

## **Civil Religion and Its Significance in Modern Socio-Political Structure**

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Although modern thinkers have discarded religion but they were influenced by its organizational nature. So they had to study religion from socio-political perspective, these philosophers or thinkers given a new outlook to that aspect of religion which can bring about unity, discipline and socio-political integration in a modern nation state. This idea later on took the shape of a new religion which is named "Civil Religion." This new religion is based on empiricism. Durkheim who was an atheist branded religion as social phenomena in the same back ground. He further propounded the theory of "functional equivalents." So he enunciated the theory of Civil Religion.

### **Determination of "Civil Religion" Concept:**

A paradigm shift was brought about by renaissance and reformation in the man's way of thinking. Prior to renaissance and reformation, the ideas and thoughts of man were based on revelation. It was the staunch belief of the man that this universe is made by Allah the Almighty and all phenomenon of nature by his command. Man also believed in spirit, angels and the life hereafter which depends on the deeds of man. But after reformation this idea of life changed out rightly, and materialistic approach was given priority at the expense of spiritualism. Now society sought secular and philosophical foundation and religion became personal matter of the man.

The man did away with the metaphysical basis of knowledge and empiricism was made the foundation of his knowledge. Hereafter was scarified at the altar of these worldly pleasures.

This shift in man's thinking influenced religion, politics, society and history to the greater extent.

On October 31, 1517 A.D Martin Luther wrote his thesis which contained objections over church, and in this way he declared independence from the church or religion. His thesis enabled people to decide the things according to their own whims and wishes, unlike traditional method in which religion had prime authority. Consequently, those moral standards which were derived

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- <sup>7</sup> Al-Daudi. *Tabaqat al-Mufasssirin*, 2: 315.
- <sup>8</sup> . Ibn al-'Ibad. *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 3: 118.
- <sup>9</sup> . Da'irah-e-Ma'arif-e-Islamiyah, 10: 487.
- <sup>10</sup> *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, 19: 128.
- <sup>11</sup> Zayd al-Khayl (d. 9 A.H./ 630 A.D.) came to the Prophet and embraced Islam. The Prophet called him "Zayd al-Khayr." On his return from Madinah, he died on the way (*Sirah ibn Hisham*, 2: 577, 578. *Usd al-Ghabah* 1: 477).
- <sup>12</sup> Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, 19: 128-129.
- <sup>13</sup> . *Ibid*, 127
- <sup>14</sup> . *Ibid*.
- <sup>15</sup> . *Ibid*.
- <sup>16</sup> *Bughyatul-Wu'at*, 2: 280; *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 3: 119.
- <sup>17</sup> . *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 3: 119.
- <sup>18</sup> . *Ibid*, 3: 120; *Urdu Da'irah-e-Ma'arif-e-Islamiyah*, 10: 487
- <sup>19</sup> In Arabic it is called Jorjania, which is corrupt form Gorgang (Yaqut, *Mu'jam*, sv "Jurjania") Also *Wafayat al-A'yan*, 5: 170.
- <sup>20</sup> . Al-Dhahabi, *Al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirin*, 1: 431.
- <sup>21</sup> . *Wafayat al-A'yan*, 5: 173.
- <sup>22</sup> Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf's* introduction.
- <sup>23</sup> . *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, 19: 129; *Kashf al-Zunun*, 2: 173.
- <sup>24</sup> Al-Dhahabi, *Al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirin*, 1: 441.
- <sup>25</sup> . *ibid*, 436-37.
- <sup>26</sup> Al-Zurqani, *Manahil al-'Irfan*.
- <sup>27</sup> He is Ahmad ibn Mansoor al-Maliki, Chief Justice of Alexandria. In his works he has actually targeted Zamakhshari's mu'tazilite thoughts. In his words, "thank to Allah Who helped me to take revenge for Ahl al-Sunnah from the innovators" (Hariri, *Tarikh Tafsir wa Mufasssirin*, p. 348).
- <sup>28</sup> . *Al-Bahr al-Muhit*, 7: 85.
- <sup>29</sup> . He was Abu Bishr 'Amr ibn Uthman ibn Qunber, known as Sibawayh. He was born in al-Bayda', a suburb of Shiraz, in 148 AH. He came to Baghdad and studied grammar with Shaikh Salama. But to become a master in the field of syntax, he studied with al-Khalil, 'Isa ibn 'Umar and Yunus ibn Habib. He studied literature with al-Akhfash. Thus he became the leader of philologists and the first who expended the science of grammar. He died in 180 AH at Sawa or Shiraz (al-Zirikli, *Wafayat al-A'yan*, vol.3: Kahhalah, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin*; Mudarris, *Rehanatul Adab*, vol.3 etc).
- <sup>30</sup> Urdu Da'irah al-Ma'arif Islamiyah, 10: 488. Also *Wafayat al-A'yan*, 5: 169.
- <sup>31</sup> . He was Abu al-Baqa Muwaffaq al-Din Ya'ish ibn Ali ibn Ya'ish al-Nahawi (d. 643 AH/ 1245 AD). He was one of famous grammarians.
- <sup>32</sup> . *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, 19:130
- <sup>33</sup> . *Ibid*, 131.
- <sup>34</sup> . *Ibid*, 130-31.
- <sup>35</sup> . *Ibid*, 129.
- <sup>36</sup> . *ibid*.
- <sup>37</sup> . *Tabaqat al-Mufasssirin*, p.316.
- <sup>38</sup> *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 3: 120

**MAWA'IZ (Religious Exhortation)**

Zamakhshari has several dialogues, carrying moral lessons. These dialogues are known as *Nawabigh al-Kalim*. These are also called *Muqamat*, as well as *Nasaa'ih al-Kubra*. The author begins them with "*Ya Aba al-Qasim*".

**STORIES**

Abu al-Qasim has two compilations of stories.

1. *Fusus al-Akhbar*.

2. *Rabi' al-Abrar*.

**FIQH**

*Ru'oos al-Musa'il* is book of fiqh.

In brief, Zamakhshari Jarullah Mahmood's scholarly writing is still blooming. His *tafsir* is criterion to understand deep meaning of the Quran, its similes, metaphors and proverbs. Asas al-Baslaghah and al-Mufassal and other works regarding to understand Arabic language are still providing guidance to scholars. He has contributed a lot in advancement of knowledg

**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup> . Mu'tazillah means 'those who separate themselves, who stand aside.' This religious movement was found at Basrah, in the first half of the 2nd/ 8th century by Wasil ibn 'Ata' (d. 131/ 748). This doctrine is based on five principles: (i) Uniqueness of God; (ii) Justice of God; (iii) the promise and the threat [that every Muslim, guilty of serious offence, who dies without repentance, will suffer for eternity the torments of Hell]; (iv) the theory of an "intermediate state", that the sinful Muslim cannot here on earth be classified as "believer" or as "disbeliever" but would belong to a separate category that of the malefactor; and (v) the obligation on every Muslim to command the good and forbid the evil (*El* 7, s.v. Mu'tazilla).

<sup>2</sup> . Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayaat al-A'yan*, Qum: Manshurat al-Radi, 1324: 5: 168.

<sup>3</sup> . . *Da'irah-e-Ma'arif Islamiyah*, Danishgah-e-Punjab, Lahore, 10: 487.

b. M. Husayn al-Dhahabi, Dr. *al-Tafsir wa Mufasssirun*, Beirut: Dar al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam, 1: 278.

c) *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, Beirut: Dar Ahiya' al-Turath al-Arabia, ND: 19: 127;

d) Ibn al-'Imad al-Hanbali, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, Beirut: Dar al-Aafaq al-Jadidah, 3: 121.

e) Al-Sam'ani, *al-Ansab*, 3: 164; f) Muhammad Husayn al-Dhabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*, 1: 429;

g) Hafiz Shamsud Din al-Da'udi, *Tabaqat al-Mufasssirin*, 2: 315 etc.

<sup>4</sup> . Jalal ud-Din 'Abdur Rahman al-Suyuti, *Bughyatul Wu'at fi Tabaqat al-Lughwiyyin wa al-Nuhat*, Ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, Matba' Isa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Shuraka'uh, 2: 279.

<sup>5</sup> . *Da'irah-e-Ma'arif-e-Islamiyah*, 10: 487.

<sup>6</sup> *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, 2: 127.

3. A dog succeeded when he loved people of the Cave. How could I be misfortunate if I express my love to the family of the Prophet?

Ibn Khallikan says that at Halb, someone of the scholars, sung some verses to me and told that Zamakhshari had commandment that after his death these verses should be written down on his tomb. These verses are:

الهي قد اصبحت ضيفك في الثرى<sup>37</sup> ولضيف حق عند كل كريم  
فهب لذنوبي في قرأى فانها عظيم ولا يقرى<sup>37</sup> بنير عظيم

Oh my God! I have to be Your guest in soil,

And a guest has the right with every noble (to be entertained).

Therefore, forgive my sins in my hospitality because these (sins)

Are tremendous and cannot be tackled without the help of All Mighty.

Jarullah Zamakhshari has elegiac verses that he composed on the death of his teacher Abu Mudar. In these verses he says:

A narrator said what these pearl are, dropping continuously from your eyes?

I told, these are the pearls that had dropped Abu Mudar in my ears,

dropping now through my eyes.<sup>38</sup>

Other than that, Jarullah Mahmood has an explanation of poetic verses used by Sibawayh, in his book. This explanation is called *Sharh Ahyat Kitabu Sibawayh*. He has also an explanation of al-Shanfara's qasidah.

#### **HADITH WORKS**

In hadith literature, the author has three books.

1. *Kitab al-Fa'iq*. It is a dictionary to understand hadith vocabulary. It has been published from Hayderabad in 1334 A.H.
2. *Mukhtasar al-Muwafaqah Bayna Aal al-Bayt wa al-Sahabah*
3. *Khasa'is al-'Asharah al-Kiram al-Bararah*.

#### **USUL:**

Jarullah Mahmood had two books in this field:

1. *Mu'jam al-Hudud*.
2. *Al-Minhaj*

#### **PROSODY**

In prosody, Zamakhshari's work is called *al-Qistas fi al-'Urud*.

ما لعلماء سوء جمعوا عزائر الشرع و دونوها، ثم رخصوا فيها لامراء سوء و  
هونوها، -- ليقمروا المال و ييسروا، و يقفروا الايتام و يوسروا، اكمام واسعة، فيها  
اصلال لاسعة، و اقلام كانهما ازلام، و فتوى يعمل بها الجاهل فيتوى.<sup>34</sup>

Trans. 'What happened to the evil scholars? They gathered together to resolve religious issues and wrote them down. Then they soften them for evil rulers and degraded it. Infact they preserved it and then suspended it...just to gamble and play game of chance with, to put the orphans in need and prosper their selves. Their long sleeves bear biting vipers. Their pens are just like arrows without head and feathers. As for their *fatwa*, when an ignorant person act upon them, he perishes.'

### AS A POET

Beside other qualities, Zamakhshari was a poet. His collection of poetry is called *Diwan al-Sh'ir*. It has been published from Cairo. Some scattered parts could be found in different books. His poetry is meaningful and beautiful. Some of his poetry is presented here:

المعز للرحمان جل جلاله و سواه في جهلاته يتغمفر  
مال التراب و للمعلوم وانما يسمى 'ليعلم انه لا يعلم'<sup>35</sup>

1. Knowledge is with the most Merciful and the Exalted.  
Other than Him just mutters in their ignorance.
2. What is the association of dust (man) with sciences? He is just struggling to know, because he does not know.

At other place Zamakhshari expresses his love to the family of the Prophet. But this love is logical, not a blind one. He says:

كثر الشك و الخلاف و كل يدعي الفوز بالصراط السوي  
فاعتصموا ببلا اله سواه ثم حى لاحمد و على  
فاز كلب بحب اصحك هف كيف اشقى بحب آل نبى!<sup>36</sup>

1. Doubts and disagreement rose a great deal. Everyone claims he succeeded to find the right path.
2. My attachment is to the One, and there is no god but He. After that my love is dedicated to Ahmad and Ali.

published respectively from Egypt and Luckhnow, in 1299 and 1341 A. H.

ii) *Al-Durr al-Da'ir* is a collection of metaphors and similes of the Arabs.

iii) *Al-Mustaqsa fi al-Amthal*. It is a collection of old similes used by the Arabs. Its manuscripts are found in Istanbul and other places.

iv) *Muquddimatul Adab*. The book contains treasure of words for literary purpose. Zamakhshari also wrote its explanation in Persian. He has dedicated this book to a general, Atsiz ibn Khwarizm Shah.

v) *Nuzhatul Muta'annis wa Nuhzatul Muqtabis* is a literary book to understand language.

vi) *Zubdatul Amthal*, vii) *Sawa'irul Amthal*, viii) *Diwan al-Tamaththul* and ix) *Samim al-Arabiyyah* are some other works in this field.

### AS A MAN OF LETTERS

Jarullah was a creative writer and his creativity is visible in all his writings. The following example will shed light on his writing. In Al-Atwaq, he writes:

احمق من النعاقمه من افتخر بالزعامة، ليرارى اشقى من الزعيم، ولا يبعد منه منافقوز بالنعيم، هالك بالهوالك. خابط في الظلم الحوالك، على آثاره لاعفاء، ادركه بجانيقها الضعفاء.<sup>32</sup>

*Trans: "The one proud of leadership, is stupid than an Ostrich; I do not see more misfortunate than a leader who is for from tranquility. He perishes to death, lost in darkness; destruction follows him when his weapons target weak people."*

Writing about nobility, he says:

لا تقنع بالشرف التالد، فذلك الشرف للوالد، واضم الى التالد طريقاً حتى تكون بهما شريفاً، ولا تدل بشرف ابيك ما لتدلى عليه بشرف فيك.<sup>33</sup>

*Trans: Don't be satisfied with possessed nobility, for that is your father's nobility.*

Add to it uncommon qualities that make you distinguished. Don't proceed with your father's honor, until you are told about your own honor (means until you have your own dignity and eminence.

Evil scholars (ulama-e-soo') are found in every society. They, too, were part of the society where Zamakhshari was living. Telling about their character, he says:

*Al-Mufasssal* is well known work among the grammarians. It was compiled in sixteen months, from Ramadan 513 – Muharrm 515 AH/ 1119-1121 AD.<sup>30</sup> It was so popular that several scholars have commentary on it. Ibn Ya'ish,<sup>31</sup> in two volumes, knows the most famous explanation as *Sharh al-Mufasssal*. This is also very popular because it is short and concise. The author has divided it into four types:

- i) Nouns, in which he discussed nominative (*marfu'at*), accusative (*mansubat*), genitive (*majrurat*), diminutives (*tasghir*) and derived (*mushtaqat*).
- ii) Verb and its various types.
- iii) Articles and their types of coupling and non-coupling (such as prepositions, exception particles, conditional particles, interrogative, etc.
- iv) Common nouns.

The second treatise *al-Unmudhaj* was also very popular. Several scholars have commentary on it. The notable explanation is by Abdul Ghani al-Irdabaily. Another commentary is *Hada'iq al-Huqa'iq*, by Sa'dud Din al-Barda'i. Muhammad 'Isa 'Askari's commentary, *al-Firudhaj fi al-Unmudhaj*, is published in two volumes from Cairo in 1289 AH.

Other than these two works, the author has two other treatises in syntax, called *al-Mufrad wa al-Murakkab fi al-Nahw* and *al-Ahaji fi al-Nahw*. Their names are found in books but these are not available.

#### **OTHER WORKS IN LINGUISTIC**

Zamakhshari's knowledge of Arabic was very vast. He was not only aware of its grammatical aspects but also of its similes, metaphors, proverbs, parables and various aspects of rhetoric. He knew their origin and root, which is visible in his works as follows:

- i) *Asas al-Balaghah*. It is a dictionary of old Arabic language, and is properly arranged. This arrangement gave it popularity. Basically the author has differentiated between *haqiqat* (real meaning) and *majaz* (metaphorical meaning), and between *sarih* (clear meaning) and *kinayah* (metonymy). One of the characteristics of this book is that the author brings those words and their beautiful phrase construction, which are used by creative minded and genius people. He also informs us about the era in which that word or idiom etc. was used. This book has been



2. It is free of stories and Judaic.
3. The author has solely depended on Arabic language while explaining Quranic words and its styles.
4. Special attention is given to rhetoric, and for the reason of inimitability of the Quran he has searched out rhetorical points in it.
5. To explain any point, the author has adopted method of question answer. First of all he raises question, then he responds to it.<sup>26</sup>

Al-Kashshaf's popularity could be imagined from its commentaries written by many scholars during the span of time. Ahmad ibn Munayyar al-Maliki wrote its commentary, naming it as *al-Intisaf min al-Kashshaf*,<sup>27</sup> in 683 AH/ 1284 AD. Abdullah ibn al-Hadi ibn Yahya's work in 810 AH/ 1407 AD is called *al-Jawaahir al-Shaffaaf al-Multaqat min Mughhaassat alKashshaaf. Tajrid 'ala Kashshaaf m'a ziyaadati nukati al-Kashshaaf*, by Jamalud-Din Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim, has been published from San'a', in 795 AH/ 1393 AD. *Nughbatul Kashshaf min Khutbatil Kashshaf*, by Muhammad Feroz Abadi (d. 817 AH/ 1414 AD). 'Ali al-Jurjani, who died in 816 AH/ 1413 AD, has marginal notes, published from Cairo in 1308 and 1318 AH. Another work *Khulasatul Kashshaf* is compiled by Siddiq Hasan Khan, Amir of Bhopal in 1307 AH/ 1890 AD.

His opponents, such as Abu Hayyan blames him for lacking knowledge in the field of rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> However, this objection is not valid because majority of his opponents, too, considers him irrefutable in this field. His only "sin" is that Zamakhshari belongs to Mu'tazillite School of thoughts as well as he strongly advocates them.

### IN THE FIELD OF GRAMMAR

Like other sciences, Zamakhshari studied syntax. He studied *al-Kitab*, a famous book of Grammar, by an eminent linguist, Sibawayh.<sup>29</sup> This is why Basra School of Grammar influenced him. On some issues he gave preference to Kufa and Baghdad School. He, however, has disagreement on several grammatical issues with other grammarians and has presented a different point of view. In Grammar, Zamakhshari has two works:

1. *Al-Mufasssal*
2. *Al-Unmudhaj*

has vast and deep study based on research, and has gone through many books and references; he is aware of ups and downs of time, and he is hero of literature and pioneer of the Quranic scholars. Beside these virtues, he is of balanced nature, very aware and sharp minded, aware of the Quranic issues, even though these are too tiny. He is well informed of allusion and metaphors even hidden in layers; he is neither fanatic nor narrow minded, hard tempered and furious...<sup>22</sup>

Truly, Zamakhshari has guarded all in his *tafsir* what he has said in the introduction. It is as such the author has described in poetic verses. He says:

ان التفاسير في الدنيا بلا عدد      وليس فيها، لعمري، مثل كشافى  
ان كنت تبغى الهدى فلزم قراءته      فالجهل كالداء والكشاف كالشافي<sup>23</sup>

(There are countless *tafsir* in this world, but by my life, non-is like my Kashshaf.

If you want to seek guidance, then you must study it. Ignorance is like disease and Kashshaf is its healer).

Any work that is praised by others, especially by the opponents, is truly worth to be proud of. About Zamakhshari and his Kashshaf, a famous scholar, al-Suyuti writes that he was a king of rhetoric; this is why his book spread all over the Far East and West.<sup>24</sup>

Another scholar, Shaikh Hayder al-Harvi says:

As for al-Kashshaf, it is highly exalted and nothing has been seen like that,

Either in the predecessors' collection or in their followers...He

left no stone while using the principles of interpretation...Comparing

other *tafsir* with it, if we suppose that others are free of tiny

errors, they would not have such a beauty and sweetness (as possess

al-Kashshaf).<sup>25</sup>

Kashshaf is distinguished from other *tafsir* because of its five characteristics:

1. It is free of interpolation and unnecessary details.

*i'tizal*. Visiting his friends he would knock the door and would ask the person at the door, "Tell him, Abu al-Qasim al-Mu'tazili is at the door."<sup>18</sup>

While returning from Makkah to his town, Jarullah Zamakhshari died at Gorgang<sup>19</sup> on Dhu al-Hijjah 9, 538 AH/ June 14, 1144 AD. On his death some one has said:

فارض مكة تدرى الدموع مقلته حزنا لفرقة جار الله محمود<sup>20</sup>  
(The land of Makkah is shedding tears being grieved by the separation of Jarullah Mahmood).

### CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Jarullah Mahmood was a genius scholar and had leading role in the field of rhetoric. In this regard he had many works in the field of Quran, linguistics, poetry etc. His works are as follow:

#### AS A LINGUIST

As a linguist, Zamakhshari has several works in various fields of linguistic:

#### TAFSIR (INTERPRETATION OF THE QURAN)

In this field his most famous work is Quranic exegesis naming, *al-Kashshaf 'an haqa'iq al-tanzil wa 'uyun al-al-aqawil fi wujuh al-ta'wil*. This work is appreciated even by his critics who blame him for *I'tizal*.

According to Zamakhshari, he wrote this *tafsir* because some of his friends insisted to do so. Therefore, he delivered some lectures on *Surah al-Baqarah*, which were recorded by them. Later on, he traveled to Makkah and completed rest of his work in a short period of two years and three or four months, while such work takes usually thirty years. According to Zamakhshari, it happened due to the blessing of this holy place.<sup>21</sup>

*Al-Kashshaf*, actually reveals beauty of the Quran through its rhetoric and keeping various sciences in it. The author has compassed rhetoric, *al-Adab* (literature), *'ilm al-Ma'ani* (the science of meaning) and *'ilm al-Bayan* (elocution).

In introduction of *al-Kashshaf*, the author writes:

It is only the science of *tafsir*, if it is adopted, non-of the scholars have been successful until now, to have complete insight in it, as Jahiz has mentioned in his work *Nazm al-Quran*... One could be a diver of a deep ocean of the Quranic realities, who is skilled in two Quranic sciences i.e. the science of meaning and the science of rhetoric... It means, he

“Once Zayd al-Khayl<sup>11</sup> visited the Prophet (pbuh), upon seeing him, Zaid loudly recited *shadah* (that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is a Messenger of Allah). The Prophet (pbuh) said to him, ‘O Zayd al-Khayl! Everyone who was introduced to me was found inferior than his characteristic, except you. You are more than what was characterized.’ Same is our Sharif.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus Abu al-Qasim Jarullah responded him and praised him more eloquently.

Once travelling to Bukhara, to study there, a tumor developed in his leg and consequently it was cut off.<sup>13</sup> Then he had to walk on crutches. According to another version, due to heavy snowfall and ice-cold, he slipped and his leg was damaged.<sup>14</sup> Al-Damghani, a famous Hanafi scholar in Iraq, says that he asked Zamakhshari why his leg was cut? In response he said: ‘Due to my mother’s curse.’ To explain this he said:

Once, when I was a child, I caught a sparrow and tied thread to its leg. Then it flew and entered a hole. When I pulled the thread, its leg broke. My mother felt sorry for it and said, ‘may Allah break your leg the way its leg is broken.’ When I traveled to Bukhara in search of knowledge, on my way, I fall down from the back of mount and my leg broke.”<sup>15</sup>

There is no contradiction in these statements. Every narration is further explanation for other ones. According to al-Suyuti, at the time of walk he would cover his crutch with his long dress and a spectator would think he is lame. He used to carry documentary report as a proof for the event, for he was afraid that people won’t believe it and would think it was cut off because of suspicion.<sup>16</sup>

Zamakhshari was a celebrated scholar. Anywhere he would go, a crowd of student would gather around him. Though his mother tongue was Persian, he would teach in Arabic, except the beginners. It was due to his great love for Arabic language and its superiority.<sup>17</sup>

As mentioned earlier, he belonged to *Mu’tazillite* School of thought and was proud of it and openly described his creed about

## ZAMAKHSHAR AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TOWARD HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

*Dr. Muhammad Izharul-Haq\**

Zamakhshari is one of those scholars who have greatly influenced the Holy Scripture's interpretation and its knowledge. He came in a time when the Zahiri School influenced general masses, as well as the political authorities. Zamakhshari stressed on metaphorical meaning of the Quran as he belonged to Mu'tazillite School<sup>1</sup> and convinced majority of the scholars about his interpretation. He was a leading scholar in *tafsir*, *hadith*, syntax, linguistics and rhetoric,<sup>2</sup> and contributed to human knowledge.

### INTRODUCTION

Abu al-Qasim Muhammad bin Umar Jarullah Zamakhshari Khwarizmi was born in Rajab 27, 467 AH/ March 8, 1075 AD, at Zamakhshar, a town of Khwarizm.<sup>3</sup> Al-Suyuti, however, mentions his date birth as 497 AH,<sup>4</sup> which seems incorrect and probably print mistake. Zamakhshari is called as Jarullah (neighbor of Allah) because of his long stay in Baytullah, at Makkah.<sup>5</sup>

Mahmood Zamakhshari traveled to several places such as Bukharah, Marve, Gorgang, Samarkand, Baghdad and Makkah, to seek knowledge. He studied grammar with an Andalusian scholar, literature with Abu Mudar Mahmood ibn Jarir al-Dabbi and Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn al-Muzaffar.<sup>6</sup> At Baghdad, he studied with Abu Mansoor Nasr ibn al-Haithi, Abu Sa'd al-Shaqqani and Abu al-Khattab ibn al-Batar<sup>7</sup> or ibn Tabar<sup>8</sup> and others. At Makkah he studied with ibn Wahhas.<sup>9</sup> On his way to hajj, when Zamakhshari stayed at Baghdad, a famous 'Alwi scholar Abu al-Sa'adat ibn al-Shajari greeted him with the following verses:

When questioned, the riders informed me with pleasant  
News about Ahmad ibn Da'ud,  
Until we met, but by God, my ear did not hear  
Better (news) than what I saw (meaning, he was greater  
than what he had heard).<sup>10</sup>

When ibn Shajari finished, Zamakhshari thanked him. Then praising him he said:

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- <sup>69</sup> Originally published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1999, pp.43-56
- <sup>70</sup> Originally published in Stefan Wilde (ed.), *The Qur'ān as Text*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1996, pp.107-111
- <sup>71</sup> Ibn Warraq, *What The Koran Really Says*, p.739
- <sup>72</sup> Jeffery, Arthur, *The Moslem World*, vol.30 (1940), p.191
- <sup>73</sup> Noldeke, Theodor, *Geschichte des Qorans*, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, N.Y, 1981, pp.60-96
- <sup>74</sup> Muir, William *Life of Mohamet*, Vol. I., Edinburg 1923, Introduction, p. iv
- <sup>75</sup> About El Fadl, Khaled, *The Place of Tolerance in Islam*, London, 2002, p. 23.

- <sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.88-89
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.82
- <sup>54</sup> Quoted in Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, Routledge, N.Y,2008, p.29.
- <sup>55</sup> Jeffery, Arthur, (ed) Introduction, *Kitab al-Masahif*, Egypt, 1936, p.5
- <sup>56</sup> Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of the Koran*, p.10
- <sup>57</sup> Ibn Warraq, Statement on the World Trade Center, retrieved on 24-03-2009 from [http://www.Centerforinquiry.net/isis/articles\\_and\\_books/state\\_ment\\_by\\_ibn\\_warraq\\_on\\_the\\_world\\_trade\\_center\\_atrocity/](http://www.Centerforinquiry.net/isis/articles_and_books/state_ment_by_ibn_warraq_on_the_world_trade_center_atrocity/).
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.13
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>60</sup> Jeffery, Arthur, *Materials For The History Of The Text Of The Qur'ān: The Old Codices*, E J Brill, Leiden, 1937.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of The Koran*, p. 122
- <sup>62</sup> Chaudary, Dr.Muhammad Akram, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences: Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'ān: The Case of Jeffery, Arthur*, vol. 12, summer 1995, No.2, Washington, Islamabad, p-172.
- <sup>63</sup> Jeffery, Arthur, *Materials*, p.iii
- <sup>64</sup> Chaudary, Dr.M.A, *Orientalism on Variant Readings*, p. 171.
- <sup>65</sup> Jeffery, Arthur, *Materials*, p.iii
- <sup>66</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, *Kitab Fadail ul-Qur'ān*
- <sup>67</sup> Al-Tabari, Abu J'afar Muhammad bin Jarir (Translated & Abridged by J Cooper, W F Madelung and A Jones), *Ja'amie al-Bay'an an ta'wil ay al-Qur'ān*, 1987, Volume 1, Oxford University Press & Hakim Investment Holdings (M.E.) Limited, p. 16.
- <sup>68</sup> Having gone through the literature written on this subject we have reached to the conclusion that it is the most suitable opinion in explaining the meaning of *Sab'a Ahruf* as far as all other opinions are concerned.

- <sup>29</sup> Ibn Warraq - The Need for Qur'anic Criticism, Part Source: retrieved on 21-01-2009 from [http://www.newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.indian/2006-05/m\\_sg00321.html](http://www.newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.indian/2006-05/m_sg00321.html),
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>33</sup> Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of the Koran*, p.351-363
- <sup>34</sup> Wansbrough, Johns, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Oxford, 1977, p.43.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid,p.44
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 42,45
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.44
- <sup>40</sup> Lester, Toby *What is the Koran?*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 1999, p.55 re-printed in Ibn Warraq, *What the Koran Really Says*, Prometheus Books, N.Y, 1998, pp. 111-112
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.112
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 113
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> Cambridge, 1980
- <sup>46</sup> Ibn Warraq, *What the Koran Really Says*, p.121.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.122
- <sup>48</sup> Housman, A.E., *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter, Cambridge, 1961, p.131.
- <sup>49</sup> Klein, William W. William Wade; Craig Blomberg, Robert L Hubbard, Kermit Allen Eckleberger. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas 1993, p. 43
- <sup>50</sup> R.A Torrey, *The Higher Criticism in New Theology*, New York, 1911, p.30
- <sup>51</sup> Bergstrasser, *Us'ul Naqd an-Nus'us wa Nashr al-Kutub*, Cairo, 1969, p.14.



- <sup>8</sup> We have tried at our level best but cannot find out his original name. Several e-mails have been sent to the Center for Inquiry USA but no received no reply in this concern.
- <sup>9</sup> Abu Isa Muhammad bin Harun bin Muhammad al-Warraq, a courageous free thinker of classical Islam.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Ibn Warraq, Qantara.de Op., Cit.
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>12</sup> Der Spiegel interviews Ibn Warraq, *Spiegel Online*, Kultur, Dienstag, August 2007
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Ibn Warraq, Qantara.de 19-07-2007 Translated from the German by Katy Derbyshire retrieved on 14.05.09 from [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/wcsearch.php?suchbereichid=62 &wc\\_search= articles+ of+ibn+ warraq & submit.x=31&submit.y=5](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/wcsearch.php?suchbereichid=62&wc_search=articles+of+ibn+warraq&submit.x=31&submit.y=5)
- <sup>14</sup> Ibn Warraq, Interview with Radio National Post, Religion Report, Sydney, Australia, on 10-10-2001.
- <sup>15</sup> The spectator, 3 October 2007.
- <sup>16</sup> The St. Petersburg Declaration, April 5, 2007
- <sup>17</sup> Prometheus Books, New York, 1998
- <sup>18</sup> Dutton, Yasin, Ibn Warraq's The Origins of the Koran: A Critical Analysis, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, May 2000 edition, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2000.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibn Warraq, The Origins of the Koran, p. 79, 235,259.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*.
- <sup>21</sup> Prometheus Books, New York, 2002
- <sup>22</sup> Al-Azami, Muhammad Mustafa, Hoping to reform, revise Islam, Impact International, Vol.30, March 2000.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibn Warraq, The Origins of the Koran, p. 9
- <sup>24</sup> Qantara.de.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibn Warraq, What the Koran Really Says, p.90-91
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.92
- <sup>27</sup> Qantara.de.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibn Warraq, Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out, Prometheus Books, New York, 2003, p.149

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## NOTES & REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> In shade of the spar between Islam and the West many individuals having Muslim family and background carry on criticizing Islam for their personal agenda of recognition, reputation, affluence and even the European nationality. Considering their literary activities as Native Orientalism, the term may be defined as “*any former Muslim living in West who inflates, advocates and precedes orientalist’s theories and works, is a Native Orientalist, and what he or she does is Native Orientalism*”. The definition may be considered as an initial attempt and not the final and ultimate. The academics and scholars are welcomed and requested to realize new realms and improvements in the definition ‘native orientalism’.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Warraq, *What the Koran Really Says*, Prometheus Books, New York, 2002, p.111.

<sup>3</sup> There are no sufficient details of his personal life mentioned in his books. His bio-data and personal details are mostly found in his interviews in magazines and world wide websites on Internet. It is endeavored at the level best to collect the related information from the print media, however, in some certain extents, the references of the internet websites are quoted due to non availability of printed sources.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Ibn Warraq, Qantara.de 19-07-2007 Translated from the German by Katy Derbyshire retrieved on 14.05.09 from

[http://www.qantara.de/webcom/wcsearch.php?suchbereichid=62&wc\\_search=articles+of+ibn+warraq&submit.x=31&submit.y=5](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/wcsearch.php?suchbereichid=62&wc_search=articles+of+ibn+warraq&submit.x=31&submit.y=5).

<sup>5</sup> Smith , Lee, Losing his Religion, Daily Globe Correspondent, Bostan, 17-08-2003.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Prometheus Books, New York, 1995.

## Conclusion

Ibn Warraq, denying all the living evidences, is creeping on the criticism of the Qur'ān by inflating various theories whereas in this era of enlightenment and conscience text and history of the Qur'ān are proved flawless. His entire work is a non serious scholarship that does not incite any glimpse of impartial, balanced and realistic meditation. He rejects the every light of Islam in a pure unethical approach based on pre-planned and presumed conclusions. It seems that he has been deployed to misrepresent Islam, regenerate old prejudice and fear against Islam and mould the public opinion in favour of long run of 'war against terrorism'.

He asserts that he was a Muslim by birth, educated in Islam and learnt the Qur'ān by heart. But his books reveal his ignorance of the basic sources of Islam and patchiness in Arabic language. He leaves aside all of his Islamic knowledge and accepts the Orientalists view point of Islam and its sources. He has edited two voluminous books on the criticism of the Qur'ān which are totally based on non-Muslim writings instead of Muslim scholars and thinkers. He comprehends Islam through the non-Muslim sources, presents Islam as Orientalists desire and consequently endeavors to impose his perception of Islam on entire *Ummah*. His scholarship is partial and biased, to criticize everything in Islam by rejecting Muslim sources.

A contemporary scholar remarks:

...Warraq is an intolerant pseudo-scholar. It (his work) is good propaganda, but not good scholarship.<sup>1175</sup>

The West should be cautious of these kinds of false friends who are adding fuel to hatred against the West among the Muslim communities. The West should also review the war on criticism against Islam as the Muslims have never criticized them to give up their beliefs.

So far as the case of variant manuscripts of the Qur'ān is concerned Ibn Warraq has dedicated the first and the last parts of his book *"What The Koran Really Says"* for allegations on the manuscripts of the Qur'ān. Both these articles are inter-related as Toby Lester inflates and reiterates Puin's views more sensationally. *"What is the Koran?"*<sup>69</sup> by Toby Lester in the part first, under the heading Introduction, and another article *"Observations on Early Qur'ān Manuscripts in Sana'a"* written by Gerd-R. Puin<sup>70</sup> in the last part under heading: Manuscripts. If Puin's found discrepancies in Sana'a fragments are analyzed, keeping in mind above discussion of variant readings, it becomes clear that these statements carry no weight of evidence, clearly far-fetched and totally untenable. It seems that the main theme runs behind his allegations is to resume the work of his ancestors to prepare a revised version of the Qur'ān. Puin determines to complete the mission by his findings:

The plan of Bergstrasser, Jeffery, and later Pretzl to prepare a critical edition of the Qur'ān was not realized, and the collection of variant derived from real old codices failed to survive the bombs of World War II. Many more old manuscripts are accessible now, which would justify a new approach, not no such undertaking is in sight.<sup>71</sup>

It is the matter of amusement that Puin wants to resume the work of Jeffery to prepare a variant version whereas Jeffery himself acknowledges this fact dejectedly, lamenting that "practically all the early codices and fragments that have so far been carefully examined, show the same type of text, such variants as occur being almost always explainable as scribal errors"<sup>72</sup> Bergstrasser also reached a similar conclusion.<sup>73</sup> Now one can ask: where does Puin stand?

William Muir acknowledges the truth:

"There is probably no other book in the world which has remained twelve centuries (now fourteen) with so pure a text".<sup>74</sup>

(*tafsir*) linguistics (*lughab*) literature (*adab*) and reading style (*qira'ats*).<sup>62</sup> His main source was the Kitab al-Masahif of Ibn Abi Dawud (d. 316 A.H). However a large number of variant reading entries listed in his Materials lack proper and authentic chains of transmission, a fact which he himself realizes.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, while listing variant readings in his Materials Jeffery never mentions his source.<sup>64</sup> He himself acknowledges that in Ibn Abi Dawud's Kitab al-Masahif, his very first and basic source, the *isnad* is weak and that the Orthodoxy may not accept it.<sup>65</sup>

It seems quite relevant here to depict the status of seven ahruf and the need of multiple (variant) readings for reciting the Qur'ān along with conditions of authentic readings. According to an authentic *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet (*peace be upon him*) has said:

ان هذا القرآن أنزل على سبعة احرف فاقرأ ما تيسر منه.<sup>66</sup>

The Qur'ān has been revealed covering seven versions. So recite it in a way that is easy for you from out of these.

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud reports:

The Messenger of God said: "The Qur'ān was sent down in seven ahruf. Each of these ahruf has an outward aspect (*zahir*: ظاهر) and an inward aspect (*batin*: باطن); each of the ahruf has a border, and each border has a lookout."<sup>67</sup>

In view of above quoted authentic *Hadiths* it is, thus, clear that the Qur'ān was revealed in seven letters but to explain and describe these seven letters is not an easy task. The discussion of the seven ahruf is a very significant, extensive and one of the most complicated discussions on the sciences of the Qur'ān. This is an established fact that the term *Sab'a Ahruf* (سبعة احرف) does not mean Seven Qira'at (Seven Readings) rather it refers to seven types.<sup>68</sup> However, the best explanation and interpretation of the Seven Dialects of the Qur'ān is that it means "Variant Recital".

cannot be relied upon to construct a reliable, scientific history. Second, we seem to assume that the Companions of the Prophet heard and understood him perfectly.<sup>59</sup>

The major theme runs through Ibn Warraq's voluminous works on the Qur'ān, "*The Origins of the Koran*" and "*What the Koran Really Says*" is to put a question mark on the authenticity of the Qur'ān. not only Ibn Warraq but many others, since a long time, have never been intended to believe the Qur'ān as word of Allah, as Muslims believe. They find Bible with a history of corruption, tempering and alteration in consequence of implying the principles of textual criticism. Being religiously biased and prejudiced or with objectives of political empowerment and for acquisitive interests not for academic research, they apply the principles of higher criticism to Islam's sacred book but originated nothing sensible to realize their contentment. So they have endeavored at their level best and even spent their lives to rummage around microscopically for each and every, weak and slight clue to negate the fair collection and transmission of the Qur'ān in the early history of Islam. But after a long run of centuries they could not make heads or tails of it.

### **Variant Readings and Manuscripts**

Ibn Warraq has exaggerated the allegations instigated by the orientalist regarding variant readings and variant manuscripts of the Qur'ān in his work "*The Origins of the Koran*" and "*What The Koran Really Says*" that suit his hard bark on the sacred book of Islam. Keeping in view the importance of Arthur Jeffery's hypothesis of variant readings of the Qur'ān Ibn Warraq has selected his well-known work "*Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*"<sup>60</sup> and other articles under the topic "The Collection and the Variants of the Qur'ān" in his edited work "*The Origins of the Koran*". To establish that "the Qur'ān is Muhammad's book, the impression of his personality is on it from the first word to the last,"<sup>61</sup> Jeffery collected about six thousand variant readings from books dealing with commentary

1. How did the Koran come to us?—That is the compilation and the transmission of the Koran.
2. When was it written, and who wrote it?
3. What are the sources of the Koran? Where were the stories, legends, and principles that abound in the Koran acquired?
4. What is the Koran? Since there never was a *textus receptus ne varietur* of the Koran, we need to decide its authenticity.<sup>56</sup>

He rejects the divine origin of the Qur'ān in his statement :

..... it is surely totally irrational to continue to believe that the Qur'ān is the word of God when the slightest amount of rational thought will reveal that the Qur'ān contains words and passages addressed to God (e.g. VI.104; VI.114; XVII.1; XXVII.91; LXXXI.15-29; lxxxiv.16-19; etc.); or that it is full of historical errors and inconsistencies.<sup>57</sup>

After describing the project of collection of the Qur'ān under the custody of Abu Bakr and Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them) he finds no relief to his agony against the integrity of the text of the Holy Book:

There are no compelling reasons for accepting the 'Uthmanic story and not the Abu Bakr one; after all they *are all gleaned from the same sources*, which are all exceedingly late, tendentious in the extreme, and all later fabrications, as we shall see later".<sup>58</sup>

According to his pre-assumed objectives, he rejects every tradition or evidence of the recording or written preservation of the Qur'ān:

Similarly the Companions of the Prophet are said to have memorized many of his utterances. Could their memories never have failed? Oral traditions have a tendency to change over time, and they

In fact Ibn Warraq reproduces Wansbrough's theory of 'revisionism' to strengthen his polemical agenda as Fred M Donner remarks:

.... the pseudonymous religious polemicist Ibn Warraq who seems to champion Wansborough's ideas in pursuit of his own personal religious agenda.<sup>54</sup>

Donner is absolutely right; Ibn Warraq's hue and cry reveals his individual interests rather than any literary advancement as he himself is fully aware of the massive work of orientalists on the Qur'anic criticism.

#### **Major Cannons towards the Qur'ān**

Ibn Warraq, with a very loathsome tongue, is carrying on criticism of the Qur'ān at international forums, facilitated by the West, to pursue his polemical agenda.

#### **Textual Authenticity of the Qur'ān**

There are numerous gateways for an assault on the Qur'anic text, one of which is to question its recording and compilation as Arthur Jeffery remarks: "The Western scholars do not consent that the arrangement of the text of the Qur'ān which is in our hands now is the work of the Prophet".<sup>55</sup> It is in this spirit that Orientalists allege that Quran was not indeed recorded during the Prophet's (peace be upon him) lifetime. Collection and compilation of the Qur'ān has been a basic subject for almost all the renowned orientalists as far as the study of the Qur'ān is concerned. Well-known to the fact that integrity and authenticity of the text of the Qur'ān rests upon its recording and collection, orientalists endeavored at their best to critically investigate the early history of the compilation and collection of the Qur'ān.

In his book, "*The Origins of the Koran*" Ibn Warraq has included his introduction as a prelude, therein; he discusses the collection of the Qur'ān quite objectively. He has the opinion that through a critical investigation of the Qur'ān it is hoped to find out the answers of the following questions:



- ii. Copies that were revised and corrected by the scribe, through comparison with the mother manuscript, are superior to those which lack this.
- iii. If the original is extant, any copy scribed from this loses all significance<sup>51</sup>.

However, Ibn Warraq is somewhat satisfied with more sarcastic and pungent theories of the orientalist towards the criticism of the Qur'ān e.g. Wansbrough's methodology: 'revisionism'. He inflates John Wansbrough's methodology that pretends to examine the Qur'ān using methods like those of non-Islamic sources, comparing it with comparable contemporary devotional works, seeking clues about its origin. He says:

Wansbrough emphasizes two points whose full implications are perhaps too disturbing for most scholars to draw: first, there is no Muslim literature which can be dated, in the form in which it is available to us, earlier than 800 C.E (end of the second century of Islam); the other is that Islam is a complex phenomenon the development of which must have taken many generations and occupied an extended geographical area before it attained a form resembling that which we know today.<sup>52</sup>

Employing the Wansbrough's methodology he alleges that the authenticity of the Qur'ān must be confirmed by comparing with non-Islamic historical sources:

If by 'authentic' we mean that the Koran was the word of God, as passed on, either directly from God or thorough the intermediary of an angel, to a historical figure called Muhammad, supposedly living in Arabia , then clearly we need some independent confirmation of this extraordinary claim.<sup>53</sup>

but fluid and variable; namely, the frailties and aberrations of the human mind, and of its insubordinate servants, the human fingers.<sup>48</sup>

Accordingly, by applying this kind of textual criticism to the Bible, the critics like Spinoza, have rejected its authority and divinely status. "Spinoza did not regard the Bible as divinely inspired - instead it was to be evaluated like any other book".<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the application of textual criticism to divine literature has been rejected by the Church on the ground that it is impracticable for a critic to fulfill the basic requirements for this project:

No study perhaps requires so devout spirit and so exalted a faith in the supernatural as the pursuit of the Higher Criticism. It demands at once the ability of the scholar, and the simplicity of the believing child of God. For without faith no one can explain the Holy Scriptures, and without scholarship no one can investigate historic origins.<sup>50</sup>

The Qur'ān is the unaltered word of Allah and does not contain any kind of errors to remove, which is the purpose of textual criticism. So far as the law of textual criticism in case of its compilation, recording and transmission is concerned, there are authentic evidences to prove its authenticity and transparency. The Muslims established a very strict criterion for the textual criticism of the Qur'ān. While compiling the Qur'ān during the reign of Abu Bakr the laws of textual criticism were strictly implemented by Zayd and the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Such are the underpinning of textual criticism and editing established by Orientalists in the twentieth century:

- i. Older copies are generally more reliable than newer ones.

assumption, you have to start afresh."<sup>44</sup> Crone puts in *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*,<sup>45</sup>

The Biblical redactors offer us sections of the Israelite tradition at different stages of crystallization, and their testimonies can accordingly be profitably compared and weighed against each other. But the Muslim tradition was the outcome, not of slow crystallization, but of an explosion; the first compilers were not redactors, but collectors of debris whose works are strikingly devoid of overall unity: and no particular illumination ensue from their comparison.<sup>46</sup>

In *Hagarism* they have presented no novelty or progress other than Wansbrough's methodology. Patricia and Cook themselves make a clean breast that they "did not say much the Koran in Hagarism that was not based on Wansbrough".<sup>47</sup>

Ibn Warraq is campaigning for such criticism of the text of the Qur'ān but seems to forget that the Bible and the Qur'ān are different books and hence each has to deal with in its own right. Ibn Warraq insists for reapplying the Biblical textual criticism to the Qur'ān denying the fact that application of principle of higher criticism to divine literature has already been rejected and declared an outdated fallacy. Because the purpose of the textual criticism is to find errors in the text and remove them and its application to divine literature means to prove it a man effort as A.E. Housman defines:

Textual criticism is a science, and, since it comprises recension and emendation, it is also an art. It is the science of discovering error in texts and the art of removing it. That is its definition, which is what the name denotes.....textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, nor indeed an exact science at all. It deals with a matter not rigid constant, like lines and numbers,

controversial claims were suggestions that the text of the Koran came into being later than is now believed: that Mecca was not the initial Islamic sanctuary points unambiguously to a sanctuary in north-west Arabia....Mecca was secondary: that the Arabs conquests preceded the institutionalization of Islam: that the idea of the *hijra* or the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622, may have evolved long after Muhammad died: and that the term "Muslim" was not commonly used in early Islam.<sup>40</sup>

*Hagarism* came under immediate attack, from Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike, for its heavy reliance on hostile sources. As its authors wrote, "This is a book, based on what from any Muslim perspective must appear an inordinate regard for the testimony of infidel sources".<sup>41</sup> Crone and Cook have since backed away from some of its most radical propositions-such as, for example that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) lived two years longer than the Muslim tradition claims he did, and that the history. In her other book *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*(1987) she made detailed argument challenging the prevailing view among Western scholars that Islam arose in response to the Arabian spice trade.<sup>42</sup>

Patricia Crone defends the goals of this sort of thinking as Toby Lester quotes her remarks:

"The Koran is scripture with a history like any other except that we do not know this history and tend to provoke howls of protest when we study it. Nobody would mind the howls if they came from Westerners, but Westerners feel deferential when the howls come from other people: who are you to tamper with their legacy? But we Islamicists are not trying to destroy anyone's faith."<sup>43</sup>

Toby Lester quotes her further: she says "everyone took it for granted that everything the Muslims claim to remember about the origin and meaning of the Koran is correct. If you drop that

- gradually from originally independent prophetic traditions (“prophetic logia”) during a long period of oral transmission, assuming their final and “canonical” form in the late second/eighth century.<sup>34</sup>
- ii. That the texts that were given scriptural status were only a small part of the vast body of traditions as the rest of these became instead the staff of *Hadith*.<sup>35</sup>
  - iii. That this “canonization” of the Qur ānic text was linked with the rise of Classical Arabic and its grammar and the appearance of the Qur ānic commentaries.<sup>36</sup>
  - iv. That the “polemical character” of much of the Qur ān suggests that an important Jewish opposition served as one of the motivations behind its “canonization”.<sup>37</sup>
  - v. That the Islamic tradition is an example of what is known to biblical scholars as “salvation history”: *a theologically and evangelically motivated story of a religion’s origins invented late in the day and projected back in time*, the whole process being similar to that of the canonization of the Hebrew Scripture.<sup>38</sup>
  - vi. That “the reason that no Islamic source material from the first century or so of Islam has survived...is that it never existed”; nor can most Muslims traditions be confirmed by contemporary non-Muslim sources. Taking Schacht as basis for Muslim law before the ninth century.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to Wansbrough, Ibn Warraq has included the work of Patricia Crone with Michael Cook, she wrote, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (1977) in the case of application of Biblical Criticism to the Qur ān. Among Hagarism’s

He expresses his deep dejection that this type of Biblical criticism has not so far been applied to the Qur'ān:

Qur'ānic criticism, on the other hand, has lagged far behind. But surely, Muslims and non-Muslims have the right to critically examine the sources, the history, and dogma of Islam. The right to criticize is a right of which Muslims avail themselves in their frequent denunciations of Western culture, in terms that would have been deemed racist, neocolonialist, or imperialist had they been directed against Islam by a European. Without criticism, Islam will remain unassailed in its dogmatic, fanatical, medieval fortress: ossified, totalitarian, and intolerant. It will continue to stifle thought, human rights, individuality, originality, and truth.<sup>32</sup>

Ibn Warraq has included Andrew Rippin's article: *Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir and Sira: The Methodology of John Wansbrough* in his book *The Origins of the Koran* in which Rippin inflates and applauds Wansbrough's methodology of revisionism<sup>33</sup>. On the basis of his methodology, Wansbrough applies "instruments and techniques" of Biblical criticism with all its types such as:

- Form Criticism
- Source Criticism
- Redaction Criticism

for the textual criticism of the Quran. It is the Biblical Criticism or Principles of Higher Criticism for which Ibn Warraq propagates much hue and cry for its implementation to the Qur'ān. Well, we see the consequences of Wansbrough's application of the Biblical criticism to the Qur'ān. He assumes the following conclusions:

- i. The different parts of the Qur'ān originated in different communities located not in Arabia but in Iraq or Syria and that these evolved only

critic of the Qur'ān and an inflator of the orientalist's critical study of the Qur'ān. Ibn Warraq rejects the approved facts regarding authenticity of the text of the Qur'ān while negating the Muslims consciousness to their religion "Blind dogmatism has shut Muslims off from the intellectually challenging and exhilarating research, debate, and discussion of the last century and a half."<sup>28</sup> It is a wrong notion; Islam is the only religion on the earth that is not based on blind faith but on continuous chain of traditions and authentic sources. Hence, the Muslims are ever willing to discuss research and debate about their sacred literature.

He has the opinion that Islamic world is still a theologically conceived and ordered society and needs enlightenment and reformation in its mindset or worldview like Western society. He further argues that reformation in Islamic world is based on execution of the science of textual and contextual criticism of the Qur'ān. He quotes admirably Western society who got secularization and rationalization through Biblical criticism:

The secularization of Europe took place thanks to various historical movements; one of them was bible criticism, where Germans in particular played an important role: Albert Schweizer, for example, saw the Old and New Testament as texts written by men that can be analyzed on a scholarly basis.<sup>29</sup>

While preferring the secularization over religious theology, he quotes Spinoza

*"...the Bible was purely a human and secular text: theology is not an independent source of truth"*<sup>30</sup>

He considers that Spinoza's attack on scriptural concepts (religion) and ideas, based on the doctrine that there is no reality beyond the unalterable laws of Nature, and consequently no revelation, miracles or prophecy, made philosophical intuition everywhere in England, Italy, Germany and France.<sup>31</sup>

- How can we know that the Koran is authentic if we cannot trust any of our sources for the rise of Islam and the life of Muhammad?<sup>25</sup>

His above said "latest questions" on the authenticity of the Qur'ān are not new rather, have been repeatedly propagated since the early days of orientalism and already exploded by the orientalist. In fact, Ibn Warraq lays the foundations of his criticism of the Qur'ān on theories and ideas of Orientalists instead any of his own creative achievement. On the basis of his inflating approach, he asserts for having a scholarly test of the Koran in 21<sup>st</sup> century:

It is also an extraordinary situation that in the twenty first century we still do not have a definitive, scholarly test of the Koran. The situation is truly chaotic; with scholars' content work without specifying which manuscript of edition they are relying on... Neither Western scholars nor ordinary Muslims have it seems, something called the Koran; they all make do with a Koran.<sup>26</sup>

In an interview with a German online magazine "Qantara" he charges the Muslims to be scared of Qur'ānic criticism:

If one tries to criticize the Qur'ān today, many Muslims react with hysteria. Because they don't want to accept any criticism of their religion. But we should encourage people to criticize the Qur'ān. We have to protect and support the scholars who are looking at the Qur'ān as scientists. That is the only way to prompt a reformation in Islam or secularization in Muslim minds.<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Warraq, in his books, articles and speeches, asserts that reformation of the Islam and the progress and broad vision of Muslim mindset lay upon the textual criticism of the Qur'ān by applying the Biblical Criticism to it. He introduces himself as a



Western intellectuals have been unable to extinguish his thirst for criticism of the Qur'ān, he speaks out:

Western intellectuals and Islamologists have totally failed in their duties as intellectuals. They have betrayed their calling by abandoning their critical faculties when it comes to Islam. Some Islamologists have themselves noticed this appalling trend in their colleagues.<sup>24</sup>

He says that 'conservative orientalist', such as Watt or Welch have done nothing to quench his thirst for criticism of the Qur'ān and still there are crucial question that have never been asked:

- If they (Watt and Welch) believe that the Koran is "authentic", how do they; think Muhammad received his revelations?
- Do they believe that Muhammad literally went into a trance and somehow saw visions of angles who recited various versed to him whom the then revealed to his companions, who wrote them down verbatim?
- Some of the passages and stories in the Koran are very long indeed. Are we to understand that Muhammad remembered several hundred lines of rhymed prose that were revealed to him in his trance?
- Do we assume that all his companions were literate and able to write down his every word, all the time believing that their prophet was in direct communion with an angel?
- ...what exactly does authentic means to non-Muslim scholars? Is there a coherent definition for "authentic"?
- Is there then a valid, i.e., non-circular, argument to show that the Koran is authentic?

Introduction and second by Toby Lester: *What Is the Koran?* The second part '*Background*' is comprised of only one essay by Yehuda D. Nevo while the third part '*A Question of Language*' comprises of essays by Alphonse Mingana, D.S. Margoliouth, Paul E. Kahle, C. Rabin, Josua Blau and A. Ben-Shemesh. The fourth part '*Sources of the Koran: Essenian, Christian, Coptic*' consists of the articles by Ibn Warraq, Eric R. Bishop, Marc Philonenko, Wilson B. Bishai, Raimund Kobert. The fifth part '*Suras, Suras, Suras*' is comprised of the articles written by Franz Rosenthal, Claude Cahen, Meir M. Bravmann, M. J. Kister, Uri Rubin, C. Geger and Michael Schub. The articles of J. Barth, A. Fischer, C.C. Torrey and James A. Bellamy are included in the sixth part '*Emendations, Interpolations*'. The seventh part consists of Richard Bell's introduction and commentary of the Qur'ān. The eighth part '*Poetry and the Koran*' includes articles by Rudolf Geyer, Julius Wellhausen and Ibn al-Rawandi while the final part is about *Manuscripts* including the essays by Adolf Grohmann and Gred-R. Puin.

Obviously Ibn Warraq's selection of the material is comprised of only non-Muslim writings on the sacred book of Muslims and void of any coincided arguments. This tendency does not reveal any kind of academic research or endeavor for truth but only discloses his dishonesty for running a one way traffic of charges and allegations against the text of the Qur'ān and his antagonism to Islam with masquerade of freedom of expression. For instance the allegations on manuscripts of the Qur'ān forwarded by Toby Lester and G.R. Puin have obviously been deflated in literary circles before publication of the book.<sup>22</sup>

### **Application of Higher Criticism to the Qur'anic Text.**

Although there is a long list of orientalists who spent their lives in investigating and criticizing the Qur'ān yet he regards it insufficient. He quotes Arthur Jeffery:

Critical investigation of the text of the Qur'ān is a study which is still its infancy.<sup>23</sup>