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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

## The Purity of the Text of the Holy Quran.

### 6. Answer to Objections.

Though the testimony produced under the previous headings of this important subject is sufficient to convince an intelligent reader of the absolute purity of the text of the Holy Quran and quite conclusive as to the fact that the Holy Book has been handed down to us without any addition, alteration or loss, yet it seems necessary for a comprehensive discussion of the subject to deal separately and at some length with the few objections which are met with in Christian writings on the Muhammadan religion. These objections may be briefly summed up as follows :—

- (1.) The existence of some passages in a fragmentary form leads to the logical conclusion that these passages must have been complete originally and that some portions must have been lost in the transmission of the Holy Book.
- (2.) The suppression by Othman of some codices of the Quran in the possession of the companions must have resulted in the loss of some portions of the Quran.
- (3.) Certain passages might not have been intended by the Holy Prophet for permanent insertion in the Holy Quran or might have been abrogated, and Zaid on account of his ignorance of the circumstances might have retained them in the Holy Book.



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- (4.) The existence of some traditions showing that certain passages were recited in the time of the Holy Prophet combined with the circumstance that those passages are not now met with in the Quran is a proof that the Quran has not been handed down to us complete.
- (5.) The existence of a Muhammadan sect (the Shias) holding the belief that the Quran is not complete leads to the same conclusion.

→ This is a brief summary of all the objections I have been able to gather from different writings by Christian critics of Islam including the hostilest and the most recent of them. Taking these objections in the order given above, we shall first consider the position of the critics who, like the author of the article on "Muhammadanism" in the Encyclopedia Britannica, assert that Othman's copies of the Holy Quran were not complete because "some passages are evidently fragmentary." An intelligent reader would easily see that such a poor contention against the strong historical testimony in support of the absolute purity of the text of the Holy Quran must be rejected as an absurd assertion. It is an erroneous conclusion and utterly illogical that because a certain passage appears to a certain reader to be incomplete and fragmentary, therefore some portion must have been lost and the speaker must have uttered it in another form. To apply such a test to historical facts is dangerous logic. When there is the strongest historical evidence that among the companions of the Holy Prophet there were many men and women who had committed the whole of the Quran to memory and that many of them were still alive when a complete copy was prepared by Zaid from a collection of the transcripts made in the presence of the Holy Prophet, it is a mere delusion to think that some portions might have been overlooked by Zaid. The tradition which describes the work of collection tells us that Zaid not only sought out all the manuscripts, but that he also called in the assistance of the memory of the reciters. And what is the alleged fragmentariness of certain passages but a form of rhetoric, the beauty and force of which cannot be realized by critics unacquainted with Arabic idiom. Just as by giving an example under a previous heading, I have shown that verses which are thought by the European critics to be entirely unconnected

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with each other have really a deep connection which a superficial reader is apt to miss, it can be shown in this case too that the so-called fragmentary passages are really expressions of exquisite beauty, and it is only a superficial knowledge of Arabic idiom that makes the European critics think that some portion has been lost.

As if to support the assertion that the fragmentariness of certain passages is evidence of something having been lost, the writer in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, whose objection I have quoted above, adds, probably thinking it to be corroborative testimony, that "a few detached pieces are still extant which were originally parts of the Quran, although they have been omitted by Zaid." Now this properly relates to the fourth objection where the nature of such "detached pieces" and the trustworthiness of the traditions containing them will be fully enquired into. Here I wish only to draw the reader's attention to the poor weapons which are made use of to attack the purity of the text of the Holy Quran. We are willing to admit the weakness of our position if any critic can make any of the "detached pieces" which are met with in certain traditions so fit in with any of the alleged fragmentary passages that the whole may become a complete sentence. There is no doubt that if any portion of a chapter or any part of a passage was lost, and if tradition has preserved any lost passages or parts of passages, some of the pieces so preserved must so fit in with some of the current "fragmentary passages" that the whole may seem to be naturally a complete sentence. But the fact is that none of the "detached pieces" can have any place any where in the Holy Quran.

There is indeed an astonishing circumstance which makes all the objections summed up above clash with one another in such a manner that all of them are falsified by a single consideration. The theory is that some portions of the Quran were lost and in support of this are mentioned the circumstances of Othman's destruction of all copies other than his own, the existence of certain traditions mentioning certain passages alleged to have been once parts of the revelation, the fragmentariness of certain existing passages which have never been pointed out, and the contention of some Shias that some passages favoring the claims of Ali were suppressed. Now after the step taken by Othman with regard to the issue of official copies of the Holy



Quran and the destruction of all private copies, the alleged differences were either preserved or they were not. If the latter alternative is taken, then the traditions speaking of the "detached pieces" must be false and fabrications of after days. If the former alternative is taken, that is to say, some if not all the differences, along with the portions omitted in Othman's copies, were preserved, then the question arises how did the copies of the Quran containing such differences become extinct. But more of this will follow in a separate discussion of the second objection. Proceeding upon the supposition that reliable tradition has preserved some of the lost passages, the question is, do the passages so preserved answer to the allegations made in the first and the fifth objection? In other words, can they be regarded as parts of some fragmentary passages in the Holy Quran, or do they favor the higher pretensions advanced for Ali, the immediate successor of Othman? The answer to both these objections must be given in the negative. What according to the critics was lost, therefore, is nowhere to be found, and what is preserved in some of the traditions was never lost. The camp of the objectors is thus a house divided against itself, and if there were no other evidence of their falsity, the self-contradictory nature of the evidence supplied by all of them combined would be sufficient to deal a death-blow to the various positions taken by the critics.

Take the second objection now. Othman gave orders for the destruction of all copies of the Quran current in his time with the exception of the original collection made in the time of Abu Bakr from which his own copies were made. Of the copies destroyed or ordered to be destroyed, the greatest importance is attached to two, the copy of Obayy and the copy of Ibn-i-Mas'ud. Regarding the nature of the differences which these copies had with the official copies of Othman, I would take as representing sane hostile criticism at its best the opinion of the author of the article "Mohammedanism" in the Encyclopedia Britannica. Under the heading of "other editions" he writes:—

"At the same time, the other forms of the Koran did not at once become extinct. In particular we have some information about the codex of Obay. If the list which gives the order of its *Suras* is correct, it must have contained substantially the same materials as



our text; in that case Obay must have used the original collection of Zaid. The same is true of the codex of Ibn-i-Mas'ud, of which we have also a catalogue. It appears that the principle of putting the longer *Suras* before the shorter was more consistently carried out by him than by Zaid. He omits *if* and the magic formulae of cxiii. cxiv. Obay, on the other hand, had embodied two additional short prayers which we may regard as Mahomed's. One can easily understand that differences of opinion may have existed as to whether and how far formularies of this kind belonged to the Koran. Some of the divergent readings of both these texts have been preserved, as well as a considerable number of their ancient variants. Most of them are decidedly inferior to the received readings, but some are quite as good, and a few deserve preference."

To do justice to the author of this article, I may also quote the following paragraph in which grounds are given for believing Othman's text to be the only valid text. This paragraph immediately follows the one quoted above and runs thus:—

"The only man who appears to have seriously opposed the general introduction of Othman's text is Ibn Mas'ud. He was one of the oldest disciples of the Prophet, and had often rendered him personal service; but he was a man of contracted views, although he is one of the pillars of Moslem theology. His opposition had no effect. Now when we consider that at that time there were many Moslems who had heard the Quran from the mouth of the Prophet, that other measures of ~~of~~ the imbecile 'Othman met with the most vehement resistance on the part of the bigoted champions of the faith, that these were still further incited against him by some of his ambitious old comrades until at last they murdered him, and finally that in the civil wars after his death the several parties were glad of any pretext for branding their opponents as infidels; when we consider all this, we must regard it as a strong testimony in favor of 'Othman's Koran that no party, not even that of 'Ali, found fault with his conduct in this matter, or repudiated the text formed by Zaid, who was one of the most devoted adherents of 'Othman and his family."

I have given these long quotations in order to enable the reader to realize the full force of the objection and the position of the



critics. So far as I have read Christian writings on Islam in the English and the Urdu languages, the case is best represented in the above two paragraphs from a hostile point of view. But as I have said this opinion only represents sane hostile criticism, for here in India we have from the pens of the Christian Missionaries or some "rice-and-curry Christians," much of criticism run mad, if it may at all deserve the name of criticism. Most of the writings of native Christians are meant to please the *padre sâhib*. An example of insane criticism is met with in an Urdu book recently published by a native Christian to which I have already referred in some previous issue. This author, the writer of the *Tawil-ul-Quran*, goes into spasms of rage over the claim of the Holy Quran for the purity of its text. He begins his "history of the Quran" with these words:—"That the greater part of the Quran was lost and that what remained was arranged badly are matters which most critical judges have had to admit." And in support of this extravagant assertion he refers to a writing of another native Christian of the same type as himself, as if one or two "rice-and-curry Christians" of India were the only critical judges of the Holy Quran that the world ever produced. He also says that 'Othman's copy of the Quran was entirely opposed to all the copies of the Quran current at that time, and that that copy was only a part of the Quran which was revealed to the Holy Prophet. He writes: "There is no exaggeration in saying that the carelessness which was shown towards the Quran in its early days and the disarrangement which it met with have never been the fate of any other book. The result was that the Quran which was collected by 'Othman has come down to us unaltered', but the Quran which the Prophet had left was lost, and what remains is only a memorial (a portion to remind one of the existence) of the original: some disarranged parts which had the good fortune to escape the hand of destruction." The reader would easily see that the writer has made extravagant assertions which the testimony of his own saner co-religionists condemns as daring falsehoods.

To return to the objection as regards the different codices, there are two points which must be discussed. It is admitted that substantially the copies of Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy agreed with the copy of Othman in text as well as in arrangement of the verses and the



chapters, so much so indeed that the writer of the article from which the above quotations are taken thinks that the collections of Ubayy and Ibn Mas'ud must have been based on the original collection of Zaid made in the time of Abu Bakr. But as I have already shown, the fact is that the text and the arrangement were complete in the life-time of the Holy Prophet and there were many companions who could recite the whole of the Quran by heart before the Holy Prophet died. It was this fact which made the collections of Ubayy and Ibn Mas'ud substantially agree with the copies made by Zaid because all drew their knowledge from the same source. The differences of these two copies with the copy of Othman were, according to the same writer, only on two points, *viz.*, firstly, Ubayy had in his copy two short prayers besides the known *Suras* and Ibn Mas'ud omitted from his copy the last two chapters which are contained in our copies of the Quran and also the opening chapter which is called the *Fātiha*, and secondly, both had a certain number of readings differing from the copy of Othman. As to the wild assertions of the author of the *Tawil-ul-Quran* that Othman's copy was different even from Abu Bekr's collection or that Ali had a collection differing from all the others, I need not add anything to what has already been said under the previous headings. As I have shown, Othman only ordered official copies to be made under proper supervision from the original collection of Zaid made in the time of Abu Bakr, and Ali never had a separate collection; for, if he had, one, there was nothing to prevent it from obtaining a circulation in the time of Abu Bakr or Omar or at least in his own caliphate, nor would he have assisted Othman, as reliable traditions show that he did, in the making and circulation of the official copies.

Accordingly we have only to see whether Ubayy and Ibn Mas'ud had their own copies, whether they differed from Othman's copies in the number of chapters and in the variety of readings, and if so, how far. We take Ubayy first. There is no reliable tradition showing that Ubayy had a copy of the Quran differing from the ordinary copies in circulation or that it had two short formulae of prayer added at the end as two more chapters of the Holy Quran. Traditions to this effect are mentioned by Jalal-ud-Din Sayooti in his *Itqán*, and accordingly the first thing we have to see is how far



such traditions may be credited with trustworthiness. For this purpose, I will refer the reader to the concise but valuable and important work of Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi on the principles of the reliability of traditions. This work is called the '*Ujda Nafi'ah*' and in the very beginning the learned author divides the works of tradition into four classes. In the first class which is the most reliable of all, he places the three leading works of tradition, the *Muatta*, the *Sahih Bukharee* and the *Sahih Muslim*. In the second class are placed Abu Daud, Tirmazi and Nasai, works which are considered to be second to the above in reliability. In the third class are placed traditional works whose authority as such has never been generally recognised, and among whose narrators are persons whose trustworthiness and truthfulness have been open to blame. It is in this class that the works of Tabrani, Tahavi and Baihaqi, the *Mustadrak* of Hakim and the *Musnads* of Ibn Maja, Darimi and some others are placed. In the fourth class of traditional works Jalal-ud-Din Sayooti whose *Itqan* affords to a prejudiced critic so much material is specially mentioned. Of the traditions of this class, Shah Abdul Aziz writes: "To the fourth class belong all those traditions of which no trace at all is to be met with in the earlier generations, and which were reported only by people of a later time. With regard to these traditions one of two things must have happened; either the earlier collectors after enquiry into them found them to be unauthentic or fabricated and therefore they did not report them, or they did not think them to be fabricated but found some of their narrators to be untrustworthy. Upon whatever supposition we may proceed it follows that the traditions of this class are not reliable . . . . . The whole stock of traditions on which Jalal-ud-Din Sayooti depends in his writing and pamphlets belongs to this class."

From the above the reader would see how far the *Itqan* may be relied upon when there is nothing to support its conclusions in reliable works of tradition. Nay, more than this. Reliable traditions accredited by Bukharee and others contradict the traditions of the *Itqan*. There are some traditions which clearly state that Ubayy was one of the men whom Othman had entrusted with the supervision of the work of transcription when he ordered the making of official copies from the original collection of Zaid.



There are other traditions which show that even in the time of Abu Bakr he assisted in the work of collection. Indeed the writer in the Encyclopedia arrives at the conclusion that Ubayy must have based his copy on the first collection of Zaid. But if we suppose for the sake of argument that Ubayy had a copy of the Quran in which he wrote down two additional chapters containing short formulae of prayer, even then it does not follow that these two prayers actually formed a part of the Quran and that the copies circulated by Othman are defective for omitting them. There is not a single other person among more than a hundred thousand companions who supported Ubayy's view. Even Ibn Mas'ud with his strange views <sup>on</sup> some other questions did not share Ubayy's view. Now the Quran was not the property of one or two individuals, so that any portion of it might have been known to Ubayy alone and thousands of other companions should never have heard of it. Every verse of the Holy Quran was, when revealed, proclaimed widely and circulated among friends as well as foes. One person could make an error, but this could be at once put right by the testimony of hundreds of others. The one thing which placed the Quran beyond the danger of the loss of any portion of it was that every verse of it obtained a wide publicity at the time of its revelation, and thus it had not one guardian or custodian, but hundreds of them. It is the collective testimony of the whole body of companions that settles the point. It is not a case of difference between Othman and Ubayy, so that a critic might think that the truth might have been with this person or that, but it is a case of the solitary view of one person opposed to the combined testimony of all the companions. In such a case and under such circumstances when sufficient publicity was given to every verse revealed it cannot be admitted that the two chapters were brought only to the knowledge of Ubayy, while the other companions remained ignorant of them, and even opposed the views of Ubayy. All this of course is based on the supposition that the tradition mentioned in the *Itqān* is true to fact which is really not the case as I have shown above.

We may, however, make this point clearer still by a reference to the words of the alleged additional chapters in Ubayy's codex. The *Itqān* tells us that they were only two short formulas of prayers, the



first running thus: *اللهم انا نستعينك ونستغفرک ونثني عليك الخير* and the second thus: *اللهم اياک نعبد و اياک نستعین و نسجد و الیک نسعی ونسجد و نرجو رحمتک ونخشى عذابی* "O God! Verily we seek Thy assistance and seek Thy protection and praise Thee well and we cast off and forsake him who disobeys Thee. O God! Thee we worship and to Thee do we perform the Divinely appointed act of prayer and before Thee do we prostrate ourselves, and to Thee do we fly and Thee do we serve, and we hope to be taken into Thy mercy and we fear Thy punishment, for verily Thy punishment overtakes the unbelievers."

The Muslim reader would at once see that this is the *دعاء القنوت* (lit., the supplication of the standing) which is still repeated by many Muslims in their prayers, others substituting for it any of the other prayers taught by the Holy Prophet. I may mention only one form of an alternative prayer which is even more authentic than this. It runs thus: *اللهم اهدنی فیمن هدیت و عافنی فیمن عافیت و تولنی فیمن تولیت و بارک لی فیما اعطیت و قنی شر ما قضیت فاذا نک تقضی و لا یقضی* "O God! guide me among those whom Thou hast guided, and protect me among those whom Thou hast protected, and befriend me among those whom Thou hast befriended, and bless me in what Thou hast granted me, and save me from the evil of what Thou judgest, for Thou judgest and art not judged; verily he whom Thou befriendest is not disgraced: Blessed art Thou, our Lord! and High" (vide *Mishkát*, chapter of *Witr*.) It is easy to see that the first and the second prayers are both contained in traditions of the Holy Prophet, and have nothing to do with the Holy Quran. Early and later Muslims all used these formulas of prayer in their nightly prayers called the *witr* and the Holy Prophet taught them to do so. It was not, then, only this much that the companions of the Holy Prophet had never been taught these words as part of the Quran, but they had been taught and they knew that they were not part of the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet, tradition tells us, himself recited this formula of prayer in his prayers as did also his companions. They were recited not as ordinary Suras of Quran following the *Fātiha* or the opening chapter of the Quran, but they were specially recited as prayer formulas. Similarly other prayer formulas



are recited in the prayers when standing or sitting or when prostrate and these are not verses of the Quran. If Ubayy actually wrote down the two formulas in his copy of the Quran, which we have very strong reasons to doubt, he made a mistake, probably thinking that their recital in prayers entitled them to a place in the Holy Quran. But thousands of the other companions who had also heard the Holy Prophet reciting the same formulas in his prayers and who also themselves recited them knew it for a fact that they were not parts of the Divine revelation. Ubayy was clearly in error and he soon renounced it, for when Othman had the official copies made after consultation with all the companions, Ubayy who was himself one of supervisors recognised their authority. It was the consensus of the opinion of the companions which made Ubayy conscious of his error and having then seen that his view had neither authority nor reason on its side, he gave it up.

