

Episode 25

The abrogation continued5+the preserved tablet

Mohamed: *My dear viewers, we welcome you again to our program, "Questions About Faith". I would like to start the program with quoting what the prophet David, may God's peace be upon him, had said, "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their cry." I pray, ask and my petition is, this time, "Lord, let the light of Your face shine upon us and help us know the truth, for we know that You are omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent."*

We also welcome our honorable guest, Reverend Zakaria. Thank you for being with us, and we have received so many questions this time. And this is going to be the last episode talking about the issue of abrogation in the Quran. The question that has been most often repeated for this time is, "What is the danger of abrogation to the Quran and to Islam as well?"

F Zakaria: I believe this is the crux of the matter, because I had many encounters with several beloved Muslims and started a dialogue with them about this issue. But their response was indifferent. They would say, "This is an insignificant issue; it has no significance at all in Islam or the Quran." How can you say insignificant? I personally think that it is a very serious issue, extremely serious. I myself know at least five dangers this issue poses to the Quran and to Islam.

The first danger is: the contradiction between the idea of abrogation; replacement and erasing, with God's foreknowledge. God has knowledge of events before they take place, but if God keeps on changing His words every now and then, had He not known from the beginning how things would end up? And then He would tell them as they would happen. So to say about God, that every now and then He changes His words, and abrogates previous words and replaces them with new ones...

Mohamed: *God forbid.*

F Zakaria: It brings to question one of the greatest attributes of God, namely that He is omniscient. Then they say this has to do with revealing things gradually, so that people would grasp them bit by bit. Gradually? God gives everything in utter perfection. It is man who tries to reach that, step by step. But God gives a standard of perfection. He is the source of the law of perfection. But for man to reach that perfection step by step, it is up to him, but it isn't God who would say something and then say, "No, this was wrong. This one I abrogated last night. I'm giving a better one." This discussion poses a great danger. This is the first point.

The second point, or rather the second danger we should take notice of, is the contradiction between the concept of abrogation, and a very important verse in the Quran. It is in Surah 15 (Al Hijr) verse 9. It reads: "We ourselves have sent down the reminder, and we are safeguarding it". Since God Almighty preserves the reminder, how can some parts of it be forgotten? Not just simply forgotten, no, but He caused them to be forgotten? So is God preserving it, or causing it to be forgotten? "Whatever verse we cancel or cause it to be forgotten". "Cancel" means to abolish or annul. How then is it preserved? If God causes it to be forgotten, how then is it preserved? This isn't really that simple, for the Muslim to take it casually to relieve his conscience. He says. "This is trivial and of no serious impact." How can he say that? It strikes faith at the root. Faith in God, faith in God's attributes, faith in God's foreknowledge, faith in God's might and power to preserve His own words, and to not let them be lost or forgotten. So regarding this brother who tells me that this is an insignificant issue: It is either one of two things. Either he is numbing his own conscience, or he knows the seriousness and gravity involved, but doesn't want to appear shaky or to admit that there is something so serious. In case of him numbing his conscience, then it is a disaster.

Mohamed: *I recall a Biblical verse that says;" My people perish because of the lack of knowledge."*

F Zakaria: And if this Muslim is trying to fool people by saying that, then it is not merely a disaster, it is a catastrophe. Do you see my point? So, the first danger is bringing God's attributes to question, especially the attribute of ... *God's omniscience*, God's absolute knowledge. And the second danger is that this goes against God's omnipotence, to preserve His words.

Mohamed: *And He is omnipotent, may He be praised and exalted*

F Zakaria: He's omnipotent.

F Zakaria: Alright then. This brings us to the third danger. And as a matter of fact, I like this point very, very much. This came from a Professor Doctor, his name is Prof. Dr. Abd El Fattah Mahmood Idrees. This professor wrote an article on abrogation in Al Azhar's website, on the internet. This is what he said word for word. He said: "Another extreme danger is that the Quran has been described as a book whose verses were made perfect. And perfection or accuracy is incompatible with abrogation."

