

Let Me Rephrase That!

Your Layman's Guide
to Abrogations



Bernard Payeur

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Abrogations

Second Edition

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Cover art is a rendition of a picture of George Burns from a poster for the 1977 Warner Bros. film "Oh, God!"

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Contents

Preface to the Second Edition	9
Foreword	10
A Harvest of Contradictions.....	12
<i>The Before and After Solution</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>The Abrogated and their Abrogators</i>	<i>18</i>
One Abrogating One.....	20
<i>Charity Becomes Compulsory</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>No More Mr. Nice Guy I</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>A Change of Direction</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Safa, Marwa and the Religion of Abraham</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>From Curser to Pardoner of Jews.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Providing for a Widow</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Dying a Muslim by Doing What a Muslim Does</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>No More Mr. Nice Guy II</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Indoctrination and War.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>A Blood-Money Conundrum I</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>From Killing Ten to Killing Two</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Intoxicants I.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Entering a House Other Than Your Own</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Adultery I.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>From Whipping to Pardoning Slanderers of Chaste Women</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>An Old Woman's Finery.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Slave-Girls and Children Close By and You're Naked.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Wives for the Messenger.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>The Prophet as Savior</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>They Also Carry Allah's Throne</i>	<i>40</i>

Let Me Rephrase That!7

<i>Wages I</i>	40
<i>The Reward of Beneficence</i>	41
<i>Wages II</i>	42
<i>Can We Be Friends?</i>	43
<i>That Sound You Hear</i>	43
<i>It Was Not a Weighty Message, After All</i>	44
<i>Wishing Won't Make It So Unless Allah Wishes It</i>	44
<i>Mouthing the Koran Is Not Good Enough</i>	44
Many Abrogating One	45
<i>A Blood-Money Conundrum II</i>	45
<i>Wills and Testaments</i>	46
<i>Intoxicants II</i>	48
<i>The Divorce Ransom</i>	49
<i>Adultery II</i>	51
<i>The Manifest Victory</i>	54
One Abrogating Many	56
<i>Adultery III</i>	56
<i>Myth of the Month of Revelations</i>	59
<i>Something for the Tax Collector</i>	60
<i>More Brides for Believers</i>	61
<i>First, Kill All the Unbelievers</i>	63
<i>Hell Is for Those Who Love Life</i>	64
<i>The Bedouins Learn Their Lesson</i>	64
<i>No More Mr. Nice Guy III</i>	66
<i>Adultery IV</i>	66
<i>Not All Poets Are Perverts</i>	69
<i>If Only</i>	69

Contents 8

Verse of the Sword.....	71
<i>Abrogation and Genocide</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>A Declaration of War</i>	<i>72</i>
Verse of the Tax	86
Epilogue	92

Preface to the Second Edition

Revelation = revealed truth = an immutable fact
communicated to a mortal by a god

The second edition of *Let Me Rephrase That* is a lot shorter than the first. Gone are the excerpts; in their place you will find reading recommendations. I wanted this edition of *Let Me Rephrase That!* to be the book you turn to when reading any books on the Koran, including the Koran itself, that don't identify revelations God later abrogated, i.e., modified or nullified. For example, earlier in Muhammad's Call, Allah showed a measure of respect for other religions.

2:62 The believers (Muslims), the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians – whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does what is good, shall receive their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear and they shall not grieve.

As Islam became a force to be reckoned with, God's position toward other religions hardened and He sent down another immutable fact, which abrogated, and in this instance invalidated, what He had said earlier about Jews, Christians and an obscure sect having nothing to fear.

3:85 Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

Scholars have identified more than two hundred revealed truths that were abrogated by subsequent communications from Allah to His ultimate spokesperson, the former merchant Muhammad. These ephemeral immutable facts and their abrogator(s), most of which, like Revelation 3:85, reflect a god's growing intolerance, is what *Let Me Rephrase That!* wants to bring to your attention.

Foreword

Of all the incongruities that devotees of a religion steeped in incongruities have to accept, the concept of abrogation has to be the most outlandish. Abrogation is common in the real world as better information replaces information that is out of date. In the world of revealed truths, retractions should not even be the exception. It defies logic, and therein lies the incongruity, the weirdness.

Scholars and clerics from the Middle Ages (eight to eleventh century) initially put forth these more than two hundred abrogated revelations, apparently oblivious to the uncomfortable conclusion that can be derived from their endeavour.

The inherent absurdity of an omniscient deity not getting it right the first or even the second time around may explain attempts by contemporary diviners of the Word of God to refute the very concept of abrogation. One such academic, Muhammad Asad (1900-92), argued that verse 10:64 was evidence of the immutability of Allah's Words.

10:64 Theirs is the good news in the present life and the Hereafter. And there will be no alteration of the Words of Allah. That is the great triumph.

Not so, according to another contemporary expert, Ahmad von Denffer (1949-present). For this eminent scholar, understanding abrogation is central to the correct application of God's laws. Denffer quotes four revelations to Asad's one, where Allah admits to occasionally changing His mind.

2:106 Whichever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring instead a better or similar one. Do you not know that Allah has the power over all things?

13:39 Allah blots out and confirms what He pleases; and with Him is the Mother of the Book.

16:101 And if We replace a verse by another – and Allah knows best what He reveals – they say: “You [Muhammad] are only a forger.” Surely, most of them do not know.

17:86 If We please, We certainly can blot out that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad); then you would find no guardian to assist you against Us.

Foreword 11

I have no hope of competing with those who have spent a lifetime making sense of the idiosyncrasies that saturate Islamic scriptures, including the concept of abrogation, which a minority of religious experts challenge for it raises doubts about the perfection of the Koran, and by extension, that of its Author.

That said, I do offer, where I am aware of it, contextual information about both the truth that is being abrogated and its abrogator, and where warranted, I state the obvious.

A Harvest of Contradictions

The first *official* Koran was compiled after Muhammad's death by a scribe by the name of Thabit. He was urged to do so by his successor as leader of the believers following the death of many of the best memorizers of the Koran at the battle of Yamama during the so-called *War of the Apostates*, a rebellion against Muslim rule in the wake of the death of God's last spokesperson¹.

Narrated Zaid bin Thabit Al-Ansari who was one of those who used to write the Divine Revelation:

Abu Bakr sent for me after the (heavy) casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Qurra' (reciters of the Koran) were killed). Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said, "Umar has come to me and said, 'The people have suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be more casualties among the Qurra' (those who know the Qur'an by heart) at other battle-fields, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost, unless you collect it. And I am of the opinion that you should collect the Qur'an.'"

Abu Bakr added, "I said to Umar, 'How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?'"

Umar said (to me), "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing." So Umar kept on pressing, trying to persuade me to accept his proposal, till Allah opened my bosom for it and I had the same opinion as Umar.

(Zaid bin Thabit added:) Umar was sitting with him, Abu Bakr, and was not speaking to me).

"You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness): and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. Therefore, look for the

¹ 33:40 Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets. Allah is Cognizant of everything.

Qur'an and collect it (in one manuscript)."

By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains (from its place) it would not have been harder for me than what he had ordered me concerning the collection of the Qur'an. I said to both of them, "How dare you do a thing which the Prophet has not done?"

Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing." So I kept on arguing with him about it till Allah opened my bosom for that which He had opened the bosoms of Abu Bakr and Umar. So I started locating Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leaf-stalks of date palms and from the memories of men (who knew it by heart).

I found with Khuzaima two Verses of Surat-at-Tauba which I had not found with anybody else, (and they were): "Verily there has come to you an Apostle (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty He (Muhammad) is ardently anxious over you (to be rightly guided)." (9:128)

The manuscript on which the Quran was collected, remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him, and then with Umar till Allah took him unto Him, and finally it remained with Hafsa, Umar's daughter.

Bukhari 60.201

The contradictions in the Koran were evident early on. Umar asked Thabit about them. He replied that it was not up to him to change the mainly hearsay evidence he had collected about what Allah revealed to Muhammad via an angel intermediary. The contents of the Koran, according to the Book, were delivered by the angel Gabriel to God's spokesman via a voice in his head, in private meetings where the winged messenger appeared to him in the form of a man, and in his dreams (what shape Gabriel took in these is not mentioned).

Narrated Aisha:

Al Harith bin Hisham asked the Prophet, "How does the divine inspiration come to you?"

He replied, "In all these ways: The Angel sometimes comes to me with a voice which resembles the sound of a ringing bell, and when this state abandons me, I remember what the

Angel has said, and this type of Divine Inspiration is the hardest on me; and sometimes the Angel comes to me in the shape of a man and talks to me, and I understand and remember what he says."

Bukhari 54.438

Narrated Safwan bin Ya'la bin Umaiya from his father who said:

"A man came to the Prophet while he was at Ji'rana. The man was wearing a cloak which had traces of Khaluq or Sufra (a kind of perfume). The man asked (the Prophet), 'What do you order me to perform in my Umra (the lesser pilgrimage)?' So, Allah inspired the Prophet divinely and he was screened by a place of cloth.

I wished to see the Prophet being divinely inspired.

