

Episode 20 - The disasters of the Quran

Nahed: *My dear viewers, we welcome you to a new episode of our program, "Questions About Faith".*

It is our pleasure to have this ongoing interview, and to answer all your questions.

It is also our pleasure and honor to have with us our guest, Father Zakaria Botros. You are most welcome Reverend Father.

Father: Thank you very much.

Nahed: *At the conclusion of our previous episode, you hinted at a very important and serious topic, which is, the issue of abrogation. But of course this question, this topic requires a lot of clarification and so much discussion. We have here a lot of questions and God willing; you will be able to answer them.*

The first question is: What is meant by "The abrogating and the abrogated"?

Father: The word 'abrogate' means to transcribe, that is, he wrote something here and copied it there. But lingually it has other meanings. And particularly in the Quran, in regards to this topic. It means to move a verse or replace a verse with another, or the replacement of the ruling of a verse with another ruling. Just as Ibn Katheer said in his commentary volume 1 page 154, citing Ibn Gareer, he said, "Abrogation is to change that which is legitimate into that which is illegitimate, and that which is illegitimate into that which is legitimate." To abrogate a verse here would be to reverse it. That is, to attach a different ruling to it. So then, to remove, to replace, to reverse, to shift, that is the meaning of abrogation. So then, abrogation means a verse canceling a previous verse. Alright?

Nahed: How many verses have been abrogated in the Quran?

Father: Ah well, Abo Gaafar Al Nahhas, as well as others like him who wrote on the issue of 'The Abrogating and the Abrogated', estimated that there are 71 Surahs. Of course, the Quran has 114 Surahs, so 71 are more than half, that contain abrogating and abrogated verses. So the average, when I tried to fix a percentage to it, came to 92.28 abrogated verses.

Nahed: *That's a huge number.*

Father: Yes. 92.28% that is 62.5 roughly. Roughly 62.5% of the Quran has abrogating and abrogated verses. I'm not the one saying that. That's what the experts of abrogation say.

Nahed: *It is a fact. The Quran is available, and they could refer to it.*

Father: Oh, yes. They could refer to it.

Nahed: *What are the types of abrogating and abrogated verses?*

Father: The scholars of abrogation divide the verses that had been abrogated into 3 categories. I will use their own terminology, and I will explain them. They are those whose writing has been abrogated and whose ruling remains, those whose ruling has been abrogated and their writing remains, and those whose writing and ruling have both been abrogated.

Nahed: *Well, of course, I can't make heads or tails of it.*

Father: Alright. How much more, can the dear viewers? That whose writing has been abrogated. Writing means, the letters themselves. Abrogated means cancelled.

Nahed: That has been removed.

Father: That has been removed from the Quran. Only the ruling of it remains. That is, they still judge according to a verse that's been removed and abrogated.

Nahed: Despite the fact that it's non existent.

Father: Despite the fact that it's non existent.

Nahed: Yet it is still in force.

Father: And is still in effect. And this is what is called

Nahed: *Have you got examples?*

Father: Oh, yes, of course. And that's what's meant by "letter abrogation". The writing has been removed from the Quran, but they still act according to it to this day. The proof or the evidence for that is, the verse of the stoning; the stoning of an adulterer and an adulteress. This used to be a verse in the Quran during the time of Mohamed. It has been removed and cancelled from the Quran, it is not written anymore. Uthman Ibn Affan did not have it written in his own copy, in his Quran. But to this day they still stone the adulterer and adulteress. This is the law to this day in Saudi Arabia. They stone the adulterer and adulteress. Oh well, where does it state that in the Quran? It has been removed, has been abrogated. The ruling has been abrogated, it is not there anymore in the Quran. I mean the writing has been abrogated, but the ruling is still effective. One other thing among those that have been removed from the Quran and

Nahed: Whose ruling is still effective.

Father: Yes, and whose ruling is still effective. The verse of nursing the adult.

