A Critique of the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān (EQ)

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Abstract

After briefly introducing the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān (EQ) and mentioning its merits, this article addresses the structural and methodological problems of this encyclopedia. Subsequently, the most important problems with the content of this work are discussed, which in turn will reveal some of the shortcomings and methodological errors in Western Islamic and Qurʾānic studies.

Keywords: Qurʾān, Orientalism, encyclopedia, Jane Dammen McAuliffe.

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Introduction

In the contemporary era, the encyclopedia is an abstract of human knowledge, in a single discipline or in all disciplines, which is structured in a thematic or alphabetical order (Bustānī, n.d., 4:500). In his definition of the term 'encyclopedia' Dehkhoda writes: "A book containing the sum of human knowledge, culture, sciences and arts. It is a comprehensible summary of human learning; a compendium of technical information comprising various disciplines and fields of study, in distinct topics that are usually arranged alphabetically, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica, which was first published in 1768. Encyclopedias are sometimes limited to one specific discipline as in the case of the Catholic Encyclopedia and the like" (Dehkhoda 1373 Sh, 24:4).

The most important features of a good encyclopedia include:

1)   Providing comprehensive information on a subject or a discipline such that a researcher would not require to turn to other secondary sources after referring to it.

2)   Arranging the information in the form of articles.

3)   Following the standard methods of composing encyclopedia articles, including:

a.   The articles should be descriptive.

b.   Observance of neutrality in the presentation of the contents, views and evidence on the subject being discussed and refraining from any form of prejudice or imposition of any opinion on the reader.

c.   Observing the approved methods of technical writing.

d.   Maintaining brevity and avoiding unnecessary verbosity and repetition.

e.   Including references for all the content.

f.   Using original and reliable sources.

g.   Using standard academic prose and avoiding poetic expressions.

h.   Presentation of facts in a coherent manner or theories that have been propounded in the quest of knowledge creation (Rezāyī Isfahānī 1385 Sh, 44-45).

It is worth noting that the fundamental principle in writing an encyclopedia is remaining unbiased while presenting information and avoiding all preconceptions and prejudice. Indeed, the best way to defend the truth is to eschew partiality and convey the reality as it is. Hence, the inclusion of unsubstantiated material along with dogmatism result in some scholars showing no interest in writing encyclopedias on issues pertaining to faith and religion.

A Brief Introduction to the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān

The general editor of this encyclopedia is Jane Dammen McAuliffe, a professor at Georgetown University in America, and four renowned researchers on the Qurʾān are her associate editors, namely: Claude Gilliot from France, William A. Graham from America, Wadad Kadi from Chicago, and Andrew Rippin from Canada. The advisory board is made up of: Nasr Hamid Abu-Zayd, Mohammed Arkoun, Gerhard Böwering (America), Gerald R. Hawting (United Kingdom), Frederik Leemhuis (Holland), and Angelika Neuwirth (Germany). Its contributors are both Muslims and non-Muslims from various countries. This work includes about a thousand entries in six volumes and has been published and distributed by Brill Publishers. The aims of composing this work have been alluded to in the preface and include:

i.   Creating a reference work that would capture this century's best achievements in Qurʾānic studies.

ii.   This encyclopedia should stimulate even more extensive scholarship on the Qurʾān in the decades to come.

iii.   To make the world of Qurʾānic studies accessible to a broad range of academic scholars and educated readers, especially since the number of reference works for the Qurʾān that are accessible in European languages remains quite small with much of the available information being partial and incomplete (EQ, vol. I, Preface).

Merits of the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān

1)   The inclusion of articles from a variety of authors from both the West and East.

2)   Attention has been paid to new subjects (such as feminism) alongside traditional Qurʾānic subjects.

3)   Distinguishing between the Qurʾān and the exegesis of the Qurʾān.

4)   Proper planning with regards to the timing and speed of publication of the encyclopedia.

5)   Turning back from the methods of earlier Orientalists and observing fairness in comments in most of the entries.

