

What
the Shiites Say
About
the Qur'an

Dr. Umar Labdo

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Shiites believe that the Qur'an is incomplete. According to them, the Book is full of contradictions, interpolations, inaccuracies and inconsistencies. And who is responsible for this falsification of the Qur'an? The Shiites say it is the *Sahabah*, the Companions who were the custodians of the Book and who preserved and compiled it after the Prophet. They say the Companions embarked on this slanting of the Qur'an in order to cover their scandalous and disgraceful acts, which are graphically exposed in the Qur'an, and to hide the outstanding traits and qualities of the family of the Prophet, the *Ahlul Bait*, including Ali's right to be the Imam after the Prophet, which are also explicitly set out in the Book.

A renowned Shiite scholar, Hashim bin Sulaiman al-Bahrani, says in his book on *Tafsir*, "You should know (dear reader) that the incontrovertible truth, according to multi-channeled narrations, is that this Qur'an, which is in our possession, has been subjected to changes after the Prophet (peace be upon him), and those who compiled it omitted from it a lot of words and verses."¹

The author of **al-Kafi**, the most authentic book in Shi'ah tradition, gives us an idea of the amount of the Qur'an which has been omitted. He narrates from Abu Abdillah Ja'far Sadiq, the sixth Shi'ah Imam, who says, "The Qur'an which Jibril (peace be upon him) brought to Muhammad (peace be upon him), is made up of seventeen thousand verses."² If we consider the fact that the Qur'an that is in our possession today is made up of just 6,236 verses,³ we realize that the part omitted, according to the Shiites, is about two-thirds of the Book. This means that, in Shiite view, what the Muslims have today of the Qur'an is just a leftover!

¹ Hashim bin Sulaiman al-Hussaini al-Bahrani, **al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an**, al-Matba'ah al-Ilmiyyah, Qum-Iran, 1393 A.H., p. 36.

² Muhammad bin Ya'aqub al-Kulaini, **Usul al-Kafi**, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, Tehran, n.d., vol. 2 p. 634.

³ Imad al-Din Isma'il bin Kathir, **Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim**, Maktabah al-Safah, Cairo, 2002, vol. 1 p. 17.

There are countless narrations in Shi'ah books, and from their religious authorities, confirming this view about the Qur'an. Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, the fiery Shiite scholar, says they are more than two thousand.¹ Another Shiite scholar, Muhammad bin Nu'man, known as al-Mufid, asserts that all the Shiite sects are unanimous on the view as a cardinal principle of their faith.²

Historically, the Shiites have a number of "scriptures" which they hold sacred and which they believe escaped the corrupting hands of the "enemies of the *Ahlul Bait*" (meaning the Companions) and therefore retained their purity. Among them are the following:

1. **Mus'haf Fatimah.** This is the authentic, uncorrupted "Qur'an", which the Shiites inherited from Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet and mother of the Imams, and which has been preserved by the Imams and their closest disciples and followers. Shiite scholars attribute to their sixth Imam, Ja'afar Sadiq, the claim that, "Fatimah left behind a volume which is not the Qur'an but it is the word of Allah *revealed* to her. It was the Prophet's dictation and Ali's handwriting."³ In another version of the same narration, he says: "It is a volume three times the like of your Qur'an but, by God, it contains not a single letter of your Qur'an."⁴

2. **Al-Sahifah al-Jami'ah.** This is another sacred book in Shi'ah tradition. Al-Kulaini quotes Ja'afar Sadiq as describing it in the following words, "It is a scroll measuring seventy *zira'* long (about 47.6 meters), dictated by the Prophet and written by Ali. It contains all the lawful and the prohibited and whatever is needed by the people to the minutest detail."⁵

¹ Hussain bin Muhammad al-Nauri al-Tabarsi, **Fasl al-Khitab fi Ithbat Tahrif Kitab Rabb al-Arbab**, locally printed in Iran, n.d., n.p., p. 248.

² Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Nu'man al-Mufid, **Awa'il al-Maqalat fi al-Mazahib al-Mukhtarat**, Dar al-Kitab al-Islami, Beirut, 1403/1983, p. 49.

³ Abu Ja'afar Muhammad bin Hussain bin Farrokh al-Saffar, **Basa'ir al-Darajat al-Kubra fi Fada'il Aali Muhammad**, Manshurat al-A'lami, Tehran, 1362 A.H., p. 176. See also, Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar al-Jami'ah li Durar Akhbar al-A'immah al-At'har**, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1403 A.H., vol. 26 pp. 41-42.