Nahed: ***Is this really a Quranic verse?***

Father: It is a Quranic verse. Aisha mentioned it; she said it was in the Quran.

Nahed: ***It was in the Quran?***

Father: Yes, it was in the Moshaf, according to the testimony of the scholars of abrogation.

Nahed: ***Well, this requires a lot of clarification.***

Father: The time of the episode is unfortunately so short.

Nahed: ***No, take your time.***

Father: Aisha mentioned that there used to be a verse, for when she wanted to meet a man. It was unlikely that a stranger would approach her, because she had been veiled. The veiling was imposed on them. So she used to make her niece breastfeed whoever she wanted to meet. We are talking about an adult man. She would nurse him. And why? In order for

him to be considered a close relative. As if he too, was her nephew, because her niece nursed him. Then she would meet him.

And there is also, in Al Bokhary's Saheeh, a narrative. This was Aisha's narrative here, but in Al Bokhary's Saheeh, there is mention of a woman who came to the prophet and said to him, "My husband is jealous of our slave, the slave was young and he grew up in the house, and now he feels jealous of him, he can't tolerate him" he said: "O.K., go and nurse him, nurse the slave."

Nahed: *An adult woman nursing an adult slave?*

Father: Yes, nursing an adult slave. She said, "Messenger, he's already a man!" He said, "I know he is an adult. Go nurse him." She went and nursed him and he became a close relative. And her husband stopped feeling jealous of him.

Nahed: *She herself nursed him?*

Father: She herself nursed him. So he became as good as a brother, I mean a son. He became like a son to her. So her husband no longer felt jealous of him. She returned to the messenger of God who, said to her, "So, how is it going now? She said. "All is clear; he doesn't feel jealous of him anymore."

So Aisha continued this process and she said, if there is any man I'd like to meet I will make someone nurse him.

Nahed: For this reason, *Aisha made her niece nurse them.*

Father: Her niece became his mother.

Nahed: *considered to be his own mother. And she has become like....?*

Father: She has become like his grandmother.

Nahed: *So now he is a relative. This was the method employed.*

Father: This is the verse of the nursing of the adult, and Aisha testified that there used to be a verse to that effect, about nursing the adult. And of course, Aisha was spoken about by Mohamed in those terms, Mohamed told them "Take half of your religion from this ruddy woman." Alright?

This was the first type of abrogated and abrogating verse.

The 2nd type is: That whose ruling has been abrogated and the writing remains. That is: verses still exist in the Quran, but they are not acted upon. And there are 550 verses of this type.

Nahed 550?

Father: Yes, existent in the Quran, but not to be applied.

I'll give you just one simple example, because of the program's time. To be frank with you, this issue about the abrogation should be covered in at least 5 episodes, as much as 10 episodes because it is so large. I'm trying to cut it short because I only have half an hour.

For example, the case of the peace verses. When the messenger was in Mecca, he spread peace: "Do not argue with the people of the Book unless it be in the politest manner, and say, we believe in what has been sent down to you, and what has been sent down to us. Your God and our God is the same God" And all such verses. 124 verses about peace and one single verse put an end to 124 Surahs; I mean 124 verses, and that is the verse of the sword.

Nahed: *Where is that found, Father?*

Father: It is in Surah 9 (Al Toba) verse 5. That's one verse. And an identical one in Surah 9 (Al Toba) verse 29. So Surah 9 (Al Toba) verse 5 says, "Kill them wherever you may find them, meaning anywhere you find them," So kill them wherever you may find them. And in Surah 9 (Al Toba) verse 29, it says "Fight those who do not believe in God, nor the last day, nor forbid whatever God and his messenger have forbidden, nor professed the true religion" (that is, Islam). Among whom? Among those who were given the Book. "Till they pay the poll tax of their own accord and act submissive." That is humiliated. "Kill them, it says. Where has the verse gone that says, "You have your own religion and I have mine."? And all such things we hear in the media nowadays, whenever they talk about Christians. "We believe you have your religion and we have ours, we're not supposed to argue with you unless in the politest manner." But where has the verse of the sword gone? The one that abrogated.

