

## Orientalists on Qur'an: A Critical Study

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### Abstract

*Orientalists have refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. as the seal of Prophets and the last messenger of Allah Almighty. As they know that Qur'an is base of Islamic faith, so they are trying their level's best to dislodge the citadel of Islamic faith i.e. Qur'an. For this purpose they have directed all their efforts to prove it a human-authored book and consequently Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. as a false Prophet. In this article we have tried to reject the objections of Western in the light of authentic historical sources.*

**Keywords:** Quran, Orientalism, Islam, Orientalists

Western scholars have keen interest in Qur'anic studies. The growing group of orientalist is publishing books, conducting conferences and presenting research papers to prove the Qur'an a purely human book. Arthur Jeffery, an American-Australian orientalist, known as authority on Qur'anic studies by Western Scholars, says:

*"The scripture of no other community, not even the old Testament among the Jews, has had quite the same influence on the life of the community as the Qur'an has had in Islam."*<sup>1</sup>

Richard C. Martin in his *Introducing Islam* says that as Qur'an is very important for Muslims so we have to read it carefully if we want to challenge Muslims and to compete Islam.<sup>2</sup> Bodley argues that Qur'an is the base to understand the mind of Muhammad p.b.u.h.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Fazal ar-Rahman, regretfully comments on the Western study of the Qur'an as:

*"Unfortunately, the treatment of the Judeo-Christian antecedents of the Qur'an has often been contaminated by the far too obvious desire of its proponents to prove that the Qur'an is no more than an echo of Judaism (or Christianity) and Muhammad (PBUH) no more than a Jewish (or Christian) disciple!"*<sup>4</sup>

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So they [orientalists] have done a detailed research in Qur'anic sciences and consequently raised several objections. A brief sketch of these objections with a critical study is being given here:

### **Orientalists on compilation of the Qur'an**

Almost all orientalists are of the view that the revelation of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. was only on oral basis. He himself had not thought to compose it in book shape.<sup>5</sup> He did not order to write the Qur'an nor he managed to save it in written form. Some of his companions made their private codices on behalf of material which they had obtained from prophet p.b.u.h.<sup>6</sup> It was not put together in written form until well after Muhammad's death.<sup>7</sup> During Muhammad's lifetime verses were written on palm-leaves, stones and any material that came to hand. Their collection was completed during the caliphate of 'Umar r.a. the second Caliph and an authorized version was established during the caliphate of 'Uthman r.a.<sup>8</sup> Almost all orientalists are of the same view.

Jeffery said that Uthman r.a. omitted various parts of Qur'an during its final editing he also added some material in it for his political purposes. According to orientalists the version of Qur'an now we possess is not the text compiled by Zayd r.a. With the passage of time various corruptions occurred in the text. We can find numerous mistakes made by the copyists. For example: James A. Bellamy in his "*Some Proposed Emendations to the Text of The Koran*" gave several examples of this hypothesis as: Hasab occurred in 21:98 is a mistake of copyist. According to James the original word is hatab.<sup>9</sup> He also mentioned Ummah, Abb, Sijjil, hittah, surhunna, Sabun minal-mathani, tamanna, Illa amaniya, sibghat Allah, ashab al-aaraf are wrongly cited by copyiest.<sup>10</sup>

### **Compilation of the Qur'an in the light of Sources**

The Qur'an had been compiled during the life of prophet p.b.u.h. A brief history of the compilation of Qur'an is being given here.