Umar said to me, 'Come! Will you be pleased to look at the Prophet while Allah is inspiring him?'

I replied in the affirmative.

Umar lifted one corner of the cloth and I looked at the Prophet who was snoring. (The sub-narrator thought that he said: The snoring was like that of a camel).

When that state was over, the Prophet asked, "Where is the questioner who asked about Umra? Put off your cloak and wash away the traces of Khaluq from your body and clean the Sufra (yellow color) and perform in your Umra what you perform in your Hajj (i.e. the Tawaf round the Ka'ba and the Sa'i between Safa and Marwa)."

Bukhari 27.17

The first time Muhammad and the mighty angel met, the Koran informs us, Gabriel appeared to God's spokesman in his true form and size, six hundred wings and all.

53:1 By the star when it goes down,

53:2 Your Companion (Muhammad) has not gone astray or erred,

53:3 And he does not talk capriciously.

53:4 It (the Qur'an) is only a Revelation being revealed,

53:5 Taught him by a mighty one (the angel Gabriel),

53:6 Possessed of steadfastness. And so he arose,

53:7 While he was on the highest horizon;

53:8 Then, he came closer and hovered around;

53:9 Coming thus within two bows' length or closer.

53:10 Then (Allah) revealed to His servant what He revealed.

Abu Ishaq-Ash-Shaibani:

I asked Zir bin Hubaish regarding the Statement of Allah: "And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey The Inspiration to His slave (Gabriel) and then he (Gabriel) Conveyed (that to Muhammad)." (53:9-10)

On that, Zir said, "Ibn Mas'ud informed us that the Prophet had seen Gabriel having 600 wings."

Bukhari 54.455

The final official version of the Koran was rushed into production during the Caliphate of Uthman, the third caliph, for reasons explained in the following hadith:

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were Waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Quran) as Jews and the Christians did before."

So Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you."

Hafsa sent it to Uthman. Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin AzZubair, Said bin Al-As and Abdur Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies.

Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, "In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue."

They did so, and when they had written many copies, Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa.

Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt.

Said bin Thabit added, "A Verse from Surat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari. (That Verse was): 'Among the Believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allah.'" (33:23)

Bukhari 61.510

The Bible, the King James Version, is about 791,328 words, more than 10 times the number of words in the Koran. It covers a period of more than a thousand years and contains a cast of thousands. For such a monumental work it is surprisingly well ordered. The Koran, on the other hand, is the inspiration of just one man based on revelations ostensibly sent from God communicated over a period of just twenty-three years, between 610 and 632 AD exclusively.

Unlike the Bible, the Koran is somewhat disorganized. There is no timeline. The only allowance given to any kind of order is the sequencing of (most of) the 114 surahs, i.e., chapters, from longest to shortest and a determination made by scholars as to which surahs were received during Muhammad's time in Mecca and which were communicated after he took refuge in the oasis city of Medina about 280 miles north of Mecca.

Adding to a lay reader's woes, chapter headings, which appear to be based on catchwords within the text, are almost useless as an indication of content for the uninitiated. The longer chapters in particular are a challenge with God, in the words of Justin Wintle, author of *History of Islam*, "jumping from one subject to another in a sort of unfurling stream of supra-consciousness," i.e., a consciousness or awareness that

is beyond our understanding. Even “jumping from one subject to another” in the same verse, such as in the following revealed truth where God begins by first telling Muhammad what to say when asked about the timing of the pilgrimage to Mecca and ends His Revelation with a warning about entering a house by the back door.

2:189 They ask you about the crescents (the new moons), say: “They are times fixed for mankind and for the pilgrimage.” It is not righteousness to enter houses from the back; but the righteous is he who fears Allah. Enter then the houses by their front doors; and fear Allah that you may prosper.

God obviously does not consider any of these things defects.

39:28 We made it an Arabic² Qur'an without any defect that perchance they might be God-fearing.

That claim about the Koran being error-free, as you would expect a book written by a god to be, meant scholars had to come up with an explanation for all the contradictions without impugning the work of those who put it together. The concept of abrogation allowed them to do just that.

The Before and After Solution

The revelations received during Muhammad's stay in Medina, which became his home and power base until his death, are known as the Medinan surahs. The 26 surahs of the Medinan period as identified by WikiIslam, November 12, 2014: 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 22, 24, 33, 47, 48, 49, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 76, 98, and 110.

² Classical Arabic is assumed:

Classical Arabic (CA), also known as Qur'anic or Koranic Arabic, is the form of the Arabic language used in literary text from Umayyad and Abbasid times (7th to 9th centuries). It is based on the Medieval dialects of Arab tribes. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the direct descendant [of Classical Arabic]... While the lexis and stylistics of Modern Standard Arabic are different from Classical Arabic, the morphology and syntax have remain basically unchanged (though MSA uses a subset of the syntactic structure available in CA). The vernacular dialects, however, have changed more dramatically...

Tradition has it that the caliph Ali, after reading the Qur'an with errors in it, asked Abu al-Aswad al Du'ali to write a work codifying Arabic grammar. Khalil ibn Ahmad would later write Kitab al-Ayn, the first dictionary of Arabic...

From Modern Arabic poetry 1800-1970: the development of its forms and themes by Shmuel Moreh

Scholars are in general agreement that the Medinan chapters normally supersede Meccan surahs, not only because of the timeframe in which they were received, but also because it was at Medina that God communicated His more unyielding instructions regarding what to do with those who refused to submit to His Will, that is, become Muslims. In the Medinan surahs it is clear that Allah has undergone a transformation and is no longer the sometimes-tolerant deity whom His spokesman introduced to his Meccan kin.

Some commentators further divide the Medinan period by the sanctioning of total war against infidels exemplified by the ominous *Verse of the Sword*. Ascertaining from which period in Muhammad's life a revelation was received is important in determining if the revealed truth is valid or has been abrogated by a subsequent immutable fact—but it is not, as you will discover, the only criteria.

The Abrogated and their Abrogators

WikiIslam uses the word abrogated to identify the verse or parts of a verse that is no longer valid, and abrogator is used to identify verses or parts thereof that have replaced the original. I have adopted their nomenclature. Where verses are presented side by side, the abrogated is on the left and the abrogator on the right. Italicized verses in either column are there for continuity and context only.

Wherever you see the command "say," usually at the beginning of a revelation, this could be God addressing His spokesperson—via Gabriel, of course—directly in real-time, telling him what to say in response to an inquiry or accusation. For example:

39:11 Say: "I have been commanded to worship Allah,
professing to Him the religion sincerely."

I specify "could be" because the verb "say" was added later as another way of giving coherence and context to God's revelations, such as indicating that Muhammad was addressing an audience and taking questions.

The abrogator is often within the same surah as the verse it is abrogating, an indication that it may have been sent in response to a question from a member of Muhammad's audience during his homily. Allah confirmed this in a revelation about members of His spokesman's audience sneaking out before he had finished delivering a surah.

9:127 And whenever a Surah is revealed, they look at each other [saying]: "Does anyone see you?" Then they turn away. Allah has turned away their hearts, because they are a people who do not understand.

Muhammad received visions of Heaven and Hell while he was preaching to an audience; therefore, there is no reason why God would not communicate, via His angel intermediary, the answer to a difficult question to His spokesman during a surah sermon.

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Allah's Apostle came out as the sun declined at mid-day and offered the Zuhr prayer. He then stood on the pulpit and spoke about the Hour (Day of Judgment) and said that in it there would be tremendous things. He then said, "Whoever likes to ask me about anything he can do so and I shall reply as long as I am at this place of mine."

Most of the people wept and the Prophet said repeatedly, "Ask me."

Abdullah bin Hudhafa As-Sahmi stood up and said, "Who is my father?"

The Prophet said, "Your father is Hudhafa."

The Prophet repeatedly said, "Ask me."

Then Umar knelt before him and said, "We are pleased with Allah as our Lord, Islam as our religion, and Muhammad as our Prophet."

The Prophet then became quiet and said, "Paradise and Hell-fire were displayed in front of me on this wall just now and I have never seen a better thing (than the former) and a worse thing (than the latter)."

Bukhari 10.515

One Abrogating One

A one-to-one replacement is the simplest form of abrogation; one revealed truth is fully or partially replaced by another.

Charity Becomes Compulsory

2:2 *This is the Book which cannot be doubted and is a guidance to the God-fearing.*

2:3 Those who believe in the Unseen, perform the prayer and give freely from what We provided for them.

9:103 Take of their wealth voluntary alms to purify and cleanse them therewith; and pray for them, for your prayers are a source of tranquility for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

The "voluntary alms", whose amount Allah decreed is to be determined and collected by His spokesman, became the obligatory Zakat, the third of the five pillars of Islam.

1. Shahadah, declaring allegiance to God.
2. Salat, daily prayers.
3. Zakat, annual charity.
4. Saum, month-long fasting.
5. Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

God had, in effect, elevated charitable donations to the equivalent of protection money, a form of extortion where the threat of bodily harm or death figures prominently.

