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A Critical Review of Orientalists' Perspectives on the Compiled Qur'an

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Abstract

When we examine the scholarly work of the Orientalists, we realize that they have actually been unable to understand the true spirit of the revelation. Whether the reasons for this were their pre-determined goals or their inability to gain a true understanding of the sources of Islam, their research writings seemed to reflect the feelings of skepticism about the sources of Islam as opposed to honest attitudes while the compilation of the Qur'an has been carried out from a special angle. The Orientalists have claimed that there is no God on behalf of the Qur'an and they bring evidences from Islamic history and traditions that prove the Qur'an as a book compiled by the Prophet or the people of that time, but all these claims are denied and the arguments given by the Orientalists are rejected by the scholars of Islam. These arguments are rejected either by saying that these hadiths are weak and subjective, or they are said to be the result of a difference of understanding. The writing under review is between the arguments of the Orientalists that the Qur'an is not the source of the Qur'an and the rejection of these arguments by Islamic scholars in style of comparison.

Key Words: Quran, Orientalists, arguments, compiled, hadith.

Introduction

The Qur'an is a book revealed by Allah Almighty and Muslims claim that there is no shortage or addition of a single letter in it until today. While the Orientalists do not believe that it is the

ultimate destination of Allah and their belief is that it is from the Prophet or the Companions. It is a self-edited and arranged book.

Orientalists' objections to the Collected Qur'an and its evaluation

The Orientalists were well aware of the status and value of the Qur'an in the eyes of the Muslims, and when this book remained on the earth, the paths of prosperity were open to them. They had the ability to conquer the whole world. Therefore, this source should be presented to the world nations in such a style and form that these other books of Samaviya will not be seen at the same time.

In this regard, the Orientalists made two basic types of objections with the purpose of creating doubts about the Qur'an in the minds of Muslims.

First: The authenticity of the Qur'an

Second: Collection and editing of the Qur'an and distortion of the text

The authenticity of the Qur'an

These two objections regarding the authenticity and non-authentication of the Qur'anic text are of fundamental importance because both of them are related to the authenticity of the Qur'an. Therefore, the Orientalists establish many doubts about the Qur'an. Among them, some of the main objections are as follows:

Arthur Jeffery

Arthur Jeffrey writes:

The Quran is an Islamic scripture. It is called by the names of the Great Quran and the Holy Quran, but it is not called the Holy Quran. Some of the educated Muslims of the West of the modern era call the Quran the Holy Quran by copying the title of the Holy Bible. So what is contained in the Qur'an today is what was collected after the Holy Prophet by his followers and published as a collection of Muhammad's inspirations.¹

Montgomery Watt

Since the aim of Orientalists is to create doubt, they make claims that have no scientific basis. For example, Montgomery Watt wrote with reference to Bell:

“From an early point in his prophetic career Muhammad thought of the separate revelations he was receiving as constituting a single Qur'an. After he had been a year or two in Medina, however, he thought of them as constituting , The Book, so it was his task to produce².

Among those who call the Qur'anic text an innovation of Muhammad, Montgomery Watt appears to be the most active among Orientalists. In his objections, like other orientalists, there is prejudice and hatred towards Islam and the Qur'an, but more than that, we do not need to place his artificial environment and fictional style of reasoning in the research capital, because he has

the transferability. Apart from arguments and evidence, the attitude of "imaginary" possibilities is more important. In this regard, he criticizes great and reliable sources like the Qur'an and the Sunnah only through possibilities, for example, while denying revelation, he expresses this possibility:

“What seems to man to come from outside himself, may actually come from his unconscious”³

Montgomery Watt, casting doubt on the authenticity of the Qur'an, further writes:

