

RETHINKING MUSLIM SECTARIAN MILIEU ON QUR'ĀNIC TEXT

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Abstract: Some Orientalists have taken a plea of some *Shiite* transmissions to prove the alteration and distortion of Qur'ānic textual corpus. They have allured a chain of arguments through the various transmissions of *Shiite* school of thought in order to present the multiple readings of the text of the Qur'ān as man-made disclosure. However, the *Sunnī* Muslim scholars hold the view that although some *Shiite* literature contains a large number of reports which depict disintegration of the textual history of the Qur'ān yet this is not the opinion of entire *Shiite* school of thought. Nevertheless, it is off course, became a helping tool for Orientalist in order to achieve their specific malicious goals and to create skeptical jerks among the Muslim mass circles regarding their sacred scripture. In this way, a dire need have emerged for re-evaluating and re-thinking these kinds of alleged transmissions both in its textual and contextual perspectives especially, when interfaith harmony and pluralistic views have been proliferated throughout the recent globe.

Key Words: Qur'ānic Text, Textual Corruption, Sectarian Milieu, *Shiite* View of Qur'ānic Text and Orientalism.

There has been a sensational discourse regarding the immaculacy of Qur'ānic textual corpus among the different Muslim sectarian school of thoughts. Some old sources of *Shia* school of thought present a view that Qur'ān has not been transmitted immaculately. Certainly, this point of view is occurred in opposite to the majority Muslim *Ummah*. Some *Shia* literature contains these sort of transmission upon which the debate of their belief has been started and possessed an atrocious situation among the various scholars of different school of thoughts.

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However, this is also an established fact that the view of distortion in the Qur'ānic text has only been reported and attributed to a small group of Shiascholars. Some fundamental Shia books include such narrations in this respect for instance al-Kulainī (d. 329 A.H.) has mentioned a report:

عن جعفر بن محمد قال: لم يجمع القرآن كله الا الائمة وان القرآن الذي جاء به جبريل الى محمد كان سبع عشرة الف آية^(١)

“Ja‘far bin Muḥammad narrates that no one collected Qur’ān except *A‘imma* and the Qur’ān which brought ḤaḍratJibrail to Muḥammad (ﷺ) was pertaining seventeen thousand verses.”

Similarly, there is a narration by Imam MuḥammadBāqir mentioned in *Al-Kāfi*:

ما ادعى احد من الناس انه جمع القرآن كله كما انزل الا كذاب وما جمعه وحفظه كما انزل الا على بن ابي طالب والائمة بعده^(٢)

“No one has claimed among the people that Qur’ān was collected as it was revealed except a liar. Only ‘Alī and *A‘imma* after him collected and memorized it as it was revealed.”

On the base of these narrations, Orientalists deduced the theory of distortion and manipulation of the Qur’ān and on the same grounds; Muslim scholars from *Ahl al-Sunnah* have given the verdict of the defective belief of *Shia* school of thought.³

The View Point of Contemporary Shi‘a Scholars

The modern *Shia* scholars however, hold the view that only the subscription of these sorts of narrations in some books doesn’t mean to have belief of textual corruption. A significant number of researchers among *Shia* scholars don’t rectify the authenticity of all such reports specially described in *Al-Kāfi* by *Kulainī*. They are not ready to accept the recognition of *al-Kāfi* as *Ahl al-Sunnah* give an established recognition to *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl al-Bukharī (d. 254 A.H.). According to them, *al-Kāfi* contains a large number of *Daif* and *Mursal* reports in it. A well-known *Shia* scholar Syed HāshimHussain asserts the view of majority of earlier *Shia*ulamā’ and intellects.

“ان المتقدمين لم يجمعوا على جميع المرويات الكليني جملة و تفصيلاً”^٤

“The earlier scholars have no consensus over all narrated reports in *al-Kāfi* by *al-Kulainī*.”

Status of Al-Kāfi's Narrations:

He presents a review of such reports and analysis of al-Kāfi's narration as under:

صحيح	حسن	موثق	ضعيف	مجموعة
5072	144	1128	9480	16199

Shia critiques pursued the narrations of al-Kāfi regarding the corruption of Qur'ānic text that is 300 in number. These 300 reports have been reported thorough four channels or ways:

1. Abū 'Abd Allah Al-Sayyārī
2. Younus bin Zibyan
3. Minkhal bin Jamīl Al-kūfī
4. Muḥammad bin Hassan Jahūr.

All these narrators have been considered as *مطعون في العدالة*. *Shia* scholars have remarked about them as “فاسد” “لا يلتفت كل ما رواه”، “كذاب”، “وضع للحديث”⁵ “المذهب”، “ضعيف في الحديث”، “غال

