

Claim of Tahrif of the Holy Qur'ân

By: Tijani Samavi

This claim in itself being so horrible that no Muslim, Shi'i or Sunni, believing in the message of Muhammad (S), can ever endure or accept. This is due to the fact that the Lord of Glory has undertaken its preservation, when He said: "Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its preserver." (15:9) Thus it is immune from any addition and loss even with one letter, being the miracle of our Prophet (S), which will never die or fall into oblivion, and falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind it, being a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of Praise.

The Muslims' practical status quo refuses the tahrif of the Qur'ân, since many Sahâbah were memorizing it by heart, competing in memorizing it and teaching their children to learn it by heart, throughout the course of time till the present day. It is infeasible for any man, group, community or government to mutilate or alter the Qur'ân, at all.

Traversing all Muslim countries, eastwards and westwards, northwards and southwards, all over the world, we will surely find the same Qur'ân with no addition or loss whatsoever. Though Muslims being separated into schools (madhâhib), sects, cults and religions, the Qur'ân remains the sole incentive able to gather them, with no disagreement between even two among them, except regarding exegesis and interpretation (ta'wil), as each group rejoicing in its tenets.

So the tahrif (corruption) attributed to the Shi'ah is no more than a vilification and exaggeration, having no existence in the Shi'ah's beliefs. When going through the Shi'ah's view regarding the holy Qur'ân we can notice that they unanimously believe in its being guarded against any mutilation.

Al-Shaykh al-MuZaffar, the author of the book 'Aqâ'id al-Imâmiyyah, says in this regard:

"We believe that the Qur'ân being the Divine revelation (wahy) sent down from Allah, the Exalted, upon His noble Prophet, containing an exposition of all things. And also it is His everlasting miracle disabling all mankind of keeping pace with it in respect of rhetoric and eloquence, and the realities and sublime knowledge it contains, being guarded against any alteration or changing or mutilation (tahrif). The Qur'ân we have nowadays being surely the same one revealed to the Prophet, and anyone claiming other than this is but a violater, or obstinate errant or mistaken, all being misguided and misled, as it is surely Allah's word that falsehood can never come at it from before it or from behind it." (His speech is over).

Besides, all the Shi'ah lands are widely known and their rules in fiqh are commonly recognized by all. Had they possessed any Qur'ân other than that we have nowadays, it would have been discovered by people. I remember that when, for the first time, I visited the Shi'ah land, such gossips were filling my mind, that whenever seeing a bulky volume, I would pick it up hoping to put my hand on that alleged Qur'ân. But very soon, such fancy has vanished away, recognizing later on that it was only one of the fabricated vilifications aimed at causing people to have aversion to the Shi'ah. Nonetheless, there is, ever and anon, someone vilifying and arguing the Shi'ah with a book named: Fasl al khitâb fi ithbât tahrif Kitâb Rabb al-'Arbâb, whose author is Muhammad Taqi al-Nuri al-Tabrasi (d. 1320 H.), who was a Shi'i. In this way those transgressors intend to overburden the Shi'ah the responsibility for this book! The act that is far from equity.

So many books were written, that in fact never express but the viewpoints of their writers and authors, containing the lean and strong, truth and falsehood, and implying wrong and correct. This fact includes all the Islamic sects, and is not confined to the Shi'ah alone. Are we permitted to hold Ahl al-Sunnah responsible for what was written by the Egyptian Culture Minister and dean of Arabic literature Dr. Tâhâ Husayn regarding the Qur'ân and pre-Islamic (Jâhili) poetry? Or what al-Bukhârî reported, which is considered veracious near them, about the presence of loss and addition in the Qur'ân, and so also is Sahih Muslim, and other sources?256

Let's turn aside from this and return good for evil. What an excellent words uttered in this regard, those said by the Professor Muhammad al-Midyani, Dean of al-Shari'ah College in al-'Azhar University, when writing:

"And as regards the claims that the Imâmiyyah believe in presence of loss in the Qur'ân, I seek God's protection... they are no more than narrations reported in their books, the like of which are reported in our books. The investigators from among both the sects have refuted them, proving their falsehood and fabrication. No one among the Imâmi Shi'ah or Zaydiyyah is ever believing in this, neither is there anyone among the Sunnis.

Anyone desiring to have more information can refer to al-Suyuti's book al-Itqân, in which he can see the likes of such narrations, of which we turned aside.

"In 1498, an Egyptian compiled a book calling it al-Furqân, interpolating it with such poor, exotic and rejected narrations, reporting quotations (in their confirmation) from the Sunni books and references. Al-'Azhar then asked the Government to stop publication of (confiscate) the book, after demonstrating with scientific proof and argument the aspects of falsehood and deviation in it. The Government responded to this request and confiscated the book. Its author then filed a case demanding an indemnity, but the Administrative Judiciary in the State Cabinet dismissed the case.

"Should we say then that Ahl al-Sunnah deny the sanctity of the Qur'ân? Or believe in presence of loss in the Qur'ân due to a narration reported by so and so? Or due to a book compiled by so and so?

The same is true concerning the Imâmi Shi'ah, that reports can be found in their books similar to those recorded in some of our books (the speech to al-Midyani). Al-'Imâm al-'Allâmah Abu al-Fadl ibn al-Hasan al-Tabrasi, an eminent Imâmi scholar in the 6th Hijrah Century, in his book Majma' al-bayân li 'ulum al-Qur'ân, says in this respect:

"There is consensus and unanimity among the Muslims that there is not any 'excess' in the holy Qur'ân. But with regard to the deficiency of the text of the holy Qur'ân, a group of Imâmiyyah and a group of Hashwiyyah who are Sunnis have claimed presence of alterations and deficiencies in the holy Qur'ân, but the true belief accepted by the Imâmiyyah holds otherwise. This is supported by al-Sayyid al-Murtada (may God sanctify his soul), giving it its full due in reply to the questions of al-Tarâbulusiyyât, saying in some places: Knowledge and certainty of the validity of the narration of the holy Qur'ân are like the knowledge and certainty on the existence of countries, cities, famous historical events, popular books, and the poems compiled by the Arabs. This is because the specific regard and attention and the strong motive for the narration of the text of the holy Qur'ân and its upkeep had been much stronger than the precision and attention given to the above-cited items, since the Qur'ân being the miracle of Prophethood, source of legal sciences and religious rules. And Muslim 'ulamâ' paid so great attention in preserving and safeguarding it, to the extent that they came to recognize all controversial things regarding which disagreement was there, including its syntax (i'râb), readings, letters and verses. So how is it permissible to believe in its being altered, or decreased, with the presence of this sincere attention and strict precision."257

To elucidate for you, dear reader, the fact that this accusation (decreasing and increasing the Qur'ân), should verily be attributed to Ahl al-Sunnah rather than being ascribed to the Shi'ah. This was one of the motives urged me to reconsider all of my beliefs, as whenever I tried to criticize the Shi'ah and negate or disapprove them regarding anything, they would prove their acquittal from it, with attributing it to me. Then, with passage of days, and through investigation, I recognized the truth of their claims, of which I was convinced, for which I praise God. Hereunder I shall present the evidences proving my claim in this topic:

Al-Tabarrâni and al-Bayhaqi are reported to have said: There are two surahs (dropped) in the Qur'ân, one being:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(إِنَّا نَسْتَعِينُكَ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَنُثْنِي عَلَيْكَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ وَنَخْلُقُ وَنَتْرَكَ مَنْ يَفْجُرُكَ)

meaning: We ask You to help us and seek Your forgiveness, and praise You with all good, never deny You, and disavow from and forsake whoever dissipates You). The second one is thus :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - اللَّهُمَّ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْجُدُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْعَى وَنَحْفِدُ نَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ وَنَخْشَى عَذَابَكَ الْجَدِّ إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ بِالْكَافِرِينَ (ملحق) .

(Its translation is: O God, we worship You and for You we pray and prostrate, and toward You we endeavour and haste. We seek Your mercy and fear Your serious torment. Your chastisement will verily afflict the disbelievers).

These two (alleged) surahs are called by al-Raghib in al-Muhàdarât as suratay al-Qunut (two surahs of supplication) that were read by 'Ummar ibn al-Khattab during qunut in his prayers, and are found in the mushafs of Ibn 'Abbàs and of Zayd ibn Thàbit.258

Al-'Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Musnad, is reported to have said:

Ubbay ibn Ka'b asked someone (Zirr ibn Hubaysh) How many verses do you recite in the Surat al-'Ahzàb? He replied: Seventy and a few verses. He (Ubayy) said: 'Never, I read it with the Messenger of Allah (S), and it is about the length of the Surat al-Baqarah or lengthier, and in it is the àyat al-rajm (verse of stoning).'259

It is obvious for every witty reader that these two surahs, which are called suratay al-qunut, mentioned in the books al-'Itqân and al-Durr al-manthûr of al-Suyuti, and reported by al-Tabarrâni and al-Bayhaqi, can never be found in the Book of Almighty Allah.

This means that the Qur'ân we have today is missing these two surahs, that are recorded in

the mushaf of Ibn 'Abbàs and that of Zayd ibn Thàbit, indicating also the presence of masàhif other than those we have. This also recalls to my mind Ahl al-Sunnah's claim of the Shi'ah's having Fatimah's mushaf, so it is to be conceived!

Ahl al-Sunnah used to recite these two surahs in the qunut supplication of every morning prayers, and I personally learn them by heart and used to read them in the dawn prayer qunut.

The second riwàyah (narration) reported by al-'Imàm Ahmad in his Musnad, which claims that three quarters of Surat al-'Ahzàb have dropped, since Surat al-Baqarah contains 286 verses while their number in al-'Ahzàb doesn't exceed 73. When considering the counting of the parts of Qur'an through hizbs, we conclude that Surat al-Baqarah is composed of five hizbs, whereas Surat al-'Ahzàb never exceeds one hizb (the whole Qur'an is 120 hizbs).

Also the utterance expressed by Ubayy ibn Ka'b: "I used to read it during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (S), and it was the length of the Surat al-Baqarah or lengthier." This man who was the most famous among the reciters who used to learn the Qur'an by heart, during the lifetime of the Prophet (S), and who was chosen by 'Umar²⁶⁰ to lead people in salàt al-tarawih, by so saying will verily and undoubtedly confuse the readers and create doubts inside their hearts.

Again al-'Imàm Ahmad ibn Hanbal reported in his Musnad,²⁶¹ from Ubayy ibn Ka'b that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Allah, the Glorious and Most High, has commanded me to recite for you the Qur'an: Those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture could not ..., (Ubayy said:) then he (S) read in it:

لَوْ أَنَّ ابْنَ آدَمَ سَأَلَ وَادِيًا مِنْ مَالٍ فَأَعْطِيَهُ لَسَأَلَ ثَانِيًا فَلَوْ سَأَلَ ثَانِيًا فَأَعْطِيَهُ لَسَأَلَ ثَالِثًا لَا يَمْلَأُ جَوْفَ ابْنِ آدَمَ إِلَّا التُّرَابُ ، يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى () . (من تاب ، وإنَّ ذلك الدين القيم عند الله الحنيفة غير المشركة لا اليهودية ولا النصرانية من يفعل خيراً فلن يكفره

(Meaning that: If son of Adam demanded a valley of funds and was given it, he will demand another one, and if given it would demand a third one, and nothing would fill the belly of the son of Adam except the earth (turàb). Allah shall verily return in mercy toward that who returns (in penitence). That is the straight religion near Allah, the Hanafi other than the polytheists, Jewish and Christians. Whoever does good it will never be denied).

Al-HàfiZ ibn 'Asàkir reported in interpretation of Ubayy ibn Ka'b, that Abu al-Dardà' betook himself toward al-Madinah with a number of people of Damascus. On reaching, he entered upon 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, reciting for him the following (alleged) verse:

﴿ اذْجَعِلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَلَوْ حَمِيَّتُمْ كَمَا حَمَوْا لَفُسَدَ الْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ ﴾ .

(meaning): Hamiyyah (fervour) of Jahiliyyah was made inside the hearts of disbelievers, and if you become impetuous as they are, corruption would afflict the Sacred Mosque (Ka'bah)."

Thereat 'Umar asked: Who taught you to recite such reading? They replied: Ubayy ibn Ka'b did. He summoned Ubayy, and asked them to read (before him). So they read:

﴿ . (ولو حميتم كما حموا لفسد المسجد الحرام) ﴾

Ubayy said to 'Umar: True, I taught them to read thus. Then 'Umar said to Zayd ibn Thàbit: O Zayd, read. Zayd read the common one (ordinary). Then 'Umar said: O God, I never know other than this (reading)! Ubayy ibn Ka'b then said:

"O 'Umar, by God you know well that I used to attend (the Prophet's meetings) and they were absent, and I used to come near while they be away. I swear by Allah, if you wish, I will stay home and never talk to anyone or teach anyone to read, till my death." 'Umar said: "I seek God's forgiveness; you know that Allah has gifted you with knowledge, so teach people whatever you know."

He (Ibn 'Asàkir) also said: 'Umar passed by a youth reading in a mushaf:

﴿ . (النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَهُوَ أَبٌ لَهُمْ) ﴾

(meaning: The Prophet has more right over the believers than they over themselves, and his wives are their mothers, and he is their father.) 'Erase it, boy', said 'Umar. 'I will not erase it, for it is so in the mushaf of Ubayy ibn Ka'b', said the youth. 'Umar went to Ubayy who told him: 'The Qur'an has kept me busy, and you have been busy making transactions in the bazaar.'²⁶²

The same riwàyah was reported too by Ibn al-'Athir in Jàmi' al-'usul, and Abu Dàwud in his Sunan, and also by al-Hàkim in his Mustadrak.

This time, I leave to you, dear reader, to comment yourself on such reports which are filling the books of Ahl al-Sunnah who are unaware of them, but vilifying the Shi'ah with whom even one-tenth can never be found.

But some of the Sunni obstinates may have aversion to such narrations, rejecting them as usual, disapproving al-'Imàm Ahmad's reporting such superstitions. They may consequently weaken the authenticity of the asànid of such narrations, regarding the Musnad of al-'Imàm Ahmad and Sunan of Abu Dàwud as not viewed by Ahl al-Sunnah at the same level of Sahih

al-Bukhàri and Sahih Muslim, whereas such riwayàt are recorded in both the Sahihs.

Al-Bukhàri, in his Sahih²⁶³ under “bàb Manàqib ‘Ammàr wa Hudhayfah (r)”, reported from ‘Alqamah that he said: I entered the Sham, performed two-rak’ah prayer and said: My God, bring me a virtuous companion. Then I came near a people, sitting with them, when a man entered and sat beside me. I asked: Who is that man? They replied: He is Abu al-Dardà’. I said I invoked Allah to send me a righteous associate, and He sent you. He asked me: Where are you from? I said, from people of Kufah. He said: Don’t you have among you the son of Umm ‘Abd, the owner of the two sandals and the pillow and purger, and the one whom Allah protected against the Satan, as confirmed by the Prophet (S)? Isn’t there among you the trustee of the Prophet (S), other than whom no one has knowledge? Then he said: How do you read “By the night when it spreadeth its evil!”? Then I recited for him:

﴿ وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا يَغْشَى وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا تَجَلَّى وَالذِّكْرُ وَالْآثَنَى ﴾

(instead of

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذِّكْرَ وَالْآثَنَى ﴾

in 92:3). (Then He asked: Did you hear it from your teacher’s mouth?) I said: By God, I heard it from the Prophet’s mouth (mouth to mouth).”

In another narration he added: “... and yet they reject my assertion of something I heard from the Messenger of Allah, may God’s peace and benediction be upon him and his Progeny.²⁶⁴

Again, in another report he said:

﴿ وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا يَغْشَى وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا تَجَلَّى وَالذِّكْرُ وَالْآثَنَى ﴾

When he said: “The Prophet (s) has read it to me, from his mouth, and yet those people insist till it was about to reject my assertion.”²⁶⁵

All these narrations indicate that in the Qur’ân we have today the words “وما خلق” are added.

Al-Bukhàri, in his Sahih, on the authority of Ibn Abbas reported that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab said: Allah has delegated Muhammad, upon whom be God’s peace and benediction, with the truth, and revealed upon him the Book. Among what He revealed was àyat al-rajm (verse of stoning), which we read, accepted and comprehended. So the Messenger of Allah (S) stoned and we stoned after him. I fear that when time prolongs, someone may say: By God we can never find àyat al-rajm in the Book of Allah, as a result of which people may go astray through ignoring an obligation prescribed by Allah. And stoning is a punishment mentioned in the Book of Allah against any married man or woman when perpetrating fornication, when it is proved by evidence or through the woman’s conceiving and confession. We also used to recite in our reading of the Book of Allah:

﴿ إِنْ أَنْ لَا تَرْغَبُوا عَنْ آبَائِكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ كَفَرٌ بِكُمْ إِنْ تَرْغَبُوا عَنْ آبَائِكُمْ ، أَوْ إِنْ كَفَرُوا بِكُمْ إِنْ تَرْغَبُوا عَنْ آبَائِكُمْ ﴾

(meaning: Don’t shun your parents since this will be counted as ingratitude on your part, or: It is ingratitude to shun your parents).²⁶⁶

In his Sahih,²⁶⁷ under the “bàb: Law anna libn Adam wàdiyayn labtaghà thàlithan” (If the son of Adam has two valleys he would ask for a third one), Al-’Imàm Muslims said:

“Abu Musà al-’Ash’ari sent for the qurrà’ (reciters) of Basrah. Three hundred qurrà’ of the Qur’ân came to him. He told them: “You are the elect of the people of Basrah’. He asked them to recite, which they did. (He told them): ‘Do not remain long without reciting the Qur’ân, lest your hearts, like those who went before you, should harden. Indeed we used to recite a surah similar in length and power to the Surat al-Barà’ah, which I forgot except for a single verse:

﴿ لَوْ كَانَ لِأَيْنٍ مِّنْ مَّالٍ لَا يَبْتَغَىٰ وَإِدْيَانُ مِّنْ مَّالٍ لَا يَبْتَغَىٰ وَإِدْيَانُ مِّنْ مَّالٍ لَا يَبْتَغَىٰ ﴾

We would also read a surah like one of the al-Musabbihit, which I forgot all except this:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ فَتَكْتَبُ شَهَادَةً فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَتَسْأَلُونَ عَنْهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴾

(meaning: O you who believe! Why say you that which you do not? Then it will be counted a testimony against you and you be answerable about it on the Day of Resurrection).²⁶⁸

These two alleged surahs, which were forgotten both by Abu Musà al-’Ash’ari, one resembling Surat al-Barà’ah, i.e. 129 verses, and the other resembling one of the Musabbihit, i.e. twenty verses, have both no existence except in the imagination of Abu Musà. It is really astonishing. I leave the judgement to the equitable reader.

When Ahl al-Sunnah’s books and Musnads and Sihàn be replete with such reports, claiming once that the Qur’ân is incomplete, and increased another time, so what is the reason behind all this vilification against the Shi’ah who unanimously concurred on the invalidity of such claims.

And when the Shi’i man, the author of Fasl al-Khitàb fi ithbàt tahrif Kitàb Rabb al-’Arbàb, who died in 1320 Hijrah, had compiled his book about a hundred years ago, he was preceded by the Egyptian Sunni writer, the author of the book al-Furqàn with about four centuries, as referred to by al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Midyani, the Dean of al-Shari’ah College

in Al-'Azhar University.²⁶⁹

The important point to be got from all this discussion, is that the Sunni and Shi'ah investigating 'ulamà' have annulled such narrations, regarding them as eccentric and unusual, proving through convincing evidences that the Qur'ân we have today being the very Qur'ân that was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad (S) without any addition or omission or substitution or alteration.

How can Ahl al-Sunnah vilify the Shi'ah because of traditions deserving no credence whatsoever near them, acquitting themselves from this charge, while their Sihàh confirm the veracity of those traditions?

While referring to such narrations so bitterly and regretfully, how badly are we in need of disposing of them and discarding them away, had not been the outspreading campaign launched by some writers and authors claiming to be committed to the Prophetic Sunnah. They are backed, behind the scenes, by uncovered circles, financing and urging them to defame and charge the Shi'ah with impiety, particularly after the culmination of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

I address such people and their supporters with these words: Observe your duty toward Allah regarding your brethren, and hold you fast by the cord of God all together, and be not divided (among yourselves) and remember the bounty of God bestowed upon you, when you were enemies (of each other) He united your hearts together with (mutual) love, and thus by His favour you have become brethren.