ibid., p. 457-458 (underlining is added).

71 Ibid., p. 178 (underlining is added).

72 Ibid., p. 200 (underlining is added).

73 H. Ibrahim Dalliu in all of this work, apart from the translation given immediately after the original ayah, gives also complementary notes where he makes an additional

Indeed, this translation occupies an important place in the culture of Albanian Muslims and can be also attached to the corpus of numerous translations of the Qur'an in the world. Nonetheless, according to Feti Mehdiu, this translation in certain respects "does not fulfill the criteria of scientific translations".<sup>74</sup>

At the conclusion it must be noted again that beside the aforementioned partial translations of the Qur'an into Albanian language, there are other similar translations too, particularly the translations of the surah Ya-Sin as a separate edition, or within the books of *Ilmihal*.<sup>75</sup>

### ***II. b. Complete Translations of the Qur'an***

As for the complete translations of the Qur'an into Albanian language, as mentioned above, they began to appear rather late, namely by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century and so far 5 such translations are published:

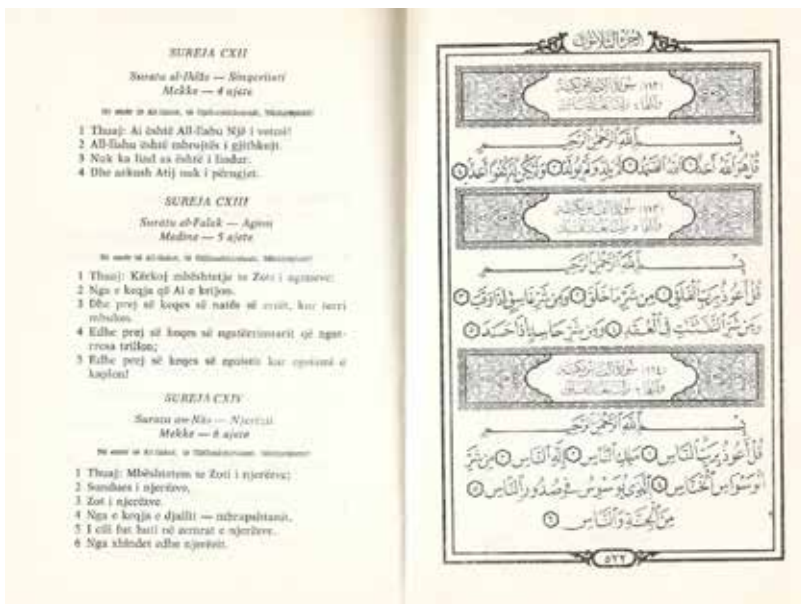
1. Kur'an-i ("The Qur'an"), translated by Feti Mehdiu, published by the Headship of the Islamic Community of Kosova, Prishtina 1985;<sup>76</sup>

translation for facilitating the understanding of the meaning of that ayah, like for the words iman, ghayb, esleme, harth, afw, bitane, hasene etc. See: *Ibid.*, p. 33-36, 200, 332, 448, 603, 607 etc.

74 Feti Mehdiu, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

75 In 1959 we have the translation of the surah Ya-Sin, by Hafiz Bajram Agani and Mehmet Gjevori, as a part of the book *Mësimi i shkurtë mbi namazin dhe Jasin-i Sherifi* ("A Short Lesson on Prayer and Yasin-i Sherif"), by Sulejman Kemura; also Sherif. Ef. Ahmeti, *Përkthimi dhe komentimi i Jasinit* ("Translation and commentary of Yasin") (1972) etc. For more, see Feti Mehdiu, *op. cit.*, p. 30, 31, 36.

76 The first completed translation of the Qur'an into Albanian language, by Feti Mehdiu, has 878 pages; and it was printed in 10.000 copies in A5 format. Reviewers of the translation are Bahri Aliu, Idriz Murati and Tefik Gashi; linguistic editors are Jusuf Gashi, Elez Ismaili and Mehmet Halimi. This work has a Foreword by Jetish Bajrami, the than head of the Islamic Community of Kosova; after the Foreword there is a translated piece from *Duh Islama* ("The Spirit of Islam") by Fazlur Rahman, titled *What is the Qur'an*. At the end, pp. 825-848, the translator gives notes taken from the translation of the Qur'an in Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian) language by Besim Korkut. On p. 849 there is a note with the numbers of the ayahs where sujud (prostration) must be performed, while on pp. 851-852 there is an explanation of some specific Qur'anic terms. On pp. 853-860 there is a historical chronology titled *Ndihmesë për ta kuptuar Kur'anin – Disa njohuri nga jeta e Muhammedit (a.s.)* ("Contribution to Understanding of the Qur'an – Some knowledge from the life of Muhammad (a.s.)"), followed by a piece about the Women of the Prophet Muhammad and the afterword on the occasion of the first edition. On pp. 867-874 is the Index of names, and at the end the table of contents. This edition contains only the translation of the ayahs into Albanian, without the original text, while the surahs are also given in roman numbering. This translation had several reprints with corrections and is well accepted among both intellectual circles and among the believers.



2. Kur'ani i Madhëruar ("The Glorious Qur'an"), translated by Prof. Hasan I. Nahi, published by the translator, Prishtina 1988.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Kur'ani i Madhëruar ("The Glorious Qur'an"), translated by Hasan ef. Nahi has 612 pages and 34 additional pages containing the Foreword by Sadri Prestreshi, a Word about the translation of the Qur'an by the translator, a biography of Muhammad (a.s.), then follows the Table of Contents according to the number of surahs and subjects according to the surahs. According to the translator, this translation was done from the original Arabic, and the text goes from the right to the left, like the original. It was printed in 5.000 copies, reviewers are Adem Hoxha and Nuhi Hajrullahu; linguistic editors are Mehmet Halimi and Nexhat ef. Nahi. This translation had also several reprints with corrections.



# KUR'ANI I MADHËRUAR

E përkthet nga arabishtja  
Prof. Hasan I. Nahi

Prishtinë, 1988

610 Xhytë 30

Sureja 112 — El-İhlas  
Mekke — 4 Ajete  
Bismil-Lah-Rahman-Rahim!

1. Thua: «Perëndia është Një! 2. Perëndisi i drejtëbën për çdo gjë! 3. (Ai) nuk ka lindur prej ndokujt, as nuk ka lindur kështu, 4. dhe askush nuk i gjason Atij!»

Sureja 113 — El-İfelek  
Medina — 3 Ajete  
Bismil-Lah-Rahman-Rahim!

1. Thua: «I lutem dhe Mbështetjen të Zotit i agimit 2. që të më mbrojë nga shërrët i të gjitha krijesave, 3. dhe prej shërrit të natës kur kapton tërrën, 4. dhe prej shërrit të fjalëve që fryjnë në syje (bëjnë magji), 5. dhe nga shërrët i zillqarit kur e shfaq zillëntë»

Sureja 114 — En-Nas  
Mekke — 6 Ajete  
Bismil-Lah-Rahman-Rahim!

1. Thua: «I lutem dhe i Mbështetjen Zotit të njerëzve, 2. Sundimtarit të njerëzve, 3. Perëndisë së njerëzve, 4. nga shërrët i djallit, bezdisës, 5. i cili fshihet në dyshime të shpirtit të njerëzve, — 6. prej shërrëve dhe prej njerëzve!»

3. Kur'an-i, përkthim me komentim ("The Qur'an – Translation with Commentary"), translated and commented by h. Sherif Ahmeti, published by the Headship of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, Prishtina 1988,<sup>78</sup>



78 Kur'an-i – Përkthim me komentim ("The Qur'an – Translation with Commentary") by h. Sherif Ahmeti has 903 pages. Reviewers are Haji Hafiz Muhamet Gashi, muderris and Miftar Ajdini; linguistic editors are Mehmet Halimi, Shefkije Islamaj and Ragip Mulaku. This translation was reprinted in Cairo and Saudi Arabia. At the beginning is the Table of Contents and than an Foreword by Jetish Bajrami; follows Vështrim rreth Kur'anit ("Overview about the Qur'an") by the translator. The text of the translation begins on p. 26 and ends at p. 894. At the end there are some Historical notes (pp. 895-899) and the Word of the Translator. As can be seen from the title of this work, it also contains some commentary, it has been reprinted several times and has wide circulation among the Muslim believers and wider.

