

Episode 21

The concept of abrogation

The author : Father Zakaria Boutros
The publisher: www.fatherzakaria.com

What is the meaning of Abrogation in the quran?

In fact it has two meanings: linguistic meaning and conventional meaning

The linguistic meaning is the cancellation, ablation or nullification of a verse or a verdict from the quran

And the conventional meaning was that meaning thoroughly studied by the Islamic scholars

And I am as a studier and transmitter of the knowledge without making any personal opinion in Islam will convey what was said by the Islamic scholars

1) Ibn Kathir said: narrated from ibn-Jarir commenting on the verse of The cow chapter (Surat Al-Baqarah) 106: "Whatever verse do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring a better one or Similar to it" saying: this means transforming the lawful into unlawful and the unlawful into lawful, the permissible into impermissible and the impermissible into permissible ' (1)

2) Imam Al-Nasfy said: the exegesis of abrogation "{Nasekh} is the change or the termination of its judicial adjudgment (2)

- It was mentioned in the Thunder chapter (Surat Ar-Ra'd) verse 39: "Allah blots out what He wills"

Actually that verse is adding a new meaning to the abrogation stating that God blots out the verses and the blotting in the quran is tremendous , so God abrogates or abates , and blots out or removes permanently, so it has many meaning as the annotators said

The importance of the abrogation in the quran

That's a very serious issue, as by going through the books concerning the abrogation in the quran as: the abrogator and abrogated by Hebat Allah Al-Baghdadi, deceased on 410 A.H., the abrogator and abrogated in the noble quran by Abu Gaffer Alnahas. And many other books and web sites over the internet, all of those books are stressing on the importance of the abrogator and abrogated, stating clearly that the quran could not be understood unless one is fully acquainted by the issue of the abrogation

For example if there is a legislation in the quran based on some conditions, then this legislation was abrogated, so whoever is ignorant about the occurrence of the abrogation will keep following the first legislation and he is unaware with the new one

There was a story happened with Ali bin Abe-Taleb:" one day he entered a mosque in Al-Kophah, he saw inside a man known as Abdul-Rahman bin Dab, he was a friend of Abe-Mosa Al-Asharee, the people were gathered around him in rounds, while he was preaching in the mosque , when Ali bin Abi-Taleb heard him, he didn't like his sayings , then he asked the man: Do you know about the abrogator and abrogated? He replied: No then he told him: you perished, and caused the others to perish...Then he pinched his ear, expelling him from the mosque and threatening him not to come again to the mosque" (3)

So man should be well acquainted with the abrogator and abrogated to know the rules of the quran

From where came the concept of the abrogator and abrogated in the quran?

This is very important and serious question, as there are very obvious verses in the quran speaking frankly about the existence of abrogation for some verses, the most famous of them are:

- **The cow chapter (Surat Al-Baqarah) 106:**"Whatever verse do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring a better one or Similar to it"
- **The Bees chapter (Surat An-Nahl) 101:**" And when We change a verse in place of another, and Allah knows the best of what He sends down, they say: "You are but a, liar" Nay, but most of them know not."
- **Thunder Chapter (Surat Ar-Ra'd) 39:** "Allah blots out what He wills and confirms what He wills. and with Him is the mother (origin) of the book"
- **The Pilgrimage Chapter (Surat Al-Hajj) 52**" Allah abrogates that which Satan throws in"

Those are the most famous verses confirming the existence of abrogation in the quran

For those saying that God is All-knower and He is Almighty, to do whatever He wishes,

God is Almighty, He can do whatever He wishes, but He is respecting man's mind , that he created , so He could never do what is conflicting with the mind , He may do what is superior to the mind, but never against the mind, and in the same time He is allowing us to realize the wisdom of what He did, and being a human , God gave me a mind to think and I should understand and study , He can do whatever He wishes , but not contradicting with the logic and sound reasoning , as we can realize those things and the reasons behind them

What is meant by “cause to be forgotten”?

