

Episode 24

The abrogation continued4+nonexistent verses

Mohamed: *Dear viewers, we welcome you again to a new episode of our program, "Questions About Faith" In the previous episodes, we spoke about the abrogating and the abrogated verses. I want to mention a verse from the Quran, which I read before in one of the Surahs, Surah 12, Yuness, verse 94 where it reads: "If you are in any doubt concerning what we have sent down to you, then ask those who have read the Book before you, truth has come down to you from your Lord, so do not be a waverer." And again, we have our guest, Reverend Zakaria Botros. You are most welcome. Would you please summarize for us the topic of abrogation again, in order to go on with it?*

F Zakaria: Abrogation in the Quran means a replacement of rulings of certain verses, and not just rulings, but other things as well, such as erasing, replacement, and alteration, as we have seen in the previous episodes. *Yes.* And we stopped in our discussion at the types of abrogation, as defined by the scholars of abrogation in Islam. We said that they fall under three categories. The first one is, the abrogation of the letter or writing of a verse, yet its ruling remains in effect. What does "the writing" mean? It means the text of the verse itself, the wording as written in the Quran. The text was abrogated, namely it is no longer there. It has been cancelled out, but the ruling remained. And what does that mean? It means that it is still applicable. Muslims still apply the rules contained in the verses. Are

there any verses that are non-existent in the Quran, yet Muslims apply their rulings? Yes. An example is what we mentioned in the previous episode, about the adulterer and the adulteress who must be stoned to death. Omar Ibn El Khattab said, "This verse was in the Quran and for fear that I would be accused of adding to the book of God, I would have written the verse myself, by my own hand". And Muslims still stone the adulterer and the adulteress. They still stone the adulterer and the adulteress.

Mohamed: *The second category?*

F Zakaria: The other category is the exact opposite. It has to do with verses whose ruling has been abrogated, yet the writing is still retained in the Quran. This means that the words are there but they are not applicable. The example we cited here is the example of 124 verses in the Quran that encourage Muslims to deal peacefully with non Muslims, such as: "If they incline to peace, be inclined to it too." "You have your own religion and I have my own religion." Then came a verse in Surah Al Tawba verse 5 that ordered Muslims to kill non-Muslims. This single verse cancelled 124 verses. Those 124 verses are still existent in the Quran but their application has been halted. If you talk to him and say, "Why don't you argue with us in the polite manner?" He will tell you, "Oh, no this has already been cancelled, it has been abrogated. There is no alternative but murder. You either embrace Islam or you get killed." "Fight those who do not believe in God neither ban what God and his messenger have banned, nor believe in the true religion, which is Islam, even those of the people of the

Book” That means, the people with whom he had peace, he has now cancelled it. So now we have talked about verses whose writing has been abrogated, yet their ruling has been retained. And the opposite, which are; those verses whose ruling has been abrogated yet their writing has been retained. The third category, however, which we have started talking about, is those verses whose ruling and writing have both been abrogated. Neither are the verses in the Quran, nor is the ruling applicable anymore.

Mohamed: *But where have those verses gone?*

F Zakaria: That is the question. As a matter of fact, we pose this question to scholars of abrogation, and truly they come up with answers that are way out of line. What we would like for the scholars of Al Azhar University is to explain this situation. We do read those things, when I ask one of the scholars to explain those things I don't mean just to answer in one word and say, "No, it is wrong." I would like some explanation, something that would respect the mind of the viewer. Please tell us if it is wrong, and why it is so, and for what reason. And explain if this is logically sound or not. Al Zohary said in his book, “Nawasekh El Quran”, “Abrogations in the Quran” by Gamal El Deen Ibn el Joozy, page 33. Let's read this very weird story about the prophet Mohamed. It says "Abu Imama told me that a number of the companions of the prophet had told him that a man among them woke up in the middle of the night, wanting to recite a Surah which he had memorized", a Quranic Surah. He recalled it. So during the night he woke up in order to recite it. "But he could not recall any part of it

except the part which says “in the name of God, the all merciful, the forgiving”.” So where is the verse? He forgot it. So what did the man do? In the morning, he went to the prophet. Who is telling us this? Again it is Al Zohary in a book called “Nawasekh Al Quran” “Abrogations in the Quran.” A book written by Gamal El Deen Ibn El Joozy. This is not of our own invention.