When the tribe of the Bani al-Mustaliq embraced Islam, the Holy Prophet sent Walid bin Uqbah to collect the zakat from them. When he arrived in their territory, he became scared due to some reason and without visiting the people of the tribe returned to Madinah and complained to the Holy Prophet that they had refused to pay the zakat and had even wanted to kill him.

On hearing this, the Holy Prophet became very angry and he made up his mind to dispatch a contingent to punish those people.

One Abrogating One 21

In the meantime the chief of the Bani al-Mustaliq, Harith bin Dirar (father of Juwairiyah, wife of the Holy Prophet), arrived at the head of a deputation, and submitted: "By God, we did not at all see Walid; therefore, there could be no question of refusing to pay the zakat and wanting to kill him. We are steadfast to the Faith and have no intention to withhold the zakat."

*Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi*³ - *Tafhim al-Qur'an* 49.6-8

All Zakat collected was taken directly to Muhammad who counted it and branded what had been paid in livestock, the most common currency in which the obligatory charity was paid.

Narrated Abu Humaid Al-Sa'idi:

Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) appointed a man called Ibn Al-Lutbiya, from the tribe of Al-Asd to collect Zakat from Bani Sulaim. When he returned, (after collecting the Zakat) the Prophet checked the account with him.

Bukhari 24.576

Narrated Anas:

Bin Malik took 'Abdullah bin Abu Talha to Allah's Apostle to perform Tahnik for him. (Tahnik was a custom among the Muslims that whenever a child was born they used to take it to the Prophet who would chew a piece of date and put a part of its juice in the child's mouth).

I saw the Prophet and he had an instrument for branding in his hands and was branding the camels of zakat.

Bukhari 24.578

The changing of charity from a voluntary contribution to a compulsory one was undoubtedly responsible for the shedding of more Arab blood following Muhammad's passing. After his death, most Arab tribes who had converted to Islam wanted to remain Muslim, but objected to paying the Zakat to Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor as leader of the

³ Abul A'la Moududi's (also spelt Maududi) [1903-1979] was a pre-eminent Islamic scholar, journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist, Islamist philosopher and the first recipient of the King Faisal International Award for his services to Islam and Islamic studies. Of the more than 120 books he wrote, he is most famous for his magnum opus, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*.

believers. Had God not said that this money was to be collected by His spokesman and no one else? "Take of their wealth voluntary alms to purify and cleanse them therewith." Bakr would have none of it, and deemed any Muslim who refused to pay the Zakat to have apostatized, declaring war on the tribes that refused to pay up along with the few that *actually* apostatized.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

When Allah's Apostle died and Abu Bakr became the caliph some Arabs renegade[d] (reverted to disbelief) [and] (Abu Bakr decided to declare war against them)[.]

Umar, said to Abu Bakr, "How can you fight with these people although Allah's Apostle said, 'I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight the people till they say: "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and whoever said it then he will save his life and property from me except on trespassing the law (rights and conditions for which he will be punished justly), and his accounts will be with Allah.'""

Abu Bakr said, "By Allah! I will fight those who differentiate between the prayer and the Zakat as Zakat is the compulsory right to be taken from the property (according to Allah's orders) By Allah! If they refuse to pay me even a she-kid which they used to pay at the time of Allah's Apostle. I would fight with them for withholding it."

Then Umar said, "By Allah, it was nothing, but Allah opened Abu Bakr's chest towards the decision (to fight) and I came to know that his decision was right."

Bukhari 23.483

The *War of the Apostates* is mostly a convenient misnomer for the bloodbath that followed Muhammad's death with the aim to make the payment of the obligatory charity a permanent fixture of Islam.

No More Mr. Nice Guy I

Once-upon-time, Allah, as revealed in the *Foreword*, was much more tolerant of other religions.

2:62 The believers (Muslims), the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians	3:85 Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it
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– whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does what is good, shall receive their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear and they shall not grieve. will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

A Change of Direction

In Medina lived three Jewish tribes along with two large Arab tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj. These two tribes had already converted to Islam and had pledged loyalty in a secret undertaking known as the *Second Pledge of al-Aqaba* (also referred to as the *Pledge of War*), which committed them to fight the enemies of God and His spokesman. The Jews joined the Arab tribes of Medina in welcoming Muhammad, in part because he preached that the god of the Old Testament was the one and only God and that he believed in the prophets of the Torah. He could also be expected to be an informed and fair mediator between all the tribes, a role which was formally recognized in a document known as the Constitution of Medina (or Charter of Medina). The agreement, in effect, created a multi-religious Islamic state in Medina, probably a historical first.

The Jews and Muhammad got along like a house on fire until it became evident to God's latest spokesperson that the Jews would never recognize him as a legitimate channel between the Almighty and mere mortals, that honour being reserved for the Chosen People. The rift that developed between them was deep and the consequences are being felt to this day.

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in the Koran*, Boreal Books, *The Jews of Medina*, *The Massacre of the Banu Qurayzah*)

Before Muhammad's falling out with the Jews of Medina, the believers prostrated themselves in the direction of Jerusalem, not Mecca, during their daily prayers. Before the breakup, Allah did not care in which direction you prayed; He was everywhere, after all.

2:115 To Allah belongs the East and the West. So whichever way you turn (while praying), there is Allah's Face. Indeed Allah is	2:144 Surely, We see your face turned towards heaven (yearning for guidance through revelation). We shall turn you towards a Qibla that will please you. Turn your face then towards the Sacred Mosque (the Sacred Mosque of Mecca, the Ka'ba);
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Omnipresent and and wherever you turn your faces
Omniscient. towards it. Those who were given the
Book (the Jews and Christians) certainly
know this to be the Truth from their Lord.
Allah is not unaware of what they do.

Safa, Marwa and the Religion of Abraham

The entire Hajj ritual is an attempt to recreate the rite Abraham is alleged to have performed to honour God when he visited Mecca and laid the foundation of His Ka'ba.

2:125 And [remember] when We made the House (the Ka'ba) a place of residence for mankind and a haven [saying]: "Make of Abraham's maqam [stand] a place for prayer." We enjoined Abraham and Isma'il [saying]: "Purify My House for those who circle it, for those who retreat there for meditation, and for those who kneel and prostrate themselves (perform the prayers)."

2:126 And when Abraham said: "My Lord make this a secure city and feed with fruits those of its inhabitants who believe in Allah and the Last Day." Allah (having accepted Abraham's prayer) said: "As for those who disbelieve, I shall provide for them for a while (in this life), and then subject them to the scourge of the Fire, and what an abominable fate!"

2:127 And while Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House⁴, [they prayed]: "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Surely you are the All-Hearing, the Omniscient."

(Recommended reading: *Shared Prophets*, Boreal Books, *Abraham at Mecca*)

⁴ If the Islamic tradition—that Adam set up the original altar at Mecca using the stone he brought with him from Paradise—has any connection with reality, then people were already circling the Ka'ba when Abraham and Isma'il showed up. The tradition falls down a bit if we give "raised the foundations" in Revelation 2:127 its ordinary, everyday meaning.

One Abrogating One 25

Over time, Allah was joined at the Ka'ba by other gods, the so-called idols, which caused the one-and-only God some distress.

During the so-called pagan interlude, the one-and-only God had to share his Ka'ba with other gods and goddesses. The pagans also introduced new rituals such as going around the Ka'ba naked, probably after having more than a few sips of wine, and ribald poetry competitions within the sacred precinct. Bowing up and down as you circled the sacred stone, the one Adam is said to have grabbed onto when he was thrown out of Paradise, had become more of a song and dance than a sacred rite.

Abraham's somber pilgrimage had taken on the aspect of a festival of fun and worship. God's spokesman would take the fun out of the pilgrimage, but this still left the believers wary of performing rituals which, from their limited perspective, were pagan rituals. One of these rituals was the re-enactment of Hagar frantically running seven times between Safa and Marwa, the two hills near Mecca, looking for water after being abandoned there by Abraham with his son Isma'il.

(Recommended reading: *Shared Prophets*, Boreal Books, *Isma'il*)

Adding to the believers' uneasiness, the pagans had placed idols on the hills. Muhammad had the idols destroyed and Allah sent a revelation, verse 2:158, assuring the believers that re-enacting Hagar's desperate search for water was not a sin.

There undoubtedly were other questions about emulating the believers of old, which God dismissed in a brilliantly formulated revelation whereby He assures believers that if the ritual was good enough for Abraham, it was good enough for them, Revelation 2:130, which effectively made Revelation 2:158 redundant.

2:158 Surely Safa and Marwa are beacons of Allah (His Religion). He who performs the proper or the lesser pilgrimage commits no sin if he goes around them. And those who volunteer to do a good deed will find Allah Rewarding, All-Knowing.

2:130 And who would forsake the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself? We have chosen him in this world and in the Hereafter; he shall be one of the righteous.

From Curser to Pardoners of Jews

In the post-Jesus era, the Jews were moving away from the more brutal punishments specified in the Torah, such as the stoning of adulterers and adulteresses. Muhammad, as the man with the last word under the Constitution of Medina, would have none of it. He literally ruled by the Book, whether that book was the Koran or the Torah. He was assisted in applying Jewish religious law by a Jew by the name of bin Salam who had converted to Islam.

