

## Episode 26

### Conclusion of the abrogation

*Mohamed: Our dear viewers, it's a pleasure to welcome you once again to our program, "Questions About Faith". It is also our pleasure to have our honorable guest, Father Zakaria Botros. Welcome to you, Reverend.*

F. Zakaria: Thank you

*Mohamed: Dear viewers, previously we have spoken about abrogation. In this episode as well, we'll be speaking about other issues following up on abrogation. But before I start, I have something to share with you from my own heart. It is on my heart to share and speak to you from heart to heart, soul to soul, and spirit to spirit. I heard a definition of a Muslim; that he's someone from whose hands and tongue people are safe. But I do believe that a true Muslim is someone who has surrendered his life, heart and soul to God Most High, to live to obey and please Him. These words come from my heart, and tell my testimony and that of many others as well. As the prodigal son returned to his father and after many years of delusion, alienation and confusion, Ishmael comes back to the bosom of his father, Abraham, about whom the Bible says, that "he believed and therefore his belief was counted to him as righteousness." These days Ishmael comes back to the bosom of Christ, Who existed before Abraham, his father, or rather before the foundation of the world. Yes, my God and my Savior, You have come to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the oppressed, to comfort those who are weeping, to give them beauty for ashes and joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for a heavy heart. You came to build the ancient ruins, to renew the run down cities, to proclaim liberty, peace, healing and love. O, my God and my Savior, you have come for all of us, and here I am a son of Ishmael. We lived*

*for years unaware of you , not knowing you and at many times we even denied you and fought you , we were your enemies. But your love which surpasses all understanding and imagination and enmity found us. You showed us the way, had mercy on us and sanctified us. O, my Savior, it was Your love that brought us back to You, just as a prodigal to his father's bosom, like someone drowning, to the ship of salvation and the ark of rescue. Thanks be to God for the heroes of the faith who have set their hands on the plow and have not looked back. And one of them is Father Zakaria. You are most welcome.*

*We have new questions as well, here. One of them is: “Can you give us some references that prove what we have been speaking about in the previous episodes?”*

**F Zakaria:** Well, I have a lot of references. Of course, I cannot bring along to the studio all my reference books, but it may be sufficient if I show the honorable viewers some of the references I have, so that they can check them out themselves and study them. This book is entitled, “AL Nasekh Wal Mansookh in the Holy Quran written by Hebatullah Ibn Salama Ibn Nasr Ibn Ali Al Boghdady, who died in the year 410 after Hegra. This is another book entitled, “Al Nasekh Wal Mansookh in the Holy Quran” written by Abu Gaafar Al Nahhass, who died in the year 338, after Hegra. And this is the Islamic Encyclopedia, published in Arabic by Ahmed Al Shennawy , Ibraheem Zaki Khorshed, and Abd Al Hameed Yunis. The Encyclopedia has about 30 volumes, and this is the summary of the whole Encyclopedia, in an attempt to make it easier for the reader. It consists of 33 small volumes published by Markaz Al Sharq Lel Ebdaa Al Fikry and it is forwarded by the sheik of Al Azhar Mosque. They have written also about abrogation.

**Mohamed:** *You mean this is a summary of all these reference books.*

**F Zakaria: Yes.** There is also this big reference book, entitled: “AL Mawsooa’a Al Arabiya Al Muyassara” supervised by Mohamed Shafeeq Ghorbal. It was commissioned by president Gamal Abdel Nasser , and you can find mention of abrogation under letter N for Naskh - abrogation. These are all reference books, but there are a lot more that have been written on this topic. I wish that the viewers would visit any bookstore and check those books out; they can also find some of them on the internet. *Yes.* If you visit some of the Islamic websites, and there are many, and type the word “Al Naskh” in your search box, or “Al Nasekh Wal Mansookh” .

*Mohamed: Would you please mention the names of some websites?*

**F Zakaria:** Oh, sure . Among the Islamic websites is alazhr website; [www.alazhr.com](http://www.alazhr.com). There is also the [alwarrak.com](http://alwarrak.com) website also Almaktaba al Islamiya. It is in Arabic and it is Islamic. The Islamic websites are really numerous. There are a whole lot of them.

*Mohamed: So the viewers could check them out and among those is [alazhr.com](http://alazhr.com) and [alwarrak.com](http://alwarrak.com).*

**F Zakaria:** Because these issues are of vital importance. And an intelligent human being ought to follow them up, to see where his salvation is. Because one’s soul is precious and dear. The earth will pass away but eternal life is permanent. Therefore he ought to know the way he’s going.

