CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES
to THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH

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IIIT Books-in-Brief Series

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Contemporary Approaches to the Qur'an and Sunnah is a collection of specially selected papers presented at the 2008 Summer Institute for Scholars convened at the IIIT headquarters in Herndon, Virginia, USA. The purpose of the annual Summer Institute is to bring together and engage senior and young scholars with a particular interest or expertise in Qur'anic Studies or the Sunnah. The essays making up this collection, categorized as chapters, are comprised of diverse writings on various significant subjects relating to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Qur'an and Sunnah are the two primary sources of Muslim faith, life, law and piety. The Qur'an, being the divine communication or revelation, (*waḥy*), is for Muslims the foundation of their faith, and the Sunnah, or life-example of the Prophet Muhammad, is the framework of their morality. Together they constitute the two sources of the law (Shari'ah) and guide to prosperity and happiness in this life and to the bliss of the hereafter. Although the Qur'an and Sunnah, being Divine inspiration (*ilhām*), are materially and formally two independent sources, they are inextricably bound in a dynamic relationship. The rulings and precepts (*ahkam*) of the Qur'an constitute the law (*shar*) of God. They are supplemented by the precepts of the authentic Sunnah, which possess authority second only to the precepts of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the Book (*Kitāb*) and the Sunnah is the wisdom (*ḥikmah*) with which Muhammad, the last prophet of God, was sent to guide humankind to the straight way (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), which leads to God. This book seeks to serve as a reminder to Muslims and non-Muslims of the place

of the Qur'an and Sunnah in the life of Muslim societies around the world.

Abridged Edition of the Original
CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH

Chapter One

Arguments for Abrogation in the Qur'an: A Critique

Israr Ahmad Khan

Theological and legislative debates revolving around the Qur'an have caused division of the *fuqahā'* (legal scholars/jurists) and *mufassirūn* (exegetes or commentators) into various camps. Two camps have arisen between Muslim scholars over a debate on abrogation in the Qur'an. The two camps include predominantly those favoring abrogation and those negating it, with both insisting upon the validity of their own respective opinion on the subject. However, only two probabilities can exist concerning the claim of the two groups: either both groups of scholars have mistaken the issue of abrogation or only one of them is right. This chapter takes a rational and critical look at the arguments for and against the doctrine of abrogation in the Qur'an.

> *Al-naskh* literally signifies two things: (1) removal and lifting up; for example, the sun removes (carries *naskh*) the shadow because with the light of the sunrise the shadow recedes; one such example is also in the Qur'an – 'Allah removes (applies *naskh*) what Satan casts in' and (2) copying a document in another place, for example, they say that the book was copied; a Qur'anic example of this import is 'We had been documenting what you had been doing.' As for the application of *al-naskh* in Shariʿah (Islamic law), it signifies in the first sense because the lifting up of a command which was initially obligatory for the people denotes its removal with or without its replacement.[1]

Al-Zurqānī defines abrogation as, "Removal of an Islamic command by a legally valid argument."[2]

Arguments advanced for abrogation are numerous due to the classification of abrogation into various categories. All these arguments are of two kinds, those strengthening the concept of abrogation, in general, and those reinforcing the occurrence of abrogation in the Qur'an itself. The verses quoted to corroborate the occurrence of abrogation in the Qur'an are: 2:106, 2:269, 3:7, 4:160, 5:48, 13:39, 16:101, 17:86, and 22:53. Verse 2:106 reads: "We do not abrogate any verse or cause it to be forgotten but We bring another verse either similar to it or better than that...." This verse clearly states the occurrence or possibility of abrogation effected by God Himself.

To the defenders of abrogation, "*āyah*" signifies a verse of the Qur'an. In Qur'anic usage, the word "*āyah*," its dual variant, and its plural form "*āyāt*" have been used 86 times, only once, and 296 times respectively. These usages do not signify just the simple meaning of "verse" of the Qur'an.

Advocates of abrogation also quote the following three statements attributed to three *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet): ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭab, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭalib, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās. In statement one, ʿUmar said, "Ubay ibn Kaʿb is the most knowledgeable among us on abrogation."[3] The chain of narrators of this report is missing, and so its authenticity cannot be ascertained. Further, one need not construe into ʿUmar's statement a reference to abrogation in the Qur'an.

In statement two, ʿAlī's view is advanced in the form of a dialogue between him and a storyteller. ʿAlī asks the latter whether he was aware of the abrogating (*al-nāsikh*) and the abrogated (*al-mansūkh*). When he answers in the negative, ʿAlī warns him: "You destroyed yourself as well as others."[4] In what way does this report constitute an argument in favor of abrogation in the Qur'an? Was the storyteller a teacher of the Qur'an whom ʿAlī warned of the serious consequences of his ignorance of abrogation in the Qur'an? Was there any reference in ʿAlī's question to abrogation in the Qur'an? Indeed, the storyteller was not a teacher of the Qur'an but, as his title 'storyteller' conveys, very clearly just that, a storyteller. Had he been a teacher of the Qur'an, he would never have been mentioned as a storyteller. It seems from the report that the storyteller would narrate stories of all sorts, including stories of previous people and prophets based on his understanding of previous scriptures.

When ʿAlī asks him with regards to his knowledge of the abrogating and the abrogated, he might have been asking him about the abrogating revelations in the Qurʾan and the abrogated verses in previous scriptures. This report does not constitute an argument in favor of abrogation in the Qurʾan.

In the third instance, reference is made to Ibn ʿAbbās as interpreting abrogation exists in the following command in (2:180): "It is ordained for you, when death approaches any of you and he is leaving behind much wealth, to make bequests in favor of his parents and near of kin in accordance with what is fair: this is binding on all who are conscious of God." Ibn ʿAbbās interprets that verses such as 2:106 and 3:7, confirm his view on abrogation in the Qurʾan. These verses have been discussed thoroughly as to their import. They do not speak about abrogation in the Qurʾan but about abrogation by the Qurʾan of the previous scriptures. The name of Ibn ʿAbbās has been misused and abused by those with vested interests.

Al-Zurqānī advanced an argument in favor of abrogation in the Qurʾan, stating there existed certain verses in the Qurʾan that can never be practiced.[5] However, there is no statement in the Qurʾan referring to the abrogated rulings. Furthermore, there is no such tradition in the hadith literature. Al-Zurqānī's statement is simply supposition. In addition, according to al-Dehlawī, the only abrogated verses in the Qurʾan are: 2:180, 2:240, 8:65, 33:52, and 58:12.[6] Interestingly, proponents of abrogation have declared these five verses as non-abrogated.[7] Therefore, no verse of the Qurʾan stands abrogated.

There is the claim that abrogation in the Qurʾan exists based on the concept of consensus. There is actually no consensus on abrogation in the Qurʾan among Muslim scholars; scholars are divided into groups, one supporting it and the other negating it. In addition, the claim of consensus controverts the reality in history today. Al-Rāzī stated that a consensus amongst Muslim scholars is not a sufficient basis to cancel the practical validity of Qurʾanic rulings.

At the forefront of the movement against abrogation theory was Abū Muslim al-Aṣfahānī. His arguments to rebut the claim of abrogation in the Qurʾan are of two kinds: the statement of the Qurʾan and the interpretation of the Qurʾan. According to him, the statement of the Qurʾan that negates the existence of abrogation in the Qurʾan is, "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: it is sent down by

One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise" (41:42). He declared abrogation theory a falsehood (*bāṭil*).[8] Al-Aṣfahānī proposed that the Qur'anic verses should be interpreted rather than abrogated.