Abdullah bin Salam was a former rabbi and a respected member of the Jewish community before he converted to Islam. He became a Muslim after a short meeting with Muhammad where God's spokesman answered three fatuous questions to the rabbi's satisfaction. It was fortuitous that the angel Gabriel, whom bin Salam then considered an enemy of the Jews, had just had a conversation with Muhammad about what was on bin Salam's mind.

Narrated Anas:

Abdullah bin Salam heard the news of the arrival of Allah's Apostle (at Medina) while he was on a farm collecting its fruits. So he came to the Prophet and said, "I will ask you about three things which nobody knows unless he be a prophet. Firstly, what is the first portent of the Hour? What is the first meal of the people of Paradise? And what makes a baby look like its father or mother?"

The Prophet said, "Just now Gabriel has informed me about that."

Abdullah said, "Gabriel?"

The Prophet said, "Yes."

Abdullah said, "He, among the angels is the enemy of the Jews."

On that the Prophet recited this Holy Verse: "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel (let him die in his fury!) for he has brought it (i.e. Qur'an) down to your heart by Allah's permission." (2:97)

Then he added, "As for the first portent of the Hour, it will be a fire that will collect the people from the East to West. And as for the first meal of the people of Paradise, it will be the

One Abrogating One 27

caudite (i.e. extra) lobe of the fish liver. And if a man's discharge proceeded that of the woman, then the child resembles the father, and if the woman's discharge proceeded that of the man, then the child resembles the mother."

On hearing that, Abdullah said, "I testify that None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that you are the Apostle of Allah, O, Allah's Apostle; the Jews are liars, and if they should come to know that I have embraced Islam, they would accuse me of being a liar."

In the meantime some Jews came (to the Prophet) and he asked them, "What is Abdullah's status amongst you?"

They replied, "He is the best amongst us, and he is our chief and the son of our chief."

The Prophet said, "What would you think if Abdullah bin Salam embraced Islam?"

They replied, "May Allah protect him from this!"

Then Abdullah came out and said, "I testify that None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah."

The Jews then said, "Abdullah is the worst of us and the son of the worst of us," and disparaged him.

On that Abdullah said, "O Allah's Apostle! This is what I was afraid of!"

Bukhari 60.7

In a case brought before him, which earned a mention in the Koran, Muhammad forced the Jews to stick to the old ways, many of which became the new ways of the Koran.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

The Jews came to Allah's Apostle and told him that a man and a woman from amongst them had committed illegal sexual intercourse. Allah's Apostle said to them, "What do you find in the Torah (old Testament) about the legal punishment of Ar-Rajm (stoning)?"

They replied, "(But) we announce their crime and lash them."

Abdullah bin Salam said, "You are telling a lie; Torah

contains the order of Rajm."

They brought and opened the Torah and one of them ~~solaced~~ [placed] his hand on the Verse of Rajm and read the verses preceding and following it.

Abdullah bin Salam said to him, "Lift your hand." When he lifted his hand, the Verse of Rajm was written there.

They said, "Muhammad has told the truth; the Torah has the Verse of Rajm."

The Prophet then gave the order that both of them should be stoned to death.

(Abdullah bin Umar said, "I saw the man leaning over the woman to shelter her from the stones.")

Bukhari 56.829

What they tried to conceal from His spokesman infuriated God, perhaps only for a moment, as is evident in Revelation 2:159. Revelation 2:160 does not so much annul Revelation 2:159 as attenuate Allah's anger against the Jews, if only for the time being.

2:159 Those (the Jews) who conceal the clear proofs and guidance We sent down, after making them clear to mankind in the Book (the Torah), shall be cursed by Allah and the cursers.	2:160 Except those who repent, mend their ways and reveal [the truth which they had concealed]; these I shall pardon. I am the Pardoner, the Merciful.
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Providing for a Widow

In the following abrogating revelation, having the deceased leave a year's provision to his widows is welcomed; it helps them stand in good stead when they are forced to leave their deceased husband's home (Islamic law recognizes the husband as the sole proprietor of the family home) and his relatives move in.

2:234 As for those of you who die leaving wives behind, their wives should observe a waiting period (during this period they should stay away from men) of four months and ten days. When they have completed that period you incur no offence on account of what they may do to themselves (such as adorning themselves or looking out for suitors) in a lawful manner. Allah has knowledge of what you do.

2:240 Those of you who die leaving wives behind should bequeath to them a year's provision without turning [them] out (from their homes). If however, they leave [their homes], then you (the relatives of the dead) incur no offence for what they do in a rightful way to themselves. Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Dying a Muslim by Doing What a Muslim Does

It goes without saying that you should not die except as a Muslim. If you do as a Muslim does, as explained in verse 64:16, which God sent to replace Revelation 3:102, you will die a believer, making the revealed truth it replaces unnecessary.

3:102 O believers fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.

64:16 So, fear Allah as much as you can, listen, obey and spend freely (in the Cause of Allah). That is best for you. He who is guarded against the avarice of his soul – those are the prosperous.

No More Mr. Nice Guy II

There was a time when Allah would have forgiven a heretic who returned to the fold, if asked to do so by His current or former spokespersons.

4:64 We have not sent forth a Messenger, but that he may be obeyed by Allah's Leave. And had they, having wronged themselves, come to you and asked for Allah's Forgiveness and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, then they would have found Allah All-

9:80 Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them; because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not guide the sinful people.

Forgiving, Merciful.

The last unbelievers God would forgive were Muhammad's mother Amina and father Abdullah. He spared them the torments of Hell after seeing His favourite spokesman weeping over the tomb of his mother at Medina. When asked by people who were near him at the time why he was crying, Muhammad replied that it was because he had just seen his parents burning in Hell. Allah would bring both his mother and father back to life temporarily so that they could become Muslim and enter Paradise.

Indoctrination and War

As the believers made progress in subjugating the non-Muslims of the Peninsula and more warriors joined them, if only to indulge in the general plunder of the property of slaughtered unbelievers, indoctrination of new recruits into the religion took on a new urgency.

4:71 O believers, be on your guard; so march in detachments or march altogether.

9:122 The believers should not all go to war. Why doesn't a company from each group go forth to instruct themselves in religion and admonish their people (those who go to war) when they return, that perchance, they may beware.

God expected some of the believers to stay behind for another strategic reason, anticipating a tactic used in modern propaganda wars: that of spreading misinformation, what is commonly referred to as *War's First Casualty*, the truth.

4:72 Indeed, among you is one who will stay behind, so that if a disaster befalls you, he will say: "Allah has favoured me, since I have not been a martyr with them."

4:73 If, however, a bounty from God comes to you, he will say, as though there was no friendship between you and him: "Would that I had been with them; then I would have won a great victory."

A Blood-Money Conundrum I

Muhammad's grandfather Abd al-Muttalib, in another variation of the story of Abraham and the thwarted immolation, promised Allah that he would sacrifice his tenth son if He gave him ten male heirs. When the time came for al-Muttalib to keep his promise, he consulted a dervish to find out whether he could fulfil his promise to God in some manner other than killing his tenth son, Abdullah, who was destined to become Muhammad's father.

The dervish al-Muttalib consulted was no ordinary soothsayer; he was a dervish with jinns in his employ, jinns who specialized in eavesdropping on God's conversations with his angels and on the angels talking amongst themselves. They would fly as close as possible to the lowest of the seven levels of heaven, the one closest to the earth, dodging rocks (what we know as meteors) thrown by the angels to keep them away, to find out what Allah had to say about what was happening down below.

Of all the characters of the Koran, jinns (God refers to them collectively as the jinn) are the most fascinating. They are Allah's most versatile and mischievous creation. There is even a chapter of the Koran named after them, Surah 72. The caricature of the genie is undoubtedly based on this creature of the Koran.

(Recommended reading: *Getting to Know Allah*, Boreal Books, *The Jinn*)

To try to answer his client's question, the dervish sent his jinns to eavesdrop on God's conversations. One reported that Allah had indicated that he would be happy with a sacrifice of camels—but how many camels? The dervish then threw some dice (bone fragments of some type) to *divine* an answer. In his assessment of the way the fragments scattered, the dervish surmised that God would be satisfied with a payment of one hundred camels. This is the price of a human life, as Muhammad reminded his audience the last time he preached to a large gathering of the faithful.

The second most important document in Islam after the Koran is probably the Prophet's *Farewell Khutba*, his farewell sermon. In his last sermon, delivered on Mount Arafat outside Mecca a few months before he died, God's spokesman summarized all the basic beliefs of Islam and all the duties of a Muslim. English translations will usually run less

than 1,300 words. In this keynote address, Muhammad reminded the assembled about the price of a human life.

And intentional murder shall be punished according to talion law; where the murderess intention is not clear and the victim is killed using a club or a stone it will cost the perpetrator one hundred camels as blood money. Whoever demands more is a man from the time of ignorance.

Translated by Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah [1908-2002]

(Recommended reading: *From Merchant to Messenger*, Boreal Books, *The Prophet's Last Sermon*)

What part of Revelation 4:92 is abrogated by Revelation 9:1, we cannot say with certainty, but we can be sure it is not the portion about blood money.