It is possible that Muhammad may have met Jews and Christians and discussed religious matters with them. There were some Christian Arabs living along the border of Syria. It is possible that the Christians came to Mecca for the purpose of Arab or Yemeni Abyssinian trade or as slaves. Some of these tribes or some branches of Yan were also Christians, but despite being Christians, it is possible that they participated in the annual trade fairs of Mecca, Medina and some other places where some important tribes of Jews lived. Therefore, the possibilities of talking to such elements were certainly there. The account of Muhammad's meeting with Hazrat Khadija's Christian cousin Warqa is on the pages of history. And in the life of Muhammad, his enemies had pointed to his connections with some such elements which can be considered as the source of his inspiration.⁴

While reviewing the sources of Montgomery's books, we find that he has mostly used 'Ehrmans', Richard Bell, Bull, Goldziher, Geoffrey, Keynes, Nicholas, Noldke and Torrey in addition to Encyclopedia of Islam etc. has been used, Bukhari is definitely mentioned in its sources, but the help is taken from the French translation. In the same way, the Holy Quran has been understood by the translation of Richard Bell⁵

Goldziher:

According to the Qur'an, the religious information of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is based on two elements:

1.External 2. Internal

He writes in his book “Al-Aqeedah wal Sharia”:

The message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a complete reflection of the selected knowledge and issues that he had acquired due to his close relationship with the Jewish and Christian circles. Muhammad was greatly impressed by these ideals and thought that by them a true religious spirit could be awakened in the hearts of the sons of the country, and that these teachings which he had received from external elements, he believed to be divinely pleasing. Attainment was very important to give a new direction to the boat of life. He was so impressed by these thoughts that they became deeply rooted in his heart and through strong external influences, he transformed these ideas into beliefs in your mind and you continued to interpret these teachings as divine revelation.⁶

George Sale

George Sale ,a famous Orientalist, has also translated the Holy Qur'an, which has the status of knowledge and trust for the people of the West. He mentions the use of themes from the Old Testament to prove the Qur'an as the authorship of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that the stories contained therein are presented as facts in the Qur'an as opposed to the Bible.

He writes:

"Many of the stories (recited in the Qur'an) have been taken in part from the Old Testament or the New Testament, but even more stories have been taken from the unauthentic gospels and traditions that were prevalent among the Jews and Christians of that time. These stories are presented in the Qur'an in the form of facts as opposed to the statements of the Bible. And the Jews and Christians have been accused of distorting the Holy Book. I am sure that such statements or situations are either completely missing or very few in the Holy Qur'an that Muhammad (PBUH) presented in the beginning. As is commonly believed. Because most of these statements can be easily found in sources before the Qur'an.⁷

1. Guidance is given to Allah:

We know that these people say about you that this person is taught by a man. However, the language of the man towards whom they are pointing is a foreign language and it is pure Arabic language.⁸

2. Why didn't the Arabs object to the Passover in this era?

3. Did the Christian monk have this knowledge? If it was, why didn't he write it himself and become alive?

4. Why were the Christians of Najran amazed?

5. Why did Jewish scholars become Muslims?

6. How could an illiterate write a book?

Collection of the Qur'an

For the objections raised by the Orientalists on the safety of the Holy Qur'an, one of their methods is to prove that the Holy Qur'an did not exist in written form during the time of the Prophet. During the era of Abu Bakr Siddique, no action was taken in this regard either. Even if it happened, then the version that came into existence at that time had no status.

1. The manuscript prepared in the era of Abu Bakr Siddiq did not contain the entire Quran because the martyrs of Yamamah battle became the impetus for the preparation of this manuscript. And traditions indicate that many guardians of the Qur'an were martyred in this war. Therefore, along with these martyrs, those parts of the Qur'an were also lost.

Arthur Jeffrey states:

Tradition says that it was the slaughter of a great number of these at the battle of Yamama in 12.A.H. that caused interest to be aroused in getting all the relation material set down in permanent written form, lest with the passing away of the qurra much of it should be lost.⁹

2. The Orientalist point of view is that during the era of Siddique Akbar, the preparation of a regular manuscript was not carried out. He says that this manuscript was called al-Sahf as if it were unedited papers.¹⁰

It is possible that "the entire content of Muhammad may or may not have been found by Zayd Ibn sabit."¹¹

Lane Poole says that the Qur'an was written after the reign of Muhammad. At that time it was in loose print. Even after that, no special method was adopted in this regard.¹²

3. The Orientalists say that Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique did not organize the preparation of any official manuscript. Had this happened, this manuscript should have been officially protected, whereas we see that this manuscript went to Hazrat Hafsa.¹³

This is also the point of view of George Sale, Rodwell, Richard Bell etc. have also followed the same idea.