⁴ See, al-Kulaini, **Usul al-Kafi**, op. cit., vol. 1 p. 171.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1 p. 171.

3. **Al-Jafar**. This is another sacred book in Shi'ah tradition that they revere and which they regard as a source of guidance and law. Al-Kulaini quotes the sixth Shi'ah Imam as having said concerning the book, "Indeed in my possession is **al-Jafar**. [The narrator said]: I asked him, 'What is in it?' [He] replied: David's Psalms, Moses' Torah, Jesus' Gospel and Abraham's Scrolls. It contains all the lawful and the prohibited."¹ What this means is that **al-Jafar** is a sacred book which, like the Noble Qur'an, contains the essentials of all the revealed scriptures.

There are other books held sacred by the Shiites, such as **Sahifah al-Zu'abah**, **Sahifah al-Namus** and **Sahifah al-Abitah**, but the above-described ones are the most important.

Mus'haf Fatimah as "the word of Allah *revealed* to Fatimah, dictated by the Prophet and hand-written by Ali," is by far the most important of all the Shi'ah sacred books. As the Shiite "Qur'an", it has interesting contrast to the Muslim Qur'an as we know it today and as it has been known ever since it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), fourteen hundred years ago.

We have a graphic description of **Mus'haf Fatimah** in many important Shi'ah sources. For example, in **Kitab Sulaim bin Qais**, one of the earliest Shi'ah sources and which, due to its importance, is known as "the ABC of Shiism", we read the following information. *Surah* al-Ahzab (chapter 33), which in the Qur'an has 73 verses, in the **Mus'haf** it is 286 verses long (exactly the number of the longest chapter of the Qur'an – al-Baqarah!). *Surah* al-Nur (chapter 24), which has a total of 64 verses in the Qur'an, the same *Surah* in the **Mus'haf** is 160 verses long. Also, *Surah* al-Hujurat (chapter 49), which in the Muslim Qur'an has 18 verses only, its namesake in the **Mus'haf** has 90 verses.²

Above are examples of the differences in the length of same chapters in both books. But the difference does not stop there; there are also differences in words, phrases, verses and sometimes even whole chapters. In

¹ Ibid., vol. 1 p. 173.

² **Kitab Sulaim bin Qais al-Hilali**, edited by Muhammad Baqir al-Ansari al-Zanjani, Muassasah Nashr al-Hadi, Qum-Iran, 1420 A.H., p. 122.

fact, hardly a single chapter is found to be identical in the two books. For instance, *Surah* al-Fatiha in the **Mus’haf** concludes like this: *Ihdinas siratal mustaqim. Sirata man an’amta alaihim, gairil maghdubi alaihim wa ghairid dalin*, *Surah* al-Fil (chapter 105) opens thus: *Alam ya’tika kaifa fa’ala rabbuka bi ashabil fil*, while *Surah* al-Asr (chapter 103) reads: *Wal asr innal insana la fi khusr. Wa innahu fihila akhirid dahar. Illallazina amanu wa amilus salihat wa’tamaru bit taqwa, wa’tamaru bis sabr.*¹

These are just a few examples of the glaring contrast between the Noble Qur’an and **Mus’haf Fatimah**, which is the holy book of the Shi’ah religion. Interested readers may refer to **al-Shi’atu wal Qur’an** by the late Pakistani scholar, Ehsan Elahi Zahir, who has compiled all the differences between the two books from authentic Shi’ah sources in a chapter by chapter style.

Needless to say, the Shiites do not believe in the Noble Qur’an as we know it and as it exists today, at least not the whole of it. For example, they do not believe in all the verses that praise and extol the virtues of the Companions of the Prophet. Verses such as this: “*And the first to lead the way of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness – Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with him, and he has prepared for them Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.*” (Qur’an, 9:100) are, to the Shiites, an interpolation because they contradict their belief that the Companions, especially the first ones including Abubakar, Umar and Uthman, had all committed apostasy after the death of the Prophet.² To the Shiites, therefore, this verse, and many others like it, was *added* by the Companions in order to cover their apostasy and hypocrisy. In short, they *doctored* the Book to suit their purposes!

But why do the Shiites apparently accept the Qur’an as the Sacred Book of Islam from which they derive guidance, verdicts, rules and legal opinions?

¹ Ibid., p. 125.

² See our booklet **What the Shiites Say about the Companions of the Prophet**.