Here we are presenting some quotations of well-known *Shia* scholars which remove the overall impression of the belief of Qur'ān's corruption attributed to them. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin 'Alī Babwaih Al-Qimmī known Al-Ṣadūq (d.381 A.H.) writes:

“اعتقادنا ان القرآن الذي انزل الله تعالى على نبيه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم هو ما بين الدفتين وهو ما في ايدي الناس ليس باكثر من ذلك ومن نسب اليه اننا نقول اكثر من ذلك فهو كاذب”⁶

“The Qur'ān is not more than collected in these two covers and whoever attributed to us the belief of some additions in this scripture, is liar.”

Al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā known as 'Alam al-Hudā (d.436 A.H.) followed this view and the famous Shi'ite Qur'ānic scholar Abū 'Alī al-Ṭabrasī quoted from him and said:

As regards additions (made in Qur'ān) the multitude of people deny this; and as regards the fact that something has been dropped (out of the Qur'ān), a party of our scholars and the people called *al-Hashbiya*⁷ relate that the

Qur'ān has been subjected to changes, additions and subtractions. The correct position is with the religion of our scholars, which is opposed to this, and is supported by *al-Murtadā*.⁸

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Bin 'Alī al-Ḥassan al-Ṭūsī (d-461 A.H) describes regarding accuracy of the Qur'ānic text:

واما الكلام في زيادته ونقصانه فما لا يليق به لان الزيادة فيه مجمع على بطلانها واما النقصان منه فالظاهر ايضا من مذاهب المسلمين خلافه وهو اليق بالصحیح من مذهبنا --- غير انه رويت روايات كثيرة من جهة الخاصة والعامة بنقصان كثير من آي القرآن --- لا يستوجب علما فالاولى الاعراض عنها⁹

“Any belief of addition or deletion in the text of the Qur'ān is against the Muslims faith. This is the true point of view and our (*Shia*) belief is the same. However, the reports regarding the alteration of Qur'ān are not reliable.”

Some *Shia* scholars declared all such altered verses as abrogated verses¹⁰ which were thrown out of *Maṣāḥif*. Similarly, various other clarifications have been stated by *Shia* scholars to refute the objection of manipulation in the text of the Qur'ān. For instance, they have put different interpretations of the objection that the Qur'ān of *Shia* was consisting of 90 parts and 70 yards in length.¹¹

“*Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*” is one of the most blazing books in presenting the narrations concerning to the distortion of Qur'ānic text. Javādal-Balāghī, criticizing on its narrations that all the reporters of this book are unreliable, weak and extremist (*Ghālī*) in their sect. it has been proved through a number of arguments that all the narration of “*Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*” are rejected (*Mardūd*) and unreliable.¹² Al-Mīlānī and 'Alī al-Ḥusainī also declare the view of al-Nurī in 'Faṣl' as his personal view:

يؤكد ما ذكرناه من أنه رأي شخصي أن علماء الشيعة المعاصرين له والمتأخرين عنه تناولوا كتابه بالرد والنقد كالسيد محمد حسين الشهرستاني والشيخ محمود العراقي وغيرهما وللشيخ البلاغي بعض الكلام في هذا الباب في مقدمة تفسيره آلاء الرحمن بل إن الشيخ النوري نفسه يعترف بصراحة بتفرده في هذا القول كما لا يخفى على من راجع كتابه.¹³

“What we mentioned—that this is his personal opinion—is affirmed by the fact that his contemporary *Shī'ī* scholars, and those who came after him, treated his book with refutation and criticism, such as al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Shahrastānī, *Shaykh* Maḥmūd al-'Irāqī and those other than them. And *Shaykh* al-Balāghī (also) has

some discourse on this issue in the introduction of his commentary, '*Ālā' al-Raḥmān*.' In fact, *Shaykh* al-Nūrī himself has explicitly admitted his singularity concerning this opinion, as it is not hidden to he who refers to his book."