4. Kur'ani i Shenjtë – përkthim e komentim (“The Holy Qur’an – Translation and Commentary”), translated by Muhammad Zakariah Khan, Islamabad – Pakistan 1990,<sup>79</sup> and

5. Kur'ani me përkthim në gjuhën shqipe (“The Qur’an with Translation into Albanian Language”), translated by Mufti Salih Ferhat Hoxha, published by P.H. “Logos-A”, Skopje 2016.<sup>80</sup>



79 Translated and commented by Muhammad Zakaria Khan; published under the supervision of Hazrat Mirzah Tahir Ahmad, Islam International Publication, L.T.D., Islamabad, Sheephatch Lane, Tilford, Surrey, GU10 2AQ, UK, 1990, 893 pages. Regarding this translation we can say that it is completely tendentious and in an anti-Islamic spirit, because the Ahmadiya/Qadiyaniyya is a movement whose teachings are based on religious suspicions, hence the ahl al-sunnah have disregarded this movement. I remember that around 1975 among our local Muslims one could hear that we had to be careful, because some suspicious translations of the Qur’an appeared, and this was in fact about the influence of Gholam Ahmad on the translation of the Qur’an in Bosnian language (by Dz. Caushevic). For more, see: Emin Behrami, Qasje studimore rreth katër përkthimeve të Kur’anit në gjuhën shqipe (“Research Approach on four Translations of the Qur’an into Albanian Language”), Prishtina 1997, Chapter Four, p. 549 onward. See, also, Feti Mehdiu, op. cit., pp. 79-88.

80 Kur’ani me përkthim në gjuhën shqipe (“The Qur’an with Translation into Albanian Language”), translated by Mufti Salif Ferhat Hoxha, 1239 pages, with “Two Words” by the publisher and “Foreword” by Ismail Ahmeti. At the end there is the Supplication of Hatme and little biography about the translator. For more about this translator, see ex.: “Myfti Salih Ferhat Hoxha (1917-1995) – me rastin e 20-vjetorit të vdekjes” (“On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of his demise”) (<http://www.zeriislam.com/artikulli.php?id=3053>).

Beside these five, there are in circulation some other translations as well, like the translation by anonymous translators<sup>81</sup>; two translated from Bosnian language<sup>82</sup>; one from Turkish<sup>83</sup> and one which appears to be the first translation, unpublished yet.<sup>84</sup>

When we speak about the first published complete translations of the Qur'an in Albanian language I feel obliged to say something about the emotions I experienced when they were firstly presented to the wide public, at a time when even the Islamic literature in Albanian language was very scarce. At the time when the first translation of the Qur'an into Albanian language by Feti Mehdiu appeared,<sup>85</sup> namely in 1985, nobody cared from which language it was translated, because it was a kind of "revolution" in itself, since it opened the doors for reading, studying and understanding the Qur'an. Latter, in 1988, the translation of the Qur'an by muderris Sherif Ahmeti was published, a classical bright-minded alim (scholar) and hoja (religious teacher) of all translators of the Qur'an among Albanians of Kosova and Macedonia. This translation brought a kind of freshness, because it contained also a commentary. The same year, i.e. in 1988, another translation of the Qur'an was published, that by Hasan ef. Nahi, a good connoisseur of the Arabic language from the renowned school of Islamic knowledge – the Al-Azhar University.

The translation of the Qur'an into Albanian language has passed through those "delivery" pains experienced by all translators in other languages, with the only difference maybe that in Albanian language it happened latter. This becomes clear when one reads the Afterword of the translation of the Qur'an by Sherif ef. Ahmeti, where he himself states, "I have tried to uphold exactly to the original in Arabic, both in translation

81 Shpjegim i Kuptimeve të Kur'anit të Lartë në Gjuhën Shqipe ("Explanation of the Meanings of the Exalted Qur'an in Albanian Language") (Versioni i përmbledhur i At-Tabari, Al-Kurtubi dhe Ibn-Kethir me komente nga Sahih Al-Bukhari, përmbledhur në një vëllim, përkthyer në gjuhën shqipe nga një grup përkthyesish pranë Darussalam), (a Summary Version of Al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir with comments from Sahih al-Bukhari, summarized in one volume; translated into Albanian by a group of translators from Darussalam), Riad, 2000.

82 Kur'ani i Madhërihëm – tentim për ta kuptuar ("The Glorious Qur'an – Attempt for Understanding it"), by Hafiz Muhamed Pandza and Dzemaludin Caushevic (translated from Bosnian by Avdi Berisha) and Kur'ani me përkthim në boshnjakishte ("The Qur'an with Translation into Bosnian"), by Enes Karic translated by Selim Sylejmani. None of these two translators are known in the filed of translation, nor of Qur'anology. For more, see Kur'ani te shqiptarët..., pp. 123-126.

83 Translation from Turkish of the Qur'an by Emin Imer, published in Istanbul. Ibid.

84 Translated by Muharem Blakçori (1894-1968). Ibid.

85 Dr. Nuredin Ahmeti, "Jehona e përkthimit komplet të Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe në qaqet intelektuale shqiptare" ("The Echo of the Complete Translation of the Qur'an in the Albanian intellectual Circles"), in Kur'ani te shqiptarët, pp. 219-240.

as well as in the commentary and to be as faithful as possible to the reality. I'm aware that I bear responsibility before God and before the readers, but the desire that Albanian readers should too have before them a translation with a commentary in our language, prevailed over the fear of responsibility. Therefore, with the intention of offering to the mass of believers a light, at least as that of a candle, for their joyful path, I made a translation with a short commentary, so the reader could understand it easier..." Something similar we see at Hasan ef. Nahi's translation, who at the Foreword of his translation writes, "Some scholars used to say that it is not allowed to translate the Qur'an literally, and the translation with commentary is mandatory for theologians. Many scholars refrain from translation, because they are afraid that it is a difficult and great task and that they may not perform it properly..."<sup>86</sup>

One may often hear remarks that translation of the Qur'an is difficult to understand. These remarks should not be taken lightly, because the reader should too, like the translator himself, experience the same "pain" by reading both the Qur'an and its translation. This in no way means that the translation is the Qur'an, but I'm talking about that dimension that has occupied its place in the Muslim Kalam, like the issue of time, so in the Muslim vocabulary one may have come across with the saying "don't offend the time, because time is God Himself". In such context the words of God do not pass through those phases that we conceive as time. When God utters His Word, He is not doing that from a depository of timely or lexical words, but He gives to each word its spirit, its meaning. Hence, Qur'anic words with each reading give new meanings. This makes the Qur'an what it is; this takes the power of identity from a language, so it remains simply that – a language; this makes God's Word all-encompassing. In relation with this we may recall the Qur'anic verse where God says: "Surely We revealed the Message, and We will surely preserve it"; or the 29 verse of the surah al-Rahman: "kul-lu yawmin huwe fi sha'n", meaning that each ayah of the Qur'an descends in continuance by giving a new spirit to a word.<sup>87</sup>

Regarding the translation of the Qur'an we have a definition which is very important for the Qur'anologists so we are quoting it in following:

86 Regarding observations and remarks on these translations, see ex.: Hajrullah Hoxha, "Disa konstatime për përthimet e para të Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe" ("Some Findings about the First Translations of the Qur'an into Albanian Language"), in *Kur'ani te shqiptarët...*, pp. 165-181. Also, Prof. Isa Bajçinca, "Mbi përthimin e Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe" ("On the Translation of the Qur'an into Albanian Language"), *"URA"* journal, No. 4, Spring-Summer, Tirana 2010, edition of the "Qendra Shqiptare për Studime Orientale" ("Albanian Center for Oriental Studies").

87 Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu..., pp. 20-31.

“Every translation of the Qur'an proclaims its own inadequacy, For it must necessarily include those verses which are clear in their emphasis that the Word of God was revealed to Muhammad in the Arabic tongue. ‘Verily, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an, haply ye will comprehend it’ (Qur'an, 43:3). Every translation in any language, classical or modern, foreign or Islamic, includes a score or so verses in different chapters which enshrine the same or similar pronouncement.<sup>1</sup> Their total import is that any translation, like any commentary in Arabic or in any other language, is no more than an approximation of the meaning of the Qur'an, but not the Qur'an itself.”<sup>88</sup>

The “war” between the translation and the meaning of the Qur'an is evident, but it is at the same time painful to see today translations by unknown translators or done non-institutionally, so unfortunately we are confronted with a very painful situation, i.e. ad hoc translations. The linguistic, intellectual, cultural responsibility have closed the doors for individual translations of the Holy Scripture; and the process of its translation has to pass through more mature, more aware phases that would be able to fill the gap of that given moment, “sha'n”, because for us too this word is meaningful. This is a demand put forth also by the secular intellectuals, let alone the Muslim religious intellectuals of the institutional domain. The language of the Qur'an is a huge source that enriches the vocabulary of every language, while giving to it a new dimension; it keeps the language alive and sweet for human mind, heart and soul.<sup>89</sup>

### III

#### THE TRADITION OF THE QUR'ANIC *TAFSEER* AMONG ALBANIANS

Every translator of the Qur'an has experienced the difficulty which the Holy Scripture bares in it, and the issue is not only to translate the Word, since there is more to it, something that transcends these dimensions, we are talking about the translation of the Qur'an for the human ear, eye, and heart. This is similar, for instance, to the effort of “translating” the beauty of nature. In addition to this, the Qur'an has a specific style, a specific sounding, a specific coloring of the words and due to this the translators suffer severe trembling, great fear, not because they do not understand it, but because with each reading of the Holy Scripture they understand something new, something different from what has been translated. This

