RETHINKING MUSLIM SECTARIAN MILIEU ON QUR’ÄNIC TEXT

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Abstract: Some Orientalists have taken a plea of some Shiite transmissions to prove the alteration and distortion of Qur’anic textual corpus. They have allured a chain of arguments through the various transmissions of Shiite school of thought in order to present the multiple readings of the text of the Qur’an as man-made disclosure. However, the Sunni Muslim scholars hold the view that although some Shiite literature contains a large number of reports which depict disintegration of the textual history of the Qur’an yet this is not the opinion of entire Shiite school of thought. Nevertheless, it is off course, became a helping tool for Orientalist in order to achieve their specific malicious goals and to create skeptical jerks among the Muslim mass circles regarding their sacred scripture. In this way, a dire need have emerged for re-evaluating and re-thinking these kinds of alleged transmissions both in its textual and contextual perspectives especially, when interfaith harmony and pluralistic views have been proliferated throughout the recent globe.

Key Words: Qur’anic Text, Textual Corruption, Sectarian Milieu, Shiite View of Qur’anic Text and Orientalism.

There has been a sensational discourse regarding the immaculacy of Qur’anic textual corpus among the different Muslim sectarian school of thoughts. Some old sources of Shia school of thought present a view that Qur’an has not been transmitted immaculately. Certainly, this point of view is occurred in opposite to the majority Muslim Ummah. Some Shia literature contains these sort of transmission upon which the debate of their belief has been started and possessed an atrocious situation among the various scholars of different school of thoughts.

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However, this is also an established fact that the view of distortion in the Qur’anic text has only been reported and attributed to a small group of Shia scholars. Some fundamental Shia books include such narrations in this respect for instance al-Kulainî (d. 329 A.H.) has mentioned a report:

"Ja’far bin Muhammad narrates that no one collected Qur’an except A’imma and the Qur’an which brought Ḥadrat Jibrail to Muhammad (ﷺ) was pertaining seventeen thousand verses."

Similarly, there is a narration by Imam Muhammad Baqir mentioned in Al-Kafi:

“No one has claimed among the people that Qur’an was collected as it was revealed except a liar. Only ‘Ali and A’immah after him collected and memorized it as it was revealed.”

On the base of these narrations, Orientalists deduced the theory of distortion and manipulation of the Qur’an and on the same grounds; Muslim scholars from Abl al-Sunnah have given the verdict of the defective belief of Shia school of thought.

The View Point of Contemporary Shi’a Scholars

The modern Shia scholars however, hold the view that only the subscription of these sorts of narrations in some books doesn’t mean to have belief of textual corruption. A significant number of researchers among Shia scholars don’t rectify the authenticity of all such reports specially described in Al-Kafi by Kulainî. They are not ready to accept the recognition of al-Kafi as Abl al-Sunnah give an established recognition to Al-Jami‘ al-Ṣahih by Muḥammad bin Ismā’il al-Bukhari (d. 254 A.H.). According to them, al-Kafi contains a large number of Daif and Mursal reports in it. A well-known Shia scholar Syed Hāshim Hussain asserts the view of majority of earlier Shia ‘ulamā’ and intellects.

1. إن المتقدمين لم يجمعوا على جميع الورود الكلبي جملة وتفصيلًا.
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“The earlier scholars have no consensus over all narrated reports in *al-Kāfī* by *al-Kulaini*.”

**Status of *al-Kāfī*’s Narrations:**

He presents a review of such reports and analysis of al-Kāfī’s narration as under:

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Shia critiques pursued the narrations of al-Kāfī regarding the corruption of Qur’anic text that is 300 in number. These 300 reports have been reported thorough four channels or ways:

1. Abū ‘Abd Allah Al-Sayyār
2. Younus bin Zibyān
3. Minkhal bin Jamīl Al-kūfī
4. Muhammad bin Hassan Jahūr.

All these narrators have been considered as مطعون في العدالة. Shia scholars have remarked about them as وضاع للحديث: "کذاب", "لايلتفت كل ما رواه", "فاسد "المذهب", "ضعيف في الحديث", "غال

Here we are presenting some quotations of well-known Shia scholars which remove the overall impression of the belief of Qur’ān’s corruption attributed to them. Abū Ja’far Muḥammad bin ‘AlīBabwaih Al-Qimmī known Al-Ṣadūq (d.381 A.H.) writes:

"اعتقادنا ان القرآن الذي انزل الله تعالى على نبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم هو ما بين الدفتي وهو ما في ابدي الناس ليس باكتر من ذلك ومن نسب البيا اننا نقول اكبر من ذلك فهو كاذب.

“The Qur’an is not more than collected in these two covers and whoever attributed to us the belief of some additions in this scripture, is liar.”