Sayyārī, who wrote a horrifying book in support of Qur'ānic distortion, *Imām Khūī* expressed his views regarding the reports of this book that all narrations are *Daīf* and its author's belief totally wrong.¹⁴

Imām Khanizī has expressively negated the view of those people who attributed distortion of Qur'ān towards *Shia* school of the thought. He is of opinion that *Imamia* (a *Shia* sect) regard the present Qur'ān as an immaculate, pure and preserved discourse of Allah. This view had remained as a belief of *Shia* predecessors. Sheikh Ṣadūq al-Qimmī Says:

"اعتقادنا ان القرآن لا زيادة فيه ولا نقصه"¹⁵

Muḥammad Jawād Mughnia writes that *imamia* do not believe any of the distortion whether it relates to addition or deletion in Qur'ān; because they have a firm belief in preservation of Qur'ān from any defect or error. It is mostly blamed that *Imamia* is of view to have belief in corruption of Qur'ānic text, which is totally wrong notion against them. The earlier and later scholars of *Imamia* have asserted vividly that Qur'ān is not except the present one in our hands. From earlier scholars he, mentions the references of Shaikh Ṣadūq, Sayed Murtaḍā and Ṭūsī's books whereas from later scholars he takes notes of Shaikh Ja'far Najfī's "*Kashf al-Ghada*", Syed Muḥsin Baghdādī's "*Sharah al-Wafiyah*", Sheikh 'Alī al-Kurki who wrote an article, in which he tried to prove that there has not been any addition in the Qur'ānic text and in addition to that he, gives the quotation of Shaikh Jawād Al-Balāghī that there is no acceptance of such reports of manipulation in the text of Qur'ān. Shaikh Amīn al-Balāghī stated in his books that there are a very small number of *Shia* scholars who unfortunately have a theory of Qur'ānic distortion.

It has been clearly observed that since the last two centuries *Shia* scholars are trying their best to confiscate themselves with these charged allegations. The best example is "*Fajral-Islām*" in which dozens of objections have been attributed against the Shiites belief, However, Muḥammad Ḥussain Kāshif al-Ghiṭa categorically rejects these attributions and disproves any relation of *Shia* to such discarded notions.¹⁶ Some *Shia* scholars have refuted these

charges in a very intensive manner as Syed AmīrMuḥammadal-Kāzmī al-Qizwīnī has uttered his answer while addressing MahmūdShakrī Alūsī Baghdādī and criticizing his book titled “*Al-Minhatal-Ilāhiyyah*” in the following statement.

"اما القول بتحريف القرآن ونقصه فليس من عقائد الشيعة بل يحكمون بضلال من يقول بتحريفه، وانما نسب اليهم ذلك الدجالون كالألوسى وغيره من اعدائهم، لان الثابت للضرورة من مذهبهم الاسلامى نفي التحريف عنه فى الدين والعقل"^{١٧}

“The attribution of addition and deletion in the text of the Qur’ān is not from the Shiites belief. Rather, *Shia* scholars declare off track to those who think so. This allegation has been charged on us by *Dajjāl* like *Ālūsī*.”

Al-Qizwinī clears the genuine position of Shi’ites belief of Qur’ān in the following way.

"ويعتقدون ان القرآن الكريم الموجود اليوم بايدى المسلمين هو الذى انزله الله تعالى على سيد المرسلين
□ لم ينقص منه حرف ولم يزيد فيه حرف"^{١٨}

“Shia hold the belief that the present Qur’ān available in the hands of Muslims is identical to which Allah Almighty revealed to Holy Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Not even single letter has omitted nor exceeded.”

In the same context great Shia Aalim, Sheikh Mufid (d. 413 A. H.) writes in his book “*al-Mesael al-Surweya*” on page 78:

أن الذي بين الدفتين من القرآن جميعه كلام الله و تنزيله، و ليس فيه شيء من كلام البشر.
“Verily what is between the two covers of the Quran its whole content is Allah’s words and revelation, there is nothing from the words of mankind in it and its entirety is the revelation of Allah”

Similarly, Abu al-Hassan Mahdī al-Khanizī has expressed the majority of Shia school of thought about all narrated reports regarding the manipulation and proposed emendations in the text of the Qur’ān. He writes:

"واما الاخبار الدالة عليه فى بعض كتبنا فهى معدودة عندنا الا ما شذمن ضعاف الاخبار وسواقتها وليس
بإيدينا كتاب حديث يدعى ادنى عالم منا بانه قام الاجماع على العمل به من اوله وآخره...فلا نلزم بالقول
بالتحريف فى القرآن ولو فرض وجود خبر فى بعض الكتب المعتبرة كيف اذا لم يكن موجوداً الا فى شواذ
الاخبار"^{١٩}

The reports asserting the meaning of textual corruption in Shia literature are in a definite number and all are proved to be *Shāz*, *Saqiṭ* and unreliable. No one amongst us hold the belief over it. At the same time, the availability of such narrations in our authentic books doesn't mean that the possibility of *Shāz* reports is rejected.