Problems and Shortcomings

1)   Structure and Methodology:

a)   A brief examination of the list of writers reveals that most of them have only one basic insight into the Qurʾān, which is a modernistic, relativistic, and evolutionary perspective that considers the text of the Qurʾān to be the work of a human being and as such, they only seek a historical commentary on it. Even though the methods and techniques

of these writers may differ, the principle view they all share is based around this original insight. This is true of both Muslim and non-Muslim writers. Such a selection could never be random. Therefore, the selection of authors for the project reflects the preferences and tendencies of the editors themselves.

b)   Despite the editors' claims (that religious affiliation has no bearing in an academic study), around twenty percent of the authors they have chosen are Muslims and that too, those with particular backgrounds and academic leanings. This means that they have already decided in favor of a specific stance in advance.

c)   The Muslim authors have mostly contributed articles on topics of secondary importance and most of the articles on fundamental topics, opinions and Qurʾānic vocabulary have been written by non-Muslim authors.

d)   The claim that the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān contains a variety of differing views may be correct to some degree, but the source of all these views is founded on the position that the phenomenon of revelation as propounded and understood by Islam is invalid and unsubstantiated.

e)   It seems that some of the non-Muslim authors have a shallow understanding of Islamic sources and at times make serious claims based on secondary sources. For example, when the author of the article "Names of the Prophet" refers to the sixth verse of Sūrah al-Ṣaff, he presents a reading from Ubayy ibn Kaʿb which is starkly different to the standard text of the Qurʾān. In the commonly accepted reading, it is narrated that Jesus said, "I give you glad tidings that of a Prophet who will come after me, and is name is Aḥmad." However, the variant reading that the author of this entry mentions states: "I announce a prophet whose community will be the final one and by whom God will put the final seal on prophets and messengers" (EQ, 3:502).

This variant reading has only been reported by Rudi Paret and nobody else (Paret 1971, 476).

f)   One of the methods of Mohammed Arkoun, the author of the article "Contemporary Critical Practices and the Qurʾān," is to accuse and pass judgment on his opponents, which he does in the many instances where he questions those who do not employ the modern critical methods of historical analysis and the like. It is interesting that he does not himself provide a single instance, piece of evidence or even a name for his claims. He repeatedly hints that those who agree with him are free thinkers while those who oppose him are somehow slaves to the status-quo [or what he terms 'dogmatic enclosure']. It appears that this approach is not academic; in fact, it is not even in line with scholarly ethics. Any person can go to a judge alone and accuse and lay blame upon his opponents.

Arkoun has made many claims in this article, but he fails to provide any witness or evidence for them. For example, he says that theological authorities and 'guardians of orthodoxy' look suspiciously at the history of religions. However, he does not mention a single individual or offer even one quote from any source as a reference for his claim. In his article, the author questions the sum of all the Shīʿī and Sunnī exegeses throughout the ages and states three problems that they all suffer from: a wide range of possible interpretation, influence of cultural contexts of different social groups, and medieval approaches now considered sacred (EQ, 1:412-430).

Such a treatment and depiction of thousands of exegeses on the Qurʾān which make up a legacy of Muslim scholarship spanning fourteen centuries is neither academic, nor is it considered fair and civil.

g)   Normally, Orientalists take their material from Sunnī sources and limit their understanding of Islam to the perspective of this specific sect, which then forms the basis of their judgments. It is about time now that they refer to the Shīʿī works on ḥadīth, theology, philosophy and history

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and hear the teachings of Islam in a rational form, based on the Qurʾān and the Sunnah of the Prophet (s), from the words of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) so as to better understand the reality of Islam.

Of course, the phrase 'Sunnī Islam' and 'Shīʿī Islam' do not look correct since two different Islams do not exist. Rather, Shīʿīsm and Sunnism are two sects within Islam that share the fundamental tenets and only have different views on some historical, creedal and juristic issues. In any case, it is necessary and crucial for Orientalist researchers to give due attention to Shīʿī thought in order to properly explain Islamic views and teachings.

As an example, we note that G. H. Juynboll, the author of the article "Ḥadīth and Qurʾān" relies mostly on Sunnī ḥadīth sources for references in his study of exegetical traditions. In addition to the Sunnī ḥadīth corpus al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah, he refers to works such as Mālik's al-Muwaṭṭả, Muṣannaf al-Ṣanʿānī, Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, Sunan al-Dārimī, al-Suyūṭī's al-Itqān, al-Zarkashī's al-Burhān and others. However, of all the available Shīʿī works on ḥadīth and other subjects, he has only referred to al-Kāfī and Biḥār al-Anwār, and that too only in his discussion on the Qurʾān (EQ, 2:376-396).