Verse 2:185 reads: "Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind, and as clear proofs for guidance, and as the criterion (for right and wrong)...." These three qualities apply to the entire Qur'an. Verse 4:82 reads: "Do they not ponder on the Qur'an? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many discrepancies." According to this statement, the Qur'an is free from any kind of discrepancy. Verse 5:3 states "...This day have I perfected your religion, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your way of life...." With the revelation of this message, the Prophet (ṢAAS)* and his followers were assured of the perfection of the Qur'an.

Verse 11:1 reads: "*Alif Lām Rā'*. This is a Book the verses whereof were perfected (*uḥkimat*) and then explained in detail from One Who is All-Wise, Well-Aware." Verse 17:82 reads: "We send down of the Qur'an that which is a cure and mercy for the believers...." Hence, every piece of the Qur'an is indisputably a cure, as opposed to what the champions of abrogation would proclaim. Verse 36:2 reads: "By the Qur'an, full of wisdom." This verse refers to the Qur'an as *ḥakīm* (wise). Each and every single command of Allah is relevant. If any verse of the Qur'an is relegated as irrelevant for man, the Qur'an, then, cannot remain as wise. Verse 39:28 reads: "This is a Qur'an in Arabic without any crookedness therein...." Naturally, the information conveyed in verse 39:28 represents the truth.

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet. Allah also granted him the *bayān* (explanation) of the Qur'an. One does not find any direct statement of the Prophet indicating any verse of the Qur'an to be practically invalid. If he remained silent over this matter, this means no verse has been abrogated. Abrogation theory adversely affects the integrity of the Qur'an. Anything causing the Qur'an to lose its original position stands logically rejected.

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*(ṢAAS) – *Ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: May the peace and blessings of God be upon him. Said whenever the name of the Prophet Muhammed is mentioned.

Chapter Two

Towards a Qur'anically-Based Articulation of the Concept of a "Just War"

Aisha Y. Musa

The popular conception of jihad as "holy war" has been fostered by a rising tide of anti-Islam propaganda from a variety of pseudo-scholars.[9] Both non-Muslims and Muslims illustrate misunderstanding of the term. The propagandists portray Islam as inherently violent, and the militants react with violence to what they see as attacks against Islam. What gets lost in between the deeds of militants and the words of propagandists is any sense of the Qur'anic usage of the word jihad and how it may or may not relate to armed conflict. The challenge facing us today is to derive an authentic Qur'an-based understanding of jihad and determine how that understanding governs its relationship to armed conflict, in order to articulate Qur'an-based principles of what may be called 'just war.' This chapter proposes a literal and holistic analysis of the text from a contemporary perspective and applying the exegetical principle of *tafsīr al-qur'ān bi al-qur'ān* (explaining the Qur'an with the Qur'an)[10] and the jurisprudential principle *al-aṣl fī al-kalām al-ḥaqīqah* (the fundamental rule of speech is literalness).[11]

It is important to seek a Qur'anic perspective on the question of jihad because Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the Book of God and the ultimate authority that defines the beliefs and practices of Islam. All other sources are informed by it and are subordinate to it. Interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an, therefore, begins with the Qur'an itself, proceeding from the idea that some parts of the Qur'an explain others and that principles elaborated through such a holistic analysis can be used in conjunction with information from other sources such as the prophetic traditions (hadith) and biographical literature (*sīrah*) to formulate viable Islamic responses to contemporary situations.

When the Qur'an addresses fighting, it does not use the word jihad. It uses the word *qitāl*. There is no concept of holy war (*al-ḥarb al-muqaddasah*) in the Qur'an. Although the term jihad is often understood to refer to war, the Qur'an always uses it in a much broader context. When the Qur'an refers directly to war, the term it uses most often is *qitāl*. The noun jihad occurs only four times in the Qur'an. The verb *jāhada* (to struggle, strive) in various forms appears 31 times.[12] None refer directly to fighting or military action. In 14 of the 31

occurrences that the verb *jāhada* appears in the Qur'an, striving in the cause of God is used in a very general context as a quality of those who believe.

The broad, general usage of *jāhada* in the Qur'an led classical Muslim jurists to recognize four kinds of jihad: There is jihad of the heart, jihad of the tongue, and jihad of the hand, and jihad of the sword. The first of these, the effort to purify one's heart from the influences of the devil, is considered the greater jihad. Jihad of the tongue and hand are understood to refer to persuasive missionary efforts and doing good deeds, and jihad of the sword refers specifically to the use of just and necessary violence.[13] While the use of just and necessary violence is one particular form of jihad, the term jihad is not synonymous with fighting.

Like the word jihad, the word *qitāl*, is a form III verbal noun. Its root is *q-t-l*, which carries the basic meaning of "to cause death/kill."[14] The root *q-t-l* appears 170 times in 122 verses of the Qur'an.[15] Of these occurrences, the word *qitāl* (fighting) itself appears 13 times in 10 verses, while its corresponding noun *qātala/yuqātilu* appears 52 times. The word *qātala* (kill) in its various conjugations and together with its verbal noun (*qatl*) appears 98 times in 77 verses. The general Qur'anic ruling about killing is articulated in verse 17:33:

> And do not take any human being's life – [the life] which God has willed to be, sacred – otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice….

Verse 5:32 states:

> … if anyone slays a human being – unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth – it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind.

Taking a single life, in the absence of one of these conditions, is morally equal to killing the human race in its entirety, according to the Qur'an.

Using some parts of the Qur'an to explain others on the question of struggle (jihad) and fighting (*qitāl*), four general principles become clear. Fighting is sometimes necessary, aggression is forbidden, fighting is a response to specific types of aggression and injustice, and fighting ceases when the causes cease and the aggressors seek peace. These

principles would form a Qur'an-based framework in which Muslim scholars can elaborate a detailed theory of justifications for war and just conduct of war in the contemporary period, which takes into account details from the prophetic Sunnah as well as contemporary political and social realities.

Chapter Three

Religious Pluralism and the Qur'an

Mahmoud Ayoub

The plurality and diversity of religions is a reflection of the plurality and diversity of cultures and civilizations. The Qur'anic worldview, with its emphasis on the diversity of human racial and cultural identities and man's innate capacity to know and have faith in God, recognizes the diverse religions of humankind as divinely preordained ways to this ultimate goal. Hence, I will first define pluralism religiously and philosophically. I will then attempt to contextualize it within the history of the civilizations of the Middle East. Finally, I will discuss religious pluralism in the Qur'an.

In its lexical usage, pluralism signifies plurality, as opposed to singularity. Plurality, moreover, implies difference and, hence, diversity. Theologically, the expression religious pluralism, must be distinguished from religious exclusivism on the one hand, and religious inclusivism on the other. Religious pluralism is the recognition of the multiplicity and diversity of religions as a natural or divinely willed phenomenon. Yet if religious pluralism is to serve as a meaningful framework of constructive dialogue among the followers of the various religions, all religions, or at least all theistic religions, must be recognized as legitimate ways to the truth or ultimate reality. All the major religions hold that the truth is one and that it transcends human understanding. Yet, since the goal of all religions is to seek the truth, they must all be ways to that goal, for "...to God do we belong, and to Him we shall return" (2:156).