#### *Compilation of the Qur'an in the Life of Prophet (PBUH)*

Allah Almighty says in Sura al-Furqan

*"Yet they say: Fables of ancient times which have caused to be written down, so that they might be read out to him at morning and evening."*<sup>11</sup>

al-Furqan is a Makkan Sura. The words (he has caused to be written down) are a sufficient proof of Jama al-Qur'an in writing since its very beginning. It was accepted by the contemporaries of Prophet as we have seen in the above mentioned verse. So it is clear that the prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. had scribes whom he ordered to write down the

revelation of the Qur'an on materials available at time.<sup>12</sup> Whenever the prophet p.b.u.h. received a verse or verses, he commanded one of his scribes immediately to write down the revelation and arrange it on its place in Suras of Qur'an.<sup>13</sup> Several traditions support this view, that every revealed verse was written down immediately then it was put in a pre-ordained order and kept in a safe place.<sup>14</sup>

Some scribes were assigned permanently to write down the revelation, being given the title of *katibin al-Wahi*. Whereas some scribes were called to write down revelations occasionally.<sup>15</sup> Many scholars tried to count the number of scribes by using the sources. Ibn Kathir count the number of scribes twenty-two<sup>16</sup>, and as a general opinion it is accepted that the number of scribes exceed to 40. Most famous scribes are Uthman r.a., Ali, Ubai b. Kab, Zayd b. Thabit r.a..<sup>17</sup> Later was known as *Katib an Nabi* and *Katib al-Wahi*.<sup>18</sup> Bukhari narrates: "*Narrated al-Bara: There was revealed: laa yastawi al-qaiduna...*"

The Prophet said: "*Call Zayd for me and let him bring the board, the inkpot and the scapula bone (or the scapula bone and the inkpot). Then he said: write: la yastawi.*"<sup>19</sup> It is also reported that material upon which the revelation had been written down was kept in the house of prophet p.b.u.h.<sup>20</sup>

To ensure that the Qur'an would not be confused with his own utterances, the prophet p.b.u.h. is reported to have ordered his companions to write nothing except the Qur'an and who have written down anything other than Qur'an erase it.<sup>21</sup>

As a result the entire revelation is said to have been gradually secured, kept in written form in a pre-ordained order and stored in the prophet's house.<sup>22</sup>

The Prophet permitted to a number of companions to have their own copies of Qur'an (in form of fragments) in addition to memorizing Qur'an.<sup>23</sup> The most famous among them, who are said to have taught many others are the following: Uthman, Ali, Ubai b. Kaab, Abu ad-Darda, Zayd b. Thabit, Abd Allah b. Masud, Abu Musa al-Ashari, Salim (the maula of Hudhayfa), and Muaadh b. Jabal r.a.<sup>24</sup> Thus the Qur'an was memorized by many companions and was all written down in the form that has come down to us (i.e., the same verses and as in the very same order.<sup>25</sup>

It is clear now that whole Qur'an was written down in the life of prophet p.b.u.h. It was safe and secure not only in written form but orally also. Dr. Hamidullah says:

*"It was the custom of the Prophet (PHUH) that immediately after dictating he would ask his companions to memorize the text and repeat it daily during the two prayers – at that time only two prayer were*

*ordained. It was only after the Ascension that five prayers became obligatory and people began to repeat the verses of the Qur'an Five times during their daily prayers. Indeed, it was the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who, for the first time, ordered the memorizing, together with the writing of the scripture, i.e. the Qur'an.*"<sup>26</sup>

The allegation of orientalist that the prophet himself had no idea to write down a book or to save the revelation is entirely baseless. The verse mentioned above proves it. The verse goes as: "*he caused to be written down, so that they might be read out to him at morning and evening.*"

There is no ambiguity now that what has been written by the scribes it was read out to Prophet p.b.u.h. A hadith also supports this fact: "*The Prophet has disallowed the carrying along of the Qur'an in enemy's land...*"<sup>27</sup>

Some other historical evidences shed light on the written form of Qur'an are: The well known report about Umar r.a. conversion shows that large passages of the revelation had already been written down even at a very early time, in Makka, long before hijra.<sup>28</sup> Another report informs us that when people came from Madina to learn about Islam, they were provided with copies of the *Surahs* of Qur'an, to read and learn them by heart.<sup>29</sup> More over during his last pilgrimage, at the sermon to the large gathering of Muslims, the Prophet said:

*"I have left with you something which if you will hold fast to it you will never fall into error – a plain indication, the book of God, and the practice of his Prophet.*"<sup>30</sup>