4:92 It is not given to a believer to kill another believer except by mistake; and he who kills a believer by mistake should free a slave who is a believer and pay blood-money to his relatives, unless they remit it as alms. If he happens to belong to a people who are your enemies, but he is a believer, then you should free a believing slave. If he belongs to a people bound to you by compact, then blood-money should be paid to his relatives and a believing slave should be freed. As for him who has not the means, he should fast for two consecutive months, as a penance from Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise!

9:1 This is immunity from Allah and His Messenger to those idolaters with whom you made compacts.

From Killing Ten to Killing Two

When Allah said that one believer could overcome ten armed unbelievers, battles were still decided in man-to-man combat with swords and spears. It was extremely unrealistic to expect one believer

to triumph over ten unbelievers bent on making him a martyr. Today, a believer with a bomb can easily slaughter ten unbelievers.

Knowing the future and the accompanying improvements in body weaponry—e.g., the suicide vest that would make it child's play, pun intended, for one believer to do away, in a flash of fire and shrapnel, with scores of Allah's real and imaginary enemies—why did God revise downward His per capita estimate as to how many unbelievers a believer could kill? Had He stuck to His original estimate, Allah might today be considered both a god and a visionary by more than the credulous.

8:65 O Prophet, urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they will defeat two hundred; and if there are a hundred, they will defeat a thousand of the unbelievers, because they are a people who do not understand.

8:66 Now Allah has lightened your burden; He knows that there is a weakness in you. So, if there are a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a thousand men among you, they will overcome two thousand, by Allah's Leave. Allah is with the steadfast.

Intoxicants I

16:67 And from the fruits of palms and vines, you get wine and fair provision. Surely, there is in that a sign to a people who understand.

5:90 O believers, wine, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination of the Devil's doing; so avoid them that perchance you may prosper!

God's change of heart concerning alcoholic beverages may have had something to do with believers at the battle of Uhud ignoring Muhammad's instruction not to be distracted by the booty—in this instance, Meccan females loitering by a caravan—until the battle was won. His archers ignored his warning, and the battle was lost.

Narrated Anas:

I used to offer alcoholic drinks to the people at the residence of Abu Talha. Then the order of prohibiting alcoholic drinks was revealed, and the Prophet ordered somebody to announce that.

Abu Talha said to me, "Go out and see what this voice (this announcement) is."

I went out and (on coming back) said, "This is somebody announcing that alcoholic beverages have been prohibited."

Abu Talha said to me, "Go and spill it (i.e. the wine)," Then it (alcoholic drinks) was seen flowing through the streets of Medina. At that time the wine was Al-Fadikh.

The people said, "Some people (Muslims) were killed (during the battle of Uhud) while wine was in their stomachs."

So Allah revealed: "On those who believe and do good deeds there is no blame for what they ate (in the past)." (5:93)

Bukhari 60.144

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in Koran*, Boreal Books, *Battle of Uhud*)

Entering a House Other Than Your Own

God must have realized that demanding that one always ask permission to enter a house other than one's own was not realistic. What about an empty house which circumstances require one to enter?

24:27 O believers, do not enter 24:29 It is no offence for you to houses other than your own enter uninhabited houses in which before you ask leave and greet you have some means of their occupants. This is better for enjoyment. Allah knows what you you, that perchance you may reveal and what you conceal. remember well.

Adultery I

24:3 The adulterer shall marry 24:32 Encourage the unmarried none but an adulteress or an among you and the righteous idolatress; and the adulteress among your servants and maids to none shall marry her but an marry. If they are poor, Allah will adulterer or idolater. That has enrich them from His Bounty. Allah been forbidden the believers. is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

How scholars determined that a revelation where God expresses a fondness for married couples abrogates a revelation about who

adulterers and adulteresses may marry is a mystery to me. I suspect it may have had something to do with getting rid of an inconvenient revelation that left too many questions unanswered. For example, where would one find idolaters to marry when they are to be killed on the spot if they refuse to become Muslim?

9:5 Then, when the Sacred Months (these are the four months during which war was prohibited in pre-Islamic times) are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them...

What about an adulteress wife's dowry, referred to as "what you have given them" in the following revelation? Can her husband withhold it and force her to ransom herself to conform to Allah's injunction as to whom she can marry?

2:229 Divorce may be pronounced twice. Then they (women) are to be retained in a rightful manner or released with kindness. And it is unlawful for you [men] to take back anything of what you have given them unless both parties fear that they cannot comply with Allah's Bounds (by obeying His commands). If you fear that they cannot do that, then it is no offence if the woman ransoms herself [pays money to be set free]. Those are the bounds set by Allah. Do not transgress them. Those who transgress the bounds set by Allah are the wrongdoers.

From Whipping to Pardoning Slanderers of Chaste Women

24:4 Those who accuse chaste women, then cannot bring four witnesses, whip them eighty lashes, and do not ever accept their testimony. For those are the wicked sinners.	24:5 Except for those who repent afterwards and mend their ways. For Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Merciful.
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Revelation 24:4 was probably sent in the heat of the moment, the heat being generated by accusations that Muhammad's child bride had committed adultery. Aisha got lost in the desert one evening and was returned to her husband the next day by the young man who found her.

(Recommended reading: *1,001 Sayings and Deeds of the Prophet Muhammad*, Boreal Books, *Aisha: The Necklace*)

Needless to say, the rumours, which severely distressed God's mouthpiece, ran rampant, prompting Allah to issue a warning to those who would slander the wife of His cherished spokesperson. You may ignore the fact that the abrogated and abrogating verses came after Allah's tirade, shown in the following verse, against those who would accuse Aisha of betraying her husband. Even within surahs, order of precedence is ignored. Past, present and future is for mortals.

24:11 Those who spread the slander (against Aisha, wife of the Prophet, according to the commentators) are a band of you. Do not reckon it an evil for you; rather it is a good thing for you. Every one of them will be credited with the sin he has earned, and he who bore the brunt of it shall have a terrible punishment.

Muhammad's son-in-law and future caliph, Ali, even suggested that Aisha be stoned, telling his father-in-law, "Allah has not placed any limits on the choice of a wife. They are plentiful." After God calmed down, perhaps after realizing that He may have just condemned Ali, not just to a whipping but to burn in Hell, Allah told the angel Gabriel to inform His spokesman that, on second thought, if an accuser of chaste women repents, all will be forgiven.

(Recommended reading: *Women and the Koran*, Boreal Books, *A Child Bride's Indiscretion*)

An Old Woman's Finery

When you spot a middle-aged or older female believer going about her business draped in that dark tent-like garment, she is simply complying with God's recommendation "that to refrain" from removing cumbersome layers of clothing is better, even if no finery is exhibited. For women who are still young enough to bear children, there is no leeway. Revelation 24:60 is not so much a verse that abrogates, but one that makes an exception for women of a certain age.

24:31 And tell the believing women to cast down their eyes and guard their private parts and not show their finery, except the outward part of it. And let them drape their bosoms with their veils and not show their finery, except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, their women, their maid-servants, the men-followers who have no sexual desire, or infants who have no knowledge of women's sexual parts yet. Let them, also, not stamp their feet, so that what they have concealed of their finery might be known. Repent to Allah, all of you, O believers, that perchance you may prosper.

24:60 Those women who are past child-bearing and have no hope of marriage are not at fault if they take off their outer garments, not exhibiting any finery; but to refrain is better for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Slave-Girls and Children Close By and You're Naked

24:58 O believers, let those your right hands possess (slaves and maid-servants) and those who have not reached the age of puberty ask your leave three times: (to attend to you or approach you) before the dawn prayer, when you put off your clothes at noon and after the evening prayer. These are three occasions of nudity for you; after which you are or they are not at fault, if you approach each other. That is how Allah makes clear His signs to you. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

24:59 And when your children reach puberty, let them ask leave, as those who came before them asked leave. That is how Allah makes clear His Signs to you. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Since slave-girls are there to do with as you please, there is no prerequisite for them to have seen you naked three times before you can do more than just leer at them. As to pre-pubescent children, that is another matter—one which God may have wanted to clear up quickly through abrogating Revelation 25:59.

Wives for the Messenger

Pre-Islamic Arabs made no distinction between adopted and natural-born sons until God decreed a distinction so that Muhammad could marry his adopted son's wife.

33:4 Allah did not create two hearts within the breast of any man; and He did not make your wives, whom you compare to your mothers' backs; and He did not make your [adopted] sons your sons in fact. That is your own claim, by your words of mouth. Allah speaks the truth and He guides to the Right Path.

Allah's spokesman walked in on his daughter-in-law Zaynab when she was almost naked and he just had to have her. His adopted son divorced her so that the man he considered his father could marry her. God quickly confirmed the righteousness of Zayd divorcing his wife so that his father-in-law could marry her.