Mohamed: *and I assume that this book is in circulation and one could read it.*

F Zakaria: Yes, it is in the Islamic bookstores. When he came in the morning to ask the prophet about it, he then said, "Others came for the same purpose." Apparently, there were other people who had heard the Surah and memorized it, and when they wanted to recall it, they were unable to. It just evaporated. So, in the morning all of them came and gathered together in order to ask the prophet. "The prophet gave them permission, so they asked him about the Surah." This means he gave them permission to talk, so they started talking. "Last night we tried to remember such and such a Surah, but we just forgot it. This is what Al Zohary says in his book: "Mohamed kept silent for a whole hour, and did not return any answer to them." A whole hour. Perhaps he was trying to recall it himself or something. "Then he said.... it has been abrogated last night." And that was that. It was abrogated. Neither is the verse there, nor is its ruling there, nor is it known anymore. Because it has been abrogated, and the people forgot it. So it has been relegated to the past. You know, the question that keeps coming to my mind is the verse that you mentioned: "We have sent down the reminder, and we intend to safeguard

it", or preserve it. How effective is this verse? Where does it come into action in this incident?

You know what the simplest answer is that they give you? Something we got used to hearing. They say that this tradition is weak, narrated by a single man. It is fabricated, incomplete, disconnected. Or they give you any one of the 35 defects of tradition.

Mohamed: *My question is, is there an objective answer to these questions?*

F Zakaria: Yes, and logical as well. Abu Bakr El Razy commented on this issue. He commented on the section of abrogation; "whose recitation and ruling have been canceled." What did El Razy say? "This may only be accomplished by God causing them to forget them, and removing them from their memory, and commanding them to cease reciting them and writing them in the Quran. And with time they would fall into oblivion." Now where does Abu Bakr El Razy say this? Refer to the book, "Al Itqan Fi Ulum El Quran" by Galal El Deen El Siouty volume 2, page 26, in the Arabic. Why, then has God sent the verse if he was going to remove it and cause it to be forgotten? These are big question marks. If there is any respect for the intelligence, there would be answers. Is that clear? That was one example. Now let's come to Surah Al Ahzab. *Go ahead.* Which is Surah 33 in the Uthmanic Quran. Shareek Ibn A'assem reported the following on the strings of Zerr: "Obayy Ibn Abi Ka'ab said to me, how do you read Surah Al Ahzab? I answered, 73 verses. These are the verses in the Quran. He answered, by the One I swear by, it has been revealed to Mohamed and it is equal to Surah AL Baqara, or

perhaps it is larger than it.” Do you know how many verses there are in Surah el Baqara? 286 verses. From this we gather that this Surah Al Ahzab was either 286 verses or more. Now there are only 73 verses left of it. You find all this written in a book entitled “Al Tah-theeb,” volume 10, page 42 to 44 in Arabic. You find it also in the book, “Nawasekh El Quran” by Gamal El Deen Ibn El Joozy, page 33.

Mohamed: *I wonder where those verses have gone.*

F Zakaria: God lifted them up, removed them, and caused them to be forgotten, just any answer. How else could they answer it?

Mohamed: *We do want an answer to this question.*

F Zakaria: The third thing. You know this topic is really huge. It is so big and what you hear about it is very strange, really odd. That's why this man says in his book: "Many scholars avoid talking about it. It is a difficult and complicated issue, (he's talking about abrogation), and many of the Islamic scholars and commentators avoid getting involved in its details. No wonder. You see my point? Here is the testimony of Aisha. What did Aisha say? She says, Surah El Ahzab had been recited at the time of the prophet, in excess of 200 verses. But when Uthman wrote down the copies, we only got what is there now, which is 73 verses. These words are in a book by Galal El Deen El Siouty entitled, “Al Etkan fi Ulum El Quran,” volume 2 page 26. The same problem again. So we have the testimony of the prophet himself, who said it had been lifted up or removed the night before,

then the testimony about Surah Al Ahzab, which they said was very long, then was reduced to only 73 verses. Now we come to the testimony of Omar Ibn El Khattab. Omar Ibn El Khattab said, "Let none of you say I have retained the whole of the Quran. How would you know what the entire of the Quran means? Much of the Quran has disappeared." Much of the Quran has disappeared? This is the testimony of one of the well-guided caliphs. He goes on to say, "But let him say I have retained of it that which has come to light." This is really weird. Now, where is this reference? This is in Galal El Deen El Siouty, in his book, Al Etqan Fi Ulum El Quran, volume 2 page 26.

Mohamed: *You say, then, that a part of the Quran has been lost, and you ask where it is.*

F Zakaria: Right. Let's read further on. Al Siouty says on the strings of Abdy, the son of Abdy: "Omar said to Abd El Rahman Ibn O'uf: "Have you not found among that which was revealed to us, the command that says: 'fight as you have fought the first time', for we do not find it anymore." He answered him, "It has been left out among those things which were left out from the Quran." This is Al Siouty saying that it has simply been left out.

Mohamed: *This is quite illogical.*

F Zakaria: Very hard to grasp. But where are the minds that would believe this today? Why do they not want people to think? Shouldn't you present your religion in its entirety, in a logical way, to convince the mind? Don't you - our beloved Muslims, take pride in the fact that the

Islamic religion is a religion for the mind? Isn't that right? O.K., then talk to us in an intellectually sound way, concerning this issue. You know, have you heard about Uthman Ibn Affan? *Have you* heard about his copy of the Quran? *Yes*. Are you aware of the changes that were made in it?

Mohamed: *You mean that even in that copy, there were changes?*

F Zakaria: Well listen to this. Haggag Ibn Joreih told us: "Abi Hamida told me on the strings of Hamida the daughter of Yunis. She says , " When my father was 80 years old he recited to me from the copy of Aisha, the following- 'God and his angels, pray over the prophet , oh you who believe, pray over him and give peace and over those who pray in the front ranks'. Then she adds, 'this used to be the case before Uthman changed the copy of the Quran.'" Before Uthman changed the copy? And this is approved in the Islamic references? Such as Galal El Deen El Siouty in his book, " Al Etqan Fi Ulum El Quran," volume 2, page 26. Very weird examples. That which have been abrogated, both in writing and ruling.

Mohamed: *I'm not diverting here, but I would like to pause here, and mention that the verse says that God and his angels "pray over the prophet." Isn't it more fitting to say that the prophet would be praying to God instead of God Almighty praying over the prophet?*

F Zakaria: Of course. Both lingually and logically, prayer has to do with the relation of the slave to his master; to God Most High. It has no other meaning.

From the created toward the Creator. But in order to justify the matter, they say “pray” here means to bless. *Yes.* But still, such explanations are hard to accept. Because the word “prayer” in Arabic is derived from the word “relationship.” “Prayer” comes from a different root word than “blessing.” From what source, then, have they come up with the word blessing? You know, it would be good to respect people's intellect. Now we come to examples of verses whose writing and ruling have been both abrogated. I gave you four already and here is the fifth. It is the testimony of Muslima Ibn Makhled. Quoting Abi Sifyan el Kala'ay, that this afore mentioned Muslima Ibn Makhled said to them one day, “Tell me of two verses from the Quran that have not been written in the Mushaf.” But they could not tell him. Abu El Kanood Sa'ad Ibn Malek was also there, so Ibn Muslima said, "Those who believed and migrated and fought for the sake of God through their properties and their own lives, rejoice, you are the prosperous and those who gave shelter to him and supported him and quarreled on his behalf with the folk upon whom was his wrath. None of them is aware of the pleasures that are held secret for them as a reward for what they have done". This verse is non existent in the present Quran. Again, this is mentioned by Galal El Deen El Siouty in his book, “Al Etqan Fi Ulum Al Quran”, in the same volume, and on the same page. Isn't that odd? Isn't it strange? I will finish this up now with what Dr. Taha Hussein has written. Dr. Taha Hussein commented on what Uthman Ibn Affan did, namely his burning of the Quran copies and the verses that had been revealed in them. Of course, we all know about the story of Uthman Ibn Affan and burning the Mus'haffs. There used to be 7 readings, or 7

different Muss'haffs and when Uthman Ibn Affan saw that the tribes were fighting over these differences, and when Ibn Massood said that there were 1700 differences among them, he brought 6 copies of the Quran, burned them, and kept only one. So Dr. Taha Hussein is commenting on this incident. He says the following, "The prophet, God's prayer and peace be upon him, said that the Quran was revealed in 7 manners of letter"(that's exactly what we have been talking about here.) "All of them were sufficient and conclusive and when Uthman banned the copies, and burned the ones he could burn, he was banning texts revealed by God and burning writings that contained Quran, which the Muslims have received from the messenger of God." He did burn and ban the use of certain verses. He goes on to say: "and this Imam had no right to cancel even a letter from the Quran, nor delete any of its texts. Moreover he - that is Uthman Ibn Affan - had commissioned only a few of the companions of the prophet to write down the Quran, and left out a multitude of the reiters who had heard the Quran from the prophet and committed it to memory from him. He commissioned only those few, to write the Muss'haf" This is a reprehensible point. And hence we understand the reason for Ibn Massood's anger, because Ibn Massood was one of the best ones who had memorized the Quran. And according to his own testimony, he had memorized from the mouth of the prophet 70 Surahs of the Quran. That's Ibn Massood. Who then was

Mohamed: *And Ibn Massood was left out from the whole thing?*

F Zakaria: Exactly. This man, with all his knowledge and his prodigious memory was entirely left out. And whom did they bring instead? Someone by the name of Zeyd Ibn Thabet. Let's read what it says here. Zeyd Ibn Thabet, who was commissioned to put the Quran together, had not reached puberty yet, at a time when Ibn Massood had already memorized 70 Surahs. And when Ibn Massood stood to protest