The word indicates toward a written document. So the hypothesis of orientalist that Qur'an was not saved in written form and that it was written 50 years later than the death of Prophet has no basis at all. Interestingly, the most celebrated orientalist William Muir attests that the Qur'an was written down and was secured in the life of Prophet p.b.u.h.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Compilation of the Qur'an during the reign of Abu Bakr (R.A)*

The Companions and their followers relied on memorizing the Qur'an. In addition, they had their personal manuscripts. Although the Qur'an was completed in the life of Muhammad p.b.u.h. But it was not bound in a book shape. People have the copies of Qur'an and they did not face any problem in this respect. In 12 A.H, when seventy of Huffaz were killed in Yamama's battle fighting against Musaylima.<sup>32</sup> Forty huffaz, and possibly seventy, had been killed earlier in the battle of Bir Mauna. 'Umar r.a. got worried and he came to Abu Bakr (R.A) with the suggestion that the Qur'an should be compiled in a single book as a safeguard against the loss of some parts of the records or the death of the Huffaz.<sup>33</sup>

Abu Bakr r.a. hesitated to do so but after a while he took the matter carefully and agreed with 'Umar r.a. He called Zayd b. Thabit r.a. because he was the well-known scribe of Prophet and Hafiz of the Qur'an, he had checked through the text with the Prophet p.b.u.h. after the Prophet p.b.u.h. had recited it in presence of Jibrail a.s.; he was skilled at writing the Qur'an.<sup>34</sup> Bukhari quoted the tradition of this compilation:

Zayd was afraid of carrying out this task because he felt that he could not do something that the Prophet had not ordered him to do. Abu Bakr r.a. finally persuaded him, and he started the work by comparing the Prophet's record with the memorized and written versions of those of the Huffaz who were available in Madina. He then wrote out the entire text in book form and presented the mushaf to Abu Bakr r.a.

The mushaf remained with Abu Bakr r.a. until he died, then with Umar r.a. until the end of his life, and then with Hafsa r.a., the daughter of Umar r.a. and the wife of the Prophet, who was the executor for her father, and was herself a Hafiza.<sup>35</sup> This was because 'Umar r.a. had died before the final nomination of the third caliph.<sup>36</sup> At this time disputes arose about the reading of the Qur'an among the Qurra (i.e., readers) because some of the Companions and the followers were teaching students in the cities they were sent to in versions that differed in various ways, and also because the Companions were reciting the Qur'an in the seven ahruf they were permitted to use.

*Compilation of Qur'an during the reign of Uthman r.a.*

By the time of Uthman r.a., disputes among the readers became so heated that they were accusing each other of unbelief (*kufir*). Many complaints were brought before Uthman r.a., urging him to take action to avert fighting and division among the Muslims. Such disputes occurred in many places: Madina to Kufa, Basra, Syria, and the military camps (*ajnad*). Hudhayfa b. al Yaman was in the battle zones of Armenia and Azerbaijan and witnessed these disputes among Muslims. He got annoyed and hastened to Madina to suggest to Uthman r.a. a unified reading of the Qur'an. He addressed him saying: "*O Chief of the Believers! Save this Umma before they differ about the Book as the Jews and the Christians did before*".<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, Uthman r.a. called the Muhajirun and Ansar for consultation. All of them agreed and encouraged him to unify the reading of the Qur'an.<sup>38</sup> Bukhari narrated further actions as:

*"Uthman r.a. sent a message to Hafsa saying Send us the manuscript of the Qur'an, so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscript to you. Hafsa sent the manuscript to Uthman r.a. Uthman r.a. then ordered Zayd b. Thabit, Abd Allah Ibn az*