His argument in this regard is that if a manuscript of this type had been prepared, then after its preparation, other manuscripts should have ended, while we see that many other books were also recited. From this, he concludes that "Mushaf-e- Siddique (RA) will also be a personal version like other Mushaf."¹⁴

Arthur Jeffrey says that "Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique may have officially submitted the Qur'an, it is not without doubt". He says that it was a purely personal action, the proof of which is that other people like Salem and Abu Musa Ash'ari etc. had also collected the Qur'an. He has also described the details of other books.¹⁵ One argument has been given for the absence of an official manuscript in the era of Siddique, that if there was such a manuscript at that time, Hazrat Uthman would not have needed to prepare a manuscript.¹⁶

Arthur Geoffrey says that even after the era of Siddiq, many books were published. But all these books were incomplete. However, their writers tried their best to include as many parts of revelation as possible in their Mushaf.¹⁷

Then, giving a false color to these books, he says that after that the kingdom expanded. One or the other of these prescriptions prevailed in one or the other region. In the area where the version was considered authentic, the same version came into force.¹⁸ John Burton and Bahl mention seemingly contradictory traditions to raise doubts about the editing of the Qur'an and say that uncertain things are revealed everywhere. By creating doubt, George Sale distorts the facts and presents the results that on the one hand, the objects on which the Quran was written were unreliable and perishable, and on the other hand, the editing of the Quran was done with the help of memory. So this whole work is unreliable.¹⁹

Richard Bell takes the path of skepticism and says that Hazrat Umar had a Mushaf. Therefore, if they had a Mushaf, why did they need to write the Qur'an? ²⁰ It is as if he is doing two things at the same time, firstly, to cast doubt on the existence of Mushaf-e-Siddiq, and secondly, even after the reign of Siddique, no agreed text of the Qur'an could be prepared. John Burton's views are full of skepticism. He says that the various Musahifs that were produced were actually an attempt to obtain the Qur'an. ²¹

Regis Blacher

Regis Blacher is a French Orientalist who was born in 1900, studied in Rabat (Morocco) and received his doctorate in 1939. Later, he was appointed a professor at the Sorbonne University. ²² It is also said that Blacher continued to serve in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Regis Blacher opines that the Prophet ﷺ was not keen on writing revelations and the reasons given for this are just imaginary ideas that have nothing to do with reality. We are surprised that he does not have any documentary and historical evidence for this, nor any rationality. However, the arrangements made by the Prophet (PBUH) to record the Holy Qur'an were in no way less than the arrangements made by the Prophet (PBUH) to preserve the Qur'an through memory. The Prophet (PBUH) had initially prohibited the Companions from writing Hadith only so that the resources of the Book could be used for the Qur'an alone and the Prophet's Hadith would not be mixed with the Qur'an. ²³ Therefore, in the tradition of Sahih Muslim, the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) is narrated:

Do not ask me to write anything other than the Qur'an. He who has written something other than the Qur'an should erase it. Narrate these things verbally on my behalf, there is no harm in that. ²⁴

Distortion of the Qur'an

The following Orientalists have objected to the distortion of the Qur'an:

D. S. Margoliouth

In order to prove distortions and reductions in the Quranic text, D.S. Margolith is an Orientalist who uses the Qur'anic texts and the collection of hadiths as his evidence, which apparently can be used to present the security of the Holy Quran in a doubtful manner. Is. For example, he mentions a tradition of Musnad Ahmad which shows that some verses from Hazrat Aisha were lost. ²⁵

This hadith is mentioned in Musnad Ahmad as follows:

Hazrat Aisha says that the verse of stoning and the verse of ten feedings of a big man were revealed written on a sheet of paper under a bed in my house. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) began to suffer (death), we took care of him, one of our pets ate this paper. ²⁶

But the fact is that the verses that are mentioned in the tradition were abrogated by the consensus of the ummah. If these verses were a part of the Holy Qur'an according to Hazrat Aisha, then at least she would have remembered them, she would have recorded them in the manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an, but she did not make such an effort throughout her life. It is clear from this that for Hazrat Aisha herself, these verses had the status of a scholarly monument and like other verses of the Holy Quran, there was no arrangement for them to be recorded in the Mushaf. Therefore, there is no word on the protection of the Holy Quran from this incident.²⁷

John Burton

The famous orientalist John Burton is also notable among the orientalists who discussed the Qur'anic text. He wrote a book called "The Collection of the Qur'an" in which he has discussed in detail the collection and editing of the Qur'an and the science of copying and erasing. John Burton wrote this book to his friend Dr. Written in collaboration with J. Wansbrough.²⁸

With reference to various objections to compilation and editing, John Burton has denied the existence of the written form of the Holy Qur'an in the Testament of the Prophet ﷺ and has written in this context that:

“Its Collection was not under taken until sometimes after the death of the prophet”²⁹

In the same way, taking the help of some traditions, he takes the view that due to this non-completion state of the Qur'an, its frequency has also been affected. (i.e. I did not find the last verse of Surah Towbah) John Burton has claimed that the Qur'an is incomplete and distorted.

After compiling the tradition of Hazrat Zaid, he writes:

“All these elements predispose one to an expectation that the edition prepared by zaid might be incomplete” “The Qur'an texts which come down to us from umer,s day are unquestionably incomplete”³⁰

This theory of John Burton and other Orientalists has been established on the basis of not understanding the words of Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit. Because the meaning of Zayd's statement is that I did not find this verse in the state of writing with anyone. This does not mean that Hazrat Abu Khuzimah and the verses of Surah Al-Ahzab, besides Hazrat Khuzimah bin Thabit Ansari, did not remember the verses of Surat-e-Tawba.

It should be noted that the traditions that John Burton tries to draw conclusions about the Qur'an and its recitations by resorting to them are only those traditions that are reliable in the Islamic heritage, which are compatible with his specific thought and which are his. There are traditions on the contrary, he does not take them into account. We find this attitude of almost all Orientalists, which in the real sense is equivalent to a biased attitude in the field of knowledge and research.

Arthur Jeffery

Arthur Jeffrey's most prominent research work is the research and analysis of "Kitab al-Masahef" and the attempt to compare the Musahaf Sahaba to the Mushaf Usmani in "Materials for the History of the Text fo the Qur'an". . He also wrote two more manuscripts entitled Muqadatan fi Uloom al-Qur'an containing the editing of the Holy Qur'an and the contents of its various readings.³¹

Conclusion

Orientalists have targeted criticism of the sources of Islam in order to cast doubt on Islam. They have determined that unless the foundations of Islam are destroyed, Islam's growing power and influence will continue. The chain of publication can never be finished. Therefore, they made the Islamic sources the subject of their research. In which the Qur'an is a source that is called the source of Islamic rules and the code of life for the Day of Resurrection. To produce doubt aout the Qur'an Orientalists have tried to distort its external and internal aspects. And the two aspects are the stages of correctness and editing of the Qur'an. Because if these two sources are made doubtful, the authentic status of the Qur'an loses its health. First of all, the sources of receiving revelation from Muhammad (PBUH) have been made doubtful by them that he (PBUH) published the Qur'an in the Torah, the Bible, and the Arabs. It has been borrowed from the stories that were already circulating in the customs and society. In the same way, the stages of editing for the people who came later have been confused and confused with weak traditions and intellectual indigestion. The internal researches of Islam have also been criticized. The answers to which have been given by Islamic scholars and they have proved the authenticity of the Qur'an and that it is from Allah through strong arguments to the claims of the Orientalists.

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