The scholars of abrogation say that the verse of the sword, has abrogated 124 verses. So you have 124 verses in the Quran, yes, but they are null and void.

Nahed: *Isn't it possible that they would claim those verses are still in effect and it is rather the verse of the sword that has been abrogated? Is it possible, or is what you are saying certain according to the Muslim scholars?*

Father: There is a rule. There is a rule in the Quran, which is worth knowing. It says that verses that come later abrogate verses that came prior to them.

Nahed: *Namely Surah 9 (Al Toba). Abrogated all the verses preceding it.*

Father: Surah 9 (Al Toba) for your own information. According to Mohamed, this is the last Surah that had been sent down to him, the last one of all.

Nahed: *It is the only Surah that does not have "in the name of the Merciful and Mercy-giving God" as a heading.*

Father: It was the last one, and after that he died.

We're not done yet. We've already spoken about "that whose writing has been abrogated and whose ruling is still in effect." And "that whose ruling has been abrogated and whose writing still remains." And now remains the 3rd type: "Whose writing and ruling have been abrogated altogether," both together.

Nahed: *That has been entirely removed from the copies.*

Father: Has been completely removed.

Nahed: *From the copies of the Quran and from the rulings.*

Father: For example, in a book by Gamal El Deen Ibn El Joozy, about the abrogating verses in the Quran, page 33, he says that a companion woke up during the night and tried to recall a verse that the messenger told them was revealed to him, and he could only remember the part of it saying, "In the name of the Merciful and Mercy-giving God", so he betook himself, went to the prophet in the morning in order to ask him. But he found a crowd there as well, and upon asking them what they wanted, they answered "it is about the verse that the prophet mentioned yesterday, we forgot it." He said, "the same thing happened to me, I forgot it as well." They said, "O.K., let's

ask the prophet." So when the prophet came, they asked him and it says, this book says, that he spent an hour till he answered. He was also trying to remember the verse and he couldn't recall it, so it came back to: "whatever verse we cancel or cause to be forgotten, we provide one better than it or at least something similar to it." That is the principle of abrogation. Whatever verse we cancel or cause to be forgotten, we provide one better than it or at least something similar to it. This was originally the principle of abrogation in the Quran. So he forgot it. He didn't just forgot it and say so, but after a whole hour of silence he said to them: "God has already abrogated it last night."

Nahed: *And that's why it has been cancelled from all their minds.*

Father: And from the Quran and from the rulings. Are you following? It has been totally nullified. Aisha says that in Surah 33(Al Ahzab), there used to be 200 verses when the prophet Mohamed narrated it to them Surah 33(Al Ahzab). It used to be 200 verses. But in the copy of Uthman, only 73 of those verses remain. So where has this huge number gone? Non existent. It has been abrogated, both in ruling and in writing. Are you following? Omar Ibn Al Khatab said, and his words are recorded, and are in all the books about abrogation, as well as in this book. Omar Ibn AlKhatab said...

Nahed: *Would you please repeat the name of the reference, so that our dear viewers would be able to refer to it?*

Father: Gamal El Deen Ibn El Joozy on Nawasekh Al Quran
And Abo Gaafar Al Nahhas, Also his book is called Al Nasekh We Al Mansokh.

What does Omar say? A lot of the Quran has disappeared, and is non existent. You can also find this in Al Siouty's Al Etqan Fi Uloum Al Quran page 56. It's there. A lot of the Quran has disappeared. And it's no longer there. Now, where has it gone? They say it has been abrogated.

These then, are the types of abrogation. All three of them.

Nahed: *O.K., Now we come to a very serious and important question. What is the danger regarding abrogation?*

Father: Now, you're talking.