As regards the variety of certain readings, I leave the question for discussion under a separate heading, and proceed to discuss the alleged rejection by Ibn Mas'ud of the two concluding chapters, or as some add, of the opening chapter also. On this point Bukharee has only this much that some body said to Ubayy that "Ibn Mas'ud said so and so" with reference to the *Mu'awwizātān* (the last two chapters.) Ubayy's answer to this question is reported to have been to the following effect: "I asked the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, and he said to me that they were so read out to him and so he read." He said, "we say as the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, said."\*

The wording of this tradition is not quite clear and accordingly the concluding words are understood by some to have been spoken by Ibn Mas'ud and by others they are taken to be the words of Ubayy. Both opinions have other traditions to support them. In the former case, Ibn Mas'ud accepted Ubayy's opinion, and in the latter Ubayy

\* This tradition is narrated in *Kitāb i Tafsīr* and runs thus :

عن زرقال قال سالت ابي بن كعب قلت ابا المذران اخاك ابن مسعود يقول كذا وكذا فقال ابي سالت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال لي قيل لي فقلت قال فذهبن نقول كما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.



stated his own belief. But even supposing that Ibn Mas'ud entertained a different opinion, he is alone in this case and his opinion was not supported by a single other companion of the Holy Prophet. This is not only clear from their siding with Othman, but we have it also on record that "not a single other companion followed Ibn Mas'ud in this opinion" (See Fath-ul Bári under the tradition quoted above.) And as we have seen even Ubayy opposed Ibn Mas'ud on this point. It is rather an interesting circumstance that the two men who are said to have differed from the other companions on one or two points did not agree among themselves and each objected to the opinion of the other on the point in which he differed. The result is that if they differed at all, neither of them had his views supported by any other companion on the points in which he differed, and his solitary opinion stood condemned by a consensus of the opinion of the whole body of companions.

Against Ibn Mas'ud's view there are other circumstances also. It is clear from many of the traditions that the two chapters objected to by Ibn Mas'ud were well-known to the companions as part of the Divine revelation. There are traditions which tell us that the Holy Prophet used to recite these two chapters in his prayers. Now it is an established fact that he always followed the recital of the *Fatiha* with some other portion of the Quran, but since these two chapters were so recited it follows conclusively that they were regarded as part of the Quran by the Holy Prophet. Ibn Mas'ud based his opinion on certain grounds but he was wrong. Both these chapters begin with the words, "Say, I seek refuge in the Lord," while the Holy Quran enjoins on one occasion (xvi: 100), "when thou readest the Quran, seek refuge in God." Ibn Mas'ud thought that since the two chapters at the end gave the words in which refuge was to be sought in the Lord, they were meant only for that purpose. It was for this reason that he did not write them in his copy of the Quran. One tradition ascribes to him the words: "Verily the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, said that they (the two chapters) taught men how to seek refuge in the Lord." But it does not follow from this commandment of the Holy Prophet that they were not part of the Quran, and the mistake made by Ibn Mas'ud becomes thus manifest. It has been suggested by Qazi Abu Bakr Báqláni, and Qazi 'Ayáz entertains the same view, that Ibn Mas'ud did not deny their being



part of the Quran, but only objected to their being written in the same volume because he had not, probably, heard the Holy Prophet ordering them to be written down. It may be further mentioned that some of the traditions speaking of Ibn Mas'ud's views with regard to these two chapters describe him as "blotting them out" from his copy as if it were an after thought on his part that these two chapters, should not be written in the Quran. Be that as it may, the conclusion is undeniable that Ibn Mas'ud's view was not supported by a single other companion, and accordingly his opinion standing thus condemned by the agreement of all the companions cannot have any weight, and must be rejected as erroneous. As regards his omission from his copy of the the Quran of the *Fdtiha* or the opening chapter, no reliable tradition bears testimony to it, and the only tradition speaking of it belongs to the fourth class of traditions referred to above. If the tradition be true, the error may have arisen from the circumstance that the *Fdtiha* was looked upon as a kind of abridgment of the whole Quran. What weight we can give to the opinion of a single individual when an agreement of the whole body of companions declares it to be erroneous has already been pointed out. The question of the variety of readings, I leave for separate discussion as already stated. X

The third objection is a mere conjecture. What the Holy Prophet intended, he pointed out to the scribes who wrote the Holy Quran and to others of his companions who committed it to memory. Had the collection of the Quran been the work of Zaid alone unaided by any other companion, there might have been room for such doubts as that he might have overlooked certain passages or embodied others into the Holy Book which were not meant for insertion therein. But as the concurrent testimony of numerous traditions received through different channels shows, Zaid was assisted in the task of collection by the whole body of companions whose assistance was available, both in the time of Abu Bakr and in that of Othman. In such a case it was impossible, when many of those who knew the whole of the Quran by heart, were still living, that any thing which the Holy Prophet had taught to his followers as being part of the Quran should have been overlooked, or any words which the Holy Prophet had not meant to be included in the Divine revelation should have found their way by mistake into it



Such an error could have been made by one man, but it could be easily rectified by the testimony of the reciters, the manuscripts written in the presence of the Holy Prophet and the companions who day and night heard the Holy Quran recited by the Holy Prophet and other reciters. We do not deny the possibility of error on the part of one or two individuals, but what we urge is that there were ample means for the correction of all possible errors. Zaid sought out the writings chapter by chapter, where complete chapters had been revealed, and verse by verse where separate verses were revealed and he had the testimony of the reciters to corroborate that supplied by the writings. Had writing alone been trusted, it was possible that he should have missed a verse here or there, but he had with him the reciters, those who had committed to memory the whole of the Quran in the Holy Prophet's life-time, and accordingly he knew which verse had yet to be sought in writing. He did not trust one or two reciters alone, for it was possible that some of them might make a mistake, and to correct such mistakes, Zaid not only sought the evidence of the other reciters, but he was not satisfied until he had sought out the writing, for as a rule every verse of the Holy Quran was reduced to writing immediately after its revelation. These two mutually corroborative measures precluded all possibility of an error finding way into the collection or of any thing being overlooked. It was to the double test which Zaid applied to every verse of the Quran that he referred when he spoke of his collecting the Quran from writing and from memory. As regards abrogation, it has nothing to do with the subject in hand, and since it requires a rather lengthy treatment, I leave it for a separate discussion. In connection with the present subject this much might be added that if ever any passage was abrogated, the companions and especially the reciters could not remain ignorant of it.

We proceed now to consider the fourth objection relating to the existence of certain traditions which speak of certain passages being recited in the time of the Holy Prophet or the existence of the "detached pieces" as the writer in the Encyclopedia Britanica calls them. That there are some traditions showing the existence of some such passages we admit, but that they are authentic or reliable we deny, though we are bound to add that misconception with regard



to the meaning of certain words has given rise to much misunderstanding as to the true significance of some of these traditions. Before considering each of these traditions separately, I would make some general remarks which would, I hope, help the reader in a clear understanding of the subject. To establish the purity of the text of the Holy Quran we have to prove two points, firstly, that nothing has been added to the original text, and secondly, that nothing has been left out from it. As regards the first of these points, no tradition, reliable or unreliable, authentic or fabricated, makes the assertion that any thing contained in the Holy Quran was not part of the Divine revelation in the life-time of the Holy Prophet, except the solitary tradition which relates that Ibn Mas'ud blotted out from his copy the last two chapters as contained in our copies of the Holy Quran. This I have already discussed and clearly shown that Ibn Mas'ud was in error and that the whole body of the companions opposed him on this point. Ibn Mas'ud thought that these two chapters were meant only to be recited after any portion of the Holy Quran was recited and that, therefore, they could not be embodied in the written copy of the Quran, as some men thought of *Bismillâ*, the opening formula of every chapter of the Quran, that it was only meant to begin with and was not a part of every chapter. It was exactly in this way that Ibn Mas'ud thought that the last two chapters should not be written along with the rest of the Divine revelation. But the opinion of a solitary person, especially when it is clearly seen to be based on a misconception of the real facts, cannot have any weight as against the unanimous testimony of all the other companions based as that testimony is on their sure and certain knowledge. But besides this, there is no other tradition whatever showing that anything which forms a part of the Quran at present was not a part of it in the life-time of the Holy Prophet. This circumstance is very valuable in considering the question whether any passage which is not to be found in our copies of the Holy Quran was at any time a part of it. Only by means of a profound investigation and searching inquiry could the Holy Quran be so collected that nothing might find its way into it which could not be considered a part of it, and as the collection in our hands has been admittedly successful in this respect, it follows that such an enquiry was made. But the same searching



enquiry which successfully kept everything out of the Holy Quran which was not part of it, must reasonably be taken to have been successful in embodying everything into the Holy Book which was a part of it. Such an enquiry was possible on account of the presence of many of those who knew the whole of the Quran by heart, and whose collective testimony as to whether any passage was or was not a part of the Holy Quran, was the most conclusive and certain proof that could be had. Had there been any carelessness it was as probable that anything should have been lost as that something should have been added. But the absence of all proof as to addition indirectly leads to the conclusion that no passage was overlooked.

The next point on which I wish to lay special stress is the wrong method of drawing inferences from certain traditions, a method which is generally followed by all European critics. It is not the collective evidence of tradition on which conclusions are based in all cases, but sometimes when there is a preconceived idea or where there is a proneness to hostile criticism, a solitary tradition is made to yield a conclusion which contradicts the strongest historical testimony, however absurd such conclusion may be on the face of it. The fact is that it is not open to a critic to select any tradition from the great mass of traditions and to draw from it any conclusion which it can be made to yield. As we showed, some time ago, there is a large element of historical unreliability in many of the traditions, and it was only with great patience and diligent search that some of the collectors of traditions made collections of the more reliable and authentic ones. The chief place among these is occupied by Bukharee, and accordingly it is safest to resort to it where some traditions give rise to conflicting evidence. The first rule then which should be followed in interpreting tradition\* is to distinguish reliable from unreliable traditions generally. Without this we can never be safe in drawing a conclusion from any tradition in the traditional lore. The second rule which should be followed, in the case of conflicting testimony afforded by certain traditions, more or less reliable, is to see on which side the weight of evidence lies.

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\* We are here considering the case of traditions conflicting with each other. If a tradition conflicts with the Quran, it must be at once rejected, for the authority of the Holy Quran rests on a far stronger basis than that of tradition.



But the most important and the surest test of all is what conclusion is supported by practice.

These tests we shall now apply to the different traditions which are relevant to the question of the purity of the text of the Holy Quran. But before doing this, I will quote the traditions on which the objections are based. I take them from one of the hostilest writings against Islam, the *Tawil-ul-Quran*, whose author has taken great pains to collect all such traditions. They are as follows:—

(a) In the Muslim, *Kitāb-uz-Zakāt* Abul Aswad reports the words of Abu Musa Ash'ari who said: "Verily we used to recite a *Sūrat* which we likened in length and warning to the *Bardāt*, but I have forgot it except this piece 'if there were for the son of man two valleys of wealth, he would desire a third and nothing can fill the belly (satisfy the desire) of the son of man except dust'; and we used to recite a *Sūrat* which we likened to one of the *Musabbihāt* (the shorter chapters at the end of the Holy Quran) but I forgot it and now remember only this much, 'O ye who believe! why do you say what you do not do; verily the testimony of this is written in your necks and of this you will be questioned on the day of judgment.'"

(b.) In the Muslim, *Kitāb-ur-Rizā*, the following tradition is reported as having been related by Ayesha: "Verily in what was revealed of the Quran there was this injunction that ten known acts of suckling are effective in the prohibition of marriage relations, but these were abrogated and replaced by five acts of suckling, and the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, died and this was among what was recited of the Quran."

(c.) In the Muslim, *Kitāb-ul-Hudūd*, there is a report from 'Abdulla, son of 'Abbās, who quoted the words of Omar, son of Khattāb, spoken while he sat in the pulpit: "Verily God raised Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, with truth, and He revealed to him the Book, and there was among



what was sent down upon him the verse relating to stoning (of the adulterer and the adultress); we read it and guarded it and understood it, and the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, stoned (the offenders), and after him we also stoned (them). But I fear that when time lengthens with the people, a sayer would say, 'verily we do not find stoning in the Book of God,' and thus they should go astray by forsaking an injunction which God has sent down; and verily stoning is truly in the Book of God a punishment for the person who commits adultery whether he is a man or woman, either after its having been proved by witnesses or by the woman's conception, or the confession of the accused."

In the Abu Daood, *Kitāb-ul-Hudood*, the same tradition is thus related by the same narrator 'Abdulla bin 'Abbās who said that Omar addressed the people saying: "Stoning is the punishment of those from among men and women who being married commit adultery when there is clear evidence or admission of crime, and by God, if people did not say that Omar has made an addition in the Book of God, I would have written it."

(d.) In the *Itqān*, Vol. II., page 30, Ayesha is reported to have said that there used to be recited two hundred verses in the chapter *Al-Ahzāb* in the time of the Holy Prophet, but when Othman wrote the copies of the Quran, we could not get more of it than what we have now."

(e.) In the *Itqān* Vol. I, page 81 there is a report from Mālik saying that "when the first part of it (the chapter entitled Repentance) dropped down, the *Bismillah* or the opening formula also dropped with it, from which it appears that it was like the Baqra in its length. And in the copy of Ibn Mas'ud there were 112 chapters for he did not write the Mu'awwazatain (the last two chapters) and in the copy of Ubayy there were 116 chapters, for he wrote at the end two chapters, *Haḍḍ* and *Khala'*."

These are the five traditions on whose basis it is sought to estab-



lish that some verses, passages or chapters which once formed part of the Holy Quran are not now contained in it. The first question is, are there any traditions which contradict the conclusion that is sought to be drawn from the above-mentioned traditions? If there are, then the next point to be settled would be, which set of traditions is more reliable, on which side does the weight of evidence lie, and which is the conclusion which early practice and established historical facts confirm. From what has been already said on the reliability of traditions and the four classes of the collections of traditions, it is clear that the two last-mentioned traditions are so unreliable that they cannot have any claim upon our attention. It is in the *Itqān* that these traditions are met with and the *Itqān* is the work of Jalal-ud-Din Sayooti the material for whose writings, we are told in the "Principles of the Science of Traditions" is entirely drawn from traditions of the lowest value, traditions of which no trace is to be met with among the earlier generations. Such traditions cannot be depended upon even if their evidence is not contradicted by reliable traditions, for their own unreliability is sufficient to condemn them. Thus there remain the three traditions contained in the Muslim. In accordance with the first principle laid down above, let us now resort to the Bukharee and see if it supports any of these three narratives of Muslim, for it must be borne in mind that the Bukharee is our best and highest authority on tradition and so the Muslim world has regarded it ever since it became public. The Sahih Bukharee, according to the unanimous verdict of all learned Muslims, not only surpassed in authority and reliability all the collections which were made before it, but of the later collections none makes any approach to it in trustworthiness. If then any tradition in the Muslim or any other collection of traditions contradicts the Bukharee, we should without any hesitation reject such a tradition. In the present case, however, it is not the testimony of the Bukharee alone which contradicts the three traditions quoted above, but there is ample testimony in the Muslim and other collections themselves which contradicts them.

Let us take these three traditions separately and see how far they can be relied upon. The first tradition mentions an address of Abu Musa Ash'ari to certain reciters of Basrah to the effect that



he and the other companions of the Holy Prophet used to recite two *Surats*, but that with the exception of one passage of each of these *Sûrats* he had forgotten the whole. Both external and internal evidence supplied by the Muslim itself condemn the trustworthiness of this tradition. For external evidence we would consider first the chain of narrators on whose authority Muslim believed the tradition to be authentic. On referring to the chain of narrators as mentioned in the tradition we find Sawaid bin Sa'eed to be the immediate informer of Muslim, and much depends on the circumstance as to how far he can be relied upon. The *Mizân-ul-Itidâl* by Zahabi is the best and the most reliable work which criticises the narrators. Referring to this work we find a long article on Sawaid bin Sa'eed in which a few of the collectors of traditions express a good opinion about him but the majority discredit him. It is, however, agreed upon by all that he attained to a very old age and became blind during his latter days and in this condition he reported and taught traditions which were not really his. Bukharee rejected his evidence as absolutely untrustworthy and so did most of the other collectors. From an anecdote related of him in the same work it also appears that he had a tendency towards Shiism, for we are told that when a person came to him with a book on the excellences of the companions, he placed Ali first and then Abu Bakr. Some have gone so far as to condemn him as a liar, but there is no doubt that with the exception of some two or three collectors, Muslim being one of them, all the others pronounced upon him the judgment that traditions narrated by him could not be accepted. Abu Daood judges him to be "worth nothing" while Ibn Habbân tells us that he was accused of being a *Zindeeq*, or one who concealed unbelief and made an outward show of belief. With such a black record of Muslim's immediate informer, it is not necessary to consider the question of the reliability of the other narrators of this tradition.

There is another kind of external evidence supplied by Muslim himself which also contradicts the testimony of the tradition under discussion. Immediately preceding this tradition there are recorded in the Muslim four other traditions to the same effect with this exception that they describe the words, attributed to Abu Musa Ash'ari by the said Suwaid as being remnants of a forgotten chapter of the Quran, not as portions of the Holy Quran but as words uttered



by the Holy Prophet. The first of these traditions runs thus :

حد ثنا يحيى بن يحيى وسعيد بن منصور وقتيبة بن سعيد قال يحيى  
انا وقال الاخران ثنا ابو عوانة عن قتادة عن انس قال قال  
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لو كان لابن ادم واديان من مال  
لا بتغى واديا ثلثا ولا يملأ جوف ابن ادم الا التراب ويتوب الله  
على من تلب (باب لو ان لابن ادم واديين لا بتغى ثا لثا)

According to this tradition, three men Yahya bin Yahya and Sa'eed bin Mansoor and Qutaiba bin Sa'eed, informed Muslim through a chain of narrators ending with Anas that the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, said on one occasion (referring to man's love of riches) that "if there were two valleys of wealth for the son of man, he would still desire to possess a third and nothing but dust can fill the belly of the son of man and God certainly repents on him who repents." It would be seen that the words reported to have been spoken by the Holy Prophet are exactly the same as are related to be portion of a *Súrat* in the tradition under discussion. Of the three men who vouched the truth and authenticity of this tradition two, *viz.*, Sa'eed bin Mansur and Yahya bin Yahya, are expressly mentioned in the critical work of of Zahabi, the *Meezan-ul-'Itidál*, as being trustworthy, while of the third it is related that nothing is known about him. This tradition, therefore, stands on a far firmer basis than that under discussion. As against a single man who has been pronounced as Zindeeq, liar, untrustworthy, by the almost unanimous testimony of the collectors, we have here the evidence, furnished by Muslim himself, of three men, two of whom at any rate are admitted to be trustworthy, that the passage in question did not form any part of the Quran, but was only the word of the Holy Prophet himself. Three other traditions are narrated by Muslim, each of which ascribes the utterance of these words to the Holy Prophet and none asserts that they were portions of chapters of the Quran which were quite forgotten. In one of these traditions to Ibn 'Abbás, the first narrator in this case, are ascribed the words that he was not aware "whether it was or was not a portion of the Quran," but these words are immediately contradicted by a second narrator who does not mention the name of Ibn 'Abbás in connection with the utterance of these words.



If we turn to Muslim himself, we find that of all the five traditions which he has narrated relating to the passage, "If there were two valleys of wealth for the son of man, he would desire a third," such being the heading of his chapter, he has given the least credit to the tradition related by Suwaid bin Sa'eed who makes the passage in question a remnant of a lost chapter. He begins his chapter with the tradition reported by the three narrators, then follows it with three others none of which makes the passage in question a portion of the Quran, and then relates the tradition in dispute which, by placing it last, he himself hints to be the least creditable of all and the lowest in authority. This is not a mere conjecture, for Muslim himself tells us in the introduction to his collection that under each heading he gives the priority in relating to those traditions which he considers to be the more reliable ones. His words literally translated run as follows: "We have set this rule before ourselves that we should mention first those traditions which are freer from defects than others, and which on account of the reliability and righteousness of their narrators are purer . . . . . And we follow traditions of this class with other traditions among whose narrators are men who cannot be relied upon to the same extent as narrators of the first class of traditions because they are not marked by the same degree of truthfulness and the same good memory." These words clearly show that Muslim considered the tradition under discussion to be the least reliable of all, and hence we should not have the least hesitation in condemning it as false.

In order to make the falsity of the tradition under discussion still more clear, we will now consider the internal evidence afforded by it. In the first place, the style of the passage is remarkable. Any one who has any acquaintance with the Arabic language will see that the style of this passage has not the least resemblance with the style of the Holy Quran, and this consideration is alone sufficient to show that the passage in question never formed a part of the Holy Quran. Secondly, the words attributed to Abu Musa Ash'ari are a clear evidence of the falsity of the tradition. He is made to say, "We used to recite a *Súrat*," indicating that he was not the only man who could recite the whole of that chapter by heart but that there were others too. In fact by "we" he means the



companions of the Holy Prophet. The alleged chapter, therefore, must have been well-known to the companions. Supposing it was possible that Abu Musa Ash'ari should forget the whole of it with the exception of a single passage, how was it that all the other companions also forgot it at the same time. None of the companions makes the slightest mention of such a chapter having ever formed a part of the Quran; none including Abu Musa Asha'ri brought it to the notice of Zaid in the time of Abu Bakr when public announcement was made that any one who had received any portion of the Quran from the Holy Prophet should bring such portion or in the time of Othman when a large number of companions was associated with Zaid to assist him in making copies of the Holy Quran. No reciter of the Quran ever pointed out that such an important chapter was missing from the Holy Book. Even the codices of Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy with their alleged differences did not contain any trace of such a chapter. Not a single voice out of thousands of the companions was raised in support of Abu Musa if he ever uttered these words. And wonder of wonders that men who made long journeys for the sake of ordinary traditions made no inquiry about such long chapters of the Quran which Abu Musa had unfortunately forgotten! And how was it that Abu Musa himself who had forgotten these chapters did not care in the least for their recovery. In fact, the statements made in the tradition are too absurd to be believed by any sensible person for a single moment. Thus both external and internal evidence clearly show the tradition to be absolutely false and not the least evidence can be produced in support of its authenticity or truth. The mere fact that Muslim has recorded it in his collection is no evidences, though, as we have shown, even Muslim believed it to be the least creditable of all.

A detailed critical examination of the remaining two traditions would perhaps be tiresome and from what has already been written on one tradition, the reader can easily see how unreliable traditions of this sort are. It would, therefore, be sufficient to consider briefly the internal evidence which the remaining two traditions supply. According to one of these traditions Ayesha is reported to have said that there was a verse in the Holy Quran plainly saying that ten known acts of suckling were effective in marriage prohibitions, that this injunction



was abrogated by another by which the number ten was reduced to five, and that this was recited in the Quran at the death of the Holy Prophet. The statement attributed to Ayesha in the tradition gives us to understand clearly that the verse was recited by others than Ayesha also. In fact if there had been any such verse, it could not have remained unknown to the companions generally for it contained an injunction of daily application. On the other hand, it would have been the most well-known of all verses. It contained an injunction as to marriage-prohibition and in a society in which the infants were generally suckled by others than mothers, it was of the utmost importance that every body should know which were the women marriage with whom was forbidden to him through foster relations. Hence the knowledge of the verse could not be limited to a single person only. The collectors of traditions have laid down a principle that when an event should from the very circumstances of the case be such as ought to be known by a large number of people who all disclaim a knowledge of it, this is clear evidence of its fabrication. This principle is a very reasonable one, and it will be easily seen that judged by this principle the tradition relating to acts of suckling and attributed to Ayesha is a clear fabrication. As we have seen, such a verse should have been one of the most well-known of all verses. Up to the death of the Holy Prophet Ayesha had heard it recited generally. Six months after this her father Abu Bakr ordered the collection of the Holy Quran, and no such verse was brought to his notice or that of Zaid. Ayesha herself never told the collectors that any such verse existed. Even at the time when Othman made transcripts Ayesha was still living and no such verse was pointed out even then by her. How was it that she spoke of such a verse to 'Umrā years afterwards and had nothing to say of it to her own father when a collection of the Holy Quran was being made under his orders? How was it again that no one besides Ayesha knew anything of such a verse? As in the case of the tradition already discussed, there is further evidence in the traditions recorded by Muslim himself that no such verse was ever known to exist to any of the companions of the Holy Prophet. Ayesha as well as others are represented as reporting traditions according to which the Holy Prophet was on different occasions asked as to whether one or two acts of suckling were effective in marriage prohibitions. Had there existed a verse plainly stating



that ten or five acts of suckling had such an effect, the question would never have been asked. Nor can it be supposed that the verse was revealed on such questions being asked, for in such a case tradition should have clearly stated that such and such a revelation was received by the Holy Prophet on the question being asked. Therefore all considerations point to a fabrication of the tradition we are discussing.

The third tradition that remains may now be disposed of. In the case of this tradition we will first show that if the meaning which is sought to be drawn from it by hostile critics is its true significance, the words attributed to Omar could never have been spoken by him. The conclusion which is drawn from the words of Omar is that a passage regarding the punishment of adulterers and adultresses was known to Omar and the other companions to be a part of the Quran but that it was not met with in the Quran. Omar also said that that passage was recited and kept in memory and understood and that the Holy Prophet acted upon it and so did his successors after him. Now it may be asked that knowing as we do that Omar himself was the man who had the greatest hand in the collection of the Quran, and the copy made was in his possession during his caliphate, what was it that led to the omission of the passage? With regard to the passage in question, there can be only three suppositions: (1) Omar and the other companions agreed that the passage was a part of the Quran; (2) Omar held the opinion that it was a part of the Quran but the other companions rejected his view; and (3) Omar as well as the other companions agreed that the passage was not a part of the Quran. The first supposition is the only one which can lend any colour to the statements made by hostile critics. But the question is, if they all agreed, who withheld them from placing the passage in the Holy Quran? This supposition is, therefore, evidently absurd. As regards the second supposition there is no evidence at all that Omar's statement was contradicted by any of the companions. But if it was actually contradicted, Omar must have himself been convinced of his error for not finding any support from any of the other companions. The case can stand only on the third supposition, but, it would be asked, how can that supposition be made to accord with the tradition, the two in fact looking like contradictory statements. But such is not the case. A little reflection would show that the tradition becomes quite meaningless if it does not carry a significance



tallying with the third supposition advanced above. Omar is made to say first that when some time will have passed away, people will begin to say that the injunction to stone adulterers is not to be met with in "the Book of God," adding at the same time that stoning is "truly in the Book of God" a punishment for the adulterers and adulteresses. This a clear contradiction if the "Book of God" is understood as meaning the Holy Quran, and the tradition is therefore quite meaningless. But the contradiction is removed if a wider significance is given to the words, "Book of God" or *Kitāb Ullah* used in the tradition. *Kitāb Ullah* does not in fact necessarily mean the "Book of God" taken literally or the Holy Quran, for in the Quran itself the words are used to indicate the commandments of God or Divine injunctions. See iv: 28 where *Kitāb Ullah-i-Alai-kum* means "an injunction or commandment of God to you" and not the Book of God.

It would be seen from the above that no reliability can be attached to these traditions with the exception of the last which bears a significance different from that which hostile critics seek to draw from it. But it would be asked, how was it that fabricated traditions derogatory to Islam found a currency among the Muslims and were embodied in their collections by some well-known collectors? It should be borne in mind that the fabrication was effected at a later period either by the *zindeeqs* (men who concealed unbelief and made an outward show of belief) or by the Shiahs. In the case of one of these traditions the character of whose first reporter has been laid bare, we have seen that he was accused of being a *zindeeq* and also inclined to *Shiism*. Yet Muslim accepted his authority though he did not attach much weight to it. One reason of this probably was that at the time when Muslim wrote, his hidden feelings had not yet been seen into. It was in this way that false traditions derogatory to the dignity of Islam found a currency and gained credit. It appears that the Shias had, especially a great hand in the fabricating of such traditions. At first they gave only a preference to Ali's claims for caliphate. When they were met with the argument that the Quran contained nothing to support their claims, they then thought of accusing the early caliphs of having omitted certain portions which favored Ali's claims.



The first step to give a currency to this belief was to give out certain traditions of the kind we have been considering here. Though these passages contained no reference to the priority of the claims of Ali, yet there was no doubt that if a belief was produced that certain passages were lost, the real purpose was gained. A collector here and there might have credited such reports on the supposition that such passages might have been abrogated, but this does not prove either the theory of abrogation or that of omission of such passages from the Quran.

Supposing for the sake of argument, however, that the traditions we are considering are reliable, we have to see whether there is any evidence to contradict their conclusions, and if so, which is the side on which the weight of evidence lies. On the one hand we have, say, the evidence of Abu Moosa Ash'ari that two chapters were recited by the companions, but that he had forgotten them at the time when he mentioned this circumstance, and on the other hand we have the evidence of all the companions disclaiming all knowledge of any such chapter. No reciter of the Quran, no one who possessed any transcript of the Holy Book, had ever heard of it. How can the evidence of one man carry any weight against the unanimous testimony of all the companions, especially when that evidence relates to a circumstance whose existence, if it ever existed, must have come in the knowledge of a very large number. Had there been the evidence of even two or three companions, a doubt could have arisen in the mind of the historian, but such a claim made on the evidence of a single companion when negated by the evidence of thousands of better informed witnesses is the most preposterous claim that has ever been made. And what is true of this one tradition is true of every other tradition belonging to the same class. In each case we have the evidence of only one person who is not supported by a single other person. Abu Moosa Ash'ari asserts that two chapters were lost, there is no body else to support him; Ayesha asserts the loss of one verse, she cannot produce the evidence of a single other witness from among thousands of companions, and so with all the others. Where Ibn Mas'ud makes an assertion, Ubayy's evidence along with the whole body of companions goes against him, and where Ubayy makes an assertion, Ibn Mas'ud's



evidence along with that of all the rest of the companions contradicts him. In fact every report has only a single companion to support it. It may be added that the evidence of one witness could not prove that any verse really belonged to the Holy Quran, for it is a fact borne out by numerous traditions that every verse of the Quran was widely published at the time of its revelation and was secured in the memories of many reciters. The anecdote related at the end of the tradition speaking of Zaid's collection in the time of Abu Bakr, which is to the effect that a certain verse of the chapter entitled *Bardat* was not found in the possession of any body except Abu Khuzaima, does not negative this conclusion, for as I have shown on a previous occasion it is the verse in writing that is meant there, as other traditions show that there was a considerable number of men who could recite the whole of the Quran from memory. In short the evidence of a single companion as against the unanimous testimony of all the others cannot carry any weight with any reasonable person.

The third criterion to judge of such traditions is to see how far early practice supports the conclusions to which they give rise. The Quran was the most valuable thing which the Muslims had in their possession after the Holy Prophet, and every Muslim did no doubt his best to have it preserved and transmitted in all its purity to the next generation. Now supposing for the sake of argument that Othman arbitrarily suppressed certain copies, was it in his power to destroy every transcript of every verse or chapter in the possession of the widely spread community of the Muslims? Supposing he could seize the copies of such prominent men as Ibn Mas'ud, how could he get hold of the numerous transcripts that must have been made from Ibn Mas'ud and others, for the practice of early Muslims shows that transcripts of the Holy Quran were extensively made? If any of the Muslims had therefore considered Othman's copy to be defective and he had in his possession any transcripts differing from it substantially he had no difficulty in keeping it hidden during the reign of Othman. In such a case, however, such copies would have become abundant as soon as Othman's power declined or at least during the reign of 'Ali who could not have any motive to continue the policy of Othman with regard to the suppression of variant copies. During the reign of Ali, therefore, many other copies would have come into circulation



and even if he had not the courage to stop the circulation of Othman's copy he would have looked with favor upon the circulation of other copies. But the wonder is that even the men who murdered Othman did not interfere with the circulation of Othman's copy of the Holy Quran, nor did they put into circulation a different edition or a new chapter or a single new verse. No, they did not even point out that a single word in the Divine revelation had been changed by Othman. When Othman's power ceased to exist or when he himself was murdered in cold blood by the insurgents, what hinderance was there then in the circulation of parts which Othman had suppressed? Even if the transcripts could by some extraordinary means be all destroyed, the words imprinted on the living tablets of hearts could not by any means in the power of a mortal be blotted out. It was simply impossible. The end of Othman's reign would have seen the circulation of all these parts which, it is alleged, had been suppressed by him, and such parts would no doubt have then been embodied in the copies of the Quran. But does history show any trace of any such thing? Not at all. With all their differences, different men and different sects have always used one and the same copy of the Quran. Had any difference actually existed, it must have found its way into the copies of the Quran, but the use of the same Quran by sects which have sometimes had the deadliest designs against each other shows clearly that no difference actually existed.

With regard to the allegation of some Shiahs, it would be sufficient to quote a passage from Muir's "Life of Mohamet" who has raised and answered this objection. He writes:—

"Assuming, then, that we possess unchanged the text of Othman's recension, it remains to inquire whether that text was an honest reproduction of Zaid's, with the simple reconciliation of unimportant variations. There is the fullest ground for believing that it was so. No early or trustworthy tradition throws suspicions upon Othman of tampering with the Coran in order to support his own claims. The Shiahs, indeed, of later times pretend that Othman left out certain *Suras* or passages which favoured Ali. But this is incredible. When Othman's edition was prepared, no open breach had taken place between the Omeyyads and the Alyites. The unity of Islam was still unthreatened. Ali's pretensions were as yet undeveloped. No



sufficient object can, therefore, be assigned for the perpetration by Othman of an offence which Moslems would have regarded as one of the blackest die. Again, at the time of the recension, there were still multitudes alive who had the Coran by heart as they had heard it originally delivered; and copies of any passages favouring Ali, had any ever existed, must have been in the hands of his numerous adherents, both of which sources would have proved an effectual check upon any attempt at suppression. Farther, the party of Ali, immediately on Othman's death, assumed an independent attitude, and raised him to the Caliphate. Is it conceivable that, when thus arrived at power, they would have tolerated a mutilated Coran, mutilated expressly to destroy their leader's claim? Yet we find that they continued to use the same Coran as their opponents and raised no shadow of an objection against it."

The Shiah, however, do not all believe that portions of the Holy Quran have been lost or that passages favoring Ali's claims were intentionally omitted by Zaid or Othman. Most of them, on the other hand, admit that the Holy Quran has been handed down to us in all its purity. Such is the belief of the more learned Shiah, while it is largely the ignorant masses that think that some portions have been lost. In the *Tafsir Sáfi*, an important Shiah commentary on the Holy Quran, the author, Mulla Mohsin, thus denounces the ignorant Shiah who taught that certain portions were lost:—

"Certain men from among us and the Hashwia masses have reported that the Quran has suffered loss and alteration. But the true belief of our friends is against this and such is the belief of the vast majority. For the Quran is a miracle of the Holy Prophet and the source of all knowledge relating to law and all religious injunctions, and the learned Muslims have taken the utmost pains for its protection, so that there is nothing relating to its vowel-points, its recital, its letters and its verses which they do not know. With such strong measures of protection and such faithful preservation of the Holy Book (by the Muslims) it cannot be supposed that any alteration or loss could take place" (p. 14.)

The learned author goes on to say:—

"Verily the Quran was collected and arranged in the life-time of the Holy Prophet exactly as it is in our hands. This is inferred



from the fact that the Quran was even then recited and committed to memory as a whole, and there was a body of the companions whose duty it was to commit it to memory. It was also recited and read out as a whole to the Holy Prophet (by the angel.) A large number of the companions as Abdulla bin Mas'ud and Ubayy bin K'ab had finished the Holy Quran in the presence of the Holy Prophet several times. All these facts show conclusively that the Holy Quran was complete and collected in the life-time of the Holy Prophet and it was not dispersed or scattered. It has been stated that those from among the Hashwia and Imamia sects (of the Shiahs) who hold a contrary view are nothing when compared with the vast majority who hold the right view. It should also be borne in mind that the contrary view was held only by some of the reporters of traditions who reported very weak and unreliable tradition." After this, Mulla Mohsin quotes the opinions of several learned Shiahs honored and respected by the whole Shiah world who taught in clear words that "the Quran as sent down by God to His Prophet is exactly what is now between the two boards (that is, in the written volume) and in the hands of the people." He also quotes a tradition whose trustworthiness has never been questioned by any Shiah. The tradition also supports the conclusion that the Holy Quran has come down to us without the alteration or loss of a single word or letter.

The above quotations are sufficient to show that learned Shiah theologians agree with all the other Islamic sects in holding the contents and arrangement of the Quran to be exactly in the condition in which the Holy Prophet left them. In fact, it is easy to see that if, as is admitted on all hands, the Holy Quran could be handed down to us from the time of Othman without any alteration or loss during a long period of nearly thirteen hundred years with the Muslims spread in every country and in all corners of the world all agreeing upon one and the same book with no variation, not even so much as of a letter or a vowel-point, it is the height of absurdity to suppose that alteration or loss could take place in the thirteen years after the death of the Holy Prophet, when the Muslims were all yet in one place and many of those who knew the whole of the Quran by heart were still living. The circumstances which contributed to the preservation of the purity of the text and arrangement of the Holy Quran were present even in a greater degree in the early Muslim society.



The companions of the Holy Prophet and the early Muslims all knew and believed that nothing had been lost from the Holy Quran. Bukharee tells us in a tradition the truth of which has never been questioned that when Ibn Abbás and Muhammad bin Hanfiah (Ali's son by a wife belonging to the Hanafi tribe) were asked as to what the Holy Prophet had left after him, they both replied : "ما ترك الا ما بين ا لد فتين" He left nothing but what is contained between the two boards," i.e., in the copies of the Quran as circulated by Othman, for it was to these copies that the words "ما بين ا لد فتين" "what is contained between the two boards" were first applied.

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## The True Nature of Divine Revelation.

The *Haqeeqat ul Wahy* (lit., the true nature of Divine revelation) is the title of a book recently published by the Promised Messiah.\* The book opens with a short statement of the object with which the writing of this book was taken in hand. It was to dispel certain doubts as to the true nature of Divine revelation and to point out the criteria for its recognition, but this at present, i. e., in the complete work, forms only, as it were, an introduction to the still more important subject of the signs and prophecies of the Promised Messiah which occupy over five hundred pages of this work. Two hundred and eight signs and fulfilled prophecies are enumerated, and the evidence for them which is in most cases written and published evidence is in many cases stated at length. These signs and prophecies are really proofs of the assertions made with regard to the criteria of Divine revelation, and the book thus not only demonstrates the truth of the claims of the Promised Messiah, but it also affords, as stated in the prefatory note, the clearest evidence as to the existence of God, an evidence which no other religion can furnish at the present day. It brings entire satisfaction to the hearts of all seekers after truth with regard to all those religious problems which are disturbing men's minds.

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\* The *Haqeeqat ul Wahy*, Urdu and Arabic, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Promised Messiah, printed at the Magazine Press, Qadian, price Rs. 4-8 or 6s.



How can we know that the words which a person claims to receive from God are really a Divine revelation? The answer to this question is given in the third chapter of the book which relates to "persons who receive the clearest and most perfect revelation from God," and the following quotation would help to give the reader some idea of the manner in which the subject is treated.

"Those who attain to a perfect connection with the Divine Being are like the person who first sees a fire from a distance, then approaches it gradually till he throws himself into it so that nothing is left of him. Thus does the man who attains to a perfect connection with God come nearer and nearer to Him until he flings himself into the fire of Divine love, and with the flame of Divine light all that is sensual in man is reduced to ashes at once. Such is the blessed end of the person who entertains true love for God. There are many signs which show a man's perfect connection with God. One of these signs is that Divine attributes are generated in him, the lower nature of man is annihilated by the fire of Divine love and a new life is breathed into him which is entirely different from the first life. A homely illustration would make the meaning clearer. Take a piece of iron and throw it into fire until it becomes red-hot. The iron becomes as fire and burns like fire, but it is not fire; it is only iron permeated with the heat of fire. Thus also the person who is completely encircled by the flame of Divine love manifests Divine glory, but he does not become God thereby. He is still a man though on account of the permeating fire of Divine love he manifests in certain respects glories of the Divine Being. Those who care to know or learn anything about such a man cannot remain in the dark as to the truth about him for there are not one or two, but thousands of signs by which he can be easily recognised. One of the signs which shows a man's perfect connection with the Divine Being is that as Almighty God is predominant above all, so the perfect one is triumphant over all those who are his opponents and stand in opposition against him.

It is also one of the signs of the perfect one that Almighty God makes his tongue utter sweet and eloquent Divine words which have in them a Divine awe, Divine blessings and wonderful power of revealing deep secrets of the future. Such words are accompanied with a light which shows with certainty that the words proceed from a Divine



source and there is not the slightest doubt about their Divine origin. There is in these words a Divine brilliance and they are free from all impurities. In most cases they reveal a grand prophecy. The prophecies so revealed relate to a great variety of subjects and in all respects they are unparalleled. They are distinguished from the predictions made by astrologers by the signs of belovedness and acceptance which are their chief characteristics. There are in them the good tidings of Divine assistance and help to the recipient of the Divine revelation. Those matters are revealed to him which are not revealed to others, and his prophecies disclose those deep secrets of the future which are not met with elsewhere. Such is, in short, the blessing which is granted to the tongue of the perfect one in the utterance of unparalleled words.

"His eye is also granted an unparalleled power of vision, and the perfect one can see objects hidden from ordinary sight. Sometimes writings are brought before his eyes which have no existence in the outside world. He can see the dead and talk with them as if they were living. Sometimes things at the distance of thousands of miles come before him in such a manner as if they were under his feet.

"His ear is also granted the faculty of hearing voices which ordinary ears cannot hear. Very often he hears the voices of the angels and in moments of affliction and restlessness finds comfort from them. He can also sometimes hear voices of material things, vegetables and animals. His heart is granted a supernatural power of judgment and discernment.

"Similarly a blessing is granted to his hands and feet and his whole body, and it often happens that his mere touch cures many diseases. In like manner the house in which he lives is filled with the blessings of God and is saved from plagues and afflictions for the angels of God protect it. And a blessing is also granted to the village or the town in which he lives.

"His very desires are a prophetic announcement of their fulfilment. Whenever he feels a very strong desire for the possession of a thing or the attainment of an object, that is a sure indication that the thing or the object desired would be attained.



"Similarly his pleasure or displeasure also partakes of the nature of a prophecy. When he is highly pleased with any body, it is for him the glad tidings of future prosperity and well-being. In like manner his extreme displeasure with any person betokens for him great adversities and ruin, for being annihilated in God his pleasure or displeasure is really the pleasure or displeasure of God. He is not pleased or displeased for his own sake or out of personal desire or excitement, but the feelings which arise in his heart are really the feelings of the pleasure or displeasure of God.

"His prayer and his devotion are not like ordinary prayers and devotions. When he prays for the removal of an affliction and applies himself wholly to it, such affliction is removed however wide its sphere may be. The reason of this is the same that has been pointed out above, *viz.*, that his determination to do a thing is often a manifestation of Divine will, and when he applies his whole attention and the full force of his will to it and all his faculties are completely engrossed with that one idea, it is then a Divine law that his prayer is accepted. But sometimes when all these conditions are not fulfilled, it happens that some of his prayers are not accepted. This is done that he may not be considered the equivalent of God in power and that ignorant men may not take him for a God.

..... But there is no doubt that most of the prayers of the perfect one are accepted. Nay, the grandest of his miracles is the acceptance of prayer. When his heart is in a state of perfect restlessness for the removal of an affliction and in this state he turns to God, the Almighty one then listens to his supplications. His hand at the time is the hand of God, for God also wills the bringing about of the thing for which he raises his hand. Almighty God is like a hidden treasure and He manifests His face only through His chosen servants. The signs of God are shown when His chosen servants are severely persecuted. When persecution becomes extremely painful to them, then understand that the sign of God is at hand. For, for His chosen servants God shows more love than a father does for the dearest of his children. For them He shows His wonderful works and manifests His extraordinary power. Hence it is that they reveal the face of God which is hidden from the world."



All revelations which do not possess these characteristics are either not Divine revelations at all or are only imperfect revelations. For, besides the perfect revelation granted to the chosen servants of God, His messengers and prophets, imperfect revelations are also granted to other men who have not yet reached the stage of spiritual perfection. In fact in what may be called a rudimentary stage revelation in the form of visions which sometimes turn out to be true is the common possession of all mankind. A true vision may now and then be seen by any person irrespective of the religion which he owns, any purity in his life or his spiritual advancement. Persons otherwise steeped in ignorance and sinfulness have sometimes been known to have seen such visions. Therefore, the mere fact of some vision seen by a person turning out true is no evidence of the truth of the religion which he owns or of the purity of his life. The second stage of revelation is that in which a person whose life is partly purified of sin, but whose lower nature has not yet entirely been subdued, receives certain revelations of an imperfect kind which are not accompanied by any of the signs of perfect revelation granted to the perfect ones of God. A person in this stage has some connection with the Divine Being, but his connection is not perfect. The three kinds of revelation are thus described in the *Hageeqat-ul-Wahy*:

"There are three kinds of men who may be said to be the recipients of revelation. Firstly, those who have no good in them and who have no connection with the Divine Being. Only on account of an aptitude of brain they sometimes see visions some of which may turn out to be true. But with such visions there are no signs of Divine acceptance and belovedness. Such visions do not bring any benefit either to themselves or to others, and men leading wicked and sinful lives may see them . . . . . In the physical world their visions may be likened to the smoke which a person sees arising from a distant place, but he does not feel the warmth of the fire or see its light. Spiritually, therefore, they have only the smoke which gives no light.

"The second class of men who see visions or receive revelations are those who have some connection with the Divine Being but their connection is not perfect. Their case may be likened in the physical world to that of the person who in an extremely cold and dark



night observes the light of fire from a distance. He may by the help of this light avoid the path in which there is danger, a path in which pits and thorns and stones abound and which is haunted by wild beasts and venomous snakes. But the faint light which he receives cannot serve to protect him from the severe cold of the night, and unless he reaches the fire and receives its warmth, he is as likely to perish as the one who walks in utter darkness.

"The true recipients of the Divine revelation are those who belong to the third class, who to continue the metaphor suggested above have reached the fire which can give them warmth and save them from perishing. They receive not only perfect light but also the warmth of the fire. Only those persons receive such perfect Divine revelation who consume the cloak of low passions in the flame of Divine love and lead a bitter life for the sake of God. They see that there is death before them and they make haste to receive it. They submit to every pain in the way of God and for the sake of God show such strength of faith that even the angels on heaven wonder at it. They know no discomfiture for they are the mighty wrestlers of the spiritual arena, and all the resistance and attacks of Satan against them are fruitless. They are sincerely faithful and true men whom no worldly pleasure can lead astray nor love of children or wife turn from the path of God. No bitterness can frighten them, no sensual pleasure can keep them away from God, no worldly connection can interfere with their connection with the Divine Being."

It may be asked, how is it that imperfection can be attributed to revelation. The fact is that Divine revelation is not imperfect, but the imperfection of the revelation arises from the imperfection of the person who receives it. The rays of light when reflected in a clear glass shine out with their full lustre, but to the extent to which the object reflecting them is opaque, they become obscure. The Divine revelation which may be likened to the light is perfect, but its brightness and perfection may vary with the recipient in whom that light is reflected. In like manner, as a cloud may intercept the light of the sun, the cloud of sins obscures the light of Divine revelation.

In support of these assertions and in support of his own claims



to be a recipient of perfect Divine revelation, the author has mentioned in this book 208 of the signs for which mostly written and in a few cases oral testimony is cited. This part of the book is, therefore, more important than the first as it contains the arguments which show the truth of the assertions made there, but the limits of our subject do not allow us to refer to these signs even briefly.

## Muhammadans and Jihad.

As a result of the "Exhortation" by the Promised Messiah published in our last \* for the guidance of the Ahmadis in the present political unrest in India, the following letter as representing orthodox Muslim views was published in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore in its issue of 22nd May :—

"The 'exhortation' to his followers, of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the founder of a new sect, to refrain from participating in all disloyal movements, which has appeared in your paper as an appendix to Khawaja Kamaluddin's communication, is all very well inasmuch as it aims at promoting the loyalty of a certain section of the Indian population ; but this noble object should on no account be made a pretext by any one to bring false accusations against those whom one does not like on other grounds.

"Referring to the execution of Abdul Latif, a follower of his, in Afghanistan, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad states in his 'exhortation' that the deceased was stoned to death by Amir Habibullah for the only fault that having become one of Mirza's followers "he opposed the doctrine of *Jihad*" in accordance with the Mirza's teachings. To say the least of it, this is a very vague way of putting things. If, however, by saying so the Mirza means—and by the general drift of his 'exhortation' it appears that he means it—that the view held by Amir Habibullah Khan as well as by the general mass of Muhammadans in India and elsewhere, about the doctrine of *Jihad*, is calculated to shake the loyalty of the Muhammadans in India, it should be emphatically declared that such an assertion is entirely unfounded, and is either based upon ignorance or something else which is unworthy of a noble cause.

"It may also be stated here for the information of the public that Abdul Latif's real fault which cost him his life was that he had become a heretic (*murtad*), an offence which under Islamic law is punishable with death. He became a heretic by following Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a pronounced heretic among Muhammadans. \* \* \* \*."

19th May.

SYED MUHAMMAD.

\* Also published in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, the *Pioneer* and several other papers.



The following reply to this letter, published by the *Civil and Military Gazette* in its issue of 28th May under the heading of "Muhammadans and Jehad," was written by the Promised Messiah.

"On the 7th May 1907, I issued an announcement for the guidance of my followers. My object in his announcement was to show that though the English Government in this country had its claims on all sections of the Indian community—for they all lived under its peaceful rule and enjoyed protection from every violation of their rights and therefore it behoved all to be thankful to this Government and to give proof of their loyalty by practice—yet this duty lay in particular and in a greater degree on those who followed me. I showed that it was this Government whom God had chosen for the protection of those who followed me and it was on account of their being under its shelter that they were protected from the violation of their most sacred rights and that if they wished to live even in Mecca or Medina their lives would not be safe, for Mullas of every Muhammadan country had given their *fatwas* that they deserved to be murdered. As an example of this, I stated how one of my followers, Maulvi Abdul Latif, was stoned to death by the orders of the Amir of Kabul, this being a clear evidence how a respectable and learned man was cruelly stoned to death for having become a follower of mine and for his refutation of the doctrine of *Jehad*. This is in brief what I wrote in my announcement of 7th May.

"To refute these statements, Syed Muhammad writes in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of the 22nd May that Maulvi Abdul Latif's real fault which cost him his life was that he had become a heretic (*murtad*) an offence which under Islamic law was punishable with death. "He became a heretic by following Mirza Gulam Ahmad, a pronounced heretic among Muhammadans." The evident conclusion to which these remarks lead is that I and all my followers are *murtad* and deserve to be murdered. This is the point on which I laid stress in my previous announcement, and to this again I draw the attention of the Government—that when a community, now counted by hundreds of thousands, is openly declared in paper as deserving to be murdered by the Islamic law which the orthodox Muslims profess to have, while under this Government it is enjoying perfect peace and liberty, it is but natural for it to prefer this Government to every other Government in this world. Where can we, I ask, find a shelter if we leave the shelter of this Government? It was not my object in the announcement, nor is it my object now, to attack Amir Habibullah for the murder of Maulvi Abdul Latif, for by the law which he followed, he considered that the Maulvi deserved to be murdered. He thought it to be a deed of great merit and therefore caused him to be stoned to death and had his family deported and cast into prison for ever. My object in referring to this incident was that the Government which God had vouchsafed to us and under which hundreds of thousands of



the Ahmadis were living had never given a judgment like that which the Amir acted upon and never adjudged the Ahmadis to be deserving of being murdered. Should we not then feel a gratitude towards this Government which we cannot feel toward any other Government in the world?

"Such were the reasons which led me to impress upon my followers the benefits which we in particular enjoyed under this Government, and to exhort them to bear in mind that if like Maulvi Abdul Latif, they left the shelter of this Government, they too would like him be stoned to death. It therefore behoved them that not with the lips only but with a true and sincere heart they should obey this Government and be ready to serve its cause at any moment and under any circumstances whatsoever. It should also be borne in mind that I do not complain Amir of Habibullah in particular, nor do I particularly lay anything to his charge. He only executed the *fatwas* which the *Mullas* gave, and every Muhammadan kingdom will do the same. Amir Habibullah Khan cannot be blamed in particular. It was for this reason that I wrote in my previous announcement that even if my followers had been in Mecca or Medina they would have met the same fate which Maulvi Abdul Latif met at Kabul.

"As for *Jehad* I have only to add this much—that the reason of our being pronounced heretics and deserving of being murdered does not consist in any denial on our part of God, of the Prophet or of the Quran. As to this anybody can satisfy himself by studying the books which I have written. He will find that we are true Muslims in this respect and are even propagating Islam. The true reason of this treatment towards us is that we deny the coming of any Mahdi or Messiah who should propagate Islam by the sword and thus deny also the popular doctrine of *Jehad*. The writer in the *Civil and Military Gazette* blames me for calling such orthodox doctrines dangerous, but I must repeat that such doctrines are undoubtedly dangerous for the ignorant masses, and it is such doctrines that have ruined the frontier fanatics. With such doctrines rooted in the hearts of ignorant persons no sooner a person claims to be the Mahdi and takes up the sword in his hand, the fire of fanaticism is fanned into a flame, and the claim without being inquire into attracts large number of ignorant men, and in this sense the belief is a standing menace to the peace of society. We say that such beliefs are errors and the pure teachings and brilliant signs which Islam presents do not stand in need of any *Jehad*. It is a fact that the wiser men among the Muslims are gradually giving up such doctrines.

"I do not say that the orthodox Muslims who are opposed to us are not loyal and obedient to this Government; they are loyal, but if they gave up such doctrines it would be far better.

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD."

Qadian, 23rd May 1907.