More than anything else, in his study of the narrations, the author has focused on the examination of chains of transmission for assessing the extent of the historical authenticity of a ḥadīth before passing judgment on its soundness or weakness. Yet one of the important means of evaluating the acceptability of narrations [that he has overlooked], aside from the chains of transmission, is the assessment of the contents of the narrations.

For example, Muslim scholars have rejected the narrations of 'the myth of the cranes' (gharānīq) and the forgetfulness of the Prophet (s) in memorizing and preserving verses of the Qurʾān, using content-based evaluation (since the contents of this narration go against the explicit verses of the Qurʾān that establish the complete infallibility of the Prophet)

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or rational evaluation.

2) Problems Related to Content

a) The claim that in-depth research has been carried out (which is mentioned in the encyclopedia's preface) is not in conformity with the actions of some of the authors. For instance, in his article "Exegesis of the Qurʾān: Classical and Medieval" (EQ, 2:99-124), Claude Gilliot introduces al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā's (d. 406 A.H.) *Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tảwīl fī Mutashābih al-Tanzīl* as a Muʿtazilī exegesis and even states that al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 A.H.) and al-Shaykh al-Ṭabarsī were Shīʿī Muʿtazilīs. It seems that he has overlooked the fact that the Islamic world had three predominant schools of dialectic theology: the theological school of the Ashāʿirah, the theological school of the Muʿtazilah and the theological school of the Shīʿah.

Even though the third school is similar to the school of the Muʿtazilah in certain approaches, such as rationalism, each of the two are separate and independent, having their own specific characteristics. For example, the Shīʿah believe in the continuity of divine guidance after prophethood through *imāmah*, but the Muʿtazilah do not espouse the same theological position; the Muʿtazilah propound the theory of 'a state between two states' (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*) [that designates the salvational status of a moral sinner] which is not accepted by the Shīʿah.

b) Even though the encyclopedia's general approach is far different from the approach of the earlier Orientalists, and a fair and scholarly outlook is witnessed in many of its articles, there are still some authors who echo and repeat the same claims of earlier Orientalists without any new insight. For instance, in his entry on "Aaron," Andrew Rippin writes that the Qurʾān wrongly refers to the mother of Jesus (a) as the sister of Aaron: *"O sister of Aaron"* (Q19:28) despite the fact that Aaron had died centuries before the mother of Jesus. He says, "According to the biblical

story, Aaron did have a sister called Miriam…, but she was not, of course, the same as Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the Muslim tradition has never taken that to be the case" (EQ, 1:1-2).

This blunder by Andrew Rippin in understanding the verse of the Qurʾān, his lack of attention to the exegeses and exegetical traditions, and his attribution of a historical error to the Qurʾān (which conflates Maryam at the time of Moses with Maryam mother of Jesus) is equally problematic for the Leiden encyclopedia, since the editors, reviewers and proofreaders of the encyclopedia paid no attention to the research of earlier Orientalists and Muslim responses to the same, as the point raised by Andrew Rippin is not new; rather, it is a mere repetition of claims of earlier Orientalists. In fact, this claim against the Qurʾān was first made by an individual by the name of Adrian Reland (1676- 1718) and it has since been responded to many times by Muslim scholars, who have pointed out the mistake of Orientalists in understanding this verse. Among these was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī (d. 1988) in his work *Difāʿ ʿan al-Qurʾān* where he mentions this very claim (p. 161) and provides a detailed response to it. However, it is quite surprising that fourteen years after the publication of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī's monograph, the very same mistake of the earlier Orientalists is repeated in Leiden's Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān without any mention of the response.

c)   Sometimes contradictions are noticeable in the Leiden Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān. For example, in his article "Ḥadīth and the Qurʾān," Juynboll mentions something about distortion (*taḥrīf*) in the Qurʾān. He quotes al-Suyūṭī saying that the verse of stoning was revealed upon Muḥammad (ṣ) but was not included in the Qurʾān. Another example is the change of the word "Aʾimmah" to "Ummah" which is a view he attributes to the Shīʿah, as with the belief that Sūrah al-Aḥzāb was originally longer than Sūrah al-Baqarah before it was subjected to change and abridgment. He also states that the Shīʿah interpret the "seven readings" as seven ways of issuing

legal opinions [by the Imam] (EQ, 2:376-396).

