

EVIDENCES FOR ABROGATION IN ISLAM (NASKH)

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EVIDENCES FOR ABROGATION (NASKH)

Written by brother Abu Hazim al Katib (from the Arabic multaqa of ahl al Hadith)

Translated by brothers: Ayman Khaled & Mahmoud al Misri (may Allah reward them both)

Slightly Edited by Um Abdullah M.

The issue of abrogation is agreed upon by scholars of Islam, it has been stated that it is a matter of consensus to which no one apposed except what was reported about Abu Muslim Al-Asfahani who belongs to Mu'tazilah sect. However, the majority of Mu'tazilah sect acknowledge the existence of abrogation, which is in agreement with the opinion of Ahlu Alsunna and the people of the Qiblah, the Muslims.

Abrogation is proven by Quran, Sunnah, consensus and logic.

From The Quran:

1) Allah, the most High says: {Such of Our revelations as we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest thou not that Allah is Able to do all things?} [2:106]

Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari (d. 310 H.) said:

“Allah means with (Such of Our revelations as we abrogate): we abrogate the ruling of a verse by another to change and replace this ruling. This is by making Halal to become Haram and vice versa or to let what is permissible to become impermissible. Thus, abrogation is only concerned with matters of commands and rulings such like: permissibility and impermissibility, prohibition and Halal ... etc. Therefore, previous nation's news and stories have no abrogation...” [Tafsir Ibn jarir (jami'e Al-Bayan):1/521]

Ibn Kathir said as well:

“Ibn Abi Talha narrated Ibn Abbas saying: (Such of Our revelations as we abrogate) means: what we replace of verses.

Ibn Jarir reported from the way of Mujahid: This part means: the verses we erased” and Ibn Abi Najeh from the way of Mujahid narrated Mujahid said: “we confirm the verse and its place in Quran but we replace its ruling. This is what the companions of Ibn Masoud narrated as well.” [Tafseer Ibn Katheer: 1/207]

Al-Qurtubi in his book “Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Quran” while he was talking about the verse of abrogation:

“Having knowledge about this matter is needed and its benefit is great, to the extent that all scholars need to know about abrogation because only the ignorant would deny abrogation since abrogation is needed to know the rulings of what is Haram and halal” [Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Quran: 2/61]

2) {And when we put a revelation in place of (another) revelation, and Allah knoweth best what He revealeth they say: Lo! thou art but inventing. Most of them know not.} [Al-Nahl: 101]

Ibn Jarir Al Tabari said:

“Allah the exalted says: We abrogate the ruling of a verse by replacing it with another ruling in another verse. In regards the part where it says {And Allah knoweth best what He revealeth}; Allah says there: what Allah abrogates and replaces is for the best of benefit to his creation as He knows the best. The part

{revealeth they say: Lo! thou art but inventing} means: those, who associate someone with Allah in worshiping and disbelieving in the messenger, say to the messenger: O Muhammad you are inventing this which means that you claiming that Allah said that while he did not. So Allah replies to what they said: indeed, most of them are ignorant about the fact that what you –Muhammad- bring them i.e. abrogated verses and verses that abrogate another verse are all from Allah.

Scholars of interpretations said exactly as what we said about the above verse. And some of those who mentioned that are:

[..chain of narration..] Mujahid said about this verse: it means Allah lifts up a verse and replace it with another

[..chain of narration..] Mujahid said: Allah abrogates verses, replace them , lift them up and confirm another verse in abrogated verses.

[..chain of narration..] Qutada said: the context of the verse {. as we abrogate or cause to be forgotten,} is same as {we put a revelation in place of (another) revelation}.

[.. chain of narration ..] Ibn zaid said about the part where Allah says {we put a revelation in place of (another) revelation}: they; disbelievers, said to Muhammad you bring something then you say otherwise. So Allah says: this replacement is an abrogation because whenever a verse si replaced by another then it has to be an abrogation. [tafseer Ibn Jarir: Jamie AlBayan: 7/646] and for further readings: Ibn Katheer: 2/774] and AlJamie Li Ahkam AlQuran by Al Qurtubi: 10/157]

3) Abrogation took place in many verses in the Quran:

1. {(In the case of) those of you who are about to die and leave behind them wives, they should bequeath unto their wives a provision for the year without turning them out, but if they go out (of their own accord) there is no sin for you in that which they do of themselves within their rights. Allah is Mighty, Wise} has been abrogated by the verse {such of you as die and leave behind them wives, they (the wives) shall wait, keeping themselves apart, four months and ten days. And when they reach the term (prescribed for them) then there is no sin for you in aught that they may do with themselves in decency. Allah is Informed of what ye do}

2. {It is prescribed for you, when one of you approacheth death, if he leave wealth, that he bequeath unto parents and near relatives in kindness. (This is) a duty for all those who ward off (evil).} was abrogated by {Allah chargeth you concerning (the provision for) your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females}

3. {Turn thy face toward the Inviolable Place of Worship, and ye (O Muslims), wheresoever ye may be, turn your faces when ye pray) toward it} abrogated the command of praying toward bait Al-Maqdis.