It means that God caused the messenger to forget those verses, as in the converses it was mentioned that the prophet Muhammad, prophet of Islam was forgetting some quran verses

In Sahih Al-Bokhary (converse number 5092) "narrated Aeisha" I heard the prophet peace upon him listening to a man who was reciting a chapter from the quran by night, he said: "God's pity upon him, he reminded me by a verse so and so caused to be forgotten for me from chapter so and so"

Some say he said that he is a human so he is liable to forget things

Actually it was not mentioned in the verse that he forgot some verses, but God caused him to forget those verses

Is it possible that God caused his prophet to forget the verses He himself descended onto him???

We are asking the Islamic scholars and specialists, why God gave the prophet the verses first , then He caused him to forget them, we are not aspersing in the quran or challenging it but we are asking a question that is in the mind of many people, the Islamic books are available everywhere and we are studying to understand, so we are demanding from any eminent Al-Azhar scholar to tell us that we are mistaking , and what is the truth

- In Sahih Muslim "narrated Aeisha" the prophet (PUH) was listening to a man reciting a quran in the mosque, he said: "God's pity upon him, he reminded me by a verse that caused to be forgotten for me" (4)

- Ibn Kathir wrote: narrated ibn-Jarir, narrated Al-Hassen, his saying “the prophet (PUH) read a part of the quran, and then he forgot” and narrated Ibn Abbas “Of the revelation coming on the prophet (PUH) by night, he forgot that by the morning ' (5)

We are asking wouldn't be better for God who gave him the verses then caused him to forget them , not to give them to him from the beginning

All of those are questions needing answers for man who is respecting his mind and think to reach the truth

The problem is that people took those things as postulates; they are saying God had said, and the prophet said, without thinking

And if God caused the prophet himself to forget, then what would He do with those people who were quran memorizers?

We are waiting for answers from the respectful eminent scholars for those questions existing in the mind of people

What was meant by “a better one”?

The question which imposes itself here is: Is there a verse better than another verse? Or in other words is there something nice and something better? If it is so, we can say then that there are bad words of God, God forbids that bosh

And if there are words better than others, then why God didn't descend them from the beginning?

Is there preferability In God's revelation?

According to the quran. There is preferability in the verses, and the problem is that He says “a better one or Similar to it” so if he will bring a similar verse, then why he didn't remind him with first verse as long as the second verse is similar to it?

Those are questions that come in mind,

Then what are the words present in the conserved tablet??

That's a very big and complicated issue

What were the words written in the conserved tablet?? Were they the words who had been abrogated or caused to be forgotten?? Or were they the new words, the better words that replaced what had been abrogated by abating or forgetting?

They are all questions with no answers

Do Muslims believe in the occurrence of the abrogation?

Here are some of the Muslim jurisprudents' opinions regarding the abrogation:

- Ibn Kathir said “all Muslims agreed on the possibility of abrogation in the verdicts of God” (6)

- Imam Al-Nasfy said:” it is permissible to have abrogation in the quran and Sonnah as adding to the text or forgetting some texts from the mind (7)

- The Islamic encyclopedia, part 3, page 9900 said” the abrogation is an intentional compact Godly act, predetermined from the beginning of time” (8)

On Al-Azhar site over the internet, there is a very important article by Mr. Abdul-Fattah Mahmoud Idrees about the abrogator and abrogated, he said: most of the jurisprudence scholars agreed on the probability of the abrogation logically and its occurrence actually

- Abe Gaffer Alnahas, said:" as there are some legislations in the quran necessitated the abrogation, so the abrogation in the quran is a real issue "(9)**
 - Alnahas also said :we have to mention that the denial of abrogation in the quran is an old issue provoked by Abu Muslim Al-Asfahany (10)**
-

(1) Ibn Kathir exegesis (Tafsir) part 1, page 104

(2) Imam Al-Nasfy exegesis, part 1, page 116

(3) "the abrogator and abrogated "by Hebat Allah Al-Baghdadi, page 12

(4) Sahih Muslim, converse number 1874

(5) Ibn Kathir exegesis (Tafsir) part 1, page104

(6) Ibn Kathir exegesis (Tafsir) part 1, page 105

(7) Imam Al-Nasfy exegesis, part 1, page 116

(8) The Islamic encyclopedia, part 3, page 9900

(9) "the abrogator and abrogated "by Abe Gaffer Alnahas, page 5

(10) "the abrogator and abrogated "by Abe Gaffer Alnahas, page 7