*Zubayr, Said bin al Aa, and Abd ar Rahman bin Harith b. Hisham r.a. to write the manuscripts in perfect copies. Uthman r.a. said to the Qurayshi men, If you disagree with Zayd b. Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, write it in the dialect (lisan) of Quraysh as the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue. They did so and when they had written many copies, Uthman r.a. returned the original manuscript to Hafsa r.a. To every Muslim region, Uthman r.a. sent one copy and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether whole or fragmentary manuscripts, be burnt.*"<sup>39</sup>

The Companions, the learned men, and the leading figures agreed with Uthman r.a. and approved the decision he had made, including Ali r.a.. He is reported as having said:

*"...he did nothing without the consolation and consent of all Companions, and, furthermore, that if he were in Uthman's position he would have done the same thing."*<sup>40</sup>

Ali r.a. is reported to have confronted those who rebelled against Uthman r.a. and said to them that Uthman r.a. burnt only the masahif that varied from the final revelation and preserved that which was agreed upon.

In fact, Muslims in general admired Uthman's action and agreed to it unanimously (with exception of Ibn Masud) because Uthman r.a. united them on one mushaf, cleansed from any abrogated versions, and freed it from any aahaad reading or any interpretation that may have been added to the text.<sup>41</sup>

Only Ibn Masud r.a. is reported to be angry with this action of Uthman r.a.. It is said that he refused to give his mushaf back to Uthman r.a. to be burnt and to have told his students to do the same.<sup>42</sup> Some reasons of his behaviour are mentioned by scholars as follows:

*"Ibn Masud is said to have felt ignored or insulted when he was not asked to join the committee set up to compile the Qur'an. He is quoted as having said that he had been taught seventy Suras by the Prophet p.b.u.h., while Zayd b. Thabit was a young boy playing with children."*<sup>43</sup>

The reason Uthman r.a. did not include Ibn Masud is discussed by al Asqalani, who points out that Ibn Masud was not in Madina at the time when Uthman r.a. urgently appointed the committee. He was in Kufa. Furthermore, Uthman r.a. did nothing more than reproduce the pages compiled by the command of Abu Bakr into one mushaf. In the times of Abu Bakr and of Uthman, Zayd bin Thabit r.a. had the privilege of being the scribe in charge of compilation."<sup>44</sup>

Historical evidences shed light on the fact that the general approval i.e. *Ijma* and confidence of the companions accorded the

Uthmanic text. Companions followed in the particulars of Qur'anic recitation. All the material we find in commentaries and other books attributed to companions as their reading, has been preserved only because of its explanatory value or as a precious scholarly inheritance attributed to the most remarkable and respected figures of Islamic history. There is no doubt that sooner or later all the companions declared their approval to Uthmanic text, so variation or authenticity of Uthmanic text is only a hypothesis of orientalists. They have no authentic material to present as a proof of their so-called research.

### Order of Suras

Furthermore, they say: As the Qur'an was compiled after the death of prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. So it is a patch work in which no chronological sequence has been followed by its editor Zayd b. Thabit r.a. Its chapters were arranged generally in order of length, longer Suras coming first and shortest last.<sup>45</sup> Various orientalists like Noldeke, Grimme, Rodwell, and Bell made attempts to arrange the chapters in chronological order, but scholars are agreed that a strictly chronological arrangement is impossible without dissecting some of the chapters into scattered verses, owing to the inclusion of revelations spoken in Madina in chapters began very years earlier in Makka. According to their point of view the correct order of Suras can throw light on the evolution in prophet's career and consequently on his book.<sup>46</sup>

As far as, the arrangement of Suras in Qur'an is concerned it was maintained by the Prophet p.b.u.h. in accordance with revelation.<sup>47</sup> He himself took care of the actual arrangement of the revelation, when it was written down.<sup>48</sup> Zayd r.a. is reported to have said: "*We used to compile the Qur'an from small scraps in the presence of the Apostle*".<sup>49</sup>

Uthman r.a. said, that in later days, the Prophet used to, when something was revealed to him, call someone from among those who used to write for him and said: Place these Ayats in the Sura, in which this and this is mentioned and when (only) one Aya was revealed to him, he said place this Aya in the Sura in which this and this is mentioned.