Firstly, the narrations that speak of distortion or alteration [in the Qurʾān] have been criticized time and again by great Sunnī and Shīʿī scholars and have been rejected. This is because most of these narrations contradict the Qurʾān itself, and anything that contradicts the Qurʾān has no value. The chains of transmission of these narrations are also flawed and some of them are actually referring to differing interpretations and readings. Among the scholars who have written works about this subject is Ayatullāh Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī (r) in his book *al-Bayān*, Ayatullāh Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat in his book *Ṣiyānat al-Qurʾān ʿan al-Taḥrīf*, and Dr. Najārzadegān in his book *Salāmat al-Qurʾān min al-Taḥrīf*.

Secondly, the issue of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb being lengthier than Sūrah al-Baqarah is attributed among the Ahl al-Sunnah to Ubayy ibn Kaʿb and ʿĀʾishah (cf. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal 1896, 5:132; Suyūṭī 1419 AH, 2:72). Why then does the author accuse the Shīʿah of believing this when it has already been seen that the actual hypothesis of distortion [in the Qurʾān] is incorrect and both Sunnī and Shīʿī scholars have rejected it?!

Thirdly, the narrations that speak about the seven readings of the Qurʾān have been faulted by Shīʿī scholars both for their chains of transmission and their content.[1] And since the [variant] readings are not successively narrated (*mutawātir*) and the [authenticity of the] Qurʾān is not established through them, they cannot form the basis of any jurisprudential ruling.

d)   It is seen that sometimes certain inappropriate attributions are made to divinely appointed Prophets. For instance, in the entry on "Abraham" by Reuven Firestone, Āzar is considered to be his biological father and in the story of the birds, Abraham is portrayed as having challenged God. In

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1. Cf. Khūʾī (1408 AH) in the discussion on variant readings and Maʿrifat (1419 AH) in the discussion on variant readings and the ḥadīth of the seven letters.

the very same entry, the forefathers of the Prophet of Islam (s) are depicted as idol-worshippers (EQ, 1:7).

However, a number of exegetes of the Qurʾān, such as the authors of *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, *al-Mīzān*, *Tafsīr Namūne* and others, have discussed this matter in their commentaries of verses 113-114 of Sūrah al-Tawbah, verse 6 of Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah, verse 47 of Sūrah Maryam and verse 86 of Sūrah al-Shuʿarāʾ where they have either offered explanations for this or rejected it. They have clarified that Āzar was the uncle of Prophet Abraham and the tradition that has been narrated about the [forefathers of the] Prophet of Islam is fabricated. They also evince many proofs about the faith of the ancestors of the Prophet (s).[1]

e)   Another problem with this work is the narration of *isrāʾīliyāt* (fabricated traditions that have roots in Judeo-Christian teachings which found their way into Islamic sources) without any criticism. For example, in the entry on "Adam and Eve," while discussing the creation of Adam and Eve, Cornelia Schöck states that the Qurʾān says, "*People!... Your lord who created you from a single person and created from him his wife*," meaning that "she was created from the lowest of Adam's ribs… or from a rib on his left side" (EQ, 1:22-26).

Firstly, there is no explicit mention in the verse or in any verse of the Qurʾān for that matter, that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. Therefore, attributing such a thing to the Qurʾān is against the principle of staying true to the original text.

Secondly, the Torah states: "Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:22-23).

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1. Cf. Ṭabrisī (1403 AH) and Ṭabāṭabāʾī (1393 AH) under the verses mentioned as well as Makārim (1352 AH, 8, 158-59).

Hence, this is part of the stories of the Torah which Cornelia Schöck has attributed to the Qurʾān in her article.

Thirdly, if the author had referred to the exegesis of Muslim scholars about the verses that speak of the creation of Adam, she would not have made this error. Scholars such as ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī (r) (in *al-Mīzān*) state explicitly that the narration which speaks of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib is false and is part of the *isrāʾīliyāt* (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1393 AH, 1:147).

f)   The authors of the articles "Shīʿa," Arzina Lalani and "Shīʿism and the Qurʾān," Meir Bar-Asher, have cast a shadow of doubt upon the principles and tenets of Shīʿism and have presented unscholarly theories which they [falsely] attribute to the Shīʿah (EQ, 4:591-609).

