

Episode 18

Nahed: Dear viewers, we welcome you again to our program: “Questions About Faith”, to answer all your questions. It’s our pleasure and honor to receive and answer all the questions you mail us. It’s also our honor to have with us, Father Zakaria Botros. You’re most welcome, Father

Father: Thank you.

Nahed: Today we resume our discussion about the impossibility of the distortion of the Bible. We’ve already spoken about the impossibility of the distortion of the Bible. First, by the testimony of the Bible of itself, second, by the testimony of the Quran to the Holy Bible, thirdly, by the scientific testimony, such as archeology, ancient manuscripts which are found everywhere, and fourthly, by logic. Today Reverend Father, we’re going to talk about another subject, which is the testimony of the Islamic scholars. There are many Islamic scholars who have testified of the Bible, that it has not been tampered with, so would you please shed some light on those testimonies?

Father: Certainly. To resume our discussion about the testimonies of the veracity of the Bible, and its freedom from distortion, we come also to the testimonies of the Islamic scholars. Among the Islamic scholars we mentioned was Imam Mohamed Ibn Ismail Al Bokhary. He said in his Saheeh, in his comment on the verse: “they lift words out of their context”, the following: “Lift words out of their context, that is, to remove the words,

but in reality no one can remove a single word from a Divine Book.” This is the reality. One can’t remove a single word from God’s Books.

Nahed: Who said that?

Father: Al Bokhary in his own Saheeh

Nahed: Which is considered the second most important book after the Quran, in terms of strength and veracity.

Father: Of course. But “lift the words”, that is, misconstrue it. It means misconstrued, with the wrong construction, which means they interpret it in the wrong sense. So the text is there and the words are there. What’s been changed is what they understand. They understand it in the wrong sense. The same author says in his book - he has another book entitled “Fath El Bary Fi Sharh Saheeh Al Bokhary”

“Ibn Taymia has been asked - he is a well known Islamic jurisprudent - about this issue of the distortion of the Holy Bible, so he answered in his legal opinion: “thus the scholars state – this was his legal opinion – that there was no alteration, except in the meaning. Alteration took place only in the meaning”. That is, the text has not been altered. The Allama Shah Walley Ellah said in his book ‘Al Fawzol Kabeer Fi Usulel Tafseer’ the following: “In the translation of the Torah and the interpretation of the texts, the Jews altered the meaning of some verses but they did not alter the original text”. Ibn Abbass also agrees to this opinion. The interpretation, and not the original text. No one could tamper with the text. Fourthly, Imam Fakhr Edin Al Razi

in his 'Tafseer Kabeer' on Surahh 2 (El Baqara) verse 174. Citing Ibn Abbass, he says: "they said that they used to alter the letter of the Torah and the Injeel, - the people said that they were changed, the letter of the Torah and in the Injeel, that is, the text. But this is impossible, because those books have already been quite well known and successively transmitted to such an extent, that renders this unfeasible. They rather concealed the interpretation. So, the meaning of alteration is to conceal the interpretation, which means they would know the true meaning, but hide or conceal it." In his commentary on Surah 3, (Al Omran) verse 78, he says: "How could it be possible to introduce distortion to the Torah despite its great renown amongst the people?" The one who claims the distortion and says that the Holy Bible has been distorted lends himself to ignorance. He neither reads nor understands. He neither studies nor knows, exactly like someone who would say the sun has not risen today, yet it's scorching hot. ***Though it has risen, and we are warmed by it. They deny the sun in broad daylight***

Nahed: They offend themselves and slight their own intelligence, first of all.

Father: He is the loser!! Here is what Al Razi says in his commentary on Surah 3 (Al Omran), verse 78: "How could it be possible to introduce distortion into the Torah despite its great renown amongst the people.?" it's already well known, how much can you change? he says again in his commentary on Surah 4 (Al Nisaa) verse 46, the following: "what is meant by 'tahreef' is the casting of spurious suspicion and corrupt construals, or

interpretation and dragging a word away from its proper sense to an improper one by means of verbal tricks, such as heretics do in this day and time, to verses which are contrary to their own belief.” That’s an example. Let’s look into Islam, how many heresies and beliefs? Isn’t that right? The Sunnis, the Sheiits, the Mo’tazilites, Al Ha’tas, and o on, hundreds of those schools.

Nahed: But here Father, is a wonderful expression: “casting of suspicion”. My Muslim brother, think of what you’re saying. This is a spurious suspicion, and you do yourself wrong.

Father: By the testimony of the books, by the testimony of their own books, ***and their scholars*** - their own scholars. He also said in his commentary ‘Addur Almonthoor’ on Surah 4. Ibn El Munther ابن المنذر and Ibn Abi Hatem ابن ابي حاتم stated in the strings of Wahab Ibn Monabeh وهب ابن منبه the following: - see how many- “the Torah and Injeel remain as God has revealed them. Not a single letter of them has been changed”

Nahed: My Lord! Ignorance, total ignorance! What a shame.