Al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā known as ‘Alam al-Hudā (d.436 A.H.) followed this view and the famous Shī’ite Qur’ānic scholar Abū ‘Ali al-Ṭabrāsī quoted from him and said:

As regards additions (made in Qur’an) the multitude of people deny this; and as regards the fact that something has been dropped (out of the Qur’an), a party of our scholars and the people called *al-Hashwiya* relate that the
Qur’ān has been subjected to changes, additions and subtractions. The correct position is with the religion of our scholars, which is opposed to this, and is supported by al-Murtada.”

Abū Ja‘farMuḥammad Bin ‘Alī al-Ḥassan al-Ṭūsī (d-461 A.H) describes regarding accuracy of the Qur’ānic text:

> And whether the matter in its statement and its conclusion does not belong to the one who speaks them, and even its sect, it is apparent also from the sects of Muslims outside it and its estimate from the two estimates are the great, so my going back to the rights, and the great from the points of view.

> “Any belief of addition or deletion in the text of the Qur’ān is against the Muslims faith. This is the true point of view and our (Shia) belief is the same. However, the reports regarding the alteration of Qur’ān are not reliable.”

Some Shia scholars declared all such altered verses as abrogated verses which were thrown out of Maṣāḥif. Similarly, various other clarifications have been stated by Shia scholars to refute the objection of manipulation in the text of the Qur’ān. For instance, they have put different interpretations of the objection that the Qur’ān of Shia was consisting of 90 parts and 70 yards in length.

“Faṣl al-Khiṭāb” is one of the most blazing books in presenting the narrations concerning to the distortion of Qur’ānic text. Javādal-Balāghi, criticizing on its narrations that all the reporters of this book are unreliable, weak and extremist (Ghālī) in their sect. it has been proved through a number of arguments that all the narration of “Faṣl al-Khiṭāb” are rejected (Mardūd) and unreliable. Al-Mīlānī and ‘Alī al-Ḥusainī also declare the view of al-Nūrī in ‘Fasl’as his personal view:

> I confirm what Dr. Ahmad is aware of which is the belief of the Shi’ite scholars, and those who came after him, treated his book with refutation and criticism, such as al-SayyidMuhammadḤusayn al-Shahrastānī, Shaykh Māhmūd al-‘Irāqī and those other than them. And Shaykh al-Balāghi (also) has
some discourse on this issue in the introduction of his commentary, ‘Ālā’ al-Rahmān.’ In fact, Shaykh al-Nūrī himself has explicitly admitted his singularity concerning this opinion, as it is not hidden to he who refers to his book.”

Sayyārī, who wrote a horrifying book in support of Qur’ānic distortion, ImāmKhūī expressed his views regarding the reports of this book that all narrations are Ḥaif and its author’s belief totally wrong.14

ImāmKhanizī has expressively negated the view of those people who attributed distortion of Qur’ān towards Shia school of the thought. He is of opinion that Imāmia (a Shia sect) regard the present Qur’ān as an immaculate, pure and preserved discourse of Allah. This view had remained as a belief of Shia predecessors. Sheikh Ṣadūq al-Qimpanī Says:

"اعتقادنا أن القرآن لا زيادة فيه ولا نقصة"

MuḥammadJawādMughnia writes that imāmia do not believe any of the distortion whether it relates to addition or deletion in Qur‘ān; because they have a firm belief in preservation of Qur‘ān from any defect or error. It is mostly blamed that Imāmia is of view to have belief in corruption of Qur’ānic text, which is totally wrong notion against them. The earlier and later scholars of Imāmia have asserted vividly that Qur‘ān is not except the present one in our hands. From earlier scholars he, mentions the references of Shaikh Ṣadūq, SayedMurtaḍā and Ṭūsī’s books whereas from later scholars he takes notes of Shaikh JaʿfarNajfī’s “Kashf al-Ghada”, Syed MuḥsinBaghdādi’s “Sharah al-Wafiyah”, Sheikh ‘Alī al-Kurki who wrote an article, in which he tried to prove that there has not been any addition in the Qur’ānic text and in addition to that he, gives the quotation of Shaikh JawādAl-Balāghī that there is no acceptance of such reports of manipulation in the text of Qur‘ān. Shaikh Ṣā‘īn-Balāghī stated in his books that there are a very small number of Shia scholars who unfortunately have a theory of Qur’ānic distortion.

It has been clearly observed that since the last two centuries Shia scholars are trying their best to confiscate themselves with these charged allegations. The best example is “Fajr-Islām” in which dozens of objections have been attributed against the Shiites belief, However, Muḥammad ḤussainKashifal-Ghiṭa categorically rejects these attributions and disproves any relation of Shia to such discarded notions.16 Some Shia scholars have refuted these
charges in a very intensive manner as Syed AmīrMuḥammadal-Kāzmi al-Qizwīnī has uttered his answer while addressing MahmūdShakrī Alūsī Baghdadi and criticizing his book titled “Al-Minbatal-Ilḥābiyyah” in the following statement.