Regarding the narrations that have been reported from Muḥaddith Nūrī in the second article, it must be said that they do not lead to certitude, neither in theory nor practice, since they are all solitary reports (*āḥād*). Hence, the claim that these narrations are numerous and successively narrated is baseless. Secondly, none of these narrations have been mentioned in the four canonical Shīʿī ḥadīth collections. Therefore, these narrations cannot be relied upon and there is no connection between the occurrence of distortion in the Torah and Gospels with its occurrence in the Qurʾān.

g)   Uri Rubin, the author of the article "Muḥammad," has displayed special skill in proffering objections, step by step, to the receiving of revelation by the person of the Prophet (s) and the origin of the Qurʾān. Yet the entire article about the Prophet of Islam (s) is written based on verses of the Qurʾān. As a result, the foundation of all that is true in the article is undermined. This is the best method of casting doubt which is done by incorporating incorrect and damaging ideas along with correct ones, such that the reader may be affected by them subconsciously (EQ, 3:440-57).

h)   The author of the article "Psalms," Arie Schippers, makes false

attributions (such as playing musical instruments, illicit relations etc.) to Prophet David (a) which are not acceptable in any way to the majority of Muslims, and especially the Shīʿah (EQ, 4:314-17). This is because he does not refer to all the primary Islamic sources and relies instead upon weak narrations. In his entry, the author has mostly used the reports that are found in the first part of al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, and this section of the book is replete with *isrāʾīliyāt*. Furthermore, while recounting its historical reports, the chains of transmitters have not been mentioned. Hence, these kind of references have no connection to the Qurʾān and the Muslims and are closer to the distorted stories of the Torah, and thus do not have any value or significance.

i)   Rotraud Wielandt, the author of the entry "Exegesis of the Qurʾān: Early Modern and Contemporary," has completely ignored the exegetical developments in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon (EQ, 2:124-40). It is especially noteworthy that the exegetical developments in the twentieth century (14th and 15th centuries A.H.) in these three countries were due to the outstanding work carried out by Shīʿī scholars. These developments included issues related to politics and government in exegesis, focus on societal needs, attention to empirical sciences, studying the views of secular ideologies and critiquing them, consideration of the thematic exegesis [of the Qurʾān] and its different aspects, and emphasis upon the method of interpreting the Qurʾān through the Qurʾān, as is seen in the following works:

Tafsīr al-Mīzān by ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī,

Tafsīr Namūne by Ayatullāh Makārim Shīrāzī,

Tafsīr al-Furqān by Ayatullāh Ṣādiqī Tehrānī,

Tafsīr Navīn by Muḥammad Taqī Sharīʿatī,

Taqrīb al-Qurʾān ilā al-Adhhān by Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Shīrāzī,

Tafsīr Rawshan by Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī,

Tafsīr Kawthar by Ayatullāh Yaʿqūb Jaʿfarī,

Min Hudā al-Qurʾān by Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Mudarrisī,

Tafsīr Tasnīm by Ayatullāh ʿAbdullāh Jawādī Āmūlī,

Tafsīr Kāshif by Dr. Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Ḥujjatī and Dr. Biāzār Shīrāzī,

Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm by Ayatullāh Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khumaynī,

Tafsīr al-Atharī al-Jāmiʿ by Ayatullāh Muḥammad Hādī Maʿrifat (from Iran),

Tafsīr al-Kāshif by Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah,

and *Tafsīr Min Waḥy al-Qurʾān* by Ayatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlullāh (from Lebanon).

j)   Even though Richard Bell's article on the inimitability of the Qurʾān can be considered one of the most scholarly entries in the Leiden Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān, its author has sufficed with studying the literary aspects of the Qurʾān only (EQ, 2:526-35). This is despite the Qurʾān being for all people in every era, and its inimitability cannot be restricted to only one particular aspect; rather, it can encompass all the aspects simultaneously. This is why we see that with the passage of time, more aspects of its miraculousness and inimitability come to light.

k)   While the article "Fāṭima" by Jane Dammen McAuliffe has some positive points such as emphasis on the merits of Lady Fāṭimah (s) and making use of both Sunnī and Shīʿī exegetical sources, it also has some weaknesses. This is due to the fact that the article mentions only three verses of the Qurʾān in relation to al-Sayyidah Fāṭimah (a) whereas exegetical traditions mention her in the commentary of 135 verses. As such, the article is incomplete and the author has not recounted and analyzed all

the verses and traditions regarding the illustrious lady. She has not even included a complete list of these narrations. Secondly, the author mentions some of the questionable narrations like that of ʿIkrimah in relation to the Verse of Purification (Q33:33) but fails to mention the responses that have been given to them [by scholars] (EQ, 2:192-3).