Among all the scriptures of the theistic religions, the Qur'an is unique in that it sets its worldview within the context of divine oneness and human diversity, including the plurality of religions. Furthermore, it regards religious diversity as one of the signs (āyāt) of God, second in importance to the "creation of the heavens and earth."[16] It also presents

its view of religious pluralism in a somewhat progressive manner. The Qur'an lays down four basic principles, which are necessary for the truth-claim of any religion. The first is that a true religion must be enshrined in a divinely revealed scripture or sacred law (Shariʿah). Secondly, it must affirm God's absolute Oneness (*tawḥīd*). Thirdly, it must profess active faith in God and the last day. Finally, it should foster righteous living (*iḥsān*). On the basis of these four principles, the Qur'an affirms the truth of the faith of Muslims, Jews, Christians and Sabaeans.[17]

The plurality of religions and scriptures arises ultimately from the great number of prophets and messengers who followed one another, from Adam to Muhammad, in a great universal procession. We rely on the Qur'anic assertion, "...There is no community (Ummah) but that a warner was sent to it" (35:24).[18] Human history, according to this Qur'anic worldview, is prophetic history. Prophetic history is in reality the history of God's guidance of humankind through the mission of His prophets and messengers. Divine guidance, moreover, is promised to a heedless humanity that must be reminded again and again of its primordial covenant with God.

The Qur'an presents religion as such under two distinct, but also interrelated, dimensions. The first is institutionalized religions, such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism. These are the framework of the laws and rituals of worship, which give their followers their legal and social identity as Jews, Christians and Muslims. All three traditions should ideally constitute what the Qur'an calls, "*millat abīkum Ibrāhīm* (the religion of your father Abraham)," who called all his children Muslims. Institutionalized human religions are the necessary vehicle and framework of the inner dimension, which they represent. The Qur'an calls this inner dimension the *fiṭrah*, or original creation of God of all His human creatures. This divine pure creation is the innate capacity to know God and have faith in Him, with which every human being is born. This means that every child is born pure.

The Qur'an not only acknowledges religious diversity and plurality, it also lays down the principles that should govern inter-religious relations. It calls for respect and protection of all places of worship. God says: "... Had God not repelled some people by means of others, synagogues and churches, mosques and monasteries in which God's name is mentioned, would have been demolished...." (22:40).[19] Neither the Qur'an nor the Prophetic tradition demands of Jews and Christians

that they give up their religious identity and become Muslims unless they freely choose to do so. The basis of this religious freedom in Islam is the categorical Qur'anic assertion: "There is no compulsion in religion..." (2:256). This is a categorical command, not a statement of fact.

The Qur'an and Prophetic tradition only enjoined Muslims as well as the followers of other faiths to engage in meaningful dialogue, cooperation and agreement on basic principles. This is what the Qur'an calls "a just word of common ascent," between Muslims and the people of the Book to worship no one except God and not take one another as lords beside God (3:64).[20] In fact, the legal designation of *ahl al-Kitāb* (people of the Book) has been quite fluid. It came to include more and more communities as Muslims came to know more and more religious traditions.

The challenge is for all of us to have faith in God and compete with one another in righteous works. It follows from this challenge that all people of faith respect one another and that they believe in all of God's revelations. The Qur'an presents the followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism not only with a great challenge, but with a great promise as well. The promise is this: "Were the people of the Book to abide by the Torah, the Gospel and that which was sent down to them from their Lord [i.e. the Qur'an], they would be nourished with provisions from above them and from beneath their feet" (5:66).

Chapter Four

Qur'anic Revealed Scripture vs. Judeo-Christian Scripture: A Muslim Perspective of the Universal and Particular in the Scriptures

Khaled Troudi

Muslims believe that the Qur'an, as the universal Guidance, is designated to provide a direct discourse that speaks to all human beings, while the particular one, the previous Judeo-Christian scriptures, has, according to the Islamic tradition, specific spiritual and temporal affairs designated to a specific nation under the leadership of God's prophet. I examine why Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the

predominant (*muhaymin*) revealed scripture (the "universal") while the Judeo-Christian scriptures represent the "particular." An analysis of various Qur'anic verses will provide the methodology that is used to undertake the different approaches of this study.

In Islam, according to the Qur'an (42:15), the idea of believing in all revealed books becomes an article of faith. Many Qur'anic passages, such as (43:4), (13:39), and (56:78), indicate that "all scriptures stem from and are parts of a single source, heavenly archetype called 'the Mother of the Book' (*Umm al-Kitāb*) and also 'The Hidden Book' (*al-Kitāb al-Maknūn*)."[21] Thus for Muslims, the Qur'an, especially the narrative passages of the previous prophets, represents the major theological source of the unity of the revealed scriptures in which the prophets are the dominant figures. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad and all Muslims are obligated to be the first believers in the prophethood of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus and in the truth of the scriptures brought by them, without making any distinction among them. Moreover, Qur'anic verses such as 42:13, 3:95, 2:130-33 and 22:78 affirmed Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to "share a common trunk of divine revelation, and their original can be considered to be not just one religious tradition, but one religion."[22]

However, some western scholars criticize this belief by claiming that Prophet Muhammad made no connection with earlier scriptures during the first four years of his prophetic career. On the other hand, they also assert that he saw Islam "within the perspective of the earlier Biblical religions."[23] They further claim that "many Muslims prefer to stress the passages that are critical of other religions and ignore or explain away the verses that praise other religions."[24] They claim that "Muslims see other religions in terms of Islam, which in their eyes is the perfect religion."[25]

However, the basic problem with these arguments lies in the separation of the chronological study of Prophet Muhammad's career and the Qur'an into two separate periods, the Makkan and the Madinan, a practice that most modern scholars fully endorse. A critical study of the Qur'anic passages, according to Rahman, "reveals rather a gradual development, a definite transition where the late Meccan phase has basic affinities with the early Madinan phase; indeed, one can see the latter in the former."[26] What they fail to understand is that the majority of Muslim exegetes were in fact placing emphasis on Judaism and Christianity whose adherents, having been favored with both prophets

and a Book (whether the *Injīl* or the Torah), therefore had to be judged by more stringent standards than people of other faiths.

Furthermore, Rashid Rida states that the "messenger comes only to confirm what the intellect comprehends, clarifying and elucidating matters of vital significance, such as what the hereafter will be like and the ways of worship not pleasing to God."[27] Rida also clarifies the minimum of human responsibility in relation to God's purpose are belief in God and the Last Day. Anyone who has been exposed to this message is bound to believe it, whether or not he or she has had the benefit of a prophetic revelation. Deeply rooted in Islamic theology is the idea that all nations have been sent prophets with specific scriptural messages that differ somewhat in their details. According to verse 5:3 of the Qur'an, this cycle of Revelation and prophethood runs its course with the advent of Islam.

According to Islamic tradition, "the Book with the truth is a summary of God's repeated interference in history, which thereby gains the coherence of a pattern made decisively clear."[28] The Qur'anic verse 5:48 and similar verses clearly confirm the idea of a predominant revealed scripture. All Muslims must accept that God sent down the Qur'an in truth as a confirmer of the Books or of all revelations that have come before it and as a protector over them. In addition, the notion of the finality of prophethood is clear in Qur'anic verse 33:40 and similar verses, which mention that all Muslims must believe that Prophet Muhammad is the final prophet sent by God to humanity.

However, the Qur'anic message emphasizes that Prophet Muhammad is the only legitimate person who has connected the "new" religion of Islam with the Biblical tradition, especially with the prophets of the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, through which Abraham is a descendant of both Noah and Adam. Accordingly, Muslims state that all "the Jews, and naturally the Christians, are thus invited to believe the Arab prophet and to consider him as the continuator of their tradition."[29] Muslim exegetes connected the idea of predominant revealed scripture with the history of the prophets, and the Jews and Christians. They regarded Judaism and Christianity as true religions that were forms of the one true religion, and which were valid for a certain period of history. According to the Islamic tradition, God sent prophets Moses and Jesus only to the children of Israel while Prophet Muhammad came with a mission to the whole world. This understanding has led Muslim exegetes to state that the missions of Moses and Jesus were limited in

time and space. For these reasons, Muslims believe the mission attributed to Prophet Muhammad is universal and not limited by geographical or ethnological ethnic boundaries.

Muslims consider the Qur'an as a message to all mankind, a Revelation, which came to ensure the victory of God's oneness (*tawḥīd*) over paganism and to correct Judeo-Christian misunderstanding of the Bible as well as Christian errors concerning Jesus. With regards to the existence of a one 'true religion' and the validity of its legislations, Muslim exegetes maintain that there is a primordial original pure faith and that Islam is its manifestation for humanity. As such, its legislations, although containing different laws and commandments to those of earlier scripture, are fundamentally the same, replacing those no longer suitable for modern times.

Chapter Five

Exegesis, Social Science and Judaism in the Qur'an

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Throughout Islamic history, religious scholars have been viewed as public intellectuals whose opinions have been valued on all matters. Indeed, in some periods, these scholars excelled in other disciplines, including physics, algebra, chemistry, astronomy, and medicine. However, views expressed in Qur'anic commentaries received little critical examination, which is a necessary endeavor for contemporary Islamic reform. I briefly address here the views of some of these exegetes and Qur'an scholars, in terms of their views on the Jews in the Qur'an.

Muhammad ibn Bahader ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkashī (d. 1391) explained that exegesis is needed for three reasons: people differ in their intellectual abilities, so some readers may need assistance to comprehend; parts of the Qur'an are built on certain assumptions that are not apparent to the common person; and some words may carry multiple meanings and can be deciphered only by learned specialists. Al-Zarkashī presented key knowledge requirements for prospective scholars in the field, including classical Arabic diction and phonetics and *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation). He explained that some parts of the Qur'an could be difficult to comprehend because of ʿ*umūm*

al-ṣīghah (general form) and *khuṣūṣ al-sabab* (particular reason).[30] Some verses may appear general in their wording but may address a specific circumstance.

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) classified the Qur'anic revelation into two main categories. The first category includes what took place after an incident or a question to the Prophet, and the other had no pretext. He also added another layer of context that can affect the meaning of Qur'anic verses: the specific place and time of revelation and whether it carried new substance or overlapped with previous revelation.[31] One major approach to exegesis is known as *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* (interpreting the Qur'an by means of the Qur'an), which is built on the assumption that parts of the Qur'an complement each other. Another approach is called *al-tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* (exegesis using tradition).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Ismāʿīl al-Fārūqī approached the Qur'an as a whole in order to construct a *tawḥīdī* (monotheistic) worldview. Al-Fārūqī and Nasr offered an understanding of God's relation to man based on the concept of *khilāfah* (vicegerency). Nasr emphasized the mystical aspects of Islam, while al-Fārūqī focused on theology.

The validity of the Qur'an for all times and places does not mean that every statement in it claims to be true everywhere and all the time. As explained, classical scholars of the Qur'an were usually very particular about noting the context of revelation. The contemporary holistic understanding of the Qur'an raises several methodological and inter-pretative challenges to classical exegesis works cited in this study. The main theoretical concern arising from the critique of past works is whether social commentary is a different enterprise than the one concerned with expounding scriptural messages. If it is difficult, impractical, or undesirable to separate the two functions, one still has to ask whether exegetes who are not trained to observe human behavior are qualified to engage in credible expositions of what the Qur'an means to the evolving human condition. In any case, when exegetes delve into such subjects, they automatically cross over to a new interdisciplinary field of knowledge. By doing so, they should welcome critique from a wide range of experts. To deal with the practical implication of this question, one can imagine the possibility of establishing an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that would train scholars in both exegesis and social and behavioral sciences.

Chapter Six

The Qur'an and Science

Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad

Cognition is a gradual process one labors over to understand something. Perception, on the other hand, is instantaneous – we cannot control perception in the way we can control the rational faculty. Yet, when the rational faculty is trapped inside a particular paradigm, we are locked into a narrow range of possible understanding. Such are the obstacles to the acceptance of revolutionary new scientific ideas for a paradigm shift. To have a new way of understanding Islam and glean new insight from the Qur'an, we must prepare to undergo a paradigm shift. As such, when approaching the Qur'an and science, we must adhere to the *tawḥīdī* premise, which requires a rejection of the distinction between the sacred and the secular. Nature is as much the book of Allah as is the Qur'an.

We can categorize and evaluate the variety of approaches to the relationship of the Qur'an to science as metaphoric, literalist, and procedural. The strictly metaphorical approach can overshadow the fact that, with the passage of time, the metaphors in the Qur'an have become more meaningful while the metaphors in, for example, the Bible, become harder to understand as time goes on. In the case of the Qur'an, many allusions that would have been confusing in the Prophet's time have become meaningful in our own time. A strictly literal approach ties the eternal truths of the Qur'an to the changing models of science. Scientific theories constantly change and evolve. Science provides intellectual models for understanding the natural world, and those models are never absolute truth. They are always our best understanding at the moment, and they keep changing. The Qur'an is not a scientific textbook. It does not instruct us how Allah created the universe. It instructs us that He designed it, and He urges us to investigate its construction. Therefore, the Qur'an is pro-science.

There are several attributes of Islamic civilization that encouraged the development of modern science. Reason is not a sufficient source of knowledge. There is also experimentation and observation – precisely what the Qur'an addresses when it commands us to look for Allah's signs in the heavens and on earth. Authority is a source of knowledge. *Waḥī* – transmission from particularly reliable sources – is also important. When our reason, our experience, and the reliable sources

all agree, then we can say that we have knowledge with as much certainty as human beings are capable. Only Allah knows anything with absolute certainty.

The Qur'an has commanded us to read, meaning to acquire knowledge from exogenous sources. Induction requires the rigorous testing of theory by experiment and empirical observation. In terms of universality, the Qur'an teaches, and we believe, that all truths come from Allah. Therefore, because Allah sent messengers to every people, all people have access to the truth, and we are not limited to the knowledge of our own history. We have the abolition of priesthood and every Muslim, male or female, has a duty to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.[32] Islam does not despise material success or advocate asceticism. A materially successful society is one that will conduct research in the hard sciences. In an academically free environment, science inevitably moves forward. Conversely, academic freedom is necessary for scientific progress. For Muslims, academic freedom is the corollary of our individual responsibility and duty to Allah.

However, only one element behind Islamic science does not derive directly from the Qur'an, and this is the issue of proper citation. Islam played a major role in the development of citation in hadith science. While authority plays a role in science, in modern science authority may be questioned. Therefore, when citing authority, it should be identified clearly and accurately. Hadith science set forth a model that was followed by the other sciences.

Emerging ideas that are somewhat established in the scientific world may not yet have totally seeped into the consciousness of the masses. Although the idea that the earth circles the sun was quickly established for scientists, common people did not adopt the idea for a couple of hundred more years. Those who may laugh today to think that people believed the sun went around the earth should ask, is it self-evident that the earth goes around the sun? The Qur'an mentions the *ghayb* and the *shahādah* – the hidden and the manifest – or the unseen and the seen.