Mohamed: *The opposite of abrogation.*

F Zakaria: I'm still quoting the man. "Perfection is incompatible with abrogation. Abrogation is also incompatible with things that are acceptable to the mind, that is, contradictory to the glory of God, as it shows hesitation and doubt in the rulings that God gave. So how can you say the Quranic verses were made perfect? If they had been perfect, they could not have been changed.

Mohamed: *Is this article still on the internet now, if I want to check it out for myself? Can I see it and read it with my own eyes?*

F Zakaria: Well, right now, as the viewer is watching me, just turn on your computer; open the Internet Explorer and type www. Alazhar.com

Mohamed: *So you mean this is the official internet homepage of Al Azhar? And this article is there.*

F Zakaria: But there are 2 websites for Azhar. The first is Al Azhar; H A R, and this has

Mohamed: *This has nothing to do with Al Azhar.*

F Zakaria: Well it has to do with it, but it has to do with the buildings, and these things. It's different. But Azhar with H R only is the one. Al Azhar without the a.

Mohamed: *Thank you for the clarification.*

F Zakaria: Go to the section that says "Islamic concepts," and type in your search –"Al Naskh" or "abrogation", and this article of this man will come up, and you would be able to read it. So these are three extreme dangers. Now we have two more left. The fourth one is, and one I would like to draw your attention to, has to do with the preserved tablet. This preserved tablet which is from eternity past. The Quran says: "An evident or clear book in a preserved tablet." This preserved tablet, I wonder, includes the abrogating verses or the abrogated ones? Or does it combine both? I mean, God is from eternity past and the preserved tablet is from eternity past. Does it have both? Or one of them only? And here we have many opinions. I have researched much because this is a debate. I respect the intellect.

Mohamed: *What you say contradicts or negates abrogation.*

F Zakaria: The preserved tablet does. Let's hear this please. Al Qurtubi says in his comment on Surah 13 (el Ra'ad) verse 39, "God erases whatever He wishes, He retains the mother of the book." He erases and He still has the mother of the book. Al Qurtubi tries to explain this by saying, "the mother of the book is the preserved tablet." And he adds the following: "which is unchangeable and unalterable?" Oh, so what is it then, that has been abrogated, since the preserved tablet is unchangeable and unalterable. This preserved tablet belongs to God. Don't they claim that this is God's?

And it is unchangeable and unalterable, so what is it then that was changed and altered? A huge question mark. So is this significant to us, or to the Muslim, or not? A very serious problem.

Mohamed: *This is truly a very serious question.*

F Zakaria: Yes, absolutely. Again, another one. Al Qurtubi himself goes on to say the following, "and it has been said that it underwent replacement or alteration". So, he says it is unchangeable and unalterable, and in the same breath, says that it underwent alteration. Would you please decide on something? The problem of Islamic books, my dear friend, is that they tell you the opinion and then they tell you the exact opposite. And then they conclude the whole discussion, saying that only God knows. We know that God knows, but we want to hear something from God. So this is a problematic issue. Watch this. Al Tabari, who is considered the master commentator, in his commentary on the same verse, says: "the book is actually two books, a book from which God erases whatever he wishes and establishes too, and the other book is the mother of the book." Do you see how these justifications bring you into more trouble? Does that mean that God has two separate copies? An old one and an updated or amended one? This will cause people to talk in a way that.... Is it inconceivable? This issue is very serious, and I wonder if it has any solution. It's a big problem. Now to

the final danger. We have already mentioned four. The first contradicts God's omniscience, another contradicts God's omnipotence, and the third one contradicts what? I have just mentioned it.

