

## Letter To SA Human Rights Commission-Re:Quraan

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 27 September 2011 12:35 - Last Updated Tuesday, 27 September 2011 12:41

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24 September 2011

S.A.Human Rights Commission  
Private Bag X2700  
Houghton  
2041

e-mail: NVKwaza@sahrc.org.za

RE: COMPLAINT BY MOHAMED FAYZAL MAHAMED  
YOUR REFERENCE GP / 2011 / 0417

The above mentioned complainant has taken his complaint to the press. It is the press that has made us aware of the nature of the complaint.

In his undated letter of complaint to you, the complainant has alleged that Yusuf Ali, a translator of the Holy Qur'aan has offered his personal interpretation of verse 4:34 of the Qur'aan. Furthermore, the complainant alleged that in his interpretation Yusuf Ali averred that women should "be beaten up".

On the basis of his averment, the complainant sought the following relief:

- (1) That Al Huda Publications be interdicted/prevented from selling the translation of the Holy Qur'aan translated by Yusuf Ali
- (2) That Al-Huda Publications should block or cover up the relevant Qur'aanic verse against which he has lodged his complaint.

In this regard, we respectfully draw your attention to the following facts:

(a) The passage which the complainant cited is not Yusuf Ali's interpretation of the relevant Qur'aanic verse. It is the exact and correct translation of the Arabic Qur'aanic verse. You will observe in the translation presented by the complainant the word lightly inserted in brackets next to the word beat. The word 'beat' is the correct translation of the Qur'aanic word which appears in the verse. The word 'lightly' in brackets is Yusuf Ali's explanatory note.

Annexure 'A' hereto, is a copy of the relevant page from Yusuf Ali's translation, on which appears verse 4:34. You will observe that the statement against which the complainant has complained is NOT Yusuf Ali's interpretation. On the contrary, it is the translation of the Arabic text which we have covered up for religious reasons.

Footnote No. 547 on annexure 'A' is the commentary of Yusuf Ali. In his commentary and interpretation of the verse complained against, Yusuf Ali clearly states:

"....and all authorities are unanimous in deprecating any sort of cruelty, even of the nagging kind.....if all fails, a family council is recommended in iv, 35 below."

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The interpretation on this Qur'aanic verse proffered by Yusuf Ali is a clear refutation of the complainant's slanderous averment, viz., "Yusuf Ali advocates hatred that is based on gender and constitutes incitement to cause harm."

By contending that the precise translation of the Arabic verse is Yusuf Ali's interpretation, and by refraining to cite his interpretation which appears in footnote No. 547, the complainant is guilty of chicanery and gross dishonesty.

The complainant has intentionally misrepresented the translation to mislead you by conveying the impression that the statement is the translator's interpretation when in reality it is the precise translation of the Arabic verse.

(b) To further mislead and confuse you, the complainant then interprets the Qur'aanic verse as follows: "Abdullah Yusuf Ali unambiguous interpretation of verse 4:34 proposes that in a domestic dispute women (wives) should, as a last resort, be beaten up in order to obey her husband." (Please note that we have reproduced his statement verbatim including the grammatical errors.)

Neither does Yusuf Ali translate the Qur'aanic statement to mean "be beaten up" nor will it be valid to translate the Qur'aanic term with the words "be beaten up". There is a vast difference between beating lightly and "be beaten up". While children too are beaten lightly (although this too is unlawful in terms of South African law, but not according to the law of the vast majority of countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim), to "be beaten up" is unlawful in Islam. "To be beaten up" conveys the impression of beating a person to a pulp.

While the complainant makes reference to Yusuf Ali's 'unambiguous interpretation', he conveniently does not mention the interpretation which appears in footnote 547. Please read the interpretation in footnote 547 and you will conclude that the charge which complainant has alleged against Yusuf Ali is scandalously false.

Yusuf Ali states with clarity in his interpretation regarding the 'last resort' : "if all fails, a family council is recommended."

The complainant has acquitted himself most dishonestly by injecting his personal interpretation of the English version proffered by Yusuf Ali. While Yusuf Ali translated correctly, 'beat', the complainant interprets this to mean "to be beaten up" which does not appear in Yusuf Ali's translation.

Yusuf Ali explained the word with the term 'lightly' because this is the exact exegesis of the Qur'aanic order of beating.

(c) This is not a matter which concerns only the bookshop called Al Huda Publications nor any other bookshop which may be selling the translation. It is the concern of the entire Nation of Islam of the whole world. Any interdict against the bookshop will be an interdict against the universal Islamic Nation. The Holy Qur'aan is the immutable Word of Allah Almighty. No one has the right to tamper with it.

The complainant has asked for a Qur'aanic verse to be effectively banned or be expunged from the Qur'aanic Scripture. This is intolerable and unacceptable. The world's Muslim community

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will never accept it nor will the Muslim community of South Africa accept that any verse of the Holy Qur'aan be expunged. If any such move is made, we can assure you of a massive upheaval in our community.

(d) The Constitution of South Africa enshrines the principle of freedom of religion. An incumbent corollary of this principle is non-interference with the Holy Scriptures of the different religious communities living in this land.

(e) In his letter of complaint, the complainant states:

“It is important to note that I am not asking the SAHRC to censure or stop the distribution of the Quran, the holy scripture of Muslims.”

In fact, this is precisely what the complainant is asking you to enact. He has petitioned you to censure, block, cover up, that is expunge from the Holy Qur'aan, a revealed verse. He seeks to achieve his pernicious objective with his attempt to mislead you by deceiving you into believing that his complaint is directed against an interpretation of Yusuf Ali. But in reality, the statement which the complainant has cited to you is the translation of the Arabic verse. It is NOT Yusuf Ali's interpretation. Yusuf Ali's interpretation appears in footnote 547. He merely presented the correct translation. Thus, any attempt to censure or expunge any verse from the Holy Qur'aan will be regarded blasphemous by the world's Muslim community, and this will undoubtedly have far reaching political consequences.

(f) It is unconstitutional to interfere or tamper with our Holy Scripture. While the law may not permit Qur'aanic law and Islamic morality to operate fully, the law also does not allow tampering with the Holy Scriptures of religious communities. We therefore must emphasize that the complaint is not confined to the bookshop. Its effect if entertained will extend to all bookshops, and to the entire Muslim community. We are religiously bound to vehemently oppose any attempt to interfere with the Holy Qur'aan – an interference which the complainant desires be effected via your office.

The government of Saudi Arabia has printed and distribute more than 5 million copies of Yusuf Ali's translation. Tens of thousands of copies have been distributed in South Africa. Will every copy be 'recalled' for blasphemous expungement and sacrilege of the immutable Verse of the Holy Qur'aan?

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