33:37 And [remember] when you said to him whom Allah favoured and you favoured: (this is addressed to Zayd regarding his wife Zaynab) "Hold on to your wife and fear Allah", while you concealed within yourself what Allah would reveal and feared other men, whereas Allah had a better right to be feared by you. Then, when Zayd had satisfied his desire for her, We gave her to you in marriage; so that the believers should not be at fault, regarding the wives of their adopted sons, once they have satisfied their desire for them. For Allah's Command must be accomplished.

If there is a revelation that encapsulates Allah's view of women, this is it! But I digress. Even Aisha was taken aback, telling her husband that when it came to his sex life: "I feel that your Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes and desires" (*Bukhari* 60.675).

This may have been the common sentiment for Allah to send down a revelation telling His spokesman that enough is enough, Revelation 33:52. Some of the objections may have had to do with Muhammad marrying his first cousin. In an abrogating, more expansive revelation that nullifies a higher-number immutable fact, God enumerates the daughters of close relatives whom His mouthpiece can marry.

33:51 *You may defer any of them you wish, and take in any of them that you wish or any that you may have cut off. So you are not liable to reproach. For thus it is more likely that they will be delighted and will not grieve, but be content with what you have given each one of them. Allah knows what is within your hearts; and Allah is All-Knowing, Clement.*

33:52 Thereafter, other women are not lawful to you, nor is substituting other wives for them, even if you admire their beauty, except for what your right hand owns. Allah is Watchful over everything.

33:50 O Prophet, we have made lawful, for you, your wives, whose dowry you have paid, what your right hand owns (slave-girls) out of the spoils of war that Allah gave you, the daughters of your paternal uncles, the daughters of your paternal aunts, the daughters of your maternal uncles, the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you, and any believing woman who gives herself freely to the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to marry her, granted exclusively to you, but not the believers. We know what We have prescribed for them regarding their wives and what their right hands own, so that you may not be at fault. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

In seeking to please His spokesman when it came to whom he could have sex with, Allah did a tremendous disservice to Muslim orphan boys, a disservice felt to this day. The revealed truths changing the relationship between adopted sons and their surrogate parent—to the equivalent of a boarder, someone to whom you provide free room and board, so that Muhammad could add his daughter-in-law and first cousin to his collection of wives, concubines and slave-girls—have been interpreted to mean that Islam is against Western style adoption, resulting in an untold number of children in the Islamic world who have no living being to call father.

God may have regretted creating orphans, where before there were only sons, so that His spokesman could satisfy his lust for his cousin and daughter-in-law, to have sent more than a handful of revelations about their welfare.

The Prophet as Savior

39:11 Say: *"I have been commanded to worship Allah, professing to Him the religion sincerely.*

39:12 *"And I have been commanded to be the first of those who submit."*

39:13 Say: *"I fear if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of a great Day."*

48:2 That Allah may forgive you your former and your later sins, and complete His Blessing upon you and lead you onto a straight path; ...

Jesus was sent to do what needed to be done so his followers would be saved, and so, it would seem, was Muhammad, though without having to die for anyone's sins.

They Also Carry Allah's Throne

Angels do more than just praise the Lord; they also carry His Throne, but that is not what is most notable and regrettable about abrogating revealed truth 40:7, and so many others. Early on, God's angels were allowed to ask for forgiveness for all "those on earth", not just "forgiveness for the believers."

42:5 *The heavens are almost rent asunder above them; while the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Lo, Allah is truly the All-Forgiving, The Merciful!* 40:7 Those who carry the Throne and those around it proclaim the praise of their Lord, believe in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers: "Lord, You have encompassed everything in mercy and knowledge; so forgive those who have repented and followed your Path, and guard them against the punishment of Hell."

Wages I

Muhammad's first wife was Khadijah, a wealthy older Meccan woman who hired the good-looking, allegedly illiterate trader—and later, married him (her third, his first)—to accompany her caravans to and from Damascus.

Khadijah died destitute and penniless in a makeshift habitat in a ravine on the outskirts of Mecca. After discovering Islam some fifteen years

after they were married, the now forty-something Muhammad would spend all of his and his wife's wealth on the promotion of his new religion. She would not live long enough to witness her husband triumph over his enemies, a triumph which would not have been possible without her wealth and support.

Revelation 42:23, where Muhammad expects no payment for the message he is delivering, may have been received when Khadijah was still solvent and he could therefore afford to preach for nothing. In asking for a voluntary wage in the revealed truth that abrogates the verse about asking for no payment, Allah communicates to His spokesman to say that He will be watching. An incentive to give, if there ever was one!

42:23 Say: (O Muhammad) "I ask you no reward for it (this message, *Muhammad Assad*) except kinship towards kinsmen." Whoever performs a good deed, We shall increase its goodness. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Thankful.

34:47 Say: "Whatever wage I asked you for is yours [to give]. My wage is with Allah and He is a witness of everything."

The Reward of Beneficence

53:39 And that man will only earn what he strives for; ...

52:21 And those who have believed and their progeny followed them in belief, We shall join their progeny to them. We shall not deprive them of any of their work; every man shall be bound by what he has earned.

What believing men have earned is not only to be reunited with "their progeny" but rewarded with sexually fulfilling female facsimiles, Allah's celebrated houris, to whom they will be joined in holy matrimony by God himself.

56:22 And wide-eyed houris,

56:23 Like hidden pearls;

56:24 As a reward for what they used to do.

44:54 Thus it will be; and we gave them wide-eyed houris in marriage.

Let Me Rephrase That! 42

52:20: Reclining on ranged couches, and We shall wed them to wide-eyed houris.

But what about women “who have followed them in belief”; what is in it for them? This is where abrogating Revelation 52:21 comes in handy, as demonstrated in a response to a question from a prospective female martyr about the rewards a female jihadist can expect from Allah for fighting and dying to extend His dominion on Earth.

According to David Cook, such a question was asked on a Hamas website by a prospective female suicide bomber; would she get the equivalent of the male suicide bombers who are promised a “fairly extensive harem of women in return for martyrdom”?

[Question] I wanted to ask: what is the reward of a female martyr who performs a martyrdom operation; does she marry 72 of the houris?

[Answer] ... the female martyr gains the same rewards as does the male, with the exception of this one aspect [the *houris*], so that the female martyr will be with the same husband with whom she dies. “And those who have believed and their progeny, followed them in belief. We shall join their progeny to them. We shall not deprive them of any of their work; every man shall be bound by what he has earned” [52:21]. The one who is martyred and has no husband will be married to one of the people of Paradise.

David Cook, Understanding Jihad, p.146

Wages II

Abrogating Revelation 58:13 is another of those revealed truths that seem designed—his expanding choice of females being the most egregious—for Muhammad’s benefit only, with little or no relevance after he has passed. The intimidating replacement revelation, like the one strongly inviting people to pay for hearing him preach, encourages those granted a private audience to make a donation.

58:12 O believers, if you converse privately with the Messenger, then tender a free offering before	58:13 Do you dread to make free offerings before your private converse? If you do not do so
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your secret conversing. That is better for you and purer; but if you do not have the means, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful. and Allah pardons you, then perform the prayer, give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah is Aware of what you do.

Can We Be Friends?

Don't take as friends those who fought to avoid becoming Muslim if you don't want Allah to consider you a wrongdoer who will join them in Hell.

60:8 Allah does not forbid you, regarding those who did not fight you and did not drive you out of your homes, to be generous to them and deal with them justly. Allah surely loves the just. 60:9 Allah only forbids you, regarding those who fought you in religion and drove you out of your homes and assisted in driving you out, to take them for friends. Those who take them for friends are, indeed, the wrongdoers. Allah is Aware of what you do.

It is not only those who actively resisted becoming Muslim that God forbids you to take on as friends.

4:144 O believers, do not take the unbelievers for friends, instead of the believers. Do you wish to give Allah a clear proof against you?

5:51 O believers, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends; some of them are friends of each other. Whoever of you takes them as friends is surely one of them. Allah indeed does not guide the wrongdoers.

That Sound You Hear

If "wrapped up" in Revelation 73:1 means totally engrossed, then God's abrogating verses asking His spokesman to, in effect, take a break, make some sense.

73:1 O enwrapped one (that is Muhammad, who used to be 'wrapped up' when the Koran was imparted to him by the Angel Gabriel), ...

73:2 Keep vigil throughout the night, except for a little while;

73:3 Half of it, or a little less;

73:4 Or add a little thereto and chant the Qur'an loudly.

It Was Not a Weighty Message, After All

73:5 Indeed, We shall deliver unto you a weighty discourse. 4:28 Allah wishes to lighten your burden; for man was created weak.

Wishing Won't Make It So Unless Allah Wishes It

73:19 This is truly a reminder (*the Qur'an*); so that he who wishes may follow unto his Lord a path.

76:30 Yet, you do not wish unless Allah wishes. Allah is truly All-Knowing and Wise.

80:12 Whoever wishes will remember it (*the Qur'an*);

81:29 But you will not wish unless Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, wishes.

81:28 To whoever of you who wishes to reform their ways.

81:29 But you will not wish unless Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, wishes.

Mouthing the Koran Is Not Good Enough

Muhammad, or perhaps the believers, may have initially misunderstood what was being asked of them.