In accordance with some other reports we come to know that the proper arrangement of Suras was well known to the companions of prophet p.b.u.h. and they were not agree to tamper with it.

Likewise some other Ahadith throw light on the order of suras since Prophet's time is:

*"Narrated Abu Huraira r.a.: The Prophet used to recite the following in the Fajr prayer of Friday: Alif Laam mim Tanzil (sajda) and Hal-ata ala Insani...(addahr)"*<sup>50</sup>

Another hadith is: "Abu Huraira said: God's messenger recited in both raka's of the dawn prayer Sura." "*Qul ya ayyuhal kafirun*" and "*Qul hu Allah hu ahad*"<sup>51</sup>

The order of Suras and their arrangement was of course well known to the Muslims due to the daily recitation of the Qur'an in the prayers at the mosque of the prophet and at other places.

All authorities state that the Prophet p.b.u.h. and his Companions recited Suras of the Qur'an in their order in and out of the prayers.<sup>52</sup>

In Madina, a delegation came to the Prophet and one in the group, Abu Aws, reported the Prophet as having said: "*I did not want to come without completing the parts of the Qur'an I recite daily*".

They asked the Companions: How do you divide the Qur'an for the recitation? They replied: We divide them three Suras, five Suras, seven Suras, nine Suras, eleven Suras, thirteen Suras, and the part of al-Mufassal from Sura al-Qaf to the end.<sup>53</sup>

Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. himself did not know about the end of a Sura until the revelation confirms it. A hadith goes as:

The basmala was a sign for the sealing of the Suras. "Ibn Abbas stated that

*"The Prophet did not know that a Sura had been sealed until the revelation came to him with In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful, when it was revealed he knew that the Sura was sealed"*.<sup>54</sup>

The Qur'an present some evidences that the order and arrangement of Suras is in accordance with divine guidance. For instance: in sura Hud Allah almighty says: "*Say [unto them] Produce, then, ten suras of similar merit, invent [by your self]*"<sup>55</sup>

Sura Hud is eleventh sura of Qur'an. It comes on eleventh number after ten Suras. It is a proof of its divine arrangement.

Likewise Allah almighty says: *And all [kinds of] cattle have been made lawful to you [for sacrifice and food], save what is mentioned to you [as forbidden]*.<sup>56</sup>

All the animal have been allowed in Qur'an to eat, mentioned in Qur'an are mentioned in al-Baqara, Maida, Anam. So there is no doubt that the order of Suras is tawqifi.

Abu Bakr r.a. simply ordered the Qur'an to be rewritten and to be assembled in one place. Different writings were found in the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) containing the Qur'an. These were arranged and tied together by a cord to ensure that none were lost.<sup>57</sup>

In the light of above, it is clear that compilation during the reign of Abu Bakr. r.a. and Uthman r.a. was not arranging of Suras. Baqilani says: The whole Qur'an, whose compilation and writing Allah commanded, excluding the abrogated verses, is what is contained in this

*mushaf* (of Uthman r.a.). It is the same arrangement and style revealed to the Prophet in the very same manner of verses and Suras with no difference in word order, and the Umma has received from the Prophet the arrangement of every verse and Sura, and their places, as they have received the recitation of the Qur'an.<sup>58</sup>

So the order of Suras in the Qur'an we have in hands is not a patch work as the orientalist claimed. Authentic historical sources throw light on the written and arranged Qur'an since the life of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. Interestingly, orientalist have to concede that: a final arrangement of Suras is not possible yet. We would not have arrived at a final decision in this regard.<sup>59</sup>

### Private Codices of Companions

Another allegation of orientalist is that a number of the companions of Muhammad p.b.u.h. had compiled their own codices of the text. Most popular of them ascribed to Abd Allah b. Masud and Ubai b. Kab r.a. These private collections were basically consistent with each other in their general content, but a large number of variant readings, many seriously affecting the text, existed in all the manuscripts. Likewise number of Suras and their order were also differed each other.<sup>60</sup> These recessions gradually disappeared after the authorization of Uthman's *mushaf* but several items of information regarding these private collection are given in Exegesis (*Tafasirs*) and in some other books. If the text of Qur'an was revealed by Allah then how this difference and variation took place? The private collections and their variation proves the human origin of Qur'an.