Mohamed: *You mentioned a book whose verses were made perfect?*

F Zakaria: Yes, you're right. Perfection. Is it not perfection, then? Then the final one is the preserved tablet. And number five is the contradiction between this verse that talks about abrogation and "causing to be forgotten", with the most dangerous verse in this respect. It is in Surah 4 (**Al Nesaa**) verse 82, talking about the Quran, it says – a challenge. It says: "If it had come from any other source than God, they would have found a great deal of contradiction in it." Had it not been from God. Look, here there is a condition and an apodosis. The condition is that it has come from a source other than God... ***They would have found contradiction in it.*** The apodosis is: they would have found much contradiction in it. Alright then. According to the testimony of the Islamic scholars of the science of abrogation, we found 71 Surahs containing contradictions. These 71 Surahs represent 62.28% of the entire Quran.

Mohamed: 62%.

F Zakaria: 62%, and even more

Mohamed: *Containing contradictions!!*

F Zakaria: Right, containing contradictions. Isn't that considered a great deal of contradiction? Isn't that a lot? This is way too much. Here is the apodosis, and it poses a very, very urgent question that addresses every thinker, who respects his own mind. When you hear the conditional clause, and the apodosis is 'yes', we have a great deal of contradiction. This is by the testimony of the experts of abrogation, so since there is a great deal of contradiction, where does this book come from? I

will leave it up to the intelligence of the viewers so that they might not accuse us if trying to undermine the faith of the believers. All I desire is for man to think, and see where he is stepping. Is he on the rock? The Lord Jesus Christ made this beautiful statement. He said, "I compare the one who hears my words and acts upon them to a man who built his house on the rock."

Mohamed: *Yes, very good.*

F Zakaria: Yes, on the rock, Strong, immoveable. The storms and the tornados, the waves come over it but, it stands unshaken. However, the man who builds his house on the sand will shake and fall at the least bit of wind. My question is to my beloved Muslims: on what foundation do you build your faith? Is it steadfast, or shaky? My dear friend, we are talking about eternal life here. And I'm saying the same thing to the viewers. Man's life is more precious than anything else in the world. The Bible says, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself lost?" Your soul is very precious. Where will you go after you die? You should know your destination. Are you going to the unknown? Only hoping and wishing? Not knowing exactly, but following anything you hear?

Mohamed: *You are talking as if you know where you are going after death.*

F Zakaria: The Lord Jesus Christ has clearly set the way to salvation and eternal life. And by the mercy of God and the grace of Christ we have eternal life. If not, then why did Christ come? Isn't that right? That's why I would like to say to my beloved Muslims, I would like to call all my beloved Muslim brothers at the end of this long explanation of the issue of abrogation in the Quran, which is one of the most serious issues in Islam, and must not be ignored. One must not act like the ostrich, which buries its head in the sand as if there is no problem, until the hunter comes and then comes serious danger.

I call upon any Islamic scholar to explain these problematic issues as serious as they are, which has been touched upon by the Caireen magazine “Al Usboo’a” which says, "The Quran contradicts itself." This is its own conclusion, from the discussion about the abrogating and the abrogated verses, that the Quran contradicts itself and undermines its own implications and fundamentals at the deepest level.

Mohamed: *Who said so?*

F Zakaria: Amr Nassef in the Caireen magazine “Al Usboo’a”, in the 19th January 2004 issue. He wrote this article as a result of watching the first episodes of our program on Al Hayat TV. He said, “The conclusion of the discussion on abrogation leads to the fact that the Quran contradicts itself and undermines its own contents and fundamentals at the deepest level.” I can only pray that God would open the minds and enlighten the hearts and change them, so that people would know the truth. And the truth is more precious than anything else. Christ said, "And you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free." So my prayer from the depth of my heart, is that my dear Muslims would think about the salvation of their souls and their eternal life, “so that they may have life and have it more abundantly.” “Search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life.” Search. For example, the person of Jesus in the Quran has been described with such noble attributes that have never been used to describe anyone else. Why doesn't he get to know Christ through the Quran? Check out His character, His life. The Quran says, Christ creates a bird out of mud , He heals the one born blind and the leper, He raises the dead. And according to their own testimony, He is not in a grave on earth, but the Quran says that God lifted Him up. The issue about His crucifixion and about His likeness being cast on others, we have discussed this issue thoroughly in the first program. But at least ask, where is He now? And where are others now? So who does man follow to open his eyes, and his heart, and take him to where He is? I hope that your program would have enough time for us to lift up

a prayer for our beloved Muslims. Please, before you finish the program, I would love to pray for my brethren, the viewers of these episodes.

Mohamed: *Yes. We thank you for these ideas and facts which might change the roots of knowledge for many people. And I pray to God that He would show us the truth. And everyone who seeks God. God is a loving God; He loves His creation and the dearest to Him among His creation is man. So I agree with you on this issue. And let's pray together to God.*

F Zakaria: Have we got a lot of time for prayer? How much time left?

Mohamed: *We still have 5 minutes, so you can continue if you like.*

F Zakaria: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, amen. You who loved mankind and said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness I have drawn you." Oh God, Your eyes follow us from the beginning of the year till its end. You who desire that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. O God, You who open Your embrace to us and manifest Your deep love to us, and whenever any of us would come to You and repent, You forgive him all his sins. I pray to You, O God, in this program, that all its viewers would encounter you. Touch the hearts, O Lord: Make Your way known to all, Master. Let everyone enjoy Your salvation and grace. Open the eyes of everyone. Touch their hearts that they might be set aflame with love to You, God. O God, You have loved us generously. We did not deserve any love because of our sinfulness, but You loved us Lord, generously, and extended Your mercy to us. I ask for a blessing, Lord, for every soul that watches and hears, so that they might come to know You. Lord, make the light of Your knowledge shine upon all hearts, so that Your Name might be glorified, and that all souls will receive blessing and

salvation. Lord, remember all those who labor so hard for this program. Lord, I pray that You visit them with every spiritual blessing. To You be all the glory and honor from now until the end of ages. Amen.

Mohamed: Amen.

My dear viewers I can only say at this time, "and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." This is my prayer for you at this time. I prayed to God, many years ago. I went to Mecca, I sat down at the feet of the Ka'aba and I prayed saying "O ALLAH, You are the truth and I want to know You. And in fact, God Most High spoke to my heart by the Holy Spirit and spoke to my mind and showed me the Truth. My prayer at the moment for you, if you don't have an answer to many questions that you're asking, or if this program has truly aroused many, I pray that you would lift up your heart now to God and ask for His salvation from sin because we are separated from God on account of our sins and we are spiritually dead. If you want to be reconciled to God, speak to God from your heart and I ask the Reverend Father right now to give us a final word. We do not want to hurt the feelings of anyone at all, or to criticize, but I know that it is God's will to reveal Biblical truth.

Please, go ahead.

F Zakaria: My dear viewers, I'm very happy for these interviews and I hope that they have aroused in the mind of everyone the interest to search, and search again in order to know the truth. Read your Quran in depth, carefully, and with an open mind. Read any commentaries you like, also with an open mind. Do not take things for granted and give in to those who believe you do not need to understand and you should take things as they are. Dear brother, God gave you a mind to use, and in eternity he will ask you, "How did you think about these matters?" How did you think about these matters, and why haven't you asked anyone? Why didn't you acquire knowledge? Why haven't you searched in order to reach the truth? This is my

prayer and this is my request of you, dear viewers, and I thank you for following these programs, until we meet again if the Lord so wills. I thank you also very much for allowing me to be here, and for this program.

Mohamed: My dear viewers, at the conclusion I would like to repeat what the prophet David said. "Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You, let them ever shout for joy because you defend them. Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For you, O Lord will bless the righteous, With favor You will surround him as with a shield."

We have been talking in the previous episodes about abrogation, and we still have more interviews to come where we will be talking about other topics related to condemnation and salvation and the writing of people's names in the Book of Life of God Most High.

Again, we welcome all your questions. Thank you very much. Till we meet again.

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