75:16 Do not wag your tongue with it (*the Qur'an*) to hurry on with it.

87:6 We shall make you recite; so you will not forget; ...

Many Abrogating One

A Blood-Money Conundrum II

2:178 O believers, retaliation for the slain is prescribed for you; a free [man] for a free [man], a slave for a slave and a female for a female. But if he is pardoned by his brother (the aggrieved), usage should be followed (capital punishment would be replaced by blood-money) and he should pay him (the aggrieved) liberally and kindly. This is remission and mercy from your Lord. He who transgresses after that will have a painful punishment.

5:45 And We prescribed to them therein (the Torah) that a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds retaliation; but whoever forgoes it charitably, it will be an atonement for him. Whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, those are the evildoers!

17:33 Do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause. Whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his heir the power [to demand satisfaction]; but let him not exceed the limit in slaying, for he will be the victor.

The above abrogated verse, Revelation 2:178, is from a Medinan surah and one of its nullifiers, verse 17:33, is from a Meccan surah. How is this possible, a revelation from the past abrogating a revelation from the future? One explanation may have to do with God's non-linear thinking. For example, in chapter 9, verse 114, we are told that Allah refused Abraham's plea that he forgive his father for not believing in his son's god.

9:114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, only because of a promise he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. Indeed Abraham was compassionate, forbearing.

Many Abrogating One 46

The actual request made by Abraham and the promise made in response are revealed ten surahs later, ending with the following revelation.

19:47 [Abraham] said: "Peace be upon you. I will seek forgiveness for you from my Lord. He has, indeed, been gracious to me."

None of the abrogating revelations mention the payment of blood money. This is not an indication that the payment of blood money sanctioned in the abrogated revelation is no longer valid. You may recall Muhammad's statement about not asking for more than 100 camels as payment for a murdered kin during his last sermon (see *A Blood-Money Conundrum I*).

Allah has not forbidden killing the souls of those who oppose the expansion of Islam—i.e., "those who fight Allah and His Messenger"—in the most gruesome way, as was done in almost daily executions conducted in Raqqa by the Islamic State during the time the city served as its capital.

5:33 Indeed, the punishment of those who fight Allah and His Messenger and go around corrupting the land is to be killed, crucified, have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or to be banished from the land. That is a disgrace for them in this life, and in the life to come theirs will be a terrible punishment.

From their perspective, the holy warriors of the Islamic State were doing the "righteous" thing, that is, being "hard on the unbelievers" as Allah commanded, expecting forgiveness for their sins and a good wage for doing so.

48:29 Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him are hard on the unbelievers, merciful towards each other... Allah has promised those who believe and do the righteous deeds forgiveness and a great wage.

Wills and Testaments

Pre-Islamic wills allowed Muhammad's first wife to be wealthy in her own right and not be dependent on any man for her sustenance. She was probably the last Muslim woman to benefit from the pre-Islamic rules, or lack thereof, governing wills. Initially, Allah was comfortable

with the well-established practice of a person making a will in which he or she disposed of their wealth as they saw fit. In fact, He insisted on it in abrogated Revelation 2:180, even if leaving something for the wives is not mentioned.

In setting rules governing the disposition of an "estate" in revelations that abrogate verse 2:180, God mentions women but not to their advantage, unless, like many apologists for Islam treatment of women such as Karen Armstrong, you argue that daughters were now guaranteed at least a share of the wealth, even if that share could never be more than half of a brother's bequest.

2:180 It is prescribed for you that when death is imminent for one of you and he leaves wealth, he should equitably make a testament in favour of the parents and the near of kin. This in incumbent upon the righteous.

4:7 Men should have a share of what parents and kinsmen leave behind; and women a share of what parents and kinsmen leave, whether big or small, as an obligatory portion.

4:11 Allah commands you, with respect to your children, that the male shall inherit the equivalent of the share of two females. If there be more than two females, then they should receive two-thirds of what he (the deceased father) leaves; but if there is only one female, she is entitled to one-half. To each of his parents, one-sixth of what he leaves, if he has any children; but if he has no children, then his parents will inherit him, the mother receiving one third. But if he has any brothers, then his mother receives one-sixth, after any will he had made or any debt he had incurred [is taken care of] Your fathers and sons – you know not who of them is of greater advantage to you. This is a law from Allah; Allah surely is All-Knowing, Forbearing.

Allah's final revealed truths as to the disposition of an inheritance, where He decides who gets what, inaugurated a vicious circle of self-serving regulations that favoured men at women's expense and made believing females dependent on the generosity of God's preferred sex for their well-being. God's spokesman acknowledged women's dependent status in a saying where he reminds them to be grateful for

whatever they get if they don't want to spend an eternity on fire in Hell.

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

The Prophet said: "I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful."

It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?)

He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them."

Bukhari 2.28

Intoxicants II

2:219 They ask you about wine and gambling, say: "In both there is great sin and some benefit for people. But the sin is greater than the benefit." And they ask you about what they should spend, say: "What you can spare." Thus Allah makes clear to you His Revelations so that you may reflect.

4:43 O believers, do not approach prayer while you are drunk, until you know what you say; nor when you are unclean – unless you are on a journey – until you have washed yourselves. And if you are sick or on a journey, or if anyone of you has relieved himself, or you have touched women and could not find water, you might rub yourself with clean earth, wiping you faces and hands with it. Allah is indeed All Pardoning, All-Forgiving.

5:90 O believers, wine, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination of the Devil's doing; so avoid them that perchance you may prosper!

9:103 Take of their wealth voluntary alms to purify and cleanse them therewith; and pray for them, for your prayers are a source of tranquility for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Revealed truth 4:43 is special in that scholars have determined that it, in turn, has been abrogated by revealed truth 5:90 (see *Intoxicants I*). Makes sense, if drinking is forbidden, there is little chance of a believer approaching prayer while drunk.

The second revealed truth in Revelation 2:219 starting with "And they ask you about what they should spend..." is abrogated by Revelation 9:103. You may remember Revelation 9:103 as abrogating Revelation 2:3 (see *Charity Becomes Compulsory*). Here, 9:103 does more or less the same thing, nullifying a revelation from God where He demonstrates some flexibility as to how believers spend their wealth, with one where He instructs Muhammad to take whatever he deems appropriate.

The Divorce Ransom

2:228 Divorced women should keep away from men for three menstrual periods. And it is not lawful for them to conceal that which Allah has created in their wombs, if they truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands have the right in the meantime to take them back, should they seek reconciliation; and women have rights equal to what is incumbent upon them according to what is just, although men are one degree above them (what is meant here is that the men have a superior authority). Allah is Mighty, Wise.

2:229 Divorce may be pronounced twice. Then they (women) are to be retained in a rightful manner or released with kindness. And it is unlawful for you [men] to take back anything of what you have given them unless both parties fear that they cannot comply with Allah's Bounds (by obeying His commands). If you fear that they cannot do that, then it is no offence if the woman ransoms herself [pays money to be set free]. Those are the bounds set by Allah. Do not transgress them. Those who transgress the bounds set by Allah are the wrongdoers.

2:230 If he divorces her, she shall not be lawful to him again until she has married another husband. If the latter divorces her, then it is no offence if they go back to each other, if they both think that they shall keep within Allah's Bounds. Those are Allah's Bounds which He makes clear to men who have knowledge.

A divorced woman is expected to leave the family home after experiencing her third menstrual cycle after being informed by her

husband that they are no longer husband and wife. Her former husband can allow her to stay longer if he wishes, as long as it is not for ulterior motives, such as to obtain a larger ransom; that would be making a mockery about God's revelations, as some people obviously did.

2:231 If you divorce [your] women and they reach the end of their [waiting] period, retain them in an honourable manner or release them in an honourable manner. Do not, however, retain them for the sake of causing them harm and in order to commit aggression (by forcing them to ransom themselves, or by retaining them for a longer period). Whoever does that shall do wrong to himself. Do not make a mockery of Allah's Revelations; and remember the Grace Allah has bestowed upon you, and the Book (the Koran) and the wisdom He has revealed to you in order to admonish you. Fear Allah and know that He knows everything.

There is no mention in the two verses abrogating Revelation 2:228 that men are superior to women by at least one degree. Therefore, is it safe to assume that the revealed truth is still an immutable fact? Yes and no. We have Muhammad's observation about the deficiency of the female mind, a verse from Allah about their ability to remember things and another where God explains why He put men in charge, allowing them to beat some sense into women at their discretion. All lend support to a persuasive argument that men are superior to women, perhaps even more than by one degree, whatever a degree is.

Narrated abu Said al-Khudri:

The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal half that of a man?"

The women said, "Yes."

He said: "This is because of the deficiency of the woman's mind."

Bukhari 48.286

2:282 ... And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her...

4:34 Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because they spend some of their wealth. Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen (their sex) which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek ways of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great.