### Codices of the Companions

Several companions of the Prophet p.b.u.h. had prepared their own written collections of revelations. The best known among these are attributed to Ibn Masud, Ubai b. Kab and Zayd b. Thabit.

A list of other Companions of whom it is related that they had their own written collections included the following: 'Umar, Ibn Az-Zubair, Abd Allah Ibn Amr, Ayesha, Salim, Umm Salma, Ubaid bin Umar r.a.<sup>61</sup>

It is also known that Ayesha and Hafsa r.a. had their own written copies of Qur'an after the Prophet had died.<sup>62</sup>

Orientalist have raised objections on these personal codices in regard of difference of order of Suras and variant Readings. Following is a brief description of the codices of Ibn Masud and Ubai b. Kab, as they are considered very important than other codices.<sup>63</sup>

*Codic of Ibn Masud r.a.*

Ibn Masud r.a. was one of the closest companions of prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h.. He is said to have prepared his own copy of Qur'an as he learned from the prophet. Ibn Nadim quoted that he had seen a copy of the Qur'an of Ibn Masud r.a. in which Sura 1,113,114 were not included. The following is the order attributed to Ibn Masud r.a.

2, 3, 4, 7, 6, 5, 10, 16, 11, 12, 17, 21, 23, 26, 37, 33, 28, 24, 8, 19, 29, 30, 36, 25, 22, 13, 34, 35, 14, 38, 47, 31, 35, 40, 43, 41, 46, 45, 44, 48, 57, 59, 32, 50, 65, 49, 67, 64, 63, 62, 61, 72, 71, 58, 60, 66, 55, 53, 51, 52, 54, 69, 56, 68, 79, 70, 73, 74, 83, 80, 76, 75, 77, 78, 81, 82, 88, 87, 92, 89, 85, 84, 96, 90, 93, 94, 86, 100, 107, 101, 98, 91, 95, 104, 106, 102, 97, 110, 108, 109, 111, 112.<sup>64</sup>

As far as the order of suras in the codex of Ibn Masud is concerned it was different from that of Mushaf al-Imam. Probably Ibn Masud r.a. insisted to maintain the order of Suras as it was because he had learnt them from Prophet p.b.u.h. in the sequence adopted in his codic. But after a short while he agreed with Uthman r.a. and gave up his codex. He accepted the Mushaf prepared by Uthman r.a. so naturally he accepted the order of Suras as maintained by Uthman r.a. Now Hamaza, Asim, Kasai, and Khalf are said to follow the reading of Ibn Masud r.a. They recite whole Qur'an in its proper order.

Moreover, this difference of order can be a mistake of copyist. Jeffery also conceded that this list of Suras and its sequence could not be considered authentic one and we cannot rely upon this list for a final copy of codic of Ibn Masud r.a.<sup>65</sup>

Another objection on the codex of Ibn Masud r.a. is that Suras no: I, 113,114 were not included in this mushaf.<sup>66</sup> The following views and interpretations have been brought to bear on the discussion:

- One group of scholars considers the story untrue and fabricated.<sup>67</sup>
- Certain scholars maintain that Ibn Masud r.a. did not write those Suras because they were memorized by all Muslims, even the children. Thus there was no fear that they might be forgotten. Otherwise, as the author of Kitab al Mabani states, how could Ibn Masud r.a., with his wide knowledge, not be aware of the most famous, the most widely known, and the easiest Suras of the Qur'an.<sup>68</sup>

However, it is understandable, in his opinion, that Ibn Masud r.a. did not write the Fatiha, which could not be forgotten, because it is recited in all prayers and rakahs.<sup>69</sup>

The author of Kitab al Mabani states that Ibn Masud may have omitted the Suras because he wanted to write only what he heard directly

from the Prophet.<sup>70</sup> However, this view seems not to be sound for the reason that Ibn Masud himself is reported to have said I have been taught seventy Suras directly from the mouth of the Prophet.<sup>71</sup> Which indicates that he learnt both the Suras he heard from the Prophet and those that he learnt from the Companions.