It is now cleared with the above mentioned references that except few unreliable individuals, no one is having belief of any deletion or addition in the Qur'ānic text. So, it is absolutely an erroneous methodology to take a partial view and neglect the whole original image which is a common belief of majority of *Shia* school of thought.

Notes and References

¹Kulainī, *Al-Kāfi* (Tehran: Entisharat e IlmiyyaIslamiyya, N.D.), ch. 471, Ḥadīth No. 28.

² Ibid, *KitābFadl-ul-Qur'ān*,

³ For example see Muḥibud-DīnKhaṭīb, *Al-Khuṭūṭ al-Arīḍah lil-Usūlallatī Qāma 'alaibiDīn al-Shiatal-Imāmiyyah*(Damascus: Al-Maktab al-Islamī, 1391 A.H.).

⁴ Dr. Muḥammad al-Ḥabsh, *Al-Qirā'at al-MutwātrahwaAthruhā fī al-Rasm al-Uthmānī wal-Aḥkām al-Shar'īyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1999), 52.

⁵Ibid., p. 53.

⁶Al-Ṣadūq, Abū ja'farMuḥammad bin 'AlīBabwaih Al-Qimmī, *Al-I'tiqādāt*, Vol. 1, p.57.

⁷*Ḥashwiya*, or *al-Ḥashw* is a contemptuous term for those among the men of *Ḥadīth*, who recognized the coarsely anthropomorphic traditions as genuine, without criticism and even with the kind of preference, and interpreted them literally. A few names of individuals who made themselves notorious in this way and who belonged neither to the Karrāmiya, nor to those Shī'a who did the same, are mentioned by al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milalwa'l-Nihl*, p. 77. See EhsanElāhī Zahīr, *The Shī'ites And TheSunnah* Trans. Professor Dr. Rāna M.N. EhsanElahie, (Lahore: IdārahTarjumān-al-Sunnah, ND), 175.

⁸Abū 'Alī al-Ṭabrasī , *TafsīrNajmal-Bayān* (Iran: 1284 A.H.), 1: 5. See also: EhsanElahiZaheer, *Op, Cit.*

⁹ AL-Ṭūsī, Abū Ja'farMuḥammad b. Hassan, *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīral-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, ND), 1: 3.

- ¹⁰Kirpālvi, Ṭālib Ḥussain, *Masa'lah Taḥrīf e Qur'ān* (Lahore: Ja'fria Dar al-Tabligh, N.D.), 455, the book persist of 32 logical arguments, 232 Qur'ānic verses, 85 Aḥādīth of Ma'sūmīn, 75 assertions of religious scholars and 2520 references, through which it is proved that Qur'ān is absolutely beyond any addition or omission to Shiites of 'Alī.
- ¹¹Ibid., pp.111-120.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 456.
- ¹³Al-Sayyid 'Alī al-Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Naḥw al-Taḥrīf 'an al-Qur'ān al-Sharīf* (Qum: Dar al-Quran al-Karim, 1400 AH), p- 120
- ¹⁴ Al-Khū'ī, Abū al-Qāsim Mūsā, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa Taḥṣīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruḥāt* (Lebanon: Second edition, N.D.), 2: 284.
- ¹⁵Al-Khanīzī, Abū al-Ḥassan 'Alī Mahdī, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyya Ilā Waḥdat Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Imāmiyya* (NP: Ṭubī'a 'alā Nafqat min ḍawī al-shū'ūr min Ahālī al-Qaṭīf, ND), 2: 72.
- ¹⁶ It should be noticed that in the beginning of this book some Orientalistic praising words have also been penned down, see Muḥammad Jawād Muḥanniyah, *Al-Shiah fī al-Mizān* (Beirūt: Dāral-Shurūq, N.D.), 314-315, and for more detail; Muḥammad Ḥussain Kashīf al-Ghiṭa, *Aṣl al-Shiah wa Usūlīham* (Beirūt: Dāral-Tujjār li-Sahibha, Adīb 'Arīf al-Zīn, 1960), 22-27.
- ¹⁷Syed Amīr Muḥammad al-Kāzmī al-Qizwīnī, *Al-Islām wal-Ālūsī* (NP: first edition, year of publishing and publisher not cited), 80.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 11
- ¹⁹Al-Khanīzī, Abū al-Ḥassan 'Alī Mahdī, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyya Ilā Waḥdat Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Imāmiyya* (NP: Ṭubī'a 'alā Nafqat min ḍawī al-shū'ūr min Ahālī al-Qaṭīf, N.D.), 2: 73.