Adultery II

First it was his swearing four times that he was telling the truth and her swearing four times that he was a liar that warded off the punishment, then God upped the ante. In Revelations 24:7 and 24:9, an acrimonious couple was now to swear a fifth time about the truthfulness of their respective allegations and whoever was lying was in for a very bad time. If the husband lied a fifth time about seeing his wife being intimate with another man, he was cursed by Allah. If a wife lied a fifth time about seeing her husband having sex with a woman to whom he was not married, she incurred the Wrath of Allah. As to the liar who got the worse of God's displeasure, I would hazard to guess the wife; you can overcome the misfortunes that come with being cursed, but you cannot escape the Wrath of Allah.

24:6 And those who accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, the testimony of one of them shall be to swear by Allah four times that he is truthful.

24:7 The fifth time shall be Allah's Curse on him if he is a liar.

...

24:9 And the fifth time will be that Allah's Wrath be upon her, if he (her husband) is truthful.

Gabriel interrupted Muhammad's interrogation of a gutsy woman accused of committing adultery to inform him that God had added the fifth oath and the curse and wrath that came with it, but not before her husband pointed out to the judge the absurdity of seeking four people to observe his wife having sex with another man. God obviously agreed with the plaintiff to surreptitiously communicate, via His Messenger to the Messenger, His replacement revealed truth so that His spokesman could stop demanding four witnesses to an alleged illegal sex act to rule in the husband's favour.

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

Hilal bin Umaiya accused his wife of committing illegal sexual intercourse with Sharik bin Sahma and filed the case before the Prophet.

The Prophet said (to Hilal), "Either you bring forth a proof (four witnesses) or you will receive the legal punishment (lashes) on your back."

Hilal said, "O Allah's Apostle! If anyone of us saw a man over his wife, would he go to seek after witnesses?"

The Prophet kept on saying, "Either you bring forth the witnesses or you will receive the legal punishment (lashes) on your back."

Hilal then said, "By Him Who sent you with the Truth, I am telling the truth and Allah will reveal to you what will save my back from legal punishment."

Then Gabriel came down and revealed to him: 'As for those who accuse their wives...' (24:6-9)

The Prophet recited it till he reached: '... (her accuser) is telling the truth.'

Then the Prophet left and sent for the woman, and Hilal went (and brought) her and then took the oaths (confirming the claim).

The Prophet was saying, "Allah knows that one of you is a liar, so will any of you repent?"

Then the woman got up and took the oaths and when she was going to take the fifth one, the people stopped her and said, "It (the fifth oath) will definitely bring Allah's curse on you (if you are guilty)."

So she hesitated and recoiled (from taking the oath) so much that we thought that she would withdraw her denial. But then she said, "I will not dishonor my family all through these days," and carried on (the process of taking oaths).

The Prophet then said, "Watch her; if she delivers a black-eyed child with big hips and fat shins then it is Sharik bin Sahma's child."

Later she delivered a child of that description. So the Prophet said, "If the case was not settled by Allah's Law, I would punish her severely."

Bukhari 60.271

By "punish her severely," Muhammad meant having her stoned to death, as were all of the women, to my knowledge, he found guilty of adultery. God's spokesman did display a short-lived scrap of mercy for a woman pregnant from an adulteress relationship.

Malik related to me from Yaqub ibn Zayd ibn Talha from his father Zayd ibn Talha that Abdullah ibn Abi Mulayka informed him that a woman came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and informed him that she had committed adultery and was pregnant.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you give birth."

When she had given birth, she came to him. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you have suckled and weaned the baby."

When she had weaned the baby, she came to him. He said, "Go and entrust the baby to someone."

She entrusted the baby to someone and then came to him. He gave the order and she was stoned.

Malik's Muwatta 41.41.1.5

In another hadith about a defenceless woman put to death on orders from God's mouthpiece, Muhammad simply sent a trusted assassin to enquire whether the woman had committed adultery and if she answered in the affirmative, to stone her.

Narrated Zaid bin Khalid and Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "O Unais! Go to the wife of this (man) and if she confesses (that she has committed illegal sexual intercourse), then stone her to death."

Bukhari 38.508

The Manifest Victory

As he grew more powerful, Muhammad's increased prestige on Earth and in Heaven is reflected in the nullification of Revelation 46.9 about him simply being a warner. Verse 46.9 also has the distinction of being the revealed truth abrogated by the greatest number of revelations.

46:9 Say: "I am not the first of the Messengers and I do not know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow what is revealed to me and I am only a manifest warner."

48:1 We have indeed given you a manifest victory,

48:2 That Allah may forgive you your former and your later sins, and complete His Blessing upon you and lead you onto a straight path;

48:3 And that Allah may give you a mighty victory.

48:4 It is He Who sent down the Serenity upon the hearts of the believers that they may increase in faith upon their faith. To Allah belongs the hosts (legions, *Moududi*) of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is All-Knowing and Wise.

48:5 That He may admit the believers, men and women, into gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever, and that He may remit their sins. That in Allah's Sight, is a great triumph.

48:6 And that He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the unbelievers, men and women, who think evil thoughts of Allah. Upon them is the evil turn of fortune. Allah is wrathful at them, curses them and has prepared Hell for them; and what a wretched fate!

The "manifest victory" in Revelation 48:1 is the Meccan's agreement to a ten-year non-aggression treaty, which Muhammad's followers considered a defeat, the reason for Allah's assurances that it was indeed a victory. Uncharacteristically, the revelations pertaining to the "manifest victory" were communicated to God's spokesman while he

was riding back to Medina with his disheartened followers. It did the trick. If Allah said the *Treaty of Hudaibiyah* was a victory, who were they to doubt God?

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in Koran*, Boreal Books, *Treaty of Hudaibiyah*)

The treaty gave Muhammad the breathing space he needed to build up his forces and make alliances that would allow him to surround and conquer Mecca two years into the ten-year non-aggression pact. Allah's spokesman could, on God's authority, break any treaty at his discretion if he suspected treachery.

8:58 And should you fear treachery from any people, throw back their treaty to them in like manner. Allah does not like the treacherous.

In January of 630 AD, on the pretence that the Meccans had been supplying arms to the Banu Bakr, a tribe allied with the Meccans that had been fighting a tribe allied with the Muslims, the Banu Khuzah. (The Meccans denied this and offered to compensate the Muslims, to no avail, for any damage the Banu Bakr may have caused.) Muhammad, at the head of an army numbering at least ten thousand, marched on Mecca which is now surrounded by tribes who had converted to Islam or were allies of the Muslims.

Mecca surrendered without a fight after obtaining assurances from Muhammad, who first consulted with God, that they could continue to worship the goddesses al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat whom they considered the daughters of Allah after they became Muslims. The next day, after he had complete control of their city, Muhammad told the Meccans that it was all the devil's doing; Satan had intruded on his conversations with Allah the previous night, and in the morning God had set him straight: al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat were history and the verses, which became known as the Satanic Verses, were stricken from the Koran.

22:52 We have not sent a Messenger or Prophet before you but when he recited the Devil would intrude into his recitation. Yet Allah annuls what the Devil had cast. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. Allah is All-Knowing and Wise.

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in Koran*, Boreal Books, *Mecca Surrenders*)

One Abrogating Many

Adultery III

God, as should now be obvious, gave adultery a lot of thought. In fact, earlier on in Revelation 4:15, He asked for more time to come up with an appropriate punishment for wives who had sex with men other than their husbands. Let that sink in for a minute: circumstances had not changed and the crime was still illegal intercourse, yet a supposedly omniscient deity was unsure of the ultimate punishment He would eventually impose. In fact, as you will discover shortly, He may even have had *third* thoughts as to the appropriate penalty for a crime *He invented*.

4:15 As for those of your women who commit adultery, call four witnesses from your own against them; and if they testify, then detain them in the houses till death overtakes them or Allah opens another way for them.

4:16 If two [men] of you commit it, punish them both. If they repent and mend their ways, then leave them alone. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

4:17 Allah has taken upon Himself to accept the repentance of those who commit evil in ignorance and then repent immediately after that. Those, He will forgive and Allah is All Knowing, Wise.

24:2 The adulteress and the adulterer, whip each one of them a hundred lashes; and let no pity move you in Allah's religion, regarding them; if you believe in Allah and the Hereafter. And let a group of believers witness their punishment.

Fakhry does not provide any explanation for his bracketed text in Revelation 4:16. Scholars are divided on whether the phrase (without Fakhry's [men] insertion), "If two of you commit it" is about two men who have had sex with each other. In any event, whatever compassion

God might have had for such a union was annulled by Revelation 24:2, rendering the discussion moot.

The most important question for many, I suspect, is where is the verse about stoning adulterers and adulteresses? Syed Shahabuddin, writing in the *Milli Gazette*, Indian Muslim's leading English newspaper, reminds us that flogging is the punishment for adultery, not stoning, and the Koran is the final authority; even God's mouthpiece could not substitute his own opinion. If so, why does Islamic law, in some jurisdictions, give precedence to the example of Muhammad instead of the Koran?

According to Shahabuddin, this is because "some [Islamic] scholars support 'Rajm' (stoning) by attributing a statement to the second Caliph Umar (second successor to Muhammad) that a revelation on the subject had been received but had been lost."

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

Umar said, "I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, "We do not find the Verses of the Rajam (stoning to death) in the Holy Book," and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed