

THE
RECENSIONS OF THE QUR'ÁN

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THE RECENSIONS OF THE QUR'ÁN

The following is the scheme of diacritical points now adopted by the C.L.S. for the transliteration of Arabic and Persian words:—

<u>th</u>	for	ث	t	for	ط
h	"	ح	z	"	ظ
<u>kh</u>	"	خ	'	"	ع
<u>dh</u>	"	ذ	gh	"	غ
s	"	ص	q	"	ق
d	"	ض	,	"	ع

THE various portions which now form the Qur'án were recited by the Prophet during a period of twenty-three years, but during his lifetime they were never collected together or systematically arranged. Passages were written on palm leaves, leather, and on such other materials as came to hand, by individual hearers, but these were all disconnected and had no special authority. The great storehouse of the Qur'án was the marvellous memory of the Arab people. It was recited again and again at each act of worship, and it was held in such reverence that the committal of it to memory was an act of the highest virtue.

We owe the Qur'án as we now have it to two recensions, made by the first and third Khalifas, Abú Bakr and 'Uthmán. At the battle of Yemana, probably within a year of the death of the Prophet, when the usurper Musailama was overthrown, a great many of the Qur'án reciters were slain, and 'Umar, afterwards the second Khalifa, began to fear lest the true text should be lost. Mirkhond says: 'when Abú Bakr received the news of the battle he thought that in course of time the words of the Lord Most High might be blotted out from the minds of the people and so ordered the Qur'án to be published.'¹ There is a well authenticated tradition by Zaid ibn Thábit which records 'Umar's speech: 'I fear,' he said to Abú Bakr, 'that the battle may again wax hot amongst the Qur'án reciters in other fields of battle, and that much may be lost therefrom; now, therefore, my advice is that thou shouldst give speedy orders for the collection of the Qur'án.' This advice approved itself to the Khalifa. He then summoned to his presence Zaid, who had been an amanuensis of the Prophet and had a great reputation for his knowledge of the Qur'án. He said to him: 'Thou art a young man

¹ *Rauḍatu's-Safá*. Part ii, vol. iii, p. 141.

and wise; against whom no one amongst us can cast an imputation; and thou wert wont to write down the inspired revelations of the Prophet of the Lord, wherefore now search out the Qur'án and bring it all together.¹ Zaid collected it from the passages written as we have described, from all who could remember any portion, and when the whole was completed it was probably given to the *Khalifa* Abú Bakr. It then came into the possession of the *Khalifa* 'Umar who gave it to his daughter Hafsa, one of the widows of Muḥammad. This edition was for ten years the only one in full use.

Zaid was assisted by Anas bin Málík and others and the work whilst in progress was superintended by 'Umar, who it is said accepted nothing as part of the Qur'án which had not been written down and which was not testified to by two persons. A case in point is the stoning verse, 'The married man and the married woman when they commit adultery then stone them without doubt.'² 'Umar said he could not vouch for this, but that he would have inserted it had he not feared that he might be charged with having added something to the Qur'án. He himself knew the verse, but could not find corroborative testimony.³ The punishment decreed in the Qur'án for adultery is one hundred stripes,⁴ but as a matter of fact stoning is the Muḥammadan legal punishment for adultery and no other basis for it is known except this verse which 'Umar withdrew. This seems to show that he had good authority for his statement. Anyhow its omission shows the care taken with this recension.

In the arrangement of the Qur'án, Zaid seems to have had original passages before him and to have put them together without much regard to the sense. Thus we have

¹ Syáfi, *History of the Khalifas* (Calcutta ed.), p. 78.

² الشيخ والشيخة إذا زنا فارجموها البتة

³ See Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Korans*, p. 194. Margoliouth states that 'Ayesha said that this verse, in which stoning was enjoined as a punishment for adultery, was on a slip (of parchment) deposited under her bed and was afterwards lost.—*Mohammed*, p. 219.

In commentating on Súrátu'l-Má'ida (v) 18, in which the Jews are charged with concealing their Scriptures, Ḥusain and Baidáwí say that one of the matters concealed was the رَجْمٌ—the verse of stoning—which was in the Pentateuch.

—*Tafsir-i-Ḥusaini*, vol. i, p. 140. Baidáwí, vol. i, p. 251.

⁴ Súrátu'n-núr (xxiv) 1. This and the succeeding four verses are said to have abrogated the verse of stoning which 'Umar hesitated to put permanently in the Qur'án.

the name *Ṣuhuf*, 'loose leaves'; and *Súras*, 'the rows,' the name now given to the various chapters. A tradition recorded by ibn 'Aliya says: 'Zaid after much labour compiled the Qur'án without any order of *Súras*.' Some orthodox Muslims hold that the present form was ordained by God, and follows an arrangement made by the Companions of the Prophet; in which case it is difficult to see the need of Abú Bakr's recension.

It is said by the German critic, Weil, that Abú Bakr altered some passages. Thus Weil adduces the tradition that 'Umar would not believe that the Prophet was dead and vehemently expressed his doubts, until Abú Bakr recited some passages from the Qur'án on the subject of the death of Muḥammad. Weil considers that 'Umar and other Muslims did not know of these passages and that Abú Bakr invented them. But Nöldeke,¹ Muir, and other competent critics think that this is a gratuitous assumption without the least foundation in fact.

The circumstances are these: 'Umar, on seeing the placid countenance of the Prophet, said: 'He is not dead, he hath only swooned away.' To one who tried to convince him he replied, 'Thou liest, the Apostle of God is not dead . . . the Prophet of the Lord shall not die, until he has rooted out every hypocrite and unbeliever.'² In words similar to these he addressed the crowd which had now gathered together. Then Abú Bakr said: 'Silence! 'Umar, sit thee down, be quiet. Hath not the Almighty revealed this verse to the Prophet, saying, "Verily thou shalt die and they shall die."'³ And again, after the battle of Uhud, the revelation came, 'Muḥammad is no more than an Apostle: other Apostles have already passed away before him. If he die, therefore, or be killed, will ye turn upon your heels?'⁴ Let him then know, whosoever worshippeth Muḥammad, that Muḥammad is dead.' Then 'Umar was satisfied. There are also other passages which speak of death, such as: 'Have we granted to man before thee a life that

¹ See *Geschichte des Korans*, p. 197.

² *Bauḍatū's-Safá*. Part ii, vol. iii, p. 780.

³ إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ، وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ—Súrátu'z-Zumar (xxxix) 31.

⁴ i.e. return to idolatry. A report had been spread in the battle of Uhud that Muḥammad was slain.

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإَيْنَ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انقلبتم على أعقابكم
Súrátu 'Alí 'Imrán (iii) 198.

shall last for ever; if thou then die, shall they live for ever? Every soul shall taste of death.'¹ 'Every soul shall taste of death: then to us shall ye return.'² Abú Bakr must, therefore, be pronounced innocent of the fraud charged upon him, for it is unreasonable to suppose that he interpolated them all.

Weil also considers that verse fourteen of *Súratu'l-Aḥqáf* (xlvi) is an interpolation: 'We have commanded man to show kindness to his parents, his mother beareth him and bringeth him forth with pain, and his bearing and his weaning is thirty months; until when he attaineth strength and the age of forty years, he saith, "O Lord give me inspiration, that I may be grateful for Thy favour wherewith thou hast favoured me and my parents."' According to the commentator Ḥusain, Abú Bakr embraced Islám in his thirty-eighth year. His parents were also converted, and in his fortieth year he said: 'O Lord give me inspiration that I may be grateful.' Thus this verse has been supposed to refer to him, but this by no means proves that he interpolated it, for had he wished to introduce a verse about himself he surely would have invented one far less obscure. This charge then may be dismissed as having no basis in fact.

Although the recension thus made under the direction of Abú Bakr was of the nature of a private undertaking, and too much importance ought not to be attached to it, yet it was of great value as forming the basis for the authoritative recension of the *Khalifa* 'Uthmán. Some authorities consider it uncertain whether Zaid completed his work before the death of Abú Bakr or not, and the fact that the work when finished was handed over to Ḥafsa, the daughter of 'Umar, would imply that Abú Bakr was now dead. In any case the private nature of the undertaking is evident.

With the great mass of the people there was no critical study of the Qur'án, for they were far too busy with the

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِيَشْرَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخَلْدَ أَقَابِينَ مِتَّ فَهُمْ الْخَالِدُونَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ
Súratu'l-Anbiyá' (xxi) 35-6.

The phrase *مِنْ قَبْلِكَ*—'before thee'—is ambiguous and it might seem to imply that Muḥammad was different to those gone before and would not die, but the Commentators do not so interpret it and deduce from the whole passage the universality of death.

² *Súratu'l-Ankabūt* (xxix) 51. كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

ceaseless fighting that went on, and in the accumulation of booty. The result was that they went on reciting the Qur'án as they had been accustomed to do and paid little attention to Zaid's arrangement, and many knew very little about it. After the battle of Qadisiya (A.D. 636), 'Umar ordered the leader of the victorious army to divide the booty amongst the warriors who were best acquainted with the Qur'án. One was called up and he replied that he had been so engaged in fighting that he did not know anything by heart. Another said that he only knew the 'Bismillah'—'In the name of God most merciful and compassionate.' As time went on, even amongst professed scholars, discrepancies arose, and those who, in their several districts, were looked upon as authorities maintained the superiority of the readings they favoured and quarrels commenced on the subject. The inhabitants of Ḥims stood by the readings of al-Miqdád bin al-Aswad; the Kúfites by those of ibn Mas'úd;¹ the Baṣrites by those of Abú Músa, and so on.² The consequences threatened to be very serious, for men wondered how there could be different texts, as the Qur'án sent down by God was one, and so the *Khalifa* 'Uthmán determined to bring out a new and authoritative recension. He appointed Zaid, who was a native of Madína, and some learned men amongst the Quraish³ to do the work. They took Abú Bakr's compilation as the basis of the new book, and collected all the copies they could get. When they had finished the work, 'Uthmán destroyed all the books of the old edition he could get, except the copy which belonged to Ḥafsa. This, however, was destroyed soon after by Manóan, the Governor of Madína. The edition now authorized was sent forth into all the provinces as the only recognized book.

In the case of any difference of opinion Zaid had to give way, and the final decision lay with the Quraish members of the revision committee, or with the *Khalifa* himself. Thus

¹ One of the Prophet's sayings is thus recorded: 'Whosoever wishes to recite the Qur'án correctly and with elegance let him follow the reading of ibn Mas'úd.' Ibn Mas'úd refused at first to give up his copy to the revision committee. The *Khalifa* ordered him to be beaten, from the effects of which he died.—*Journal Asiatique*, Décembre 1843, p. 385.

² Nöldeke gives an excellent account of the way in which these differences arose.—*Geschichte des Korans*, pp. 280-5.

³ This was the Meccan tribe or family to which the Prophet belonged.

the Qur'án was preserved in the Meccan dialect. An example of the *Khalífa's* interference is given in the tradition which records that 'Alí wished to write نَابِوَة with ة: the others with ت as نَابِوت and 'Uthmán decided in favour of the latter, as being according to the Quraish dialect. This is rather an unfortunate illustration, as نَابِوت is not an Arabic word, but was borrowed by Muḥammad from the Rabbinical Hebrew.¹ All the various traditions on such points are intended to show that the recension is according to the Meccan dialect, the language of Gabriel and of Muḥammad. It is said by some that the *Khalífa* had a political motive in his action in this matter, and that he hoped that the settling of doubt as to the Qur'anic text and the production of an authorized edition, would raise him in the estimation of the true believers and so strengthen his party against their adversaries, who were numerous and powerful. This may be so, but he had the support and sanction of the Companions of the Prophet, for without their assent and co-operation it could not have been done. It is evident that the *Khalífa* collected all the revelations he could procure, and exercised care and caution. Ibn Zubair says: 'I read to 'Uthmán the verse, "Such of you as shall die and leave wives shall bequeath their wives a year's maintenance without causing them to quit their homes"²; but the phrase "quit their homes" is abrogated by other verses,³ so why have you written it?' Then 'Uthmán said, 'O my nephew, leave it, I will not change anything from its place.'

The present form of the Qur'án was established by Zaid and his coadjutors. They retained the Bismilláh, except at the heading of Súratu't-Tauba (ix). The reason they gave for this was that they were in considerable doubt as to whether Súras viii and ix should not come together. At last they finally agreed to separate them, but omitted the Bismilláh, as that is a very definite sign of separation. Its absence shows that there was some doubt about the division into two Súras. The arrangement of the Súras is quite arbitrary and depends on no principle at all. Many Súras are very composite. Probably the people could not tell Zaid

when various parts which they brought to his notice were revealed, and so the portions got mixed up together without any regard to dates or place. Thus when Muḥammad bin Sirín asked 'Akrama whether the Qur'án was to be in chronological order, he said: 'Collect it just as it came down, first portion first, second second, and so on; if men and genii tried they could not do it in this order.'

In fact, the age and the men were uncritical, and the only apparent rule followed was to arrange the portions of a Súra in the best way possible and then to put the longer Súras first in order and the shorter ones last, without any reference to chronological sequence.

Some of the Súras have single letters prefixed to them, the meanings of which it is impossible to determine. These are the letters Á.L.M.; Á.L.M.R.; Á.L.R.; Tá. Há.; Káf, Há Yá, 'Ain, Šad.¹ This latter set occurs in the beginning of Súratu' Maryam (xix) which contains the histories of John the Baptist and of Christ, and which was recited to the King of Abyssinia in the presence of the ambassadors whom Muḥammad sent to him. This had led Dr. Sprenger to suppose that these mystic words stand for a Christian symbol, just as the letters I.N.R.I. stand for *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*. So he would make out of these letters the following sentence:

عيسى النصارى ملك اليهوديين

In Arabic, it is not necessary to use the first letter of a word for an abbreviation.² The most prominent letter in a word can be taken, so Dr. Sprenger takes ك ص ع and ي and supposes the words were written thus and were read, as legends on coins are read, from below, thus:—

ع = عيسى and ص = النصارى that is, Jesus the Nazarene.

ك = ملك and ي = يهودى that is, King of the Jews.³

This is very curious but not at all probable. Ibn Khaldún says: 'God has placed these letters in several Súras to show the impossibility of imitating the style of the Qur'án. He also says

¹ See Geiger's *Judaism and Islam* (S.P.C.K., Madras), p. 81, and Noldeke's *Geschichte des Qorans*, p. 211.

² Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 240.

³ e.g., v. 284, which limits the obligation to four months and ten days.

آلم آلر آلر طة كهيعص

² Thus آخر is represented by ح in الخ, which is equivalent to κ. τ. λ.

³ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 20, p. 280.

that Zamakhshari considered that these letters indicated that the style of the Qur'án was perfect and that imitation was defied.¹ This is in accordance with the idea that just as men know these letters but can make nothing out of them, so no one can compose anything equal to the Qur'án. Several explanations are given by Sale in the preliminary discourse to his translation of the Qur'án. Nöldeke considers them to have been private marks of the owners put on the copies lent to Zaid, which have inadvertently crept into the text.

Muslims believe that the Qur'án is incorruptible—'a book whose verses are established in wisdom, and then set forth with clearness'; but the fact that 'Uthmán and his company of revisers had to consider a variety of readings, to weigh their authority, and if necessary to discard them in favour of the Meccan readings, caused no small scandal. But a way was found out of the difficulty. Abú ibn Ka'b, one of the Companions, became so famous as a reciter of the Qur'án that the Prophet himself said: 'Read the Qur'án under ibn Ka'b.' Ibn Ka'b one day stated that, scandalized at man after man who entered the Mosque repeated the Qur'án in different ways, he spoke to Muḥammad about it. The Prophet said: 'O Abú ibn Ka'b! intelligence was sent to me to read the Qur'án in one dialect, and I was attentive to the Court of God, and said: "Make easy the reading of the Qur'án to my sects." Then instructions were sent to me a second time saying, "Read the Qur'án in two dialects." Then I turned myself to the Court of God, saying, "Make easy the reading of the Qur'án to my sects." Then a voice was sent to me the third time, saying, "Read the Qur'án in seven dialects." There is also a tradition that 'Umar said: 'During the lifetime of the Prophet I heard a man read a chapter of the Qur'án. I heard the readings which he followed, and, as they were different from those which I knew and which I had heard from the mouth of the Prophet, I feared the namáz would be spoilt. At the close of the prayers I was angry with him and struck him a blow, and demanded to know where he had heard these readings. He declared that he had heard them from Muḥammad. We then went to the Prophet to settle the dispute.

¹ Ibn Khaldún (de Slane's translation), vol. iii, pp. 68-9.

² كَتَبَ أَحْكَمَتِ آيَةُ ثُمَّ قِيلَتْ —Súratu Húd (xi.) 1.

He said they were correct and added, "In truth, the Qur'án is revealed in seven dialects, read it in as many ways as you can."¹ This removed all difficulty, and the foresight displayed by the Prophet in thus obtaining a divine sanction for the various ways of reading the Qur'án was looked upon as a proof of his inspiration. Thus arose the 'qirá'ātu's-sab'a,' or 'seven readings' of the Qur'án now recognized. These are called after seven men famous as Qur'án readers, and as 'Uthmán's Qur'án had no vowel points, great opportunities for differences in pronunciation arose. In course of time public opinion fixed on two of the styles as most appropriate, and now these are in actual use. The reading-style of Ḥafṣ, a disciple of Imám 'Āṣim, is followed in India, and that of Náfí in Africa and Arabia.²

The fact that 'Uthmán, when his own recension was complete, burnt all the copies of the older edition he could find was made the basis of a charge of the alteration of the original text.³ He defended himself thus: 'They say that I burnt the Qur'án. I did it because it was in small portions in the hands of men and every one said, "I have the best one." I collected them all, placed a long Súra first, a medium length one in

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, Décembre, 1843, p. 378. This tradition concerning the 'seven readings' is referred to in well-known books thus:

أُنْزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرَفٍ —The Qur'án was revealed in seven readings' (words).—*Mishkátu'l-Masábih*.

أُنْزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى سَبْعِ لُغَاتٍ —The Qur'án was revealed in seven dialects.—*Majma'u'l-Bihar*.

نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرَفٍ كُلُّهَا كَأَيِّ هَاءٍ —The Qur'án descended with seven readings, all perfect and sacred,—*Majma'u'l-Bihar*.

It is said that the seven dialects were those of the Quraish, Hawádhin, Tai, Hazi, Himyar, Shaqif, and Yaman.

لَكَانَ قَالَ سَبْعَ لُغَاتِ الْعَرَبِ كَقُرَيْشٍ وَهَوَازَنَ وَطِيٍّ وَهَزِيلَ وَحَمِيرَ وَخَثِيفَ وَبَنِي أَلْعِ —Others say that the 'seven readings' represent seven different copies, of which two were in use in Madína, one in Mecca, one in Kúfa, one in Basra, one in Syria, and one called the 'common edition' which is the one now in use. Mirzá Kaẓim Beg points out that this last explanation is untenable, as the seven different copies did not come into existence until after the death of the Prophet.

² A fuller account of these Qáris, or Qur'án Readers, and the 'various readings' which they have introduced will be found in Sell's *Faith of Islam* (3rd ed.), pp. 68-5, 398-405.