88 A.L. Tibawi, “Is the Qur'an Translatable?” in *Muslim World*, LII, 1962, p. 1.

89 Ismail Bardhi, “Terminologjia teologjike si problem” (“Theological Terminology as a Problem”), Academy of Science and Arts of Kosova, FSHI, Prishtina 2006.

is the reason for the necessity of commenting the Qur'an, among Albanians too, where we see the development of the tafseer, or Qur'anic exegesis, between the traditional and "modern".<sup>90</sup>

The Qur'an itself says that it consists of ayahs which are muhkam (with evident meaning) and mutashabih (which can be hardly understood)<sup>91</sup>, namely lucid and allegorical verses.<sup>92</sup> It is because of this that even the Arabs of the time when the Qur'an was revealed, and it was revealed in Arabic, due to the need for better understanding of some revealed ayahs, often addressed the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to explain to them their meanings,<sup>93</sup> and this makes the Prophet Muhammad the first mufassir.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, this means that knowledge only of the Qur'anic Arabic is insufficient for understanding the meanings of the Qur'an too. In this regard there is also the issue of many dialects of the Arabic language, which continue to exist in the Arabic-speaking areas to the present days.<sup>95</sup> Hence, the need for commenting or interpretation of the Qur'an for those who lack the slightest knowledge of Arabic becomes even more important.

During the Ottoman Empire there were, undoubtedly, writings in Albanian and Ottoman languages by Albanian authors<sup>96</sup>, but, unfortunately, those manuscripts have remained between oblivion and destruction.<sup>97</sup> Nonetheless, this was followed by the new period when, with the establishment of the new alphabet, begins the translation and even the interpretation of the Qur'an among Albanians. It is the most serious school in this area, because many of the commentators of the Qur'an were educated in the renowned theological schools of Istanbul. Hence we may say that they were students of the Istanbul's school and in their translations the spirit of this classical and modern tradition of the time may be sensed.

90 For more, see Ismail Bardhi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu..., pp. 145-147.

91 See, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit*, p. 458.

92 Qur'an, Âli Imran 7.

93 İsmail Cerrahoğlu, op. cit., p. 17; Ebi Muhammed Sejjid Ibrahim bin Ebu Amuh, et-Tefsiru-n-Nabawiyi li-l-Qur'ani-l-Kerim, Tanta-Cairo, 1990; Nerkez Smailagić, *Uvod u Kur'an* ("Introduction to the Qur'an"), pp. 135-141.

94 İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Tarihi I*, pp. 41-70.

95 For more, see İsmail Cerrahoğlu, op. cit., pp. 16-23.

96 We are discussing about a very long period, and not only about translators and interpreters of the Qur'an, because tafseer was taught even in the Ottoman schools/madrasahs in Albanian territories. For more, see Ismail Bardhi, *1918-1988 Yillari arasinda...* pp. 1-34. Also, Dr. Sadik Mehmeti, "Një dorëshkrim i çmuar i tefsirit të Imam Bejdaviut në Arkivin e Kosovës" ("A Precious Manuscript of the Tafseer of Imam Baydawi at the Kosova Archive"), in *Kur'ani te shqiptarët*, pp. 59-73.

97 Regarding these, see ex. Katib Çelebi, *Keshfuz-Zunun*, Maarif Matbaasi, Istanbul 1943, v. II; also, Franc Babinger, *ibid.*; Mr. Sc. Sadik Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale në Arkivin e Kosovës* ("Oriental Manuscripts at the Kosova Archive"), DAK, Prishtina 2008.

This school continued until after the World War Two, when we witness a discontinuation of several decades.

In the following we will mention the names of some of these scholars who published their works in the field of translation and tafseer of the Qur'an in journals *Zani i Naltë* and *Kultura Islame*, both publications of the Muslim Community of Albania, like, Hafiz Ali Korça, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, h. Vehbi Dibra, Hafiz Ali Kraja, Sadik Bega, Haki Sharofi etc. After a certain time distance among Albanians in Kosova, h. Sherif Ahmeti excels as mufassir.<sup>98</sup>

While reading and analyzing the works of tafseer in Albanian language, we encounter the sources mentioned by Albanian commentators, sometimes mentioning only the names of Muslim mufassirs, and sometimes the titles of their works. Among the most frequently quoted mufassirs are Mujahid, Taberi<sup>99</sup>, Ibn Kathir, Fahrurddin al-Razi<sup>100</sup>, Qadi Baydawi<sup>101</sup>, Abu Suud Efendi<sup>102</sup>, Nimetullah efendi<sup>103</sup>; and the tafseers are Tafseer Hazini<sup>104</sup>, Madarik<sup>105</sup>, Fat'hu-l-Bayan, and to a lesser extent Hulasatu-l-Bayan fi-t-Tafseer al-Qur'an<sup>106</sup> by Muhammad Vehbi efendi Konyali, as well as Ruhu'l-Bayan by Ismail Haqqi Bursevi.<sup>107</sup> So, by looking at the methods of these mufassirs the method of Albanian commentators becomes much clear.

By looking at the names of the aforementioned mufassirs, obviously the Albanian commentators have used wide range of tafseer literature both of the tafseer rivayah and tafseer dirayah. To the first group belong the tafseers of Mujahid and that of al-Taberi, while to the second group

98 Sabri Bajgora, "Kontributi i ulemave shqiptarë në fushën e tefsirit" ("Contribution of the Albanian Ulama in the Field of Tafseer"), në *Kur'ani te shqiptarët*, f. 43-57. As for this author, it must be noted that he is among those who follow the interpretation method established by the renowned mufassir Sherif ef. Ahmeti, and publishes his works Islamic periodicals, like *Edukata Islame*, *Takvimi* and *Dituria Islame*.

99 Muhammad bin Jarir al-Taberi, *Jamiu-l-Bayan an ta'wili-l-Qur'an*.

100 Fahrurddin er-Razi, *Mefatihul-Gayb (Tefsiru-l-Kebir)*.

101 al-Baydawi, *Anwaru-t-Tanzil wa asraru-t-ta'wil*. This is among the tafseers which was widely used among our people, and it can be found in almost all libraries.

102 Abu Suud, *Irshadu-l-akli salim ila mazaya-l-Kitabi-l-Kerim*.

103 Baba Nimetullah bin Muhammed al-Nahjivani, *al-Fawatihu-l-Ilahiyyah va-l-mefatihul-ghaybiyyah al-Mudihatu li-l-Kelimi'l-Qur'aniyyah wa-l-hikemi-l-Furqaniyyah*.

104 The original title of this work is *Lubabu-t-Ta'wil fi ma'ani-t-Tanzil*, by al-Hazini.

105 *Medariku-t-Tanzil wa haqaiqu-t-Ta'wil*, by al-Nasafi.

106 The tafseer of Muhammed Vehbi (Konyali) efendi, titled *Hulasatu-l-Bayan fi-t-Tafsiri-l-Qur'an* is among the most used and read tafseers in these parts, and it still continues to be read in circles called "home madrasah" or "classical madrasah". Another interesting thing is that this mufassir was a contemporary of Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, meaning that the tafseers of Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu and Muhammad Vehbi Konjalli belonged to the same period.

107 Muderris Sherif ef. Ahmeti frequently quotes this tafseer as reference.

(rational tafseer) the tafseers of Fahrurddin al-Razi, Qadi Baydawi, Abu Suud Efendi etc.<sup>108</sup>

In the writings of the aforementioned authors, high refinement and good knowledge of the substance of the Qur'an is evident, beginning with the rules required for a mufassir, like faith, knowledge of religious subjects in general, knowledge of the issue of nasih and mansuh or abrogation, of the Arabic language; and also the subject they discuss corresponds with a center of deep spirituality, like belief and human soul.

It is an established fact that each researcher and teacher of the science of tafseer must be well acquainted with asbab al-nuzul, or the reason of the descending of the ayahs and, as we already mentioned, the aspect of naskh and mansukh. It seems that we are all looking at this only in an unreachable dimension, namely only at that side that God has kept for Himself as a warrantor of His Word; but, I believe that it has also "our" side, namely it is enabled for us. If we wish to understand the Qur'an with its eternal dimension as the Word of God, we must put this phenomenon within ourselves and there to see what asbab al-nuzul and nasikh mansukh mean. This manner of understanding paves the way for upholding our view on the eternal values that do not touch upon the beginning or the end of creation, i.e. of man, the tabiatullah.

The asbab al-nuzul on the horizontal plane presents, I would say, a "limited" meaning, though necessary for understanding and experiencing the Word of God, while nasikh mansukh (abrogation), apart from the rational "side" gives or creates an opportunity for much clearer, easier, ezejian understanding of the Revelation itself, because it enables new meanings for "the new". In the sayfahs of the tafseer in Albanian language our Albanian mufassirs have penetrated into this field and have tried professionally to answer the "phenomena" of the time, beginning with the scientific "revolution", political atheism up to Darwinism, i.e. the philosophy that declares God as dead... In this plane and in their tafseers, thematic or systematic, they have tried to explain God's ayahs.

From this truth stems an impossibility that means not a weakness, but simplicity of highest purity, with a timeless source, as was the testimony of the Children of Adam to the One God. This power is permanently provoking the mind and calling upon man through his discursive cognition to fully and completely answer the first questions of our youth and the last question of our old age.



Regardless of our understanding of religiousness or religious behavior as God's revelation and man's response to it, or as a human pre-tradition, or even as a "social product", it is always present in the human experience as a reality with a superhuman origin, as something supra-rational which comprehends reason and which in its entirety cannot be comprehended with the discursive way of thinking and, accordingly, cannot be entirely objectified.

Religion and religiousness are not phenomena which can be fully understood by human mental cognition, but they are a mystery, secrecy in which the one who believes is involved<sup>109</sup>. In the living expression of man the field of religious is not like some other fields of activity; it is an entirely privileged field – the field of experiencing the Sacred. Religiousness has to do with what is a mysterious and secret field of the relation between man and his Lord, namely with those deepest and the most intimate dimensions of human existence.<sup>110</sup>

During his life man is a great explorer and his soul never gets satisfied only to see something for its "how" – for the legitimacy of action. He wishes to dive deeper and to reach so far as the widest, utter and semantic answers.<sup>111</sup> This is particularly true about the questions of religion and religiousness, or religious behavior, the relationship of humans with religion and religious institution.<sup>112</sup>

109 Ajka..., pp. 34-35.

110 This kind of interpretation of the phenomenon of religion is an elaborated subject on which many authors of Islamic provenience have written, and it is also treated by the philosophers. See Dr. Hasan Hanafi, *Mawsuat-ul Adare al Arabiyyah al Islamiyyah II*, Beirut 1986, pp. 7-47.

111 The specific relation of the believer with the Absolute, despite all efforts of theological, philosophical, anthropological, sociological, scientific interpretation remains first and foremost a mystery, a secret. But this in no way means that that one should give up questioning or research, or be satisfied with the scientific positivism and reductionism in the process of exploring the phenomenon of religion and religiousness. See, ex. Esad Ćimić, *Sveto i svjetovno* ("The Sacred and the Worldly"), Zagreb 1992, pp. 127-193.

112 While studying the phenomenon of religion and religiousness in no way is recommended to study and view only religious objectifications: Holy Scriptures, myths, rites, religious language of symbols, religious teachings (doctrine, science) and habits. It would be much proper to see, first of all, at the factual situation, namely the process of occurrence of religion, relation and religious attitude of the believer. It is precisely here that religiousness is given as a relationship of man with God, the divine and the sacred. Within such relation all other human relations and the entire human life are shaped. Indeed, the essence of the authentic religious experience "eye to eye" with the Divine, the Transcendent, the Being of beyond, which is "something completely different", may even occur in a total commitment through devoted liturgical acts and prayers. See, ex. Mircea Eliade, *Istoriija verovanja i religijskih ideja* ("The History of Belief and of Religious Ideas"), Beograd 1991, pp. 5-8, 53-100.

It is simply impossible to deal with all religious phenomena and nuances of religiousness within the frame of history; this being the feature of tafseer. Also, it is impossible to give a full answer on what man thinks about all this, because the pious thinks differently than the scientist, phenomenologist differently than the historian etc.<sup>113</sup> Such a variety of expressions of religiousness, of relation with the world, so many formulations and religious systems, sects which have not created their own religious systems, such a variety of ideas, thoughts, rites, beliefs, attitudes, experiences can be hardly found in other fields of human activity.

Nonetheless, the revealed religions, or “religions of the books”, as they are called in the religious literature, since their religious worldviews are based on Holy Scriptures (Bible for Jews and Christians, and the Qur’an for the Muslims), have their origination with God and were granted to humans not as a liability, but as a call and guidance<sup>114</sup>, which do not enter the soul through personal endeavor, meditations, body exercises, but with their acceptance through belief. They are a call to faith, and this means a powerful and intensive encounter with God.<sup>115</sup>

In the following we will give examples of certain topics elaborated by some Albanian mufessirs, namely Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Haki Sharofi and Sherif ef. Ahmeti.

113 None, indeed, could be withdrawn from the historical situation to judge exactly such truly historical and religious phenomena. Positivist scientists think that all this can be explained and understood with the human psyche, his history, his relation to himself, to others, to the society and culture in which one lives. On the other side, the believer considers that those secrets are submitted to God and eternity, to God who “descends” in human timeliness so as to lift man and place him in a state of eternal realization, namely love. This is a return to the house from where he once escaped and got lost. In such wandering he lost his ties with the Sustainer and lost his origin. While looking for a way out from this troublesome situation for him, he has given many answers which have also been lost in new questions. The intervention of God Himself was necessary. On this kind of interpretation, see for ex. Miljenko Belić, *Metafizička antropologija (Metaphysical Anthropology)*, Zagreb 1993, pp. 55-144; M. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 61-85.

114 “The word *huden* is a ‘masdar’ verb, which means: i. To show the right path. ii. To show the right path and to send him on track.” Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Ajka...*, pp. 31 (note).

115 For more on this subject, see S.H. Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, London, Allen & Unwin 1981; F. Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin 1963; F. Schuon, “Kur’an”, in *Kur’an u suvremenom dobu (“The Qur’an in Modern Times”)* (ed. Enes Karic), Sarajevo 1991, pp. 683-722.

### ***Belief in God, according to Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu***

As a central theme and an effort for theological speculation in the tafseer of Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Ajka e kuptimevet të Kur'ani Qerimit*, we read the explanation of the phenomenon of the religion and the need for monotheistic belief, the tawheed. As much as the themes are not elaborated in a systematic way, yet the Qur'anic ayahs dealing with the subject show an exegesis with very outright moments that testify to a genuine theology of this Albanian mufassir.

Religion is presented within the momentum of existence as an internal call with the words *Alastu bi Rabbikum* ("Am I not your Lord?") and as an aim to testify God, to which creatures reply with *Qalu Bala* ("Yes, we testify").<sup>116</sup> This is in fact a call which ever becomes evident to man both as a close as well as a distant sign, as Dalliu himself says: "Perëndija ju ka vë parasyshë mentarvet aqi shumë arsyna për ekzistencën e vet sa qi janë të shtërnguem me thanë: Poh, ti je Zot' ynë." ("God has put before the wise so many reasons for His existence so they are forced to admit: Yes, You are our Lord.")<sup>117</sup> It rises from the insatiable need of man to transcend himself, to find the meaning and as a created and innocent being to prostrate in reverence before God, who is the Creator of the Universe.<sup>118</sup>

Of course, belief is something that cannot be encompassed by any description. It is always something more than what we know or that we could know. Hence, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu doesn't attempt to present any new description of the Islamic belief; indeed, his intention is to show that Islam is not what the majority thinks it is; that it is not what is taken as a premise in the overview of the phenomena related to it. Its reduction into the human history or in a part of it, which lasts around fourteen centuries, transcends precisely what Islam says clearly about itself and in which Islam recognizes itself. Of course, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, based on Qur'an's totality evokes moments which make the "signs" (ayat) to be signs of salvation, guidance for the believer, like the purity of thought and sincerity of act (47:24). Also, in another instance, as a condition for studying the Holy Book he assumes the prayer (40:60)<sup>119</sup>.

116 Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu in his tafseer of *al-A'raf*, 172, translates the word *Rabb* as Trainer. See, *Ajka...*, p. 1455.

117 H. Ibrahim Dalliu, *ibid*.

118 As it is well known, in the tafseer literature many different interpretations are given for this Edenian moment, in particular for the word *Beni Adem*, with connotations of the uncreated kind, as a noun – "man", before the sexes were separated. For more, see *Ismail Hakki Bursevi, Tefsir Ruhul Bejan*, v. 3, Istanbul 1389 h., p. 283; also *Muhammed Hamdi Yazar, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, v. 4, pp. 2323-2333.

119 See the commentary of the surah *al-Baqarah* in *Ajka...*, pp. 56-58.

Besides ayahs, in the Qur'an we notice other notions which have essential meanings as a proof to God's existence, like burhan, khujjah, signifying arguments:

"O people! A proof has come to you from your Lord, and We sent down to you a clear light" (al-Nisa, 174)

In this ayah, regarding the word "burhan", apart from its meaning as Holy Word, in the tafseer Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit we see an explanation according to which Muhammad a.s. is also an argument, burhan of God, who explains the secrets of God's "signs".<sup>120</sup>

The Qur'an is the Word of God which puts greater emphasizes on action rather than on the idea. The problems put forth it solves thoroughly and with lucid words and according to such solutions, or rules, commands them to be implemented in action and in accordance with the belief. The Qur'an is not only a Revelation of Truth, but also a guide for arriving at that Truth.

"This is the Book in which there is no doubt, a guide for the righteous." (al-Baqarah, 2)<sup>121</sup>

God in whom Muslims believe is Allah, the One, the Only Who in His Revelation imperatively commands His prophets:

"Say: Allah is One!" (al-Ikhlâs, 1)

He is the Living, the Eternal, Who revealed Himself to people; Who spoke to people; not a God invented by mind or philosophy. He, also, is not a God defined by logics:

"God! There is no god except He, the Living, the Everlasting. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission? He knows what is before them, and what is behind them; and they cannot grasp any of His knowledge, except as He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation does not burden Him. He is the Most High, the Great." (al-Baqarah, 255).

Due to the importance and polysemy of this ayah, Dalli comments it by dividing it into semantic units.<sup>122</sup> Among the problems of commenting is the incapacity of the language to describe transcendence, because the language itself is one of the arguments, ayahs, of that very Only Creator,

120 Ibid., pp. 959-960.

121 For further explanation of this ayah, see *ibid.*, p. 30.

122 Ibid., pp. 392-396.

Who has given it as a tool for people to understand each-other. This is because language is capable of expressing the measurable, the manifested, and only to foretell the other one, the essential, which cannot be measured.

Allah is One; He has no rival, because He is ahadun. He removes suspicion, gives great relief by pointing to His attributes, His care for the Universe and knowledge of the secret. Faith in Allah, s.w.t., the tawheed, becomes the outlook that comprises belief, morals, the right, rituals and difference in opinions.

***Creation of heavens and earth "within six days"; according to Haki Sharofi***

"Betohem se me të vërtetë Ne, qiellnat e tokën edhe çdo gja qi ka midis tyre i krijuem mbrenda gjashtë ditëve e këjo punë s'na ka prurë ndonji të lodhën". 50:38

("We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days, and no fatigue touched Us.")

...

"Tue studjue Kuranin e naltë shofim se fraza 'gjashtë ditë' përmendet edhe në gjashtë versete tjera të Kuranit, të cilët janë:

"Pa dyshim Zoti i juaj asht Allahu, i cili krijoi qiellnat e tokën mbrenda gjashtë ditëve; pastaj i u-shtrua Fronit; natën e përfundoi me ditën dhe ditën e ndjek nata; Ai Zot krijoi Diellin, Hanën dhe hyjt të disiplinuar nën urdhën të Vet; Dijeni se krijimi dhe rregullimi i përkasin vetëm Perëndisë, Sa i naltë asht Allahu, "Zoti i gjith botave-" 7:54.

"Allahu asht Ai, i cili krijoi mbrenda gjashtë ditëve qiellnat e tokën dhe ç'ka ka ndërmjet tyre; pastaj i u-shtrua Fronit; Ai asht Mirëbamës i Madh; pyet për këtë gja ata qi kanë lajme mbi bamirsinë e Zotit." 25:59.

"Me të vërtetë Zoti i juaj asht: Ai qi krijoi qiellnat e tokën mbrenda gjashtë ditëve; pastaj i u-shtrua Fronit; prej kah dirizhon rregullimin e Rruzullimit; s'ka ndonji përkrahës Veçse mbas lejit të Tij; një Ky asht Allahu, Zoti i juaj; adhuronit-e pra! A nuk do të mëjtoni? 10:3.

Allahu asht Ai qi, për me ju provue - për me ju dëftue - juve se cili jush do t'i ketë ma të mira punët, krijoi qiellnat e tokën mbrenda gjashtë ditëve; para këtyrë Fronti i Tij ishte mbi ujët. E po t'ju thueshë; keni me u ringjallë mbas vdekjes" ata qi mohojnë kanë me thanë; "këjo s'asht tjetër veç se magji e qartë". 11:7

“Allahu asht Ai qi krijoi mbrenda gjashtë ditëve qiellnat e tokën edhe çka ka midis tyne; Pastaj j’u shtrua Fronit; nuk keni jashta Atij ndonji mik e përkrahës; pra a nuk do të mendohi”. 32:4.

“Allahu asht Ai qi krijoi mbrenda gjashtë ditëve qiellnat e tokën; pastaj j’u shtrua Fronit; Ai din ç’hyn në tokë e ç’del prej saj e ç’ulet prej qiellit e ç’hypën në qiell; Ai asht bashkë me ju kudo qi jeni; Perëndija shef ç’punoni”. 57:4.

Nga përmbajtja e qartë e këtyne verseteve kuptohet se Perëndija me madhnin të Vet e krijoi Gjithesinë mbrenda gjashtë ditëve; por këto versete nuk na thonë rendin, mbas të Cilit duelen në shesh krijesat, as punën e përditshme qi kreu Perëndija çdo ditë.”

(“While studying the Exalted Qur’an we see that the phrase ‘six days’ is mentioned in six other ayahs of the Qur’an, which are:

“Your Lord is God; He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established Himself on the Throne. The night overtakes the day, as it pursues it persistently; and the sun, and the moon, and the stars are subservient by His command. His is the creation, and His is the command. Blessed is God, Lord of all beings.” 7:54.

“He who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six days, then settled on the Throne. The Most Merciful. Ask about Him a well-informed.” 25:59.

“Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then settled over the Throne, governing all things. There is no intercessor except after His permission. Such is God, your Lord—so serve Him. Will you not reflect?” 10:3

“It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne was upon the waters—in order to test you—which of you is best in conduct. And if you were to say, “You will be resurrected after death,” those who disbelieve would say, “This is nothing but plain witchcraft.” 11:7

“God is He who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six days, and then established Himself on the Throne. Apart from Him, you have no master and no intercessor. Will you not reflect?” 32:4.

“It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then settled over the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth, and what comes out of it, and what descends from the sky, and what ascends to it.

And He is with you wherever you may be. God is Seeing of everything you do." 57:4.

From the clear content of these verses it is understood that God with His Majesty created the Universe within six days; but these verses do not tell us the order, according to which the creatures came to being, nor the daily work done by God for each day.")

In the following Haki Sharofi gives a very appropriate definition about the creation of the world, by saying that:

"...Kurani i madhnueshëm nuk ka ardhë me na mësue se si u-krijue bota, por na mëson përsë u krijue bota. Pra qëllimi i krijimit të botës asht qëllimi i Kuranit. Të dy kanë një qëllim të vetëm. Asht absurd të themi se 'bota u krijue për me na mësue se si u krijue'. Bota asht vepër; por dhe mënyra e krijimit dhe e rregullimit të saj asht një tjetër vepër. Prandaj Kurani i shenjt me shtat versetet qi paraqitem, na tërheq verejtjen e na thotë:

... Në qoftë se nuk e besoni Kuranin, studjoni ligjet e natyrës, mbas të cilëve asht krijue dhe përmbahet gjithësisja. Ata qi kanë mend dhe epen mbas diturisë, e kuptojnë shumë lehtë veprën e mrrekullueshme të Zotit dhe i shtrohen pushtetit të pasosun të tij..."

("..The Glorious Qur'an has not come to teach us how the world was created, but teaches us why the world was created. Therefore, the purpose of creation is the purpose of the Qur'an. Both have one and the same purpose. It is absurd to say that 'the world was created to teach us how it was created.' The world is a work; but the manner of its creation and ordering is another work. Thus, the Holy Qur'an with the seven verses that we presented warns us and says:

"... If you don't believe in the Qur'an, study the laws of nature, according to which the Universe was created and is sustained. Those who have mind and are in pursue of knowledge, easily understand the magnificent work of Allah and submit to His endless power..."

Then he continues with commenting the "phrases", as he calls them, of the aforementioned verses:

"Për shembull le ta marrim e ta vështrojmë versetin e parë qi ishte 50:38:

Fraza e fundit 'Edhe këjo punë s'na pru ndonji të lodhun' na difton se Perëndija nuk lodhet e nuk mërzitet nga punët qi ban, mbassi Aj s'asht lodhë fare kur krijoi qiellnat e tokën. Prandaj Perëndija nuk ka pushue as

nuk ka për të pushue ndonji herë; sepse s'asht lodhë e s'ka për t'u lodhë kurrë qi të ketë nevojë të prehet. Vepra e Krijuesit vazhdon dhe do të vazhdojë gjithnji; se po të pushojë një minut fiket jeta dhe gjithsija m'atë çast. Kësaj pike i ban isharet verseti i naltë:

'Prej Zotit lypin gjith ata qi janë në qiellna e në tokë; pra Zoti gjithnji asht në aktivitet'. (55:29)"

("For instance, let us look at the first verse, which is 50:38:

The last phrase 'and no fatigue touched Us' tells us that God doesn't get tired and bothered by the work He does, because He didn't get tired while creating heavens and earth. Hence, God has not rested nor will He ever rest, since He hasn't got tired, nor will He get tired so as to need to rest. The work of the Creator continues and will continue forever; because if He stops for a minute life and the entire universe will be wiped out instantly. To this point alludes the lofty verse:

"Everyone in the heavens and the earth asks Him. Every day He is managing". (55:29)"

While commenting the ayah 7:53, Sharofi among others says:

"Fraza e parë (e ajetit 7:54) 'pastaj i u shtrua Fronit' asht në kuptim figurativ qi duhet të interpretohet e nuk mund të merret në kuptim të natyrshëm; sepse Perëndija s'ka trup qi të shtrohet e të shtrihet; gjith ashtu, Perëndija s'ka nevojë edhe për Fron.

Mbas këtij interpretimi kuptohet se çdo gja është nën kontroll të Zotit. Nga ky kontroll rrjedh edhe fenomeni i natës e i ditës qi tregohet në frazën e dytë. Mbas këtij spjegimi vjen pyetja: 'po si e ban Zoti natën e ditën'. Qi ti hapi përgjigje kësaj pyetje vjen fraza e tretë 'Aj Zot krijoi diellin, hanën dhe hyjt të disiplinuem e të shtruem nën urdhën të Vet'.

Prej kësaj fraze kuptohet se Perëndija qi të rregulloje natën e ditën krijoi diellin, hanën dhe hyjt, të cilëve i u vu ligjin e rrotullimit nëpër hapsinë, ligj i mrrekullueshëm qi s'mund t'i shmangen.

Fraza e katërt: (Dijeni se Krijimi e rregullimi i përkasin vetëm Perëndisë), ka ardhë për të rrxue pandehmën të gabueme të materjalistëve qi thon se bota u krijue e u rregullue vetiu.

Fraza e fundit të versetit difton Zanin e ndërjegjes të atyne njerëzve të ditun e të mençëm qi kur shofin krijimin dhe rregullimin e mrrekullueshëm të gjithësis thonë: 'Sa i naltë asht Allahu, Zoti i gjith botave.'"



("The first phrase 'then established Himself on the Throne' is in a figurative sense that should be interpreted and cannot be taken in its natural meaning; because God has no body to stretch or lay down; also, God needs no Throne.<sup>123</sup>

After this interpretation it may be understood that everything is under God's control. From this control results the phenomenon of night and day which is mentioned in the second phrase. After this explanation, the question arises: 'well, how is God making day and night.' In answer of this question follows the third phrase:

"...and the sun, and the moon, and the stars are subservient by His command".

From this phrase it can be understood that God for regulating night and day created the Sun, the Moon and the stars, to which He ordered the law of circulating across the space, a wonderful law that they cannot deviate from.

The fourth phrase: ("His is the creation, and His is the command"), came to overthrow the wrong presumption of the materialists who say that the world was created and ordered by itself.

The last phrase of the verse shows the Voice of conscience of those knowledgeable and wise people who when seeing the creation and the magnificent orderliness of the Universe, say: "Blessed is God, Lord of all beings".)

While commenting the ayah 25:59, "in which we find two completely separate phrases", Haki Sharofi says:

a) Aj asht Mirbamës i Madh.

b) pyet për këtë gja ata qi kanë lajme mbi bamirsin' e Zotit.

123 In his short commentary of the ayah 10:3, the mufessir from Kosova, the late h. Sherif ef. Ahmeti writes: "...Zoti që ia shpalli Kur'anin Muhammedit, është i gjithfuqishëm; Ai e krijoi ekzistencën brenda gjashtë ditësh. Po të donte do ta krijonte për një moment, ose për më gjatë, por Ai deshi ta krijojë për gjashtë etapa. Ai nuk pati as nuk ka nevojë për vend, por krijoi gjithësinë qëndroi mbi Arshin. Para krijimit të gjithësisë, nuk pati nevojë për vend, nuk pati nevojë as pas krijimit; po përse atëherë tha: qëndron mbi Arsh? Kjo është punë e Tij, e askujt tjetër!" ("... God who revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad, is the Almighty; He created the existence within six days. If He wanted he could have created it in a single moment, or longer, He wanted to create in six stages. He needed not, nor does He need a place, but created the Universe and sat on the Arsh. Before creating the Universe, he had no need for a place, nor he needed it after the creation; well why than He said: sat upon the Arsh? This is His issue, and of nobody else!") Shih, Sherif Ahmeti, Kur'ani përkthim me komentim, p. 283.

“Fraza e parë na mëson se Perëndija i nep mirsit e Veta pa kursim e pa interes. I vetmi burim i çdo së mire asht vetëm Perëndija; Krijimi i jonë, rritja dhe edukata e jonë, ushqimi dhe veshja e jonë, na vijnë vetëm prej Perëndisë. Aj na plotson të gjitha nevojat e jetës s’onë si mbas ligjit e rregullit qi ka vu Vetë.

... Këjo na vërteton se në botën ka njerëz qi pandehin se materja i regullon punët mbas ligjit të kozalitetit. Kurani me këtë frazë vjen të na dishmojë se ka edhe njerëz të ditur qi kanë lajme të sigurta se kozalitetit qi duket është mjeti, nëpër të cilin udhton finaliteti.... Me të vërtetë, po të studjojmë ligjet e natyrës, shofim se disa punë janë rrjedha dhe efekt i shkaqeve. Bije fjala “të nxehtit asht shkaku qi rrit vëllimin e trupave”. Ky fenomen i natyrshëm ash pranue si ligj i Fizikës.

Mirpo këtë ligj në tri gjendjet e ujit e gjejmë të ndryshëm. E vemë në zjarr ujët, ligjit qi përmendëm vepron, d.m.th të nxehtit j’a rrit ujët vëllimin. Po t’a paksojmë temperaturën, ujët e zvogëlon vëllimin e po t’a paksojmë edhe ma tepër temperaturën, ujët ngrin e atëherë ligji fizik qi përmendëm s’e bën më efektin e parë, por të kundërtin; d.m.th. akulli në vend qi kishte kur ishte ujë përkundrazi ka një vëllim ma të madh.

Përpara këtij fenomeni nuk mund të pyesim ma “Si?” por “Përse?” Sepse ligji i Kozalitetit këtu s’pat fuqi me veprue, mbeti pa efekt.

Tashti na duhet të kërkojmë një ligj tjetër qi e pengoi efektin e ligjit të parë. Shkenca deri sod s’ka mundë me e zbulue këtë ligj e si duket as nuk ka për t’a zbulue ndonji herë. Atëherë e gjykoni vet zotnija juajë, leçitës të ndershëm qi mohoni finalitetin dhe pranon vetëm mjetin e saj, Kozalitetin.

(“a) He is a Great Benefactor.

b) ask about this those who have news about God’s benefaction.

The first phrase tells us that God gives His grace unsparingly and with no interest. The only source of all goodness is God alone; our creation, growth and education, our food and dress, come only from God. He fulfills all the needs of our life according to the law and orderliness established by Him.

...This proves that there are in the world people who presume that matter regulates things according to the law of causality. The Qur’an with this phrase comes to prove that there are also people of knowledge who have certain news that causality is the instrument, through which travels the finality... Indeed, if we study the laws of nature, we see that certain

things are result and effect of causes. For instance "heat is the cause for increasing the volume of bodies". This natural phenomenon is accepted as a law of Physics.

But we find this law different in three states of the water. We put the water on fire, the mentioned law acts, i.e. the heat increases water's volume. If we reduce the temperature, the water decreases its volume and if we continue to further decrease the temperature, the water freezes and the abovementioned law of physics doesn't do its first effect, but the contrary: namely, the ice has now even greater volume than when it was water.

Before this phenomenon we can no longer ask "How?" but "Why?", because the Law of Causality here had no power to act and remained without effect.

Now we must seek another law which prevented the effect of the first law. Science up to this day has not been able to discover that law and it seems that it will not be able to do that ever. Then judge by yourself dear gentlemen, you who deny finality and accept only its tool – causality.)

...

Si u pa në këtë studim të gjatë, Kurani asht një libër i naltë e i shenjtë. Qi ka ardhë prej të Madhit Zot për me j'a ndriçue njerzisë rrugën e misjonit. Kurani asht si një shkollë edukative e kompletueme qi i ka mbrenda të gjitha klasët tue fillue nga ata të fillores e deri në ata të Universitetit. Gjithsecili njeri mund të marre dritë në Kuran, por me kusht qi të udhëhiqet prej mësuesi kompetent. Në Shqipni, me gjasë të rrallë nuk na mungojnë mësuesit kompetentë; por lypset me i kërkue e me i gjetë. Sepse, si dihet, studenti kërkon Profesorin e jo Profesori studentin.