Al Qurtubi attributes to Yazid b. Harun the view that Ibn Masud died before he had completed memorizing all the Suras. However, al Qurtubi objects to this view,<sup>72</sup> which indeed has no evidence to support it. The alleged exclusion of these Suras from the mushaf of Ibn Masud does not mean that they were not memorized by him for, as is well known, they are among the shortest and easiest Suras of the Qur'an.

Furthermore, al Baqilani states that all these riwayat are isolated reports (*ahaad*) that should not be regarded as reliable. In addition, he considers all differences attributed to Ibn Masud as false and related by ignorant (people), although he does not deny that Ibn Masud, like any other hafiz, might fall into error in certain haruf. He adds that if Ibn Masud had denied these two sealing Suras, the Companions would have disagreed with him, and that this would have become widely known, since lesser quarrels have been reported to us. Also, he says that the consensus of the Companions on the compilation of the mushaf cannot be impugned by these anomalous invented narrations.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, a considerable number of Ahadith refer to the position of these suras, the story behind their revelation and, above all, to the recitation of them to by the Prophet while at home and traveling, which indicate that Ibn Masud was aware of them.

#### *Codex of Ubai b. Kab r.a.*

Ubai b. Kab r.a. was one of the scribes of Prophet p.b.u.h.. He wrote the Qur'an, and prepared a copy of mushaf. It is said that two additional suras and an aya were found in his mushaf. The order of Suras is also differed from mushaf of Uthman r.a. and as well as Ibn Masud. Following is the order of Suras in the copy (of mushaf) attributed to Ubai b. Kab r.a.

1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 5, 10, 8, 9, 11, 19, 26, 22, 12, 18, 17, 39, 45, 20, 21, 24, 23, 40, 13, 28, 27, 38, 36, 15, 42, 30, 43, 41, 14, 35, 48, 47, 57, 52, 25, 32, 71, 46, 50, 55, 56, 72, 53, 68, 69, 59, 60, 77, 78, 75, 81, 79, 80, 83, 84, 95, 96, 49, 63, 62, 66, 89, 67, 92, 82, 91, 85, 86, 87, 88, 74?, 108, 97, 109, 110, 111, 106, 112, 113, 114.<sup>74</sup>

Why the sequence of suras is different in codices of companions, it has been discussed earlier. Another objection about the codex of Ubai b. Kab r.a. raised by western scholars is that Ubai had included an extra sura in his codex.<sup>75</sup>

Another explanation of this problem is that Ubai and Ibn Masud were confused, since they first heard the Prophet recite qunut in the prayers, particularly in the witr prayer, the most important sunna after the obligatory five daily prayers, and that Ubai r.a. came to believe that they were from the Qur'an.<sup>76</sup>

The author of Kitab al Mabani states that Ubai's profound knowledge of the Qur'an would have enabled him to distinguish what is the Qur'an from what is not. This is supported by the fact that the transmission of qiraa from him to the Imams (leading experts in qiraat) does not mention that Ubai taught them qunut as part of the Qur'an.<sup>77</sup> Baqilani suggests that Ubai might have written qunut on the back of his mushaf as a Dua, as we do on our masahif.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, he studies in a special chapter the stylistic differences between the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet.<sup>79</sup> On this basis, he concludes that it is impossible that the Companions could not distinguish between the Qur'an and what is not the Qur'an and that the number of Suras was known to them.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, many authorities confirm that what is attributed to Ubai is no more than dua, and they call it Dua al Qunut.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, these narrations attributed to Ubai Ibn Kab r.a. and Abd Allah Ibn Masud cannot be regarded as authentic.