³ The Shi'ahs considered this burning of the Qur'án to be a great crime. —*Haggu'l-Yaqín*, quoted in *Journal Asiatique*, Décembre, 1843, p. 384.

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the middle, and a short one at the end, arranged all well and handed them over to men; but the Qur'áns which they had I collected and burnt.' The probability is that 'Uthmán made the best recension then possible, but there are traditions regarding other forms of the book, for they did not all become extinct at once. Of these the most important are those of Ubai ibn Ka'b and of Ibn Mas'úd. Ubai is said to have brought together Súras (cv) and (cvi), contrary to the sense. He varies the order of the Súras and is said to have added two new ones, called *Súratu'l-Khala'* and *Súratu'l-Hafd*, or, as it is also called, *Súratu'l-Qanút*. These are:

'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

'O God we pray Thee for help and forgiveness: we praise Thee and are not unthankful towards Thee, and we let go and forsake every one who trespasses against Thee.'

'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

'O God we serve Thee, and to Thee do we pray, and Thee do we worship; we hasten to Thee; we strive after Thee; we hope for Thy pity, and we fear Thy punishment. Truly, Thy punishment overcomes the unbelievers.'

These may have been simple prayers, written on the margin of a Qur'án, but it is not clear whether this is the case or not. The oldest book in which Nöldeke found them is one written in the fifth century of the Hijra. They are taken from the codex of Ubai. Nöldeke considers them to be authentic.¹ The second Súra of these two, it is said, should be placed in the Qur'án after the words of *Súratu-Yúnus* (x) 10, 'Glory be to Thee, O God, and their salutation therein "Peace."' There are expressions in these Súras not found in the authorized Qur'án, e.g., *حَفَدَ* and *أَتَنَى*. Then *كُفِرَ* is not constructed with the accusative, but with *بِ*. Again *فَجَرَ* in the sense of trespass does not take the accusative.

The objection is taken to these Súras that in them man addresses God and not God man; but *Súratu'l-Fātiha* (i) is similar in style, and in any case the word *قُلْ*, 'say,' may be understood, so this objection has no weight. According to

the Traditions these prayers seem to have been known in early times.

Ibn Mas'úd's copy omitted *Súratu'l-Fātiha* (i) *Súratu'l-Falaq* (cxiii) and *Súratu'n-Nás* (cxiv). 'Ali's copy of the Qur'án is said to have been arranged chronologically, *Súratu'l-'Alaq* (xcvi) being put first; but as the copy is not extant, it is impossible to say whether this account is correct or not. The copy possessed by 'Ayesha is said to have been arranged in a different order from the one made by Zaid. Other copies joined together Súras xciii. and xciv. but they have all disappeared.

The most serious opponent of 'Uthmán's text was Ibn Mas'úd, a companion of the Prophet and a great theologian. Ibn Mas'úd refused to give up his copy of the Qur'án to the President of the Revision Committee and thus incurred the anger of the Khalifa, by whom he was publicly chastised. He died a few days after from the effects of the beating he had received. This unnecessary and cruel act on the part of the Khalifa was disapproved of by his contemporaries, and has ever since been looked upon by the Shi'ahs as an atrocious crime. But notwithstanding the number of enemies 'Uthmán had, his Qur'án held its ground, and as any valid cause of opposition would have found eager partisans, we must assume from the general acceptance given to it, that it was looked upon as genuine. By far the most serious objection to it is that made by the Shi'ahs, though there is no good historical evidence that 'Ali or his followers in the earliest period ever rejected 'Uthmán's book. The charges made against him are of much later date, and though their historical value may not be great, they cannot be entirely overlooked. No doubt some copies of the Qur'án were preserved by their owners in spite of the Khalifa's orders that all should be destroyed. A Shi'ah tradition records that the Prophet said, 'O 'Ali! Truly the Qur'án delivered to you is written in fragments on pieces of silk and of skin; collect them, but do not act as the Jews did with the Book of the Law.' 'Ali said that he received this copy covered up in a yellow cloth, and read it to the Prophet in his house.

This was why, according to Shi'ah tradition, 'Ali said the Qur'án ought to be kept in his family. When 'Umar asked him to lend his copy in order that other copies might be compared with it, he refused, saying that the Qur'án he possessed was the most accurate and perfect, and could not be

¹ See *Raudatu's-Safá*, Part ii, vol. iii, p. 168.

² *Sketches from Eastern History*, p. 53.

In Súratu 'Alí 'Imrán (iii) 106, 'Ye are the best nation that hath been raised up unto mankind: ye enjoin the just and forbid the evil.' For 'nations' read 'Imáms,' that is, for أُمَّة read أئمة The Shi'ahs support their reading by saying that the description given of the enjoining and the forbidding applies more correctly to the Imáms as rulers than to a nation in its corporate capacity.

In Súratu'l-Furqán (xxv) 74, 'O our Lord! give us in our wives and offspring the joy of our eyes and make us examples to those that fear Thee.' For 'make us examples to those that fear Thee'—اجعلنا للمتقين إماماً read 'make for us Imáms, from those that fear Thee,'—اجعل لنا من المتقين إماماً that is, from 'Alí and his descendants.

In Súratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 12, 'Each one has angels before him and behind, who watch over him by God's order.' The Shi'ahs read 'Each one has angels behind him and guardians (قريب) who watch over him by God's order.'

In Súratu'l-Húd (xi) 20, '(With such can they be compared) who rest upon clear proofs from their Lord; to whom a witness from him reciteth (the Qur'án) preceded by the Book of Moses, a guide and mercy.'¹ The other reading is, 'To whom a witness from him a guide and mercy, reciteth (the Qur'án), preceded by the Book of Moses.'² This witness, according to this reading, is the 'guide and mercy,' and is 'Alí who comes from him, that is, Muhammad. Thus it is not, as in the received text, the Book of Moses which is the 'guide and mercy.' One day after 'Alí had finished his sermon a member of the congregation said to him, 'which verse of the Qur'án refers to thee?' 'Alí replied, 'Hast thou not read the verse "who rest upon clear proofs from their Lord: to whom a witness, a guide and mercy, reciteth the Qur'án preceded by the Book of Moses." This tradition is accepted by Imám Fakhr'u'd-Dín Rázi.³ The whole verse is a difficult one. It is a very good example of a mujmal verse, as it contains words, to which different meanings may be given.⁴ Some say that the 'who' is Muhammad or Jewish

converts to Islám, or Muslims in general: that the 'clear proof' is the Qur'án or Muḥammad, or the true religion; that the 'witness' is Muhammad or 'Alí or Abú Bakr, or the Qur'án or Gabriel, who came from Him (God) and recited the Qur'án to Muḥammad. In this case 'Him' means God and not Muḥammad.¹

In Súratu'l-Múminún (xxiii) 39, 'There is no life beyond our present life; we die and we live and we shall not be quickened again.' The Shi'ahs say that the order must be inverted—'we live and we die.'²

(iii) Verses defective in respect of their order.

Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 58: 'He (Moses) said, "What, will ye exchange that which is worse for what is better? Get ye down into Egypt, for ye shall have what ye asked." It is said that in the correct and true Qur'án these words were immediately followed by others, now found in Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 23: 'They said, "O Moses! Therein are men of might and verily we can by no means enter in until they be gone forth."'

In Súratu'l-Furqán (xxv) 6 the opponents of Muḥammad say of the Qur'án, 'Tales of the Ancients hath he put in writing and they were dictated to him morning and evening.' It is said that in the original Qur'án these words were followed by a passage now found in Súratu'l-'Ankabút (xxix) 47, in which God says to Muḥammad, 'Thou didst not recite any book (of revelation) before it; with that right hand of thine thou didst not transcribe one.'

But the most serious charge of all is that of the omission of a whole Súra, called the Súratu'n-Núrain, or 'Two Lights,' by which Muḥammad and 'Alí are meant. It is as follows:

'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

'O ye who believe, believe in the two lights we have sent down, who have recited our signs and warned you of the punishments of the Last Day. These two lights (proceed) the one from the other.³ Truly, I am the Hearer, the Knower.

¹ أَمَّنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيْتِهِ مِّن رَّوْءَةٍ وَيَقُولُ هَٰذِهِ مَنِّي وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً

² وَيَقُولُ هَٰذِهِ مَنِّي إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ

³ Journal Asiatique, Décembre, 1842, p. 412.

⁴ Faith of Islám (3rd ed.), p. 74.

¹ Khulāṣatu'l-Tafsir, vol. ii, p. 388; Baiḍāwī, vol. i, p. 481; Tafsir-i Ḥusaini, vol. i, p. 298.

² i.e., for نحيى و نموت read نحيى و نموت

³ A reference to the Shi'ah interpretation of Súratu Húd (xi) 20, according to which 'Alí proceeds from Muḥammad.

'Say, how can those be compared who make tyranny, and those who know my troubles. They will place charms on their necks and they will repent of their works.

'We gave good news to thee of pious descendants, and they will not be disobedient; my peace and my mercy is on them, living or dead, and on the day when they shall rise again. My anger is on those who after thee transgress amongst them. Truly, they are a bad people and will wander from the right way; but those who go on in the way, on them is my mercy and they will be safe in the lofty rooms (of Paradise).
'Praise be to the Lord of both worlds. Amen.'

The following is the Arabic text of this Súra.