4. {O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty steadfast they shall overcome two hundred and if there be of you a hundred steadfast they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence.} was abrogated by {Now. hath Allah lightened your burden, for He knoweth that there is weakness in you. So if there be of you a steadfast hundred they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a thousand (steadfast) they shall overcome two thousand by permission of Allah. Allah is with the steadfast.}

5. {It is prescribed for you, when one of you approacheth death, if he leave wealth, that he bequeath unto parents and near relatives in kindness. (This is) a duty for all those who ward off (evil).} was abrogated with { Allah chargeth you concerning (the provision for) your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females}

6. {And now verily We shall make thee turn (in prayer) toward a qiblah which is dear to thee. So turn thy face toward the Inviolable Place of Worship,} abrogated praying toward madqdis Masjid.

Scholars have written special books about abrogation in the Quran:

- Al-Nasikh and Mansookh by Abu Ja'far Al-Nahhas
 - Al-Nasikh and Mansookh by Abu Ubaid Alqasim Bin Salam
 - Ma'rifat AlNasikh wa AlMansookh by Ibn Hazm
 - Al-Nasikh Wa Almansookh from the Quran by Hibat Allah al-Maqri
 - Nawasikh AlQuran by Ibn Al-Jawzi
 - Al-Nasikh Wa AlMansookh by Ibn Al-A'rabi
- and many other books.

Thus, we can notice that this is a matter of consent by scholars about the existence of abrogation so that you never find a scholar who wrote about Quran Tafseer denying or even doubting abrogation except some recent ones who have no early scholar to agree with them.

Proofs from the Sunnah:

There are many traditions that indicate the occurrence of abrogation in the shari'ah. The Prophet might give an order, and then would say that it has been abrogated, or prohibits from something and then say that it had been abrogated.

Many books had also been authored that speak about this [matter], which indicates the belief of the People of Hadith, Fiqh, and Usool in this matter, and from the books that were authored:

- "Al-I'tibar fee Al-Nasikh wa Al-Mansookh min Al-Athaar" by Al-Hazimi
- "Nasikh Al-Hadith wa Mansookhuh" by ibn Shaheen
- "Rusookh Al-Akhbar fee Mansookh Al-Akhbar" by Al-Ja'bari,
- "A'lam Al-'Alam ba'd Rusookhih behaqaiq Nasikh al-Hadith wa Mansoukhih" by Ibn Al-Jawzi
- "Ikhbar Ahl Al-Rusookh fe Al-Fiqh wa Al-Hadith Bi Miqdar Al-Mansoukh min Al-Hadith" by Ibn Al-Jawzi, and others.

This is also what is mentioned by the commentators and explainers of prophetic traditions in their books, such as: Ibn 'Abd Al-Bar in "Al-Tamheed" and "Al-Istizkar", Ibn Hajar in "Fath Al-Bari", Al-'Ieni in "Umdat Al-Qari", Ibn Daqeeq Al-Eid in "Al-Ihkam", and Ibn Al-'Arabi in "Al-Qabas".

This is also what is declared by the people of Fiqh in their books, such as: Al-Nawawi in his "Majmou'", Ibn Qudamah in "Al-Mughni", Al-Kasani in "Badaai' Al-Sana'i", and Ibn Rushd in "Bidayat Al-Mujtahid".

And it is also what is stated by the compilers of the Sunnah, such as: Al-Bukhari, the authors of the Sunan, Abi 'Awanah, Ibn Khuzaima, Ibn Hibban, Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Tahawi, and others.

It is also what is declared by the four Imams in their books.

Thus, this matter is the view held by the Scholars of Hadith, Fiqh, Tafseer, and Usool...

As for Consensus:

The consensus [about this matter] was transmitted by more than one [scholar], as it is the consensus of the companions where no one from among them rejected this, and [this consensus] was transmitted by Ibn Al-Hamam in Al-Tahrir (Tayseer Al-Tahrir 3/181).

Al-Bajy said: “All the Muslims are on the view of the possibility of abrogation” (Ahkam Al-Fusool p. 391).