Chaos theory commonly known as the "Butterfly Effect" points to the fact that physical systems are extremely sensitive to small changes in the initial conditions. When combined with quantum mechanics, this hypersensitivity of physical systems to small changes can be analogous

to the discussion of religious issues, such as human free will and divine intervention. Quantum mechanics seems to undermine the premise that everything is determined from its initial state. Everything in the universe seems to interact with everything else.

Quantum mechanics has said that the wave involved here is a wave of probability of the particle's position and momentum, and that the position of a particle and the momentum of a particle do not actually exist until they are observed. There is only a probability that the particles are in a particular place or a probability the particle is at a particular momentum. The only way you can ever hope to know the position or momentum of a particle is to observe or measure it. However, when you observe it you affect the thing observed, i.e. you change it. Therefore, if you ask the question, what is it if I do not observe it? Is the moon there when nobody is looking? We do not know.

Not everything is physics. The *shahādah* is the consequence of the *ghayb*. The *ghayb* may not be physical. In chaos theory, a quantum difference such as whether a synapse fires or not can lead to different chains of events in the macroscopic world, such as whether to embrace someone or to turn away from him. These are questions of human will. There are implications for the divine will when we speak about the entire universe. If Allah wants to answer your prayers, He can answer your prayers without contradicting the physical laws He has decreed, because quantum mechanics only tells you how things are going to probably behave in the collective. It says certain things are improbable to a certain degree. Quantum mechanics tells you how Allah usually does things, but then in any given instance, Allah might do something else and it is not a violation of the laws of physics. It is very consistent with the laws of physics.

Rather than view the religious as sacred and the scientific as profane, the work of understanding the manifest, the explicate and the *shahādah* is as sacred as the work of understanding the word and meaning of the holy text. The book of nature is also a holy text, and understanding it is also an act of worship.

Chapter Seven

Translation of Qur'anic Verses with Injunctions: A Theme-based Comparative Review

Daoud Nassimi

While the translation of the Qur'an is a challenging task as a whole, the translation of the verses of injunctions in the Qur'an is more challenging. It requires translators to understand and consider many other factors in addition to the knowledge and command of both languages. Since the Qur'an (in its original language) is the perfect word of God, for Muslims, the translation of the Qur'an to any other language is always limited. Therefore, Islamic scholars and Qur'an translators agree that any translation of the Qur'an is actually the translation of the meaning of the Qur'an, and not anything like an equivalent to the Qur'an.

A comparison is attempted between four translations: Abdullah Yusuf Ali (hereafter, YA), *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*; Muhammad Asad (MA), *The Message of The Qur'an*; Muhammad Taqiyyu al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (H&K), *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language*; and Sayyid Abul Aʿlā Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding The Qur'ān: Abridged Version of Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* (A/M). A passage is discussed in terms of clarity of meaning, consideration of the context of the verse, subject, section, Surah, consideration of jurisprudence knowledge (fiqh), and consideration of the historical background and issues of this age. The passage selected for review in this chapter includes only the first part of connected texts for the injunction of the dress code for women.[33]

The injunctions (*aḥkām*), or ruling, injunction, command, decree, ordinance, or judgment, of the Qur'an form the primary source of the Shariʿah. The language of the verses of injunctions in the Qur'an often has a unique style. Many of the injunctions of the Qur'an start with a direct address to the believers, such as, "O believers." The translators of the Qur'an require knowledge of jurisprudence (fiqh) and issues of today's world related to the Qur'an. The various translations of verse 24:31 will be reviewed. This injunction is referred to as *aḥkām al-ḥijāb*. Although *ḥijāb* applies to both males and females, it is often referred to the dress code of women.

Verse 24:31 is preceded by a verse that commands Muslim males first to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity. While lowering of one's gaze and protection of one's private parts have to be observed by both men and women, as explained in verse 24:30, verse 24:31 requires women to cover their *zīnah* or natural beauty. The next part of verse 24:31 calls on women to walk without stamping their feet lest they attract people's attention because of the sounds produced by such walking. Verse 24:31 ends with an invitation to all of the believers to turn to God for true success.

YA translated the verse as:

(24:31). And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard (*2984) their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments (*2985) except what [must ordinarily] appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. (*2986) And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss. (*2987)

MA translated the verse as:

(24:31) And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms [in public] beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof; (*37) hence, let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms. (*38) And let them not display [more of] their charms to any but their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women folk, or those whom they rightfully possess, or such male attendants as are beyond all sexual desire, (*39) or children that are as yet unaware of women's nakedness; and let them not swing their legs [in walking] so as to draw attention to their hidden charms (*40) And [always], O you believers – all of you – turn unto God in repentance, so that you might attain to a happy state! (*41)

H&K translated the verse as follows:

(24:31) And tell the believing women to lower their gaze [from looking

at forbidden things], and protect their private parts [from illegal sexual acts, etc.] and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent [like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.], and to draw their veils all over *Juyūbihinna* [i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms] and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their [Muslim] women [i.e. their sisters in Islam], or the [female] slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigor, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. (*1)

A/M translated the verse as follows:
(24:31) And enjoin believing women to cast down their looks and guard their private parts and (*20) not reveal their adornment except that which is revealed of itself, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their husbands, or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, (*21) or of their own sons, or the sons of their husbands, (*22) or their brothers, (*23) or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, (*24) or the women with whom they associate, (*25) or those that are in their bondage, or the male attendants in their service free of sexual interest, (*26) or boys that are yet unaware of illicit matters pertaining to women. Nor should they stamp their feet on the ground in such manner that their hidden ornament becomes revealed.

Focusing on key words and phrases in comparative review, YA translated the word *zīnah* as "beauty and ornaments" that covers both aspects. MA has translated it as "charms" which means attractive features. H&K and A/M have translated it as "adornment" that may not cover the natural beauty. MA translated *khimār* as "head covering," but the rest have translated it as "veil." YA and MA rendered the word *jilbāb* (plural, *jalābīb*) as "outer garments," but YA has further explained it in his comment as "an outer garment: a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom." H&K have rendered it as "cloaks (veil)" and A/M has rendered it as "outer coverings."

Regarding the phrase: *Yudnīna ʿalayhinna min jalābībihinna*, the translators have rendered this phrase as follows: YA: "They should cast their outer garment over their persons [when abroad];" MA: "They should draw over themselves some of their outer garments [in public];" H&K: "To draw their cloaks [veils] all over their bodies [i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes or one eye to see the way]" and A/M: "To draw a part of their outer coverings around them."

Regarding the phrase: *Illā mā ẓahara minhā*: The translators have rendered this phrase as follows: YA: "except what [must ordinarily] appear thereof;" MA: "beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof;" H&K: "except only that which is apparent [like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.]"; and A/M: "except that which is revealed of itself."

Regarding the phrase: *Wal yaḍribna bi khumurihinna ʿalā juyūbihinna*, the translators translated it in the following ways: YA: "they should draw their veils over their bosoms;" MA: "let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms;" H&K: "to draw their veils all over *juyūbihinna* [i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, and bosoms];" and A/M: "to draw their veils over their bosoms."

In reviewing the translations of the verses containing women's dress code injunction, it is apparent that of the four translators, YA has provided much of the necessary details in his commentary to explain and clarify the subject. While the other three translators have tried to expound, each one of them has made some statements that need to be clarified and addressed.

The theme-based approach applied in this chapter to assess various translations of the Qur'an allows, as demonstrated, for meaningful differences among translators to be highlighted, as well as identifying the need for certain qualifications among translators to augment their expertise.

