

Explanation of Me'raj-un-Nabi (P.B.U.H.)

In the light of Modern Physics

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ABSTRACT

“Before the sunrise of Modern Physics, it was impossible to understand the concepts of time dilation and distance contraction. But Qur’ān explains these concepts far before the modern concept of theory of relativity. This article explains the concepts of the motion of body moving with the velocity of light or its multiples. On the basis of it, how we can understand the happenings of Time Dilation and Distance Contraction during the distant motion on Lailat-ul-meraj?”

Why a person on earth measures the time of Meraj as instantaneous, while this time consists of many light years in space?

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- ⁷⁴ Alger, Hamid, Dr., *The Problems of Orientalists*, Islamic Literature, Lahore, Vol: xvii, No.2, February 1971, p.102, Here it has been reproduced from "The Muslim" Chesterfield, England, Vol: vii, No.2, November 1969.
- ⁷⁵ W Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad the Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 17.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 13.
- ⁷⁷ W Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988, p. 80.
- ⁷⁸ W Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad the Prophet and Statesman*, p. 41.
- ⁷⁹ Syed Ṣabāḥ ud-Dīn 'Abdur Raḥmān, *Muḥammad at Mecca Per Aik Nazar*, Ma'ārif 'Aẓam Garh, India, p.208.
- ⁸⁰ John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (New York, London: Cambridge University Press), p. vii.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 127
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 119
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 204, See also John Wansbrough, *Quranic: Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (London: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977), pp.44-46.

- ⁵⁹ M.A. Chaudhary, Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an: The Case of Arthur Jeffery, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Jointly Published Washington D.C., Kualalumpur and Islamabad, Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1995.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- ⁶¹ Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, Ed., Arthur Jeffery, (Egypt: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Raḥmāniyya, 1936/1355)
- ⁶² Abu 'Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1991), p. 157
- ⁶³ Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p.5
- ⁶⁴ Rodwell J.M., *The Koran*, (Translated), (London: 1963), p. 2
- ⁶⁵ Bell, Richard, *The Qur'an. Translated, with a critical Rearrangement of the Surahs* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937, 1939).
- ⁶⁶ As John E. Marrill says that "This critical re-arrangement is the distinctive feature of the translation", See John E. Marrill, Dr. Bell's Critical Analysis of the Qur'an, *The Moslem World*, Vol: xxxvii, No.2, April 1947, p.134.
- ⁶⁷ Bell, Richard, *Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh university Press, 1958); Bell's pupil W. Montgomery Watt completely revised this book in an enlarged form in published at the University Press, Edinburgh, 1970. Watt mentions "Richard Bell was my greatly respected teacher under whom I did much of my study of Arabic and who guided me in the preparation of the thesis which eventually appeared as *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*. On one or two points, however, I am unable to accept his theories about the Qur'an, as I indicated in the article 'The Dating of the Qur'an: a review of Richard Bell's Theories' (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1957, 46-56)...It is my hope that the present revision will enable a new generation of scholars to appreciate the importance of Bell's painstaking analysis of the Qur'an." See W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1970, p. v
- ⁶⁸ W.Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an*, p.51
- ⁶⁹ Bell, Richard, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* (London and Edinburgh: Frank Gass and Company Limited, 1968).
- ⁷⁰ Bell, Richard, *A Duplication in the Koran, The Composition of Surah xxiii*, *The Muslim World*, Vol: xviii, no.3, July 1928, pp. 227-233.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227
- ⁷² *Bell's Introduction to the Qurān*, p. 51.

- ³⁵ Sell, Edward, pp.255-256.
- ³⁶ Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies* (London 1971), vol. II
- ³⁷ Goldziher, Ignaz, *Mohammed and Islam*, Trans. from German to English by Kate Chambers, (Yale: Yale University Press, First published, February, 1917), p.10.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p.11
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- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p.12
- ⁴¹ Ibid., p. 29
- ⁴² Ibid.,
- ⁴³ Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, p.3
- ⁴⁴ Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, p..53
- ⁴⁵ Shalbī, ‘Abdul Fattāḥ, *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wal-Ihtijāj bihi fī al-Qira’āt* (Cairo: Maktabah Al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, , 1960), p.35
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 63-64
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., P. 77
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., P. 78
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., P. 81
- ⁵⁰ Blachere, *Al-Qur’ān Nuzuluhū Tadwīnuhū Tarjamatuhū wa Ta’thiruhū*, Tr. By Raḍā Sa’ādah, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Labnānī, ND), pp.9-10.
- ⁵¹ Najāb al-‘Aqīqī, *Al-Mustashriqūn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1965), Vol. 1, pp.316-318
- ⁵² Blachere, *Al-Qur’ān Nuzuluhū Tadwīnuhū Tarjamatuhū wa Ta’thiruhū*, Vol. 2, pp.167-176
- ⁵³ Ibid.,
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.,
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.,
- ⁵⁶ Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Zuhd, Bab al-Tathabbut fī al-Ḥadīth wa Ḥukm Kitābat al-‘Ilm* (K.S.A: Ri’āsah Idārat al-Buḥūth al-‘Ilmiyya, Makkah al-Mukarrama, 1980/1400), Vol. 4, p.2298.
- ⁵⁷ See for more comments Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Diḡā’ ‘an al-‘Aqādah wa al-Sharī‘ah Didd Maṭā’in al Mustashriqīn* (Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1384 A.H.), p. 13.
- ⁵⁸ Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of the Koran*, p.410

- ¹⁸ He consolidates his assertion with a story he heard without indicating any reference to that. Story runs as "One day when Fatimah, Muhammad's daughter, was reciting the verse" the Hour has come near and the moon is split asunder" (Surah LIV., al-Qamar, 1), a daughter of the poet was present and said to her, "that is a verse from one of my father's poems, and your father is stolen it and pretended that he received it from God." This tale is probably false, for Imra'ul Qais dies about the year 540 of the Christian era while Muhammad was not born till A.D. 570, "the year of the elephant." See Tisdall, Clair, *The Original Sources of the Qur'an*, p.47.
- ¹⁹ Here 11 couplets are given, indicating some same words which have been compared with that of Qur'anic, sūra Al-Qamar, Verse No.1. See p. 48.
- ²⁰ Ibid, p.50.
- ²¹ Having gone through the *Dīwāns of Imra'ul Qais*, the above mentioned couplets are not found.
- ²² Without introducing the Sheikh's name and his status
- ²³ Ibid, see foot-note L 2, last three lines.
- ²⁴ Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of the Koran*, p.410
- ²⁵ D.S. Margoliouth, *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam* (London: 1905).
- ²⁶ D.S. Margoliouth, *Mohammadanism* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1911)
- ²⁷ D.S. Margoliouth, *Mohammadanism*, p. 68.
- ²⁸ Ibid.,
- ³ The Rev. Canon Sell D.D., M.R.A.S, fellow of the University of Madras and author of 'The Faith of Islam' 'The Religious Order of Islam', 'Essays on Islam', 'Islam: Its Rise and Progress'. Living as a fellow at Madras University he prepared this work with the title of "The Historical Development of the Qur'an".
- ³⁰ Sell, Canon, Edward, *The Historical Development of the Qur'an* (London: Society for promoting Christian knowledge, 1909).
- ³¹ See for detail Alphonse Mingana, "*Leaves from Three Ancient Qur'ans..*" and Jeffery's "*Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*"
- ³² He indicates for an account of the recensions of the Qur'an and its 'various readings' Sell's *Essays on Islam*, pp.221-248, 251-267, see Ibid, p.93.
- ³³ Ibid, p.255
- ³⁴ Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, pp.cv, cvi.

References

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- ² Irfan Shahid, "Theodor Noldeke's "Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden": An Evaluation", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Jan., 1977, p.119.
- ³ Theodor Noldeke, *Geschichte des Qor’ans* (Gottingen, 1860).
- ⁴ Some of his essays were gathered and published as *Sketches from Eastern History*. See Ibn Warraq, *The Origins of the Koran*, p.409
- ⁵ ‘Alī al-Ṣaghīr, Muḥammad Ḥussain, *Al-Mustshriqūn wal dirasāt al-Qur’āniyyah*, p.88.
- ⁶ Al-Biqā’ī, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Umar, *Nazm al-Durar fī Tanāsib al-‘Ayāt wa al-Suwar*, ‘Abd al-Rāziq al-Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1995).
- ⁷ Al-Zanjānī, Abū ‘Abdullah, *Tārīkh al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-‘Alam’ī, 1388AH/1969), pp.49-61.
- ⁸ ‘Alī al-Ṣaghīr, Op, Cit., p.90.
- ⁹ Brocklemon, Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī, Arabic translation by Al-Najjār, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm (Al-Qahira: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, al-Qāhirah, ND), Vol:1, p.140.
- ¹⁰ Theodor Noldeke, *Geschichte des Qor’ans* (Gottingen, 1860), pp.1-3.
- ¹¹ Wollaston, Arthur, *The Religion of the Koran* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1911).
- ¹² Wollaston, Arthur N., *The Religion of the Koran*, p. 11.
- ¹³ Tisdall, Clair, *The Original Sources of The Qur’an* (London: Northumberland Avenue, W.C. & New York, 1905).
- ¹⁴ Tisdall, Clair. *The Original Sources of The Qur’an*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 11.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 12
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p.19.
- ¹⁷ Most of the time he refers his readers to the works of William Mure, Dr Zwemer, and Dr. Adolf Brull etc.

Concluding Remarks

Collection and compilation of Qur'ānic verbatim have always been an arena of controversy among the Orientalists regarding authenticity of the Holy Qur'ān. Through these objections Qur'ānic text has been a perpetual subject to frequent misgivings in the 20th century. It is an established fact that the method applied by Western scholars to determine the textual indiscretions of the Qur'ān, is totally different from that kind of understanding and wisdom, with which Muslim scholars have presented the solution of these complications. For Orientalists the bibliographical information, the reformation and the correction of historical events carry more importance and lie at the core of their goals. The current review study has been quantified for presenting the significant notions of mid eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries' Orientalistic understandings and approximations regarding the Qur'ān. It has also been observed that in the 20th century, almost the same approach in all Orientalists, and it is really a partial attitude in the field of scientific research and hardly justified.

Putting different objections on the compilation and accumulation, John Burton denied the presence of Qur`ān in a form of book in the period of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), in this regard he writes that “its collection was not under taken until sometimes after the death of the Prophet”.⁸¹ Relying on some traditions he adopts this idea that due to its incompleteness, the *tawatur* of Qur`ān is also affected.⁸²

On the base of saying of Zaid (R.A) in a tradition, “فقدت آية” (means I could not find the last two verses of *Sūra al-Touba*) John Burton asserts the distortion and incompleteness of the Qur`ān. After the reference of Zaid (R.A) he writes:

All these elements predispose one to an expectation that the edition prepared by Zaid might be incomplete The Qur`ān text which come down to us from ‘Umar’s day are unquestionably incomplete.⁸³

This notion established because of misunderstanding of the tradition of Zaid Bin Thābit (R.A) by John Burton and other Orientalists. The meaning of Zaid’s statement is that while writing he could not find these verses from anyone. It doesn’t mean that the verses of *Sūra al-Tauba* and *Sūra al-Aḥzāb* besides Abū Khuzaimah (R.A) and Khuzaimah Bin Thābit al-Anṣārī (R.A) were not learnt by heart by other companions of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) also.

John Burton has also discussed the issue of *Maṣāḥif of Ṣaḥāba* in detail in his book. He asserts that all *Maṣāḥif* attributed to companions, or other copies of the Qur`ān found in big cities or differences of multiple readings or recitations attributed to some individuals are invented by linguists later on.⁸⁴

It should be clear that John Burton tries to reach to conclusion about Qur`ānic text and its multiple readings which he has already formulated in his mind. For this purpose, he only picks those narrations which harmonize to his specific thoughts. Thus, the narrations which are contrary to his bent of mind are not considered for scholarship.

As the purpose of Orientalists is to create doubts so, they emit such spitefulness that has no solid foundation. For example Montgomery Watt writes:

From an early point in his Prophetic career... Muḥammad thought of the separate revelations he was receiving as constituting a single Qur'ān. After he had been a year or two in Medina, however, he thought of them as constituting, The Book, which, it was his task to produce.⁷⁷

The concepts of Montgomery Watt and Bell are the primary steps to declare Qur'ān as tampered and distorted book. The thing that is hidden in the difference of the Book and al-Qur'ān, according to them, the safety of Qur'ān without any change and distortion is dubious and it is the purpose and aim of research of these Orientalists. Watt propagated the absence of *mu'awwadhatain* (معوذتين) in the Codex of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (R.A.). In his view, Ibn Mas'ūd (R.A.) did not consider these *Sūrās* as the part of Qur'ān,⁷⁸ besides this he presented a lot of objections on narrations regarding the compilation of the Qur'ān in the reign of Abū Bakr (R.A.).

After evaluation, the contents of the literature of Watt, we find that he consulted and followed mostly his teachers' views like Richard Bell, Bull, Kaitani, Goldziher, Jeffery, Nicolson, Noldeke, Torry and beside this, Encyclopedia of Islam is the major source for his research writings. Although, we find the reference of *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī in his writings but he took help from a French translation of al-Bukhari as he tried to comprehend Qur'ān from the translation of Richard Bell.⁷⁹

JOHN BURTON

The famous John Burton is one of the contemporary Orientalist who also selected the text of Qur'ān for his scholarly interest. He has written a book titled "The Collection of the Qur'ān". Some significant topics such as the compilation, codification, collection and the subject of annulling and abrogation of Qur'ānic verses have been discussed in detail. John Burton wrote this book with the cooperation of his companion, Dr. John Wansbrough.⁸⁰

Integration of Society he very generously concedes that Islam in the future may, after all, have some role to play in the world. But he says Islam “must admit the fact of its origins”? Namely, admitting and agreeing to the whole Orientalist thesis that the Qur’ān is nothing but a hotchpotch of quotations from the Torah, New Testament and other sources. In other words, that Islam should, or the Muslims should, voluntarily dissolve Islam and then they will have a role to play in the future of the world.⁷⁴ Montgomery Watt seems to be very active among those who called the text of Qur’ān, the creation of Muḥammad (PBUH). His objections give the smell of hostility and prejudice against Islam and Qur’ān like other Orientalists, further we need not to give importance to his artificial atmosphere and fictional discourse of reasoning, as the asset of research, because in his views “imaginary” possibilities and suppositions have more importance than reported narrations and evidences. In this regard, he only finds faults in fundamental and definite sources of Islam only on the bases of possibilities, for example, he expresses the possibility, while denying the revelation, he asserts that “what seems to man from outside himself, may actually come from his unconscious”⁷⁵

He more explicitly distorting the Islamic theme of ‘*Wahī*’ expresses the possibility that the environmental elements of many years have influenced his (Prophet of Islam) passions and emotions so much that they might appear at time in the form of “revelation”.⁷⁶