Father: What a shame. You’re right in saying they wronged themselves, because they shut themselves off from the light. He says here: “the Torah and the Injeel remain as God has revealed them. Not a single letter of them has been changed. But they err in the distortion by means of misinterpretation, by means of books that they themselves have written. They wrote them, and they say

they are from God, but they aren't from God." These are not the original books.

Nahed: Yes. External books that they wrote.

Father: Watch this conclusion! "As to the books of God, they are preserved, unchanged"

Nahed: Who's that, Father? Would you please repeat?

Father: Al Imam Al Razi in his commentary on - ***he is the chief of commentators*** - and another commentary by Al Galalayn الجالان on the comment about the verse that says: "we have sent down the Reminder and we are safeguarding it". He says that God safeguarded it from alteration, and distortion, and addition, and deletion. God preserved it from alteration, distortion, addition, and deletion. What more do you need? Now we come to Mr. Abbas Mahmoud El Aqqad, also a worthy Islamic witness. He is a scholar and author who wrote the books "The Genius of Mohamed", "The Genius of Christ", "The Genius of Omar", "The Genius of Abu Bakr" and a book called "God".

Nahed: Yes, the book entitled 'Allah'. Quite an astonishing book.

Father: Yes. He says the following in Al Helal series - I mentioned that in the previous episode, but I don't mind repeating it since it's a statement from an Islamic scholar. Al Helal series, the December issue, 1959. Whoever wants to get this issue can obtain it at Dar Al

Helal. It's the book of Al Helal, not the magazine of Al Helal. In the opening editorial, under the title "the treasures of the Qumran Valley", he said the following: "These archeological scrolls have been discovered in one of the caves of the Qumran Valley to the east of the Jordan and these scrolls date back to 2 thousand years". 2 thousand years ago! And this was in 1959, so it was 2 thousand years before that date. It is many centuries before the emergence of Islam. Islam emerged in the 7th Century, so it's 2 thousand years before the 20th century. How many centuries? "and it appeared after the preparation of the uncovered scrolls for public reading. They prepared them to be read, but the most important thing they include was a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah, the Holy Scriptures and several other sacred writings. "And that there is no change or alteration between them and the books we have now in our hands." So where does the distortion come from? We conclude the statements of the scholars by the statement of yet another scholar, who is Mr. Ahmed Amin, the Islamic author and historian who wrote 'Duhul Islam'. ضحى الاسلام In volume 1 page 358, he says: "a number of the experts of prophetic tradition, the Islamic Hadeeth, jurisprudence and theology, the science of Kalam (speech), have claimed that alteration took place in the interpretation, not in the revealed text. Which means in the exegetes, not in the original. "The proof of those people, -the reason why they say so- is that the Torah had spread to the entire world. The whole earth is full of the copies and only God knows how many copies of it there were. There were plenty. "It's impossible to conspire to alter or change all those copies. Impossible. So, not a single copy would remain on earth without alteration or

change. And the change must be consistent. They have to agree, all of them. The mind considers this preposterous and testifies to its invalidity. Could anything be clearer?

Nahed: *The testimony of the Islamic scholars, not just any scholars, the Islamic scholars.*

Father: And then an ignoramus comes and says, ‘you have tampered with the Holy Bible’

Nahed: *Well, there is a very important question, and we’re confronted by it everywhere. It is being said that the Quran abrogated the Injeel. That is, it has superseded the Bible and supplanted it. We face this question so often, Father. What do you think about this?*

Father: Based on the assumption that Islam came and superseded the religions prior to it, and the Quran must have superseded the books before it.

Nahed: *“The completer”, “The seal” and other such big words that they use.*

Father: Your question here leads me to ask several questions. Let’s take them...

Nahed: *One by one...*

Father: One by one. Well, you know, when you think about everything logically and reasonably and in depth you won’t get simply a superficial answer. *There need be a convincing answer.* It must be convincing. So I

have six questions to address such a claim. The first thing, what is the concept of abrogation نسخ in the Quranic language? What does abrogate mean? That's one thing. The second question: How can the Quran abrogate the Injeel, which it has confirmed? How could it possibly supersede it, yet it has confirmed it? They just say: it has abrogated it. Third question: How could the Quran abrogate the Injeel although it commands the prophet Mohamed and Muslims to refer to it? Question number 4: How could the Quran abrogate the Injeel although it commands the Christians to judge according to its commandments? Question 5: How could the Quran abrogate the Injeel although it has commanded people to fulfill its laws? "judge according to what God has sent down in it." "How could they choose you for a judge, although they have the Torah, in which there are the judgments of God?" And the final question: The issue of abrogating and abrogated, 'nasekh and mansokh', where does it occur? Who does it belong to? And which book could you cite?