Vetëm duhet dijtun edhe një pikë; për t'u shijue ambëlsia e Kuranit duhet me nxanë edhe alfabetin e tij. Alfabeti i Kuranit për një zelltar të kujdesshëm është shumë i lehtë."

(As it was seen in this long study, the Qur'an is an exalted and sacred book, which came from God Almighty to enlighten to the humankind the path of its mission. The Qur'an is as a completed educational school that has in it all classes, from the elementary up to the University level. Every man can take some light from the Qur'an, only provided that he is guided by a competent teacher. In Albania, chances are rare not to find competent teachers, we just need to look for them and find them. Because, as it is well known, the student looks for the Professor and not the Professor for the student.

There is only one point that we must consider: to taste the sweetness of the Qur'an one should learn its alphabet. For a careful zealot the alphabet of the Qur'an is very easy.")<sup>124</sup>

### ***Belief in the Final Day, according to Sherif ef. Ahmeti***

Given the fact that the late Sherif efendi Ahmeti was my lecturer of Aqid, I personally know that he was affectionate in interpreting the aqid issues by Qur'an. It was typical for him to lecture without reading the subject matter from his synopsis, which means that he had particular ability of a good qalamist. His arguments were vivid, convincing, rational, and he often used to be sarcastic regarding the harsh and irrational theories of atheism. Yet, his main inspiration were the Qur'anic verses and their he found his pleasure.

As for illustration of the aforementioned, in the following I will present some of his arguments – explanations about the Judgment Day.

Among the pillars of the completed Islamic belief is the belief in "resurrection after death", or belief in the Judgment Day, yawm al-akhirah, the Day of Resurrection, yawm al-qiyamah: "Those who believe, and those who are Jewish, and the Christians, and the Sabeans—any who believe in God and the Last Day, and act righteously—will have their reward with their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve." (al-Baqarah, 62).

The mufassir explains the word akhirah as follows:

"Muslimanët janë të obliguar që përveç Shpalljes së Fundit, e cila iu shpall Muhammedit, t'i besojnë edhe shpalljet e tjera, që iu shpallën pe-jgamberëve të mëparshëm, dhe të jenë të plotbindur për jetën e ardhshme pas kësaj jete. "Ahiret" quhet bota e mbarmë, jeta pas kësaj jete në dynja, dhe pas ringjalljes, pra jeta në ahiret."

("Muslims are obliged, beside believing in the Last Revelation, which was revealed to Muhammad, to believe in other revelations as well, which were revealed to earlier prophets, and to be fully convinced about the next life after this. "Akhirah" is called the final world, the life after the life in this dunya, and after the resurrection, namely the life in akhirah.)<sup>125</sup>

As for the Qur'an, he speaks in a very convincing manner about death, from being it a phenomenon, the issue of accountability and the hereafter. Hence, the word yawm al-akhirah in the Qur'an is mentioned very

124 For more, see Haki Sharofi, "Tefsiri i Kur'anit" ("The Tafseer of the Qur'an"), in "Kultura Islame", year V, No. 1 (49), September 1943 – Ramadan 1362, pp. 3-8.

125 H. Sherif Ahmeti, op. cit., p. 33.

often. One of the subjects in all divine revelations is death, regardless of disagreements regarding the resurrection, reincarnation, eternity of the soul, punishment/accountability etc. The Qur'anic lexicography presents rational arguments, which put death in inseparable relation with life in this world. Firstly, death is not related only to human or living beings<sup>126</sup> in general, but to everything created, which is constantly presented to us: "He brings the living out of the dead, and He brings the dead out of the living, and He revives the land after it had died. Likewise you will be resurrected." (er-Rum, 19).

Apart from a commentary on the surah al-Rum, Sherif ef. Ahmeti with regard to death and resurrection says: "Njerëzit janë të obliguar të madhërojnë, ta lartësojnë dhe t'i shprehin falënderim Zotit, çdo mëngjes e çdo mbrëmje, natën e ditën, sepse vetëm Ai ka fuqi ta nxjerrë të gjallin prej të vdekurit dhe anasjelltas dhe t'i nxjerrë njerëzit prej varrezave në ditën e mahsherit dhe t'i vë vërë para vetes e t'u japë atë që u ka premtuar." ("People are obliged to praise, glorify and express gratitude to Allah, each morning and evening, night and day, because it is only He who has the power to raise the living from the dead and vice versa, and to rise people from the graves on the day of mahshar and to give them what they have deserved.")<sup>127</sup>

Secondly, death as an answer to the rational: "Is he who was dead, then We gave him life, and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like he who is in total darkness, and cannot get out of it?..." (al-An'am, 122). While commenting this ayah the mufassir says: "I vdekuri i përmendur në këtë ajet, është ai që ishte i humbur në besim, e i gjallë me dritë në dorë që shkon kah të dojë, është ai që besoi. Kur'ani konsideron të verbër në shpirt atë që ka mbetur në errësirë të paditurisë, në errësirë të mohimit. E atë që pranoi mësimet e Kur'anit, e konsideron të shpëtuar prej verbërisë shpirtërore, të ngjallur prej asaj errësire të vdekjes dhe të ndriçuar në dritën e besimit... Allahu i tubon në Ditën e Kijametit njerëzit dhe xhinët, shejtanët. Xhinët shtangen dhe nuk mund të flasin, e njerëzit gabimtarë përpiqen të kërkojnë falje, por është vonë... Zullumqarin që ndalet prej punëve të këqija, Zoti e dënon në këtë dynja, duke i dhënë pushtet mbi të një zullumqari tjetër..." ("The dead mentioned in this ayah, is the one who was lost in belief; and the living with light on his hand to go wherever he wants, is the one who believed. The Qur'an considers as blind in soul the one who has remained in the darkness of ignorance, in the darkness of denial. And it considers

126 See Ismail Hakki Bursevi, op. cit., p. 138.

127 H. Sherif Ahmeti, op. cit., p. 559.

the one who accepted the teachings of the Qur'an as saved from spiritual blindness, revived from the darkness of death and enlightened with the light of belief... Allah gathers on the Day of Judgment humans, jinns, devils. Jinns freeze and cannot speak, and the sinners among humans try to beg for pardon, but it is too late... The nefarious who refrains from wrongdoings, God will punish in this world, by giving the rule over him to another nefarious..."<sup>128</sup>.

'You cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call if they turn their backs and flee' (al-Naml, 80). "Termet: të vdekur, të shurdhët, të verbër janë në alegori, mexhazë e aludohet në ata njerëz, që nuk i studiojnë faktet që i parashtron Kur'ani, që nuk duan të dëgjojnë këshillat e bukura, që nuk marrin përvojë nga ngjarjet e popujve të mëparshëm, andaj për ata nuk ka shpresë se do të gjejnë rrugën e vërtetë. Vetëm besimtarët dëgjojnë me vëmendje dhe përfitojnë nga mësimet e Kur'anit. Kur do të jetë afër koha e ndëshkimit të atyre që nuk besuan dhe koha e kijametit do të dalë një shtazë nga toka – 'dabetul erdi', e cila do t'u flasë njerëzve, do t'i mallkojë ata që nuk besuan argumentet e Zotit, sipas hadithit që e shënon Imam Ahmedi në Musnedin e vet: Kijameti, katastrofa e përgjithshme, nuk do të ndodhë para se të lajmërohen dhjetë shenja... e në mesin e tyre e numëron edhe 'dabetul erd-in'... Në ditën e tubimit pas ringjalljes do të tubohen në grupe të gjithë ata që nuk pranuan mësimet e Zotit, do të jenë të rrethuar dhe të shtrënguar e të shtyrë me rrëmbim drejt vendit ku do të përgjigjen për veprat e bëra..." ("Terms like dead, deaf, blind are allegorical, majaz and they allude to those people who do not study the facts presented by the Qur'an; who do not wish to listen good advices; who do not learn the lesson from the events of earlier peoples; thus for them there is no hope that they will find the true way. Only the believers listen carefully and benefit from the teachings of the Qur'an. When the time of punishment of those who didn't believe will approach and the time of qiyamah will come, one brute will come out of the earth – 'dabetul-ard', and will speak to the humans, will curse those who didn't believe in God's arguments, according to a hadith noted by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad: The Qiyamah, the overall disaster, will not happen before ten signs are announced... among which is the 'dabatul-ard'... On the day of gathering after the resurrection all those who do not accept God's teachings will be grouped; they will be surrounded and tightened and pushed with ravishment to the place where they will answer for their deeds..."<sup>129</sup>

128 Ibid., pp. 204-205.

129 Ibid., pp. 529-530.

The moment of death presents a continuous purity since the time when man before his creation testified unto God, and the same is repeated with the end of his life in this world, when man will face the most pure moments, like belief in the Only God, the testimony for his deeds and justice in judging them, gathering of believers simply as God's servants:

"They have not esteemed God as He ought to be esteemed. The entire earth will be in His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right... And the Trumpet will be sounded, whereupon everyone in the heavens and the earth will be stunned, except whomever God wills. Then it will be sounded another time, whereupon they will rise up, looking on.... and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought in; and Judgment will be passed among them equitably, and they will not be wronged. And every soul will be fully compensated for what it had done. He is well aware of what they do.... the verdict of punishment is justified against the disbelievers! And those who feared their Lord will be led to Paradise in throngs..." (al-Zumar, 67-73).