سورة النورين أنسى وأربعين آية

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا يَا النُّورَيْنِ أَنْزَلْنَا هُمَا يَتْلَوَانِ عَلَيْكُمُ آيَاتِي
وَيَحْذَرَانِكُمُ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ نُورَانِ بَعْضُهُمَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَإِنَّا لَسَمِيعٌ
عَلِيمٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فِي آيَاتٍ لَهُمْ جَنَاتُ نَعِيمٍ ۝
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا آمَنُوا يَنْقُضُهُمْ مِيثَاقُهُمْ ۝ وَمَا عَاهَدَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْهِ
يَقْدِفُونَ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ۝ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَعَصَوْا أَوْصِيَ الرَّسُولُ ۝ أُولَئِكَ يَسْقُونَ
مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي نَوَّرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِمَا شَاءَ وَأَصْطَفَى مِنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّسُلِ ۝ وَجَعَلَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ ۝ يَقْعَلُ
اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
يُرْسِلُهُمْ ۝ فَآخَذْتَهُمْ بِمَكْرِهِمْ إِنَّ آخِذِي شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ
عَادًا وَثَمُودَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَجَعَلَهُمْ لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً ۝ فَلَا تَقْنُونَ ۝ وَفِرْعَوْنَ
بِمَا طَغَى عَلَى مُوسَى وَآخِيهِ هَارُونَ ۝ أَغْرَقْتَهُ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝ لِيَكُونَ
لَكُمْ آيَةً ۝ وَإِنْ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْمَعُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَشْرِ ۝

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ الْجَوَابَ حِينَ يَسْأَلُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ مَا وَاهُمْ ۝ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
حَكِيمٌ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ إِنْذَارِي فَسَوْفَ يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ
كَانُوا عَنْ آيَاتِي وَحُكْمِي مُعْرِضُونَ ۝ مِثْلَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْفُونَ بِعَهْدِكَ إِنِّي
جَزَيْتُهُمْ جَنَاتِ النَّعِيمِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَآجِرٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ وَإِنَّا عَلَيَّا لَمِنَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ وَإِنَّا لَنُؤْفِيهِ حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۝ وَمَا نَحْنُ عَنْ ظُلْمِهِ بِغَائِلِينَ ۝
وَكَرَّمْنَاهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝ وَآتِهِ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ لَصَابِرُونَ ۝ وَإِنَّ عَذَابَهُمْ
لِمَامٌ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ مَا آمَنُوا طَلَبْتُمْ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَاسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهَا وَنَسِيتُمْ مَا وَعَدَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ ۝

وَنَقَضْتُمْ الْعَهْدَ مِنْ بَعْدِ تَوْكِيدِهَا ۝ وَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۝ فِيهَا مِنْ بَيِّنَةٍ مُؤْمِنًا
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ يُظْهِرُونَ ۝ فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۝ إِنَّهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ۝ إِنَّا لَهُمْ
مُحْضِرُونَ ۝ فِي يَوْمٍ لَا يَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ وَلَا هُمْ يَرْحَمُونَ ۝ إِنَّ لَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ
مَقَامًا ۝ عَنْهُ لَا يُعْدِلُونَ ۝ نَسْتَجِ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝ وَقَدْ
أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ۝ بِمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ ۝ فَبَغَا هَارُونَ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ فَنَجَّلْنَا
مِنْهُمْ الْقِرْدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَلَعَنَاهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَبْعَثُونَ ۝ فَاصْبِرْ نَسُوتَ يَبْلُغُونَ ۝ وَقَدْ
أَتَيْنَا بِكَ الْحُكْمَ كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ مِنْهُمْ
وَصِيًّا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ۝ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ عَنْ أَمْرِي فَإِنِّي مُرْجِعُهُ ۝ فَلْيَتَمَتَّعُوا بِكُفْرِهِمْ
قَلِيلًا ۝ فَلَا تَسْأَلْ عَنِ النَّاكِثِينَ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ قَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَكَ فِي أَعْيَانِ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَهْدًا ۝ فَخُذْهُ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ۝ إِنَّ عَلَيَّا قَانِتًا بِاللَّيْلِ
سَاجِدًا ۝ يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو ثَوَابَ رَبِّهِ ۝ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا

وَهُمْ يَعَذِّبُ يَعْلَمُونَ ۖ سَيَجْعَلُ الْأَخْلَاقَ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ ۖ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْمَالِهِمْ
يُنذِرُونَ ۚ إِنَّا بِبَشَرَاتِكَ بِذَرِيَةِ الصَّالِحِينَ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَأَسْرَنَّا لَا يَخْلُقُونَ ۖ فَعَلَيْهِمْ
مِنْهُ صَلَوةٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأَحْيَاءٌ أَوْ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ۖ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يَبْغُونَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ غَضَبِي ۖ إِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ خَاسِرُونَ ۖ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ سَلَكَوا
مَسْلَكَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ ۖ وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرَفَاتِ آمِنُونَ ۖ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۖ
آمِينَ *