Chapter Eight

Finding a Principled Approach
to *Matn* Analysis

Sami Catovic

The majority of scholars have held to the principle that obeying God (the Qur'an) cannot be separated from obedience to the Prophet.[34] The Qur'an clearly establishes the authority of the Prophet in numerous cases, such as, "Surely you have in the Messenger of Allah the pattern of excellence for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much" (33:21). However attempts have been made historically, as well as in contemporary times, to dissociate the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad from the Message he brought, the Qur'an.[35] This approach is academically unsound, as well as having no real import for the masses.

The stages of transmission of the Prophet's example begin with the Companions, who lived with the Prophet and observed his example. They transmitted what they heard or saw during the life of the Prophet to those who were not present. After the Prophet's death, they became the vehicle by which those who followed could learn about the Prophet, primarily through oral tradition. Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101 AH/720 CE) called for the compilation of hadith during his time. Sunnah as practice differs from written or oral validation, or the hadith literature. Practice depends on established practice and is not necessarily validated from written or oral documentation. The documenting of the Sunnah was maintained through oral and written tradition. However, at the end of the second century we see the first comprehensive collections of narrations in book form. In the centuries that followed, it was generally agreed upon that there were six canonical collections of hadith. These were Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and al-Nasā'ī.

The early development of hadith criticism primarily focused on the structure of the chain and the evaluation of the narrators of the tradition. Specialists in the field developed a highly complex system by which to judge the narrators in the chain of transmission to determine the level of their trustworthiness in conveying a particular hadith. This science, the *al-ʿadl wa al-tarjīḥ* (impugnment and validation) contributed to the classification of alleged hadith from authentic to fabricated. The

highest level of authenticity included those hadiths that reached the status of *mutawātir*. If a hadith was not at the level of *mutawātir*, it fell into the category of *āḥād*. The *āḥād* traditions were further divided into two sub-categories: the *maqbūl* (accepted) and the *mardūd* (rejected). The *maqbūl* in turn was broken down into *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) and *ḥasan* (fair). Whether a hadith was *ḥasan* or *ṣaḥīḥ* depended largely on the integrity of the chain and the evaluation of the narrators in the chain. Along with this determination was the principle that the chain and the *matn*, that is the chain and content of the hadith, also had to be sound. It has been argued that although the *matn* also had to have been sound, the hadith scholars did not develop or focus their attention on developing a system by which the *matn* could be analyzed.

The existing *matn* criticisms focus on the tools that can be used to look at apparently conflicting statements or practices attributed to the Prophet. However, another complementary approach is based on the establishment of certain principles by which a tradition is evaluated. This approach has been invoked during the times of the Companions and the succeeding generations.

Judging a tradition based on a principle was something that the Companions themselves had invoked at times. For example, in a tradition narrated by Bukhārī regarding the Night Journey (*al-isrā' wa al-miʿrāj*), ʿĀ'ishah analyzed the narration of the event as articulated by some of the Companions based on it violating a Qur'anic verse. The relevant portion of the tradition is as follows:

> Narrated Masrūq: I said to ʿĀ'ishah, "O Mother! Did Prophet Muhammad see his Lord?" ʿĀ'ishah said, "What you have said makes my hair stand on end! Know that if somebody tells you one of the following three things, he is a liar: Whoever tells you that Muhammad saw his Lord, is a liar." Then ʿĀ'ishah recited the Verse: "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision. He is the Most Courteous well-acquainted with all things" (6:103). "It is not fitting for a human being that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil..." (42:51).[36]

ʿĀ'ishah's strong language (using the term "liars") addressed to those who claimed that the Prophet saw his Lord on the Night Journey is based on her understanding of the verse: "No vision can grasp Him" and that He does not speak "except by inspiration or from behind a veil." For ʿĀ'ishah, what was articulated by some in describing what

happened clearly contradicted the Qur'an and thus had to be rejected based on the Qur'anic principle. The validity, arguments, or evidence that may contradict ʿĀ'ishah's conclusion may be debated and in fact was. The point however is that she judged a tradition based on certain principles that she derived and articulated.

The use of a principled approach is commonly found in the area of theology. Many theologians adopted a certain methodology in dealing with verses from the Qur'an as well as hadith that speak about God. Positive knowledge about God had to be based on the Qur'an and hadith that reached the status of *mutawātir*. For example, we find in Bukhārī and Muslim traditions references to God "laughing." For Ibn al-Jawzī, laughing is something that is done by humans and therefore it cannot be understood as referring to God. He explained those traditions by what occurs when one laughs, and then interpreted accordingly. He says: "Laughter that seizes people is merely a reference to when someone manifests the teeth that are concealed by the mouth. But this is impossible with respect to God, Glorified and Exalted is He. It is [therefore] necessary to construe it to mean, 'God manifested His generosity and graciousness.'"37

According to Khaled Abou El Fadl, one cannot divorce the role of the narrators in contributing to the narration of the hadith. In other words, what we have narrated to us may contain what the Prophet had said, but we heard it through people who contributed to the text of the hadith, either intentionally or not. One may have narrated a tradition in a certain way based on his or her own circumstances and biases, which colored the understanding and selection of narration. Further, these traditions were integrated into existing legal structures by which some may have placed more value in the tradition as compared to others. For Fadl, it is unrealistic to think that one can merely state that the Prophet declared something, unless one also looks to the authorial enterprise in the chain of transmission. The Prophetic voice may be found to be stronger or less strong when the authorial enterprise is considered.

Furthermore, not only the evaluation of those within the chain of narration and their alleged biases, but the Companions themselves become subject to criticism. This line of reasoning put forward by Fadl calls into question the accepted principle, as articulated by Ibn Ḥajar, that, "The *Ahl al-Sunnah* are unanimous that all [the Companions] are ʿudūl, i.e. truthful." The ʿAdālah is that there has been no intentional

deviation from the truth. This does not mean that they were infallible (as some may understand it) but rather that they did not intentionally deviate from the truth.

Fadl provides a useful principle or tool that can be used in evaluating a particular hadith. This principle is that a higher standard should be employed for traditions that have a strong social impact, transcending a specific legal obligation. If scholars establish some basic overriding principles, not necessarily to automatically reject or accept a particular tradition, but to provide a framework that would cause one to pause when they come across a particular tradition and inquire further, it may control the quick judgment people reach merely by finding a particular hadith in an authentic collection.

Chapter Nine

Post-Divorce Financial Support from the Islamic Perspective (*Mut̔at al–Ṭalāq*)

Mohamad Adam El Sheikh

The subject examined in what follows is post-divorce financial support and its affinity to *mut̔at al-ṭalāq*, as we know it in Islamic jurisprudence. Predominant scholastic understanding and prevailing judicial applications in the Muslim world today indicate that women are not entitled to any post-divorce financial support (*mut̔at al-ṭalāq*), property settlement, or indeed any wealth of their household accumulated during the course of their marital life. The pretext is that the shelter, food and clothing provided by husbands during marriage fully exhausts any share ex-wives can expect to receive post-marriage. This understanding considers women as being only entitled to three months of spousal support during the religiously prescribed waiting period known as *̔iddat al-ṭalāq*.

As a former judge of Shari̔ah courts in Sudan, former resident imam of one of the largest Islamic centers in the U.S., and as an Islamic adjudicator and arbitrator for the Muslim community for more than twenty years in North America, I have encountered and been involved in numerous cases of this nature. I have witnessed the injustices imposed against divorced women and their suffering due to the neglect of Islamic rules of post-divorce financial support. This un-Islamic and inhumane treatment of divorced Muslim women affected me deeply,

motivating a desire to study the issue for myself in the interests of women and to examine the correct Islamic position with regards to compensation.

One of the oldest Qur'anic commentators, Imam al-Ṭabarī, in his commentary on the Qur'anic verses related to divorce, strongly advocated the rights of women with regards to the *mutʿah* (post-divorce financial support, or post-divorce payment, made by a divorcer to a divorcee). He said:

> It is my conviction that post-divorce *Mutʿah* is an obligatory payment on the husband who divorced his wife, and he is liable to pay her *mutʿat al-ṭalāq* just like he is liable to pay her due dowry, and he will never be exonerated from such obligation until he pays her or her proxies or heirs, and that *mutʿat al-ṭalāq* is like other debts that are due to her, and the husband is subject to incarceration and his property can be sold for not paying his divorced wife her post-divorce due *mutʿah*.[38]

Abū al-Fidā' Ismāʿīl Ibn Kathīr defined *mutʿat al-ṭalāq* by saying that *mutʿah* was something paid by the husband to his divorced wife, according to the husband's means, so as to compensate the divorced wife for what she lost due to the divorce. Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, one of the most prominent jurists of his time, was in favor of the opinion of jurists who believed that *mutʿat al-ṭalāq* was not an optional matter but fittingly mandatory. Al-Zamakhsharī, among the most famous jurists and scholars of Islam, believed post-divorce support to be mandatory only for women divorced before the consummation of marriage, and only recommendable for other divorcees.[39] Shaykh Rashid Rida supported scholars who endorsed the eligibility and the right of divorced women to post divorce support as a mandatory duty upon the divorcing husband.[40]

The Prophet was married to a woman known as ʿUmrah, daughter of Yazīd, son of John, from the tribe of Kilāb, but due to an uncertain reason the marriage was not consummated. Upon divorcing her, the Prophet paid her what was due according to her post-divorce right and sent her back to her family. In this Prophetic practice, we learn that despite the short time she spent in the Prophet's house, when he pronounced an irrevocable divorce upon her, he granted her post-divorce *mutʿah*.[41]

Muslim jurists hold two different opinions on post-divorce financial support. Some jurists regard it as mandatory (*wājib*), in the first category of Islamic rulings; and some as *mundūb* (recommendable), in the second category of rulings. However, in terms of practicality, Muslim jurists do not hold post-divorce support as obligatory. Even those who believe it to be a mandatory command from Allah do not advocate it, much less apply it. The principle is almost totally ignored, and buried under the prevailing rubble of custom. In today's society, many women have to fend for themselves and earn an income to support themselves and their children. In circumstances such as these compensation for divorce becomes even more important because the safety net of extended family systems is fast eroding. Today, in many cases, divorced women do not have places of refuge and no financial means to support themselves or their children.

Regrettably, our predecessor jurists left us with a very limited legacy on the subject of assessment for post-divorce financial support, and almost nothing on property settlement. Most assessments were reported from either the Companions of the Prophet, such as ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās and al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, or there is the incident of the Prophet himself when he divorced one of his wives before consummation of the marriage, gave her *mutʿah* and asked Abū Usayd to take her to her family.

Muslim jurists need to take a proactive role in reviving the application of post-divorce support (*mutʿat al-ṭalāq*) as it has been clearly decided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. There are numerous reasons for reinforcing the application of post-divorce support in our modern time. It is a command of Allah as reported in a number of verses in the Scripture. It has been supported and illustrated by the Sunnah, the Companions of the Prophet, and the Successors. It is a manifestation of the profoundly rooted Islamic principle of justice and fairness for all in general and towards women in particular. It is in the best interests of minor children, largely the first victims of arbitrary subjective divorces.

Furthermore, it serves as a means of deterring all kinds of harm that divorced women may fall victim to, women who today are crying out for help, but receiving none. Finally, it is an implementation of the Prophet's recommendation (*waṣiyyah*) made to his Ummah on the Day of ʿArafah during the Prophet's Ceremonial Declaration known as the farewell Pilgrimage Sermon.[42] These issues are fundamental and critical

and they impact on human lives and have far reaching consequences. As such, I urge Muslim jurists to face this emerging challenge fully, to apply the fairness and justice of Islamic Shariᶜah law in all matters, and to protect all the rights of women.

<div align="center">Chapter Ten</div>

A Muslim Approach to Western Studies of Islam

<div align="center">Khaleel Mohammed</div>

Especially with the September 11, 2001 events, as one of the most horrific manifestations of terrorism falsely committed in the name of religion, Islamophobia in the West has seen an increase not only in the media and academe but also in the increase of threat to the personal safety of Muslims. Given a calamitous connection between the popular news media and the academic world, in an America that is beset by a zealous nationalism characterized by the most insidious Islamophobia, it is easy to understand the gross generalizations and simplifications about Islam. By not developing a foundation in religious studies and the ability to structure adequate terminology, media and academe often fall prey to the use of non-Muslim-designed, derogatory, political coinages in a religious setting, thereby reinforcing negative images of Islam. Following are some examples of the problem as it applies to the Qur'an. By focusing on narratological analyses, Muslim researchers can refute some of the wrong ideas and play a meaningful role in removing negative images of their religion.

There is a vast disconnect between Islamic and religious studies. Many "islamicists" who are employed in the various departments of religion are not religious specialists, and, as such, they are not generally familiar with religious theory and terminology. Some Muslim professors are not even trained in Islamic studies; they have become lecturers on the subject either because they are Arabs or claim they can teach Islam. In many instances, they do not even know Arabic. One of the most pressing problems is that many Muslim professors bring either their sectarian or faith-based prejudices, and do not objectively approach their subjects. Also, there is a great need for improvement in Islamic studies as a discipline within religion, and several studies have been conducted on the issue.

The study of religion in post-Enlightenment Germany started as Religionwissenschaft, which then spawned sub-disciplines of Wissenschaft des Judentums and Islamwissenschaft. It would be wrong, however, to think that the only difference between the mentioned sub-disciplines is the religion of focus. The most prominent names associated with early Islamwissenschaft are non-Muslim, among them Georg Freytag, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, Abraham Geiger, Gustav Weil, Theodor Nöldeke, Aloys Sprenger, and Ignaz Goldziher, all of whom were non-Muslims and who applied the then-condescending Orientalist perspective in their examination of Islam.

While the field of religious studies has evolved tremendously, and the overtly critical approach to Islam has largely been abandoned, the most consulted theories and texts in Western studies of Islam are still largely based on the writings of scholars who, knowingly or unknowingly, have coined problematic terminologies. Among such terminologies are words like "fundamentalist," "radical" and "moderate." Today, "fundamentalist" is an umbrella term denoting everything from the die-hard traditionalist to the militant anti-American extremist. The terms "fundamentalist," "radical," and "moderate" are meant to polarize and establish labels that can be terribly misleading. Being introduced at conferences by non-Muslims as a "moderate" Muslim is a description that deems other Muslims who do not share the same viewpoints as immoderate fanatics.[43]

Since Islamic Studies is not conducted under the aegis of religious studies, the Muslim "specialists" who conduct Qur'anic studies often do so without knowledge of western concepts (and the attendant vocabulary) of exegesis. Even when Muslim professors approach their subject from the perspective of religion, their presentations tend to focus on the pre-modern period. One hears of the exegeses of al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, and a host of classical scholars, but rarely does one hear of the modern discourse of Muhammad al-Ghazali or Taha Alalwani.