The mufassir comments these verses as follows: "Allahu i merr shpirtat, i merr nëpërmjet engjëllit dhe nëpërmjet engjëjve të caktuar për këtë detyrë, por vetëm me urdhrin e Tij. Pjesa lëndore e njeriut, të cilës i është bashkuar edhe shpirti, quhet: 'nfsun', e kur thuhet 'Zoti e merr nefsën, kur atij i vjen vdekja', është për qëllim ndërprerja e bashkëpunimit të pjesës lëndore me atë shpirtërore dhe me atë rast pjesa lëndore është e vdekur, e shpirti nuk vdes. Edhe ai që është në gjumë i përngjan të vdekurit, ngase shqisat e trupit nuk funksionojnë... Ai e urdhëron Israfilin t'i fryjë surit dhe çdo gjallesë bie e vdekur në vend, e kur e urdhëron t'i fryjë herën e dytë, të gjithë ringjallen, ngrihen në këmbë dhe presin çka po urdhëron Zoti. Ajo tokë pas ringjalljes do të jetë e ndriçuar me drejtësinë e Zotit, aty sillen të gjithë pejgamberët dhe engjëjt që kanë shënuar veprat e njerëzve për t'i dëshmuar ato dhe çdokujt i jepet sipas veprave të bëra..." ("Allah takes souls, takes them through Angels appointed for this task, but only with His command. Man's material part, to which soul is attached to, is called 'nafsun', and when it is said 'God takes the nafs, when death comes to him', this means the cessation of cooperation of the material part with the spiritual one, and in that moment the material part dies, while the soul doesn't. The one who sleeps resembles to the dead, because the senses of his body do not function... He orders Israfil to blow the sur and every creature dies instantly; and when He orders him to blow it for the second time, all are revived, raised and awaiting for God's command. That earth after resurrection will be enlightened with God's justice, there all

prophets and angels who have recorded people's deeds will be brought to testify about them and everyone will be given according to the deeds..."<sup>130</sup>)

The sayfahs of tafseer in Albanian language, short as they may be, are nevertheless filled with an educated interpretation in accordance with the demands of the subject of tafseer; the mufassirian spirit of our mufassirs is noticeable, and they didn't allow themselves to rely only on the "pure mind", but upon a mind enlightened by Revelation, and have occasionally dived in the vast areas of metaphysics, because human soul feels it necessary to willingly or unwillingly contact with such interpretations. This important discipline is being developed and fulfilled with new translations<sup>131</sup> and interpretations<sup>132</sup>. All these mufassirs, and maybe others whose names we may not know, will remain alive and under God's compassion for their efforts in this regard.

### **CONCLUSION**

As students of Qur'anology, as well as readers, we are obliged before reading the sayfahs of translation and tafseer of the Qur'an into Albanian language to understand somewhat their "asbab al-nuzul", namely the reason for translation and commentary or interpretation of the Qur'an; the time when Albanian mufassirs lived; how they died and why some of them died; how were they convicted by various regimes and has all of this ended at all. If we don't consider the aforementioned, I don't believe that we will be able to understand the sayfahs of translation and tafseer of the Qur'an al-Kareem in Albanian language.<sup>133</sup>

The overall history of translation and tafseer of the Qur'an, which on one side always testifies the metaphysics and, on the other, tries to prevail over it in the mental resoluteness of the human being, shows by itself

130 Ibid., p. 645.

131 Muhammed Asad, *Mesazhi i Kur'anit* (The Message of the Qur'an"), translated from English by Bujar M. Hoxha, Logos-A, Skopje 2016. When we speak about the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an, we must mention also the translation of one of the best known tafseers, Tafseer Ibn Kathir, which was published into Albanian as *Kandili ndriçues, në versionin e shkurtuar të Tefsirit të Ibni Kethirit I-VII*, translated by M.Sci. Bashkim Aliu, Foundation of Islamic Youth, Zürich, August 2007-2011.

132 A new effort in the field of interpretation of the Qur'an is recently done by Metin Izeti, who, based on a wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (a.s.): "Take knowledge wherever you might find it", has made an interpretation which is somewhat different from the usual interpretation by other Albanian mufassirs, because he "delivers" his interpretation as lectures, starting from the end of the Qur'an, namely the chapter al-Nas. In his interpretation one may find deep metaphysics, educated in the spirit of the Qur'an and the language of philosophy. For more, see, Metin Izeti, *Dyzet Net I, Logos-A, Skopje 2015 and Dyzet Net II, 2016*.

133 For more regarding the sufferings of Muslims in these parts see Justin McCarthy, *Vdekje dhe dëbim...* ("Death and Exile") Alsar, Tirana 2015.



something rather important and astonishing, namely that we do not have any other notion for the Revelation, except the metaphysical one, particularly when we try to prevail over that metaphysics. All non-metaphysical efforts made so far for prevailing over the metaphysics of the Qur'an in their essence are somewhat physical.

After the dark times which Muslims of these parts passed, it is very "natural" to have a vacuum in these papers, be they of translation or commentary of the Qur'an, which denies us the right to make accusations to the past time in the context of tafseer. Yet, the present enables to make the rediscovery of these works and authors, each of whom being a shahid (martyr) and shâhid (witness) of time, though, unfortunately, to some extent forgotten by us. Beside what was mentioned above, we have most certainly valuable manuscripts which are still in families and private libraries, and as such remain an undiscovered treasure, and are a challenge for the future students of tafseer or Qur'anology in general.

Each period offers a particular chance for studying the writings, pages/sayfahs of tafseer of the Qur'an, because they strengthen the communication with the antiquity and build the culture of living and thinking; they offer possibilities for creating a spiritualized vocabulary, a living one that would address the soul, heart and mind and they present a sustainable department for studying and development of this important field of study. The great regard of our Albanian mufassirs toward the Holy Scripture reminds me of a sage from Bethlehem, who while watching a man writing something by the road, asked him: "What are you doing?" The man replied: "I'm writing down the Word of God". Hearing this, the sage warned him: "Be very careful not to omit anything, because if you miss even a mark, it could destroy the Universe."

### **SUMMARY**

This paper, namely The Sayfahs of Translation and Tafseer of the Qur'an al-Kareem into Albanian Language, is divided in three parts: Political and Cultural-Religious Circumstances; Translations of the Qur'an into Albanian Language; and The Tradition of the Tafseer of the Qur'an among Albanians.

The first part deals with the difficult times that have prevented the development of religious culture, not only by hindering this culture, but also by impoverishing, destroying and throwing it into oblivion, and that historical period left consequences for the future too.

Translations of the Qur'an have overcome that difficult phase, and Albanian Muslims with a particular care and love began the partial and latter the complete translation of God's Word. Regarding the issue of translation one may notice important debates in Muslim intellectual and institutional circles. Of course, at the beginning only partial translations were done and published, and much latter the complete ones. Also, in this part names of the translators of the Qur'an into Albanian language are presented.

The tafseer tradition is presented in detail, beginning with the names of of mufassirs up to the sayfahs of their tafseers, partial and complete – systematic. The ways of dealing with the subjects by Albanian mufassirs show the influence of various schools of tafseer, that of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab and the Albanian religious school. Sources that prove the aforementioned are also given.

In this work mainly the literature of the Albanian people written in their own language has been used, intending to make that literature a part of the literature of the tafseer of the Qur'an as well as to present the tireless work and efforts of Albanian Muslim translators and mufassirs.

**APPENDIX**

This Appendix includes the tafseers of some of the Albanian mufessirs mentioned in this work, published in Islamic periodicals in Albania and Kosova. Of course, it is far from being comprehensive.

**Zani i Naltë** (Tirana – Albania)

DIBRA, Vehbi, Tefsiri i Kur'anit (Tafseer of the Qur'an)(chapter 50, verse 38), 11 July 1934

KORÇA, Hafiz Ali, Tafseer of sure-i Asr, 2 November 1923

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Ikhlas, 3 December 1923

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Kawthar, 4 January 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Ma'un, 5 February 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Nasr, 6 March 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Qadr, 7 April 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Fatihah, 8 May 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Takathur, 9 June 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Humazah, 10 July 1924

\_\_\_, Tafseer of sure-i Feel, 11 August 1924

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