l)   Some general problems with the article "Imam" authored by Imiyaz Yusuf include:

1- Lack of a definition for the term

2- Failure to clearly present the subject

3- Lack of objectivity on the part of the author

4- No bibliography or references

5- An overall inability to convey the actual discussion

The fundamental problem with this article is that it has failed to present the core meaning of the terms 'Imam' and 'Imamate' to the level expected of an encyclopedia. Rather, it contains selective and incomplete discussions that only raise questions, accompanied by some errors in scholarship that do not, in the end, present any particular conclusion (EQ, 2:502-4).

m) "Chronology and the Qurʾān" is an important historical subject. In order to research it well with correct methodology and approach, historical evidence, authentic narrations, and the connotations of verses and chapters of the Qurʾān must be consulted. Keeping this in mind, Muslim researchers of the Qurʾān have mostly referred to the narrations of Ibn ʿAbbās on this subject, and based on these narrations they have reconstructed the chronology of the revelation of Sūrahs. However, since Orientalists have mostly focused their study on the tone, pace and style of the verses and Sūrahs, upon which they have based their criteria, or have resorted to weak narrations, they have mostly come up with incorrect conclusions (EQ, 1:316-35)

n) In the article "Form and structure of the Quran," the author states that the redaction of the Qurʾān carried out under ʿUthmān bin ʿAffān saw the incorporation of passages into completely new contexts (EQ, 2:246).

Since the order of the verses was predetermined, the claim that in many instances ʿUthmān shifted verses and incorporated them into new contexts cannot be substantiated. Furthermore, aside from the consensus [on this issue among Muslim scholars], there are numerous narrations that clearly state that the order of verses was predetermined. (Cf. Suyūṭī 1419 AH, 1:62-63; Ṣāliḥ 1990, 70)

Conclusion

In their study of the meanings of terms or exegesis of verses of the Qurʾān, or in explaining the connotation of Islamic narrations, many Orientalists have failed to refer to the primary sources or have referred to them sparingly. In numerous instances, they prefer to relate the views and statements of other Orientalists as their references. It is obvious that research which is based on this methodology and approach cannot have any true scholastic value.

For example, it is mentioned in some narrations that when the Prophet (s) would receive direct revelation, a special state would come over him such as heavy perspiration, or a kind of semi-unconsciousness, or hearing a particular sound. Juynboll says that many Orientalists thought that these states were the result of some physical ailment that afflicted the Prophet (s). Moreover, they easily attribute forgetfulness to the Prophet or the influence of Satan on the revelation of the Qurʾān. They compare a number of sound narrations on the merits of the Qurʾān to magical charms and talismans, and mention the interaction of the Prophet (s) with the jinn in a manner reminiscent of crowd-pleasing fables. Based on all this, it is imperative that we announce to the world that not every foreign heart is deserving of knowing the secrets of the Qurʾān!

Moreover, it cannot be doubted that the ḥadīth corpora depict some teachings in a manner not intended by the apparent meaning and are thus in need of explanation or an allegorical interpretation. There are also instances where some of the narrations are not considered reliable due to specific reasons. Unfortunately, by referring to the ḥadīth corpus directly, Orientalists have taken hold of these kinds of traditions and have accused both the Shīʿah and Ahl al-Sunnah for adopting a particular position in relation to the distortion (*taḥrīf*) of the Qurʾān.

Would these very same Orientalists not object and criticize a Muslim scholar who ignores the commentaries of the Jews and Christians, and the views of their theologians and sages, and delves directly into parts of the Torah and Gospels where he begins to offer his own understanding of the apparent statements of the texts and then attributes them to the followers of these texts?

Therefore, it is completely unfair and inappropriate to present a compendium containing guidelines, with arbitrarily selected and misconstrued analyses, aimed at cultivating the hearts and minds of people, without understanding the spirit of Islam and the spirit of the Qurʾān. All in all, it may be said that the divine laws have been ordained according to the specific spiritual and psychological needs and the social situation of men and women, and the intention of the Lawgiver is to create an appropriate legal system in order to guide mankind towards God.

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