The answer is that the Shiites do not accept the Qur'an in its entirety, but they pretend to do so. Otherwise why do they regard the Companions of the Prophet, the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*, as apostates? Why do they insist that A'isha, the Wife of the Prophet and Mother of the Faithful, had committed adultery when no less than sixteen verses of the Qur'an (in *Surah al-Nur*) have exonerated her?¹ It is clear, therefore, that the Shiites accept parts of the Qur'an which agree with their faith and reject other parts, which they regard as an interpolation.

Another question often asked is: Where is the Shiite "Qur'an" and why can't it be bought in the market? The answer to this question is provided by a Shi'ah scholar named Hussain al-Khurasani. He says, "We the Shiites believe that there was a Qur'an which was written by Imam Ali with his own blessed hand after he had finished preparing the Prophet's body for burial and had executed his will. The book continued to be in the custody of the Imams as a trust from Allah until it reached the Imam Mahdi who kept it and will bring it out when he appears."² This means that the book was in existence for about 250 years from Ali's time until the time of Imam Mahdi (born 255 A.H.) who took it with him in his great disappearance.³ The book will be in circulation again when the Imam reappears at the end of time.

Another Shi'ah scholar gave the same explanation. He said, "After the death of the Prophet, the *Amir al-Muminin* (meaning Ali) carried it (the Qur'an) in his outer garment [*rida'*] and brought it to Abubakar and Umar while they were seated with a group of men in the mosque. He presented it to them but they said, 'We have no need for you and your Qur'an. We have our Qur'an; it is sufficient for us.' Whereupon, he said, 'You will never see it after today until the Mahdi arises.'"⁴

¹ For their false accusation of A'isha, see our booklet **What The Shiites Say about A'isha and Hafsah?**

² Hussain al-Khurasani, **al-Islam ala Dau' al-Tashayyu'**, n.d., n.p., p. 204.

³ The last Imam (the 12th), who is known as the Mahdi, had two disappearances: the lesser disappearance, which continued for 65 years during which a handful of trusted disciples had contact with him, and the great disappearance which has lasted since 259 A.H. and will terminate with his reappearance at the end of time. See, Imam Musa Musawi, **A Critical Revision of Shi'ah**, the Supreme Islamic Council, Columbia, Maryland (USA), 1412/1992, pp. 77-78.

⁴ Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, **Nur al-Anwar fi Sharh al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah**, Dar al-Mahajjah al-Baida', Beirut, 1420 A.H., p. 175.

So the book is not physically in existence today, but excerpts of it are found scattered in Shi'ah books, ancient and modern.

The View on the Scale of the Shari'ah

If we put this Shiite belief on the scale of the Shari'ah, we will see that it is in grave error. This is because it contradicts the clear verses of the Qur'an and many traditions of the Prophet, as well as the consensus of the Ummah. Even non-Muslim scholars and researchers have acknowledged the purity and immutability of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an challenges mankind to ponder and consider its contents if they could find any contradiction:

*Will they not then consider the Qur'an carefully?
Had it been from other than Allah, they would
have found therein much contradiction. (Qur'an, 4:
82)*

The Shiite belief also denies Allah's promise to guard his Book against any human interference:

*Verily, we, it is we who have sent down the
Reminder (i.e., the Qur'an) and surely we will
guard it (from corruption). (Qur'an, 15: 9)*

Indeed, Allah has protected his Book so that "*it is unassailable Scripture. Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or behind it. It is a revelation from the Wise, Owner of Praise.*" (Qur'an, 41: 42)

The Shiite view of the Qur'an has grave consequences. It amounts to a denial of the Qur'an and a rejection of its verses. This, when done knowingly, will render one's *Iman* null and void. Admittedly, many Shi'ah followers, especially in Nigeria where there is lack of Islamic knowledge, may not be aware of this belief. But this is not an excuse. Another dangerous part of the belief is the saying that a book was *revealed* to Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her). This implies the existence of a prophet, even a

prophetess, after Prophet Muhammad. This also is a negation of the Qur'an, which will make a Muslim an apostate.

It is for the above reasons that Muslims who are fascinated by Shiism are counseled to be careful of their faith. May Allah guide us all to the straight path, amin.

Important Notices:

1. Sunni Muslims consider the twelve Shi'ah Imams and other members of the Prophet's household, the *Ahlul Bait*, as belonging to the rank of the leadership of the Ahlus Sunnah. They also believe that statements attributed to them by the Shiites, which are contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, such as the ones we have seen, are mere lies and the Imams are innocent of them.

2. Shiite sources consulted in preparing this booklet are available at the library of **Markazus Sahabah** in Sokoto. The library is open to the public.