### **Abrogation**

Another objection often raised by orientalist is the theory of abrogation. They are of the view that the Qur'an contains several contradictions. The Prophet got over this by inventing a theory of abrogation which is supposed to have received divine sanction. As the prophet claimed the Qur'an to be a complete divine book then it is very difficult to understand the need for change or abrogation, when the text of the whole book is supposed to have been written from all eternity upon a tablet in heaven. It means that there are contradictions in the text preserved in heaven.<sup>82</sup> So this theory of abrogation which fit the requirements of one specific man and his friends in a specific area and time confirms it as the book of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)<sup>83</sup> who made the concept of nasakh to hide his mistakes in long suras due to his bad memory.<sup>84</sup>

### **Refutation of the Objection**

Abrogation literally means to erase, to compensate. Its technical definition is: *"To repeal a legal order through legal argument"*.<sup>85</sup> Sometimes a legal order enforced by Allah for a particular time. Then at a later time, he cancelled that order and enforced a new order.

The allegation raised by orientalist is not a new one. The Jews of Arabia also raised the same point in the life of prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h.. They thought that there can be no abrogation in the commands

of Allah, because if the abrogation is accepted it would imply that Allah also changes His views. They thought that this would mean that once Allah gave one commandment but when He realized his mistake He withdrew it. Orientalists of our age are of the same view. In fact abrogation does not mean to declare abrogated as wrong but it is to fix the time limit for the enforcement of the first order and to tell that the first order was just and proper for the time it remained in force.<sup>86</sup> But now a new order is being enforced according to the changed circumstances. Whoever would think over it in a reasonable frame of mind would have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that this change is exactly in keeping with the infinite wisdom of Allah. It cannot be questioned in any way. He would not be a doctor in the true sense if he uses the same prescription under all the circumstances and for every disease. An adept would make necessary changes in his prescriptions according to the changing condition of the patient.<sup>87</sup>

Abrogation is not found only for the follower of the Holy Prophet p.b.u.h. but it has remained a regular feature in the religious orders of other Prophets p.b.u.h. as well. We find several examples of abrogation in the present day's Bible. For example: it has occurred in the O.T. that in the religious system of Yaqub p.b.u.h. a man could have two real sisters as his wives at the same time, and he himself had two wives at one time, Liyyah and Rahil who were sisters.<sup>88</sup> But this was forbidden in the religious dispensation of Musa p.b.u.h.<sup>89</sup> Every moving animal was permissible as food in the dispensation of Nuh r.a.<sup>90</sup> In that of Isa p.b.u.h. divorce was allowed only if a woman committed adultery.<sup>91</sup> In short there are several such examples in the New and Old Testaments of the Bible wherein an existing order had been abrogated through a new order.<sup>92</sup>

Why the Orientalist do not pay heed to this reality! In fact abrogation is a phenomenon of the wisdom of Allah. It is not a vice of Qur'an or a proof of its human origin instead it confirms that this book is revealed by a great almighty power of the universe. It also attests the common origin of O.T., N.T. and Qur'an. Maurice Bucaille, a non Muslim, read the Qur'an without biases and with open mind. For this reason he states that:

*"Thanks to its undisputed authenticity, the text of the Qur'an holds a unique place among the Books of Revelation, shared neither by the old nor the New Testament... it was written at the time of prophet p.b.u.h."*<sup>93</sup>

As far as, the objections of Jeffery, Bell, Watt, Mingana, Noldeke and the other members of this growing group of orientalists are concerned, they are based only on their prejudice against Islam and prophet

Muhammad p.b.u.h.. Its basic reason is expressed by a orientalist, while talking about an authentic version of N.T., as..."*we had to wait till the sixteenth century till the council of Trent for an official Holy Scripture...*"<sup>94</sup> As their own books are corrupted by human beings down the centuries so they feel jealousy to accept the Qur'an an authentic, unchanged, untampered book and raise objections against Qur'an.

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