Nahed: *How dangerous is it?*

Father: That's right. Someone may say: "Well, it doesn't really matter if they are there or not, whether they have been abrogated or not. Well, it is God's will. That's what the director wants. Do you have any problem with that?"

Well, no. You can't say, "This is simply His will, hold your horses." And why is that? Because this abrogation, this principle, conflicts with the statement in Surah 6 (**Al Anaam**) verse 34, as well as many other verses, which state, "There's no way to change God's words, there's no way to alter God's words." So how can there be abrogating and abrogated verses? Knowing that the abrogation is an alteration of verses. Does the Quran contradict itself? Are you following?

So here is a conflict. You are talking about abrogation, but if you claim that you'll be conflicting with another fact, which is: there's no way to alter God's words. That's number one. Number two, another conflict with Surah 85 (**AlBoroog**), verse 22 and 23, which say, "still it is a majestic Quran, it is preserved on a guarded tablet." So then, this preserved tablet, did it contain the abrogating and abrogated verses? The abrogating ones only, or the abrogated ones only? Or does it itself contain conflicts and contradictions? And does God, in this preserved tablet, not know the events that would transpire, so that He would put in this, and replace it with that, then adapt it with this?

O.K. When Mohamed forgot the verse, wasn't it in the preserved tablet? Couldn't Gabriel have reminded him of it, once again? Couldn't he have jogged his memory? So there is a conflict. The issue can not be easily resolved. Anyone wanting to think with a 21st century mentality must, by necessity, grab hold of these issues. But if you want to follow the mentality of the Bedouins, or the ignorant of the 1st century after Hegra, then you can remain in your ignorance. Never mind being a fool, as long as you can make a living. Inconceivable. So the issue contains a conflict.

You know, it has a further discrepancy with something else. Surah 15 (**Al Hegra**), verse 9, which says: "We ourselves have sent down the Reminder, just as we are safeguarding it." What does safeguarding mean?

You know what the commentators say about safeguarding?

The commentators, though they really haven't got the awareness of the full scope of the issue, they only explain it piecemeal, that is, preserving it from alteration, change and modification.

Well, isn't that what abrogation is all about?

They say "No, they are two completely different issues." They didn't grasp the whole thing; the whole thing didn't click with them.

You know what the problem is? Man should have a consolidating mentality. It is a must to consolidate this with that, this fact with that fact. But if you take this fact alone and that fact by itself, you'll get nowhere. "We ourselves have sent down the reminder, just as we are safeguarding it." So how can its writing be abrogated while its ruling remains? And how can its ruling be abrogated while its writing remains? And how can both its writing and ruling be abrogated, if God is safeguarding it?

So here is a conflict, a collision. But a man of intellect will discern, will think. What's the issue? What's the problem?

And you know, the issue of the abrogating and abrogated verses to this day remains unsolved, to this day the scholars of abrogation have written about it, and still there is no solution at all.

Now pay close attention to the danger, to the more powerful danger. In Surah 4 (**Al Nesaa**) verse 82 where it says, "If it had come from some other source than God, they would have found a great deal of contradiction in it."

Nahed: Yes, the verse once again?

Father: "If it had come from some other source than God they would have found a great deal of contradiction in it."

Nahed: And the reference, also the verse again?

Father: Surah 4 (**Al Nesaa**) verse 82.

Nahed: O.K.

Father: "If it had come from some other source than God." Today, if you find any contradiction, what will the results be?

Nahed: That it isn't from God.

Father: That it is not from God. Oh, here is the crux of the problem, which they must face.

O.K., if it had a "great deal of contradiction." By the testimony of the scholars of abrogation, there are 71 Surahs in the Quran out of a total of 114 that contain abrogation, and that is a great deal of contradiction. "They would have found a great deal of contradiction in it." Here there is 62.28 % of contradiction in the Quran. So there is a great deal of contradiction in it.

So what does this evidence indicate? I will leave it up to the viewers, to judge for themselves. We don't want to be judgmental, so we leave it up to them to judge. And if he doesn't believe, let him study and inquire and research. You know?

Nahed: I don't want them to believe. I want them to refer back to the Quran.

Father: Certainly.

Nahed: And refer to the books that your Reverence has just mentioned. And let them study for themselves and reach this truth.

Father: That's right.

Nahed: They shouldn't take our words for granted.

No not at all. We are only **broaching** subjects for research, and subjects for discussion and we wish that every man would think with a 21st century mentality, in order to reach the truth themselves.

Father: Right. You know, the whole problem, is that people think like an ostrich. What do I mean by an ostrich? It sticks its head in the sand in order to feel safe from danger. When the hunter is pursuing it, and it grows weary of running, you know, it sticks its head in the sand, as though it is now hidden from the hunter and now she is safe. And most unfortunately, this is what they are doing. They say: "You know, we have nothing to do with these problems. The devil is in the details. Let's not delve into that. You are an infidel, a free thinker. "Don't research. Don't talk. Take it as it is."

This is not the mentality of mature people.

Nahed: You know Father, that's why I said I want them to search for themselves and look for the things we are saying.

Father: That's it. What's the whole idea behind this program? It is a call to think, an invitation to enlightenment, an invitation to liberation. Liberation of the mind from close-mindedness. And once the mind is liberated it gets enlightened, and it learns, and afterward, each will be accountable before God for his own decisions. I mean, we have lived for 14 centuries, 14 centuries and even more, since the migration and the Quran

has been there. Not only since the migration, it's since the sending of the prophet. Isn't that right? The Quran is there. Nobody dares to object to it.

Father: And nobody dares to think about it. Must it be taken for granted? How can one just hand over his destiny, his future, his eternity, to an issue that he has neither researched nor studied. You know, when you are looking for a job, you check out its pros and cons, and its hazards before you apply for the job.

Nahed: And where is the blessing of the intellect? The blessing of the intellect which God has bestowed on mankind to distinguish him from the rest of His creation.

Father: Yes, and thus man is responsible for his own decisions. God created man as an intelligent being with free will, with a free mind, and there is a responsibility. He will tell him, "I gave you a mind and freedom of choice and free will. Now you are responsible. What have you done with them? What have you done?" And that's why I call upon all our viewers to use the grace granted to them by God and appreciate the responsibility that God holds them accountable for. He will ask them "What have you done?" He will answer; "Well, I am just as you created me." God will then say: "Created you? Are you saying that I have created you from the beginning like this? I gave you a mind to think, to assess and to investigate everything, to search for the truth, wherever it may be found. And after that you can embrace it, in order to know what your responsibility is". I have to be totally frank with you, I fear that all those brothers among our Muslim viewers will discover on that day that

Nahed: It was too late.

Father: They will discover it after the dye had been cast. The crying over the spilt milk won't help much. This won't do. So I appeal to our beloved viewers, to check out what we have said. I'll summarize what we have said, and it is as follows. What is meant...this was your question. What is meant by the abrogating and the abrogated verses? We said in Surah 2 (Al Baqara) verse 106; "Whatever verse we cancel or let it be forgotten we provide one better than it or similar to it."

Abrogate means what? It means we change, we alter, and we make a verse that allows us to ban another verse. That is, we replace it with another verse

stating that it is forbidden. And who says that? It was Ibn Katheer who said that.

And again, we spoke about the number of abrogated verses. 62.28% of the Quran. That is more than 50 % affected by abrogation.

What are the types of abrogating and abrogated verses?

That whose writing has been abrogated and whose ruling remains, that whose ruling has been abrogated and their writing remains, and that whose writing and ruling have both been abrogated. That is, they are neither written nor are they in force anymore.

Nahed: Excuse me; I would like to ask a question now. They may claim that those verses have never been there. They may say that you made that up. They will say that.