Nahed: Well, to be honest, I've never read about abrogation in the Bible. I read it elsewhere, though. Could we retrace our steps one by one and discuss it in detail?

Father: We'll tackle now the **first point**, which is the concept of abrogation in the Quranic language. what does abrogation mean? Abrogation, to be honest, has several meanings. Would the viewers please excuse me for bombarding them with all this information? But I like to give the whole words. **Please do**. The first meaning of abrogation is removal. To abrogate something means

to remove it, and for the simple folks, to abrogate means to copy a book or transcribe it, that is, to make a copy of it.

Nahed: *Yes, make another copy. That's the simplest meaning.*

Father: And it's one possible meaning, but there are other meanings of the word abrogation, such as removal. I'll show you how; in Surah 2 (El Haj) verse 52, it says the following: "we've never sent any messenger, nor any prophet before you, unless Satan interfered with his desire, even while he desired something. God cancels - God will cancel out whatever Satan tampers with, then God will decide of his signs. God is aware and wise". Cancel out whatever Satan tampers with. That *is completely abolish it and replace it*. There's a story related to this. Shall I put it off or shall I go on and say it? I'll go ahead and say it. The two Imams Algalalan explained the intention of this verse which Al Siouty cited regarding the meaning of abrogation, that is, removal. In accordance with the verse occurring in Surah 2 (El Hajj) verse 52 which says: "We have never sent any messenger before you, nor any prophet before you, unless Satan interfered with his desire, even while he desired something. God will cancel out whatever Satan tampers with". The two Imams Algalalan explained it, saying: "the meaning of "desire" is to recite. And the meaning of "his desire" is his recitation or reading. For the prophet, may God's prayer and peace be upon him, has recited in Surah 53 (El Najm) in a gathering of the people of Quraish. He said: "have you all considered Al Lat and Al Uzza and Manat the other in third place?" Then he continued saying the following: (Satan

interfered here.) “these are the exalted semi goddesses whose intercession is to be hoped for” Al Lat and Al Uzza and Manat were idols, idols of Mecca. Are they exalted goddesses? Are they of such high status?

Nahed: *No way, of course.*

Father: And whose intercession is to be hoped for? Impossible. No way. It’s said that the people of Quraish were so happy to hear that finally their gods were honored. They now have status in intercession. And they prayed with him and prostrated themselves, and those who couldn’t prostrate themselves got some dust and rubbed it on their foreheads instead of prostrating themselves, because they were old. Then Gabriel informed him ...

Nahed: *What have you said!!!*

Father: Gabriel said: What have you said? I’ve never told you such words! Where have you gotten them from? But I already recited! Gabriel told him it was Satan who inserted that. Gabriel told him of what Satan has inserted into his recitation and therefore he grieved, so this verse was revealed in order to comfort him, to make him feel good. And they removed ‘the exalted ones’ and “whose intercession was to be hoped for” from the Quran entirely, and hence, this is removal.

Nahed: *Removal, and a replacement with something else.*

Father: Another definition, again, occurs in Surah 16 (el Nahl), that means 'replacement' where it says: Surah 16 (el Nahl), verse 101: “whenever we replace a verse by another verse God is quite aware of what he sends down. They say, you are merely an imposter. Indeed most of them do not know anything.” God is free to replace a verse by another, a section by another section. it’s all His. So it means to remove, to replace. And here’s another meaning, to shift. In Surah 8, it says towards the end, concerning the succession of inheritance from one to another. To shift the heritages; this one yes, this one no, and the last states that, and now it has shifted or switched. It can also mean to copy from one place to another, which we’ve mentioned earlier, as in copying a book. In Surah El Jassiah verse 28: “we’ve been recording whatever you have been doing” Here abrogate means 'to copy'. Isn’t that right?

Nahed: Excuse me, in order to make things clear for our viewers, we’re still talking about part 1, which is abrogation. The concept of abrogation; right? This is the first question of the six which your Reverence mentioned.

Father: O.K. Now, shall we go to the second question?

Nahed: You asked, how could the Quran abrogate the Injeel, although it has confirmed it? What do you mean by that ?

Father: As a matter of fact, I pity any Muslim who utters such a thing because it proves that he hasn’t studied his own Quran. ***Unfortunately, and we know it’s***

a fact. So this plight, and that's why he utters words without knowing their implications. He's challenging his own Quran as false. For instance, in Surah 10 (Younis) verse 37 it says the following: "this Quran was not invented by anyone except God, but it exists as a confirmation from the Lord of the universe for what he already has, and serves as an analysis of the Book which contains no doubt" confirmation for what he already has- That is, a confirmation for the Torah and Injeel. And in Surah 5 (El maida) verse 46: "We've sent you down the Book with the truth to confirm what was already there from the previous Book, and to safeguard it." Again, confirming. How could it have endorsed something that had already been abrogated? Surah 6 (Al Anaam) verse 92: "this is a blessed book we have sent down to confirm what came before it" and in Surah 35 (Fater) verse 31: "What we have revealed to you from the book is the truth confirming what has preceded it" and in Surah 46(elahqaf) verse 12: "We've just heard a book sent down after Moses to confirm what came before it", and in Surah 12 (Youssef) verse 11: "It's not some report which has been invented, but confirmation of what has existed previously" Surah 2 (Al Baqara) verse 91: "It's the truth confirming what they already have" and in Surah 2(Al Baqara) verse 97: "He has brought it down for your heart with God's permission to confirm what came before it", and Surah 3 (Al Omran) verse 3: "He has sent down the book to you with the truth to confirm whatever existed before it." and in Imam Baydawi's commentary on these words he says: "The Quran came as a confirmation, namely identical to the Divine Books prior to it whose veracity is well attested, for it testifies to its authenticity." These are not my own words, as you

or the viewers may think, that he finishes his words by: "identical to the Divine Books prior to it".

Nahed: Would you please repeat the reference so our beloved ones would refer to it.

Father: Yes. The commentary of Imam Baidawy on this verse "to confirm whatever existed before it". He says: 'the Quran came as a confirmation that is identical to the Divine Books prior to it whose veracity is well attested, for it testifies to their authenticity'. It has neither said that it abrogates them nor cancels them, but rather confirming them, namely ...

Nahed: This question has absolutely no room now. It's really weird. I have no idea where they come up with that.

Father: Well, perhaps it's on account of the abrogation of the Quran. They may believe that the verses that come later abrogate the ones that come before them, so the later verses would abrogate the earlier ones. Hence, the Quran that came later would abrogate the words that came before it. This is based on a specific Islamic thought.

Nahed: You said, how could the Quran abrogate the Injeel, although it commands Mohamed and Muslims to refer to it. And you said, how could the Quran abrogate the Injeel, although it commands both Christians and Jews to judge according to what God sent down in it?

Father: Exactly. ***Please go ahead.*** It's very evident from the Quranic verses that the Quran advises Mohamed to fall back on the Injeel and the Torah. So in Surah 10 (Younis) verse 94 it says: "If you were in any doubt concerning what we have sent down to you - namely if you have doubts about the Quran - then ask those who have read the Book before you". ***Of course, there's no other alternative except the Jews and the Christians.*** So, had it been abrogated or abolished He would not have told him to refer to them. He even commanded him to use the Bible and the prophets as an example. In Surah 6 (Al Anaam) verse 90: "those are the ones to whom we have given the book along with discretion and prophethood. Such are the ones whom God has guided, so copy their guidance". That's follow their example. He also commanded him to refer to the reminder: "Ask then the people of the reminder if you do not know", but in Surah 16 (El Nahl) verse 43, how would he ask them then? And the prophet Mohamed himself testified to the Torah and the Injeel in Surah 28 (Al Qassas) verse 49: "Say, bring a book from God's presence which would be a better guide than either of them so I may follow it" ***A better guide than either of them, the Torah and the Injeel.*** If they had been abrogated, how would he follow them?

Nahed: ***And there is nothing better than them. O.K. Now there's an urgent question, although we are at the end of our session and I'm sure it'll take up a whole session by itself: What did you mean by your statement: "which book is singled out for abrogation"?***

Father: Yes. Well, I believe I should deal with something before this, and I believe that the abrogating and the abrogated requires a whole session by itself. ***Well, several sessions to be honest. Just one would not be enough.*** One will be enough. I would like to deal with something little here. How could the Quran have abrogated the Injeel, although it has commanded the people of the book to judge according to its revelation? In Surah 2 (Al Baqara) verse 212: “mankind was once one nation, so God dispatched prophets as heralds and warners. He sent the book down along with them to bring the truth so as to decide among mankind concerning whatever they had been disagreeing about”. He sent down along with them. And in Surah 5 (Al Maida) verse 68 it says: “People of the Book, you will not make any point until you keep up the Torah and the Gospel”. So had they been abrogated, how could they be commanded to keep them up? And in Surah 5 (El Maida) verse 44: “We have sent down the Torah containing guidance and light. The Rabbis and scholars judge by means of it.” Had it been abrogated, this would have been removed.

Nahed: If you'd excuse me. Because of the time of the program, we have to stop the discussion now. And the Lord's willing, next session we'll be talking about a very important topic, which is the abrogation.

My dear viewers, be sure that we love you and have your interest in mind. If you want a Bible or any religious book, please mail us at the address which will appear on the screen at end of the session, and we'll be sure to send it to you. Thank you, till we meet again.