*Mohamed: Can you mention to the viewers some of the names of the scholars of abrogation who categorized abrogated and abrogating verses? And are they few or many?*

**F Zakaria:** As a matter of fact, in all the books that touch upon the issue of abrogation, there must be a list of authors, Islamic authors who wrote about the same topic. Such as Abu Ga’afar El

Nahhas in his book, "Al Nasekh Wal Mansookh," from page 17 to page 28. He lists all the authors who wrote on this topic and he gives a summary on each one of them. So he mentions, for example Ibn Katada Al Sudsy. He lists them chronologically; this author died in the year 118 after Hijra. So he was an early author, in the second century after Hijra. He wrote on this topic. Also Ibn Shehab Al Zuhary. He also died at the beginning of the second century, after Hijra, in the year 124, after Hegra. There is also A'ataa' Ibn Muslim Al Khorasany, who died in the year 135. He wrote a book entitled, "Al Nasekh Wal Mansookh in the book of God." Ibn al Kalby, who died in 146, wrote a book with the same title. And Mokatel Ibn Soliman, who died in the year 150. Al Hussain Ibn Waqed, who died in the year 159. Abd Al Rahman Ibn Zaid, who died in the year 182. And Abo Nasr Al Bosry, who died in the year 204. Now he has come to the third century. Ibn Haggag Al Aawar. Abu Obaid Abu Al Qasem Ibn Sallam, Ga'afar Ibn Mobasher Ibn Ahmed Al Thaqafy, Abo Al Hareth Al Maroozy, Al Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal who died in the year 241, Al Sagestany. His full name is Soliman Al Ashaath Al Sagestany, who died in the year 275. Ibn Al Harby, Ibn Moaaz Al Bosry, Ibn Al Hallag, Abo Dawood Al Sagestany, Abo abd Allah Al Zobairy, Imam Ibn Hazm one of the most famous Islamic authors. Abo Bakr Al Shibany Al Ga'ad, Ibn Al Enbary, Ibn Al Monady, Ibn Al Nahhas, Al Bardaay, Al Ballouty, Ibn Mohamed AL Neesapory, Al Marzabany Al Sirafy, Ibn Salama, Abd Al Qaher Al Boghdady, Makky Ibn Aby Taleb, Ibn Helal, Ibn Abd Allah Al Ashbeely, Al Hazemy, Ibn Al Joozy a very important person. His full name is Abo Al Farag Ibn Abd Al Rahman Ibn Abi Al Hasan, the Hanbali jurisprudent. Ibn Al Hassar, Al Ja'abary, Al Karmy. Al Ajhoory. All these are names. He lists 42 people here who touched upon the issue of abrogation, which only shows that this issue is not insignificant. It had begun since the earlier centuries of Islam. The first one to write a book about the issue of abrogation was from the second century. So it is a very serious issue. We are to search and study it well, if one is honest with himself and wants to know the truth.

**Mohamed:** *So there are 42 Islamic scholars who touched on the topic of abrogation.*

**F Zakaria:** Certainly. That's only what Abu Ga'afar Al Nahhas has listed up to his point of time. But later on, more people wrote on this topic. On page 28, let me tell you the date of the last one mentioned. I will give you the date of his death so you know who came after. The last one, he mentioned here, is Al Ajhoory, who died in the year 1190, after Hijra. Which year are we now in? We are in the year 1400. So with time people wrote more books, because it is a vital issue that must be settled and must be made known.

**Mohamed:** *I remember that every time I asked my religion teacher at school any question about religion, he would say "Haram," forbidden, but there is a question that occurs to my mind and to the minds of many of our viewers. Does any man have the right to openly discuss religious books? Who gives us this right, seeing that you talk now about these topics?*

**F Zakaria:** This is a crucial question, because as a matter of fact, people are afraid to ask about religion. They are not only afraid but also many times there aren't any ready answers in the minds of those who are being asked. Therefore the one who is supposed to answer him says to him, "Don't ask. Religion is not meant to be asked about."

**Mohamed:** *"Haram," prohibited. I ask the pardon from the great God.*

**F Zakaria:** It must be accepted as it is. I also recall a Quranic verse that says "Do not ask about things, if they be revealed to you, they would offend you." It discourages asking, it means if you know the background, if you know the reason behind it you will be offended, so you better not ask. This has even been turned into a proverb. So people don't ask anymore. They set

their minds at ease. I also recall another Quranic verse that says, "Desert Arabs are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and it is better if they do not know". Namely, they do not know what's going on. Better if they don't know? So some of the Quranic verses are understood to discourage asking, because if you ask you will get yourself in trouble. So people set their minds at ease. If they are told anything they do it, and whatever they don't understand, they let go and forget about. But I really liked an article I read in Al Ahram newspaper in Egypt, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> of Safar, 1423 after Hijra, which is the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2002 AD. In the issues number 42159, under the subtitle Sandook Al Donia which is supervised by the famous author Ahmed Bahgat, under the title "A Reasonable Suggestion". He says that this is a message from councilor Dr. Gamal Al Deen Mahmoud, the previous secretary general of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs. This is the man who sent this letter or message and he's the previous vice president of the Court of Appeals, that is, a significant person. This is a letter for letter quotation of the message: "Dear brother Ahmed Bahgat. The peace of God, his mercy and blessings be upon you. In a conference with the Council of Islamic Research held by Al Azhar under the title "This is Islam", from the period of 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2002, Sheikh Abd Al Mo'ez Abd Al Sattar who is a well experienced missionary, stood up and gave a very estimable speech to the audience." Then the Sheikh presented his suggestion.

***Mohamed: And what was this suggestion?***

**F Zakaria:** It is a very strange but amazing suggestion. That they must put on trial – a big word that I myself can't imagine, but the great missionary uttered it - the texts of all religious books, including the Holy Quran must be put on trial, in terms of the instructions and rulings they contain for the believers. There are certain issues now that are cast on the international table of debate, such as violence , terrorism and political tyranny, human rights, the status of women, the values of freedom, justice and tolerance, acceptance of the other, and how

to deal with those who are in doctrinal disagreement, among other different issues. This suggestion is much better than religious debates, or cultural ones", so this is the message that came to who? **Mr. Ahmed.** Mr. Ahmed Bahgat, sent by the councilor Doctor Gamal Al Deen Mahmoud about a statement that had been made in the Council of Islamic Research by Sheikh Abd Al Mo'ez Abd Al Sattar. As a matter of fact, such words would encourage people, at least to question or ask, not to put on trial. Of course, no one will reach the point of putting religious books on trial, but at least one would ask and have the right to be answered. We answer this call. And from this point, we discuss these texts from religious books, including the texts of the Quran, as called to do by his honor, Sheikh Abd Al Mo'ez Abd Al Sattar, and try to understand them in the light of the interpretation of the major Islamic scholars. Because someone like myself has no right to interpret and to issue judgments about matters regarding the Islamic religion, because I'm not an Islamic scholar. But we get the books that have commented on this, and passed judgments. Also the books of Sunna and prophetic tradition, and as a matter of fact, the call of Sheikh Abd Al Mo'otaz is a very bold one, though we cannot put the texts of the Quran on trial, as I said before. We are merely asking for explanations and inquiring about some of those texts. Perhaps we'd find someone who would explain them to us through sound logic that can be accepted by sober minds. Hence, I found reasonable grounds for myself to discuss, if this man calls the texts to trial and he is one of the Islamic missionaries.

**Mohamed:** *So you are not coming up with these things yourself, you're just quoting what you've read.*

**F Zakaria:** Yes, what I read. Why? Because in reality every follower of a religion must study all religions in order to be able to choose the right one. Everyone is held responsible for his own choice. We know that God created us as intelligent beings. There is a verse in the Bible that says: "I have set before you

life and death, blessing and curse, good and evil, so choose life in order to live.” Choose. So God sets several choices before man and it is up to him to search, understand, choose and decide, because he will be held responsible for his decision. But if man doesn't read, doesn't understand doesn't ask, and is not concerned then he will be like the ostrich that buried its head in the sand. The danger is imminent but it remains untroubled until it is overrun by its enemy.

***Mohamed: You mean that what is actually “Haram,” or prohibited is not to read and search the Scriptures.***

**F Zakaria:** Not just “Haram”, prohibited, it is also very dangerous. The danger lies, my dear brother, and I also address all the viewers – the danger is that one will not know anything about his life or future. Even a school boy starts to think about his future, if he’s asked: which college would you like to join? Would you like to join the faculty of arts? He’d answer. “Ah, what will I do when I graduate?” Would you like to join the faculty of law? The boy would say, “The world is full of lawyers.” You keep talking to your child until he says to you "I want to join such and such a faculty."