Further, Muslim scholars, both classical and modern, have discussed most ideas, such as logocentrism, phallocentrism, reader response criticism, preterism, presentism, the affective fallacy, the intentional fallacy, the hermeneutic circle, and the Divine Command theory, albeit under different terms. When their ideas are presented, however, if the scholar does not know the western term, s/he cannot draw parallels and make the necessary comparisons.

By failing to make themselves familiar with Biblical material and the religious theories pertaining thereto, Muslims are often unable to make the inter-textual connections. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a good example. In the Hebrew Bible, Abraham pleads for Lot's people, presenting his case to the point where in the final verses of Genesis 18, it would seem that if ten good people were present, the city would have been spared divine punishment. If a reader of the Qur'an brings the details of this narrative (not provided in the Qur'an), when contemplating 11:70-4, then Lot's question in 11:78 can be perceived for what it actually is: not simply a plea, but trying to evoke a certain action, in response to a divine promise.

In classes on comparative themes in Abrahamic religions, students have never failed to note the difference they found in studying the Qur'anic verses when taken along with the readings of the relevant Biblical material. The judgmental, strict, litigious God of Islam that has been created in the imagination of Western Orientalists (and to a certain extent in some Muslim perception) is in fact a forgiving, affectionate Lord.

While it is certainly easy to lay the blame for the sad state of Islamic studies at the feet of Orientalists, only by a new approach to Islamic studies in general, and Qur'anic studies in particular, can Muslims make any meaningful contribution to the field. Fazlur Rahman's identification of the two main problems in Muslim scholarship regarding Islam's scripture still applies: lack of a genuine feel for the relevance of the Qur'an today and a fear that such a presentation might deviate on some points from traditionally received opinions.[44] The problems are inter-connected; approaching them from the perspective of Western religious studies offers a solution.

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Notes

1. Qur'an 22:52 and 45:29; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), p. 20.
2. Al-Zurqani, Muhammad Abd Azim, *Manāhil al-ʿIrfān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-ʿArabī, 1998), vol. 2, p. 460.
3. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh*, p.58; Al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār-al-Maʿrifah, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 221-222.
4. Ibid., *Nawāsikh*, pp. 29 – 31.
5. Al-Zurqani, vol. 2, p. 472.
6. Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dehlawī, *Al-Fawz al-Kabīr*, Khurshid Anwar, Urdu trans. (Deoband, India: Kutub Khana Husayniyah, n.d.), pp. 252-312.
7. Israr Ahmad Khan, *Qur'anic Studies: An Introduction* (Kuala Lumpur: Zaman Islam Media, 2000), pp. 223-226.
8. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1997), vol. 1, p. 640.
9. For example, Andrew Bostom's, ed., *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008); and Robert Spencer's, *Onward Muslim Soldiers: How Jihad Still Threatens America and the West* (Washington: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2003).
10. Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, 1, 28, Al-Muhaddith Program.11.36 available at http://www.muhaddith.org/quran.html# Download.
11. Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-Rā'iq*, v.1.02, Al-Muhaddith Program. 11.36 (CD).
12. *The Holy Qur'an* (CD) (Harf Information Technology, 2002), ver. 8.0. Qur'an search on *j-h-d*.
13. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 56-57. Editor's note: The concept of jihad as that of struggle and to nobly protect oneself in defence when attacked has been tragically abused, hijacked and falsified by political and religious groups to justify their savage acts of terrorism and murder, betraying Prophet Muhammad who was sent as a mercy to all the world.
14. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, entry *qātala*,available, at http://www.alwaraq.net/ Core/AlwaraqSrv/LisanSrchOneUtf8.
15. *The Holy Qur'an* (Harf Information Technology). Qur'an search on the root *q-t-l*.
16. Qur'an 2:193 and 8:61.
17. See Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue*,

ed. Irfan A. Omar (New York: Orbis Books, 2007), pp. 17-30. For a more detailed discussion of these four principles from a comparative religious point of view, consult my original lecture, on which this paper is largely based, in the IIIT archives, summer 2008, available at: www.iiit.org.

18. See also Qur'an 40:78, where the plurality of faiths is clearly asserted.

19. See also Qur'an 4:36.

20. It is significant that this call to dialogue follows the only heated debate which the Prophet had with the Christians. This debate is alluded to in the *mubāhalah*, or imprecation verse, (3:61). See Ayoub, *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters*, vol. 2, pp. 188-202, 206.

21. Fazlur Rahman, "Pre-Foundations of the Muslim Community in Mecca," *Studia Islamica* (1976), no. 43, p. 10.

22. Jerald F. Dirks, *The Abrahamic Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Similarities and Contrasts* (Maryland: Amana Publications, 2004), p. 27.

23. Jacques Jomier, *The Bible and the Qur'an*, trans. Edward P. Arbez (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1964), p. 20.

24. William C. Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Aragon House, 1994), p. 174.

25. Ibid.

26. Rahman, 1976, p. 10.

27. Rashid Rida, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, (Beirut, 1935), vol. 1, p. 338.

28. Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 10.

29. Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'an and Muslim Literature* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2002), p. 9.

30. Al-Zarkashī, Muḥammad ibn Bahāder ibn ʿAbd Allāh, *Al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Proof in Qur'an Studies), http://www.aljamea.net/services/viewing/Preview_ Books. php, December 6, 2008. http://www.altafsir.com.

31. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Competence in Qur'an Studies), http://www.aljamea.net/services/viewing/Preview_Books.php, December 2, 2008.

32. Narrated from Anas by al-Bayhaqī in *Shuʿab al-Īmān* and *al-Madkhal*, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, and al-Khaṭīb through three chains at the opening of his *al-Riḥlah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth* (pp. 71-76, nos.1-3) "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim (male and female)." Quoted by Khalid El-Darymli, "Values, Technology and Society: Islam and Science," 2005, http://www.slideshare.net/kkkseld/microsoft-word-the-project-islam-and-science/, citing M. Husain Sadar, "Science and Islam: Is There a Conflict?" in Z. Sardar, *The Touch of Midas: Islam, Values, and Environment in Islam and the West* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1984), p. 15.

33. A comprehensive review may be found in the original.

34. See, Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 10-12.

35. See, Ibid.

36. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 60: 378.

37. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *The Attributes of God: Dafʿ Shubah al-Tashbīh bi-Akaff Al-Tanzīh*, Abdullah bin Hamid Ali, trans. (Bristol: Amal Press Ltd., 2006), p. 82.

38. Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, Ahmad Shakir, ed. (Beirut: Muʾassassat al-Risālah, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 80-82.

39. Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tanzīl wa ʿUyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Taʾwīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 337.

40. Rashid Rida, *Tafsīr al-Manār* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1947), vol. 2, pp. 430-431.

41. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-Āthār fī Funūn al-Maghāzī wa al-Shamāʾil wa al-Siyar*, (Beirut: Dār al-Agād al-Jadīdah, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 389.

42. Al-Nawawī, Muḥiyy al-Dīn Abī Zakariyyah Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf, *Minhaj al–Talibin: A Manual of Muhammadan Law According to the School of Shafii*, Translated by E. C. Howard from the French translation of L. W. C. Van Den Berg (London: W. Thacker & Co., 1914).

43. See Khaleel Mohammed, "The Art of Heeding," *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grass Roots*, Rebecca Kratz Mays, ed. (Philadelphia: The Ecumenical Press, 2008), pp. 75-86.

44. Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qurʾan* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1994), p. xii.

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