Father: Well, I would refer them to the books on abrogation, which I mentioned. Gamal El Deen.

Nahed: You mean, it is recorded in them.

Father: They are all recorded.

Nahed: And he says in that book that there are verses that are not there anymore.

Father: Definitely. In these books, Gamal El Deen El Joozy in Nawasekh Al Quran page 39. It is there and Al Etqan Fi Ulum Al Quran by Al Siouty. He is also renowned. And then again Abo Gaafar Al Nahhas in his book Al Nasekh Wa Al Mansookh. And Hebat Allah also wrote a book with the same title Al Nasekh Wa Al Mansookh, by sheikh Hebat Allah. These are books about Al Nasekh Wa Al Mansookh. It is even a science, in Al Azhar University called the science of abrogation, the science of Al Nasekh Wa Al Mansookh. It so happened that once I met 8 scholars of Azhar and Law colleges from other countries. They were 8. And we had a discussion on this topic, the topic of abrogation. Whenever I talked about abrogation, they say "Oh, but the Injeel also has..." "Well, it is none of your business what the Injeel has.

Nahed: Well, excuse me Father, just for one minute, because we are always confronted with this one question. They tell us, "Well Jesus came and abrogated the Old Testament, that is the Torah, as they claim.

Father: Well, this is what they claim, but the word abrogation has never been mentioned in the Bible, neither in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. No Nasekh and no Mansookh.

What did the Lord Jesus say, verbatim, and one must understand? He said, "I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill." So then, He did not come to abrogate. Abrogate is the same as destroy, he rather came to fulfill. And fulfillment has nothing to do with that. Let me give you some examples. A student, I mean a pupil in the primary school, he graduates from primary school and goes to prep school. Do they cancel all the knowledge that he has learned in the primary school? Do they tell him, "Forget all that"? "This has been cancelled. This has been abrogated. We will give you something else." Never. They'd rather tell him: You've learned something in the primary, that was according to your level, but in the prep school we will add to that knowledge, and in the secondary school we will add even more, and in the university we will add to it. We neither abrogate, nor destroy, nor alter the legal and make it illegal or the illegal and make it legal. The Lord Jesus came only to fulfill. You know the Old Testament contains symbols, and they had to be fulfilled in Him. I'll give you an example. The animal sacrifices, the sheep and the oxen and the cows and so on. They were symbols of the redemption on the cross. So when Christ came, He fulfilled.

Nahed: So they had been made null and void.

Father: Yes, null and void.

Nahed: Not abrogated...

Father: They were fulfilled in Christ...

Nahed:... with the blood of Christ,

Father: Fulfilled in the blood of Christ. Exactly as I told you in a previous episode, when someone contracts a building for you, he first brings the model to you. It looks perfect and flawless, then you would say "this is very nice, now you can continue." So he goes and he applies this practically. Because this was only a symbol of the real building. We can not say that he destroyed the model.

Nahed: Well, as a matter of fact, this is a huge topic and it requires many more episodes.

Father: Certainly.

Nahed: By the grace of God, we will have more interviews with you, Father and will continue with more interviews with you. And we thank you very much for these clarifications, Father. And may God reward you, and bless your ministry.

Father: A short word before we finish up...

Nahed: Oh please.

F I don't want the viewers to settle for only knowledge and research. I want them to lift up their hearts to God. And say to Him, "God, shine Your light upon Your path. Show me Your way, make the truth shine to me, that I may follow You" and God responds immediately.

Nahed: Amen.

Father: Immediately say to Him, "Lord, I open my heart to you to come into my life and make it shine. I want you to possess me completely. Amen.

Nahed: My dear viewers, I plead with you in the name of God, whom you worship, send us your questions. Tell us whether you need a Bible or any religious books. Mail us and we will send one to you free of charge to the address that you give us.

Thank you very much. Till we meet again.