"أما القول بتحريف القرآن فليس من عقائد الشيعة بل يحكمون بضلالة من يقول بتحريفه، وإنما بسبب الفهم دجالون كالألوسي وغيره من أعدائهم، فإن التابث للتضطهدهم من ماهيهم الإسلامي نفي التحريف عنه في الدين والعقل."

“The attribution of addition and deletion in the text of the Qur’ān is not from the Shiites belief. Rather, Shia scholars declare off track to those who think so. This allegation has been charged on us by Dajjāl like Alūsī.”

Al-Qizwīnī clears the genuine position of Shi’ites belief of Qur’ān in the following way.

"ويعتفون ان القرآن الكريم الموجود اليوم بابدى المسلمين هو الذي انزله الله تعالى على سيد المسلمين لم ينقص منه حرف ولم يريد فيه حرف.

“Shia hold the belief that the present Qur’ān available in the hands of Muslims is identical to which Allah Almighty revealed to Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Not even single letter has omitted nor exceeded.”

In the same context great Shia Aalim, Sheikh Mufid (d. 413 A. H.) writes in his book “al-Mesael al-Surweya” on page 78:

أنا الذي بين الدفتي من القرآن جميعه كلام الله وتنزيله، وليس فيه شيء متكلامالبشر.

“Verily what is between the two covers of the Quran its whole content is Allah’s words and revelation, there is nothing from the words of mankind in it and its entirety is the revelation of Allah”

Similarly, Abu al-Hassan Mahdi al-Khanizī has expressed the majority of Shia school of thought about all narrated reports regarding the manipulation and proposed emendations in the text of the Qur’ān. He writes:

"وحاما الأخبار الدالة عليه في بعض كتبنا فهي معدودة عندها إلا ما شدمن ضعف الأخبار وسواعطها وليس بابينا كتاب حديث يدعى ادئي عالم منا بانه قام الاجتماع على العمل به من اوله وآخره فلا نلزم بالقول بالتحريف في القرآن ولو فرض وجود خير في بعض المكتب المعتبرة كيف اذا لم يكن موجوداً إلا في شواذ الأخبار."
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The reports asserting the meaning of textual corruption in Shia literature are in a definite number and all are proved to be Shāz, Saqiṭand unreliable. No one amongst us hold the belief over it. At the same time, the availability of such narrations in our authentic books doesn’t mean that the possibility of Shāz reports is rejected.

It is now cleared with the above mentioned references that except few unreliable individuals, no one is having belief of any deletion or addition in the Qur’anic text. So, it is absolutely an erroneous methodology to take a partial view and neglect the whole original image which is a common belief of majority of Shia school of thought.

Notes and Reference

1Kulainī, Al-Kāfi (Tehran: Entisharat e IlmiyyaIslamiyya, N.D.), ch. 471, Ḥadith No. 28.
2Ibid, Kitāb Fadл-ul-Qur’ān,
3For example see Muhībud-DīnKhatîb, Al-Khuṭūṭ al-Arīdah lil-Uṣulallatī Qāma ‘alaibiDīn al-Shiāṭal-Imāmiyyah(Damascus: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1391 A.H.).
5Ibid., p. 53.
7Hashwiya, or al-Ḥashw is a contemptuous term for those among the men of Ḥadīth, who recognized the coarsely anthropomorphic traditions as genuine, without criticism and even with the kind of preference, and interpreted them literally. A few names of individuals who made themselves notorious in this way and who belonged neither to the Karrāmiya, nor to those Shi‘ī who did the same, are mentioned by al-Shahrastānī, al-Milālwa ‘l-Nihl, p. 77. See EhsanElāhī Zahir, The Shi‘ītes And TheSunnah Trans. Professor Dr. Rana M.N. EhsanElahie, (Lahore: IdarahTarjumān-al-Sunnah, ND), 175.
Kirpîvî, Tâlib Hussain, *Masa‘lah Taḥrif e Qur‘ān* (Lahore: Ja‘friya Dar al-Tablīgh, N.D.), 455, the book persist of 32 logical arguments, 232 Qur‘ānic verses, 85 Aḥādīth of Ma‘śūmin, 75 assertions of religious scholars and 2520 references, through which it is proved that Qur‘ān is absolutely beyond any addition or omission to Shiites of ‘Ali.

Ibid., pp.111-120.

Ibid., p. 456.


It should be noticed that in the beginning of this book some Orientalistic praising words have also been penned down, see Muḥammad Jawād Mughanniyah, *Al-Shi‘ah fī al-Mizān* (Beirūt: Dāral-Shurūq, N.D.), 314-315, and for more detail; Muḥammad Hussain Kashīf al-Ghīṭa, *Aṣl al-Shi‘ah wa Usulīhā* (Beirūt: Dāral-Tujjār li-Sāḥibīhā, Idib ‘Arīf al-Za‘īn, 1960), 22-27.


Ibid., p. 11