***Mohamed: So God gave us the freedom to think and to use the mind that He blessed us with.***

**F Zakaria:** And we are responsible for our choice. God will hold man accountable. He will not just ask whether we did good or bad. No, He will ask, “Have you chosen the right path, or not, to begin with?” The Bible says, “there is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death”. And then man would be shocked to find that he was on the wrong path.

***Mohamed: What does this mean? Can you please explain this a bit more?***



**F Zakaria:** Frankly, the privilege that God bestowed upon man, which is the intellect; man ought to invest it, not just to invest it on what he eats and drinks, but rather and most importantly to think about his eternal destiny. He is confronted with a religion that says, 'This is the true way' and another religion that says, 'That is the true way' and then a third religion that says, 'That is the right way'. Man should think, which one is the best for him, what are the privileges in each one of them. Are you following? And the most important thing is to search for the salvation of his own soul in those religions, because, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" He must look for the way that leads to salvation, to eternal life, and as the Bible says very openly and clearly, I'm here comparing religions, not evangelizing, I'm comparing religions. The Bible says "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved". "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." What is my attitude as a man who follows a certain religion and wants to reach God? What is my attitude to God's means of salvation?

***Mohamed: So what must I do to be saved?***

**F Zakaria:** This is the most vital question, what must I do to be saved? First of all, one should first try to understand, try to understand first, because when you come to make a decision without understanding, without awareness, this is simply because you are told to do so. No one can get people to do things by remote control. So he should understand first what is the right way that leads to eternal life. He should think it over, read books, discuss it with others, with people he trusts. He should search for the salvation of his soul. It is not a simple and easy matter. Before one joins a certain college, he asks the whole world.

***Mohamed: But when we ask one of the Muslim Sheikhs or Imams , “Where will I go after death,” the answer is: “God knows”. What do you have to say about that?***

**F Zakaria:** Yes, God knows, but He imparted His knowledge to man. Otherwise what would be the benefit of the books that He revealed to us?

***Mohamed: How can this be?***

**F Zakaria:** I mean read the book, as Christ said, "*Search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me*". For example, if a Muslim viewer simply reads his own book the Quran, and checks out everything that the Quran said about the person of Christ. If there is a man in the whole world that received such noble attributes as Christ did in the Quran, let him tell me who he is. Then according to the highness of Christ in His personal life, in His noble teachings, in His signs and miracles, in His goals which He came to achieve, then I must tell him. So after I study and inquire I must pray to God Himself and say to Him, "Lord, I'm lost, I'm confused, I don't know the way. Reveal the way to me, give me light, guide me. Guide me to the right way. And God must respond to man, because He promised, "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you". Man only needs to ask, after he asks, he should seek, when he seeks and God reveals, he needs to accept and believe.

***Mohamed: Then everyone must read the Scriptures and search the books in order to get to know the true God, and to ensure his eternal life***

**F Zakaria:** To know where he is going. Because God's mercy gives security to man: "By grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But the important thing is, that no one should hold on to things that he is

not sure are correct. He may have faith in something, but how do you know if it is true or not? Why don't you search? You say, "No, we've been told it's true." What do you mean? You must study, check, and inquire, and ask God, and when He reveals to you, then you must accept this revelation from God.

***Mohamed: Then it is not "Haram", or forbidden to discuss the heavenly books, and it is not forbidden to ask God Almighty about His Will for me as a man, about my personal relationship with Him, and about my eternal destiny in the afterlife?***

**F Zakaria:** This is essential. If you notice, in the past whenever someone asked any question, they would tell him, "You're an infidel and a heretic." Nowadays, they don't carry it that far, they don't call seekers infidels or heretics anymore, but they discourage questions. There was a movie; I really don't have much time to watch movies but anyway... One guy was commissioned to perform a terrorist act. This guy started to ask, "Why should I do that?" And the head of the group said, "Ali", or whatever his name was. "Ali, don't ask". This guy was a suicide bomber. He was going to commit suicide, he was going to die, he was going to blow himself up, and he is not allowed to ask what or why he was doing that? Don't ask? Just take it as it is? Ask not. This will never lead you to the way of salvation.

***Mohamed: Thank you Reverend Father. Dear viewers, we are running out of time, but I leave this verse with you. "Seek me and you shall find me as you seek me with all your hearts, says the Lord." Thank you for allowing us to visit you in your homes and meet with you in this episode. Until we meet in the next episode, when we will be talking about the concept of revelation in Christianity and also in other religions. Thank you, and we'll see you again.***