نَمَتْ

Mirzā Kāzīm Beg, to whose researches we are indebted for a copy of this Sūra in the original Arabic, does not believe in its genuineness. He looks upon it as a feeble imitation of the Qur'án, invented by a fanatical Shi'ah, after religious quarrels had absorbed the attention of the 'Ulamá of the two rival sects. He says that there is no authentic tradition about it, that no author in the earlier centuries mentions it, and that the name al-Núrain—the two lights—in connexion with Muḥammad and 'Alī was not heard of until the seventh century of the Hijra. He admits that it is quite possible that unimportant changes may have been made in the early recensions, but declines to believe that a whole Sūra was discarded. Even assuming that 'Uthmān did not wish that anything favourable to 'Alī should appear, it was not necessary to omit a whole Sūra. The omission of a few phrases would have served his purpose just as well. He considers the whole chapter, with the exception of the words and expressions favourable to 'Alī and his family, to be simply a compilation from various parts of the Qur'án. Some words and phrases have been altered, some borrowed literally, and the result of the whole is that the style is very inferior to that of the Qur'án itself. This statement he supports by a comparison of expressions used in this Sūra which are either exactly the same, or very similar to phrases found in the Qur'án.¹

¹ The following are some examples :

عَذَابٌ Súra xxxviii. 59; جَلُوا عَلَىٰكُمْ آيَاتِي Súra v. 59; يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا Súra iv. 99; جَلَبُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ Súra xxi. 70; جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ Súra xxxix. 16; قَوْمٌ عَالِمُونَ

M. Garcin de Tassy, in a foot-note to Mirzā Kāzīm Beg's article, expresses the great joy he feels at the discovery of this unknown Sūra,¹ and he evidently considers that it is not to be lightly set aside. He thinks that there is nothing improbable in the idea that it was recited by Muḥammad and that it formed part of 'Alī's copy; but he does not consider himself bound to uphold its authenticity, while on the other hand he declines to say that it is a forgery. He very properly sets aside Kāzīm Beg's argument with reference to the difference in style, and to the similarity of expressions in it and in the Qur'án, for, as he points out, in the Qur'án itself the repetitions of similar words and phrases in the various Súras are innumerable.²

On the whole, the weight of evidence seems to be against the Shi'ah claim. 'Alī and his followers were a powerful body during the *Khālifate* of 'Uthmān; they must have known very well whatever the Prophet had said about 'Alī; and it is not easy to believe that, powerful as they were, they would have allowed 'Uthmān to suppress all such passages. Then when 'Alī became *Khālifā* he could, if he had so willed, have produced his copy of the Qur'án. The passions raised by civil war were already so strong, that it is not likely that such an action as that would have so increased them as to lead to still further danger to the *Khālifate*. The fact is that the cult of 'Alī, a most curious and interesting phase of religious thought, is of very much later growth; and when it developed it needed all the support that these supposed revelations could give it.

وَأَن أَكْفُرَكُمْ Súra xvi. 28; قَدْ تَكْرَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ Súra iii. 87; يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ Súra v. 65; وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ آلِفْرَةً وَالْخَنَازِيرَ Súra xii. 18; قَمَرٌ جَمِيلٌ Súra v. 55; لَأَمْلِكُونَ Súra xxxix. 12; قَاتِلًا بِالْأَكْبَلِ سَاجِدًا Súra xxix. 66; قَلْبَهُمْ قَلْبًا Súra xxxix. 12; فِي الْغُرَفَاتِ آمِنُونَ Súra xxxiv. 32; سَيَجْعَلُ الْأَخْلَاقَ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ Súra xxxix. 12; آمِنُونَ Súra xxxiv. 36; وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ end of Súra xxxvii.

¹ Je suis charmé d'avoir appelé l'attention des orientalistes sur le chapitre du Coran inconnu jusqu'à l'époque où je le publiai, l'an passé, pour la première fois.—*Journal Asiatique*, Décembre, 1843, p. 427.

² Nöldeke agrees in the main with the criticism.—*Geschichte des Korans*, p. 222.

The way in which the various recensions were made, and the need of them show that the Qur'án is open to criticism, and that the orthodox view of inspiration needs to be very much modified, but do not prove that the present copies are not authentic. The conclusion arrived at by Muir, with which most scholars agree, seems to me sound and good. He says:¹ 'The conclusion, which we may now with confidence draw, is that the editions both of Abú Bakr and of 'Uthmán were, not only faithful, but complete as far as the materials went; and that whatever omissions there may have been, they were not on the part of the compilers intentional. The real drawback to the inestimable value of the Qur'án, as a contemporary and authentic record of Muḥammad's character and actions, is the want of arrangement and connexion which pervades it; so that, in inquiring into the meaning and force of a passage, no infallible dependence can be placed on the adjacent sentences as being the true context. But, bating this serious defect, we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Qur'án is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muḥammad himself, and conclude with at least a close approximation to the verdict of Von Hammer "*That we hold the Qur'án to be as truly Muḥammad's word, as the Muḥammadans hold it to be the word of God.*"'

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, vol. I, p. xxvi.