Mohamed: *Excuse me, what's the meaning of "reached puberty"?*

F Zakaria: Well, he was very young, a boy. He was still a child. Ibn Massood had memorized a lot, whereas this guy was still a boy. Ibn Massood protested. "And when he stood to protest, disapproving the burning of the copies of the Quran." We are still quoting Dr. Taha Hussein from his book entitled "Al Fitnal Kubra" or "The Great Sedition", volume one from page 160 to 183. Again, we repeat: "And when Ibn Massood started to protest, disapproving the burning of the copies of the Quran", what did Uthman do to him? "He took him out of the mosque in such a violent way and he had him repeatedly knocked to the ground until his ribs were smashed." Very tough. And on this account many Surahs and many verses were lost, as we have seen previously.

Mohamed: *This is very strange, and also hard to accept. I cannot but deduce from what you say, or rather it is understood from what you say, that you almost challenge the authenticity of the Quran, Islam and the Muslims in general.*

F Zakaria: Well, you can't take it that way. Who am I, to challenge the authenticity of the Quran, Islam or the Muslims? The first thing I always emphasize, is that I truly love Muslims, all Muslims. Why? Because they are the creation of God and his handwork. They have great value in his eyes. This applies to every man. God loves him. So we do love our Muslim brothers, but we also want them to know the truth. I'm not challenging or attacking. First of all, we do not belong to any anti-Islamic organization, neither international nor local. We are only driven by love. We seek the salvation of the Muslim brother, so that he might know the way of God.

Mohamed: *What do you mean by “the salvation of the Muslim”?*

F Zakaria: The salvation of the Muslim. When God created man he was in the best state and manner; pure, holy, righteous and full of grace. But when Satan lured him, man and his wife were brought down from paradise. The Quran says literally, "descend from it, all of you." In the plural, namely you and your offspring, according to the Quranic commentaries. I'm talking Islamically now. Man became a castaway from the divine presence, separated from God.

Mohamed: *But I meant by my question to you, Reverend Father, to give us an answer as a Christian. Do you want to communicate a message to the Muslim? What is this message?*

F Zakaria: I would still say the same thing. God created man in His likeness and His image. Then man sinned, he

was cast away from the presence of God and was separated from life; from God – the source of life, and came under the judgment of death. Man was dead, ***Because of? Sin. Sin, yes.*** He sinned, he rebelled and he was separated from God because of his disobedience. God, in His love, created this creation and would not let it perish. And out of His love He wants to save it, and restore it back to its original state. And henceforth, came the plan of redemption. The plan of redemption. Namely, that Jesus Christ came, was born of the Virgin Mary, to fulfill the redemption of mankind, to die on behalf of humanity. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that all those who believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life.” Whoever accepts Christ, receives eternal life. But how can a Muslim accept Christ, while the Quran says that Christians are infidels, and the Gospel has been distorted? So the Muslim closes the door and lives unsatisfied with his own religion and is unable to find something else to satisfy him.

Mohamed: *I almost hear you saying that within every man there is a need, there is a longing for the Creator inside the created, so how can I make this relationship with God?*

F Zakaria: Exactly right. God has done everything. All that is left for man is to accept His plan. God has done everything, because man could do nothing. The Bible says, "By grace you have been saved, by faith. This is not of you. It is the gift of God." Man only seeks his salvation, seeks his own comfort, because as long as man is away from God there is no peace: "No peace to the

wicked, says the Lord." Peace comes about only when he is reconciled to God. And in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions

Mohamed: *This is so good.*

F Zakaria: Well, Christ is willing to forgive man's sins. When man accepts His redemption, then He will forgive him. He said on the cross, "Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing."

So the door is closed in the face of my Muslim brother. Islam neither satisfies him nor answers his questions and at the same time Islam shuts the door, so that he cannot receive the grace of salvation and eternal rest and happiness. Therefore, I encourage Muslims to ask. Read the Quran in depth, read the commentaries in depth, read the tradition in depth and ask the sheikhs. Find a solution and a way, because your eternal life is more valuable than being led to waste. Seek God.

Mohamed: *Thank you very much. What you say is that religion does not lead to God, but faith leads to God. Thank you.*

F Zakaria: Well, faith through religion. Because religion teaches us about faith. I'm not talking about a religion that is merely a set of regulations. No, a religion that offers us faith, offers us God, and offers us grace. Therefore seek it, that you may be eternally happy.

Mohamed: *Thank you very much. Dear viewers, we heard that God desires for all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Once again we*

thank you for visiting us, and for allowing us to visit with you in this episode. And until we meet again, we welcome all your questions that you can send us via the addresses shown on the screen. Thank you. Till we meet again. May God's grace be with you all.

F Zakaria: Amen.

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