Al-Shawkani said: “Abrogation is possible by common sense, and has occurred in reality with no dispute in this between the Muslims, except what was narrated from Abi Muslim Al-Asfahani” (Irshad Al-Fuhool p. 276).

And refer to: Sharh Tanqeeh Al-Fusool (p.303), Ham’ Al-Jawami’ Bisharh Al-Muhala (2/88), Al-‘Adad ‘Ala ibn Al-Hajib (2/188), Nihayat Al-Sawl (2/167), Sharh Al-Kawkab Al-Muneer (3/535), Al-Muswadah (p.195), Usool Al-Sarkhasi (2/54-55), Al-Wusool ila Al-Sawl by ibn Burhan (2/14-15), Al-Ibhaaj fee Sharh Al-Minhaj (2/249).

As For [it being] Common Sense and Rationally Acceptable:

1) It is said that scholars had agreed that rulings of the sharee’ah have a reasoning behind them that can be explained by the benefit and the interest [arising from them], and these benefits can change, such that something might be of benefit at one time, but not another, and the actions of Allah – the all Mighty – have a good reason behind them, and nothing is done by Him except what has a wisdom behind it and a benefit to His slaves.

2) There is nothing rational that would prevent the changing of rulings and their abrogation. And if there is nothing that would prevent such a thing, then this would imply possibility.

3) That the Islamic sharee’ah had abrogated the sharee’ahs of all those that were before us, and whoever attests to this should also attest that abrogation is possible within our own sharee’ah.

As for rejecting Abrogation, it was transmitted only from Abu muslim Al-Asfahani, who was from the Mu’tazilah, and the authenticity of this about him is differed upon:

- It was said that this is not true about him.

- It was also said that he just rejected calling it that, rather he calls it takhsees (making it specific) not naskh (abrogation). Thus this dispute is only in wordings not on its permissibility.

It was also said, that if what is transmitted about him is true, and he rejected abrogation itself (not just the wording), then his opinion is considered Shaaz [odd, and is] against the Book of Allah, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the Muslims that were before him. Abu Al-Husien Al-Basri, who was a Mu’tazilate like Abi Muslim, said: “The Muslims agreed that it is fit for the rulings to be abrogated, except for a strange narration of a few who [claimed that] such thing is not befitting” (Al-Mu’tamad 1/370).

Al-Shawkani said: “Abrogation is rationally acceptable, and has occurred in reality with no dispute in this between the Muslims, except what was narrated from Abi Muslim Al-Asfahani, where he said that it

is rationally acceptable, but never actually occurred. Now, if that is authentic about him, it would demonstrate that he is ignorant about this sharee'ah in an outrageous way. What is even stranger than this is what was narrated about him of the dispute in the books of the sharee'ah, [if that is true, then this would lead to ignoring, any dispute that arise from him] because the dispute of those who attained scholarship is the one that we take into consideration, not the dispute of those whose ignorance reached this level" (Irshad Al-Fuhool p.276).

As for the evidences for this strange opinion (the rejecter's opinion):

From among the proofs of this Shaaz (odd) opinion (of the rejecters):

1) That Allah says in the Quran: {Falsehood (Baatil) cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy} (41:42).

The point they are trying to make is Allah the Exalted stated that no falsehood can approach the Quran, thus if abrogation was possible than falsehood would have approached it.

It was replied to them that the meaning of falsehood here is lies, corruptions, and alterations similar to what happened to the previous Books, thus the above verse would agree with what Allah said in another verse: {Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e. the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian}(15:9).

It is also said that what is meant by falsehood in the verse is Satan, and that he would be incapable of adding or removing anything from it.

.....

Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari said in his Tafseer about the verse: "And the most correct of these views according to us, that its meaning is: One of falsehood is incapable of altering it with all his plots and conspiracies, or changing any of its meanings, and that is what is meant by 'approaching it from before it', or making any addition in it, and that is what is meant by 'approaching it from behind it'".

2) They said: Saying that abrogation is permissible, would lead to saying that Bidaa' is possible on Allah the all-Mighty (i.e. means that He ruled something, then discovered something He didn't know before, so He changed his ruling), and since we must exalt Allah from such a thing, that would prohibit the occurrence of abrogation.

What they mean by Bidaa' is for something to appear and become apparent after it was hidden, and that is not the case except for He who was ignorant of the thing before it was made clear to him and apparent.

The answer to their claim is:

That Allah – the most High and Exalted – had decreed the first ruling, while knowing that He will abrogate it with the second. He the All-Mighty had already known what was and what is to be, and His knowledge had encompassed all things, thus there is no Bidaa' here [to Allah], rather this Bidaa' happened to us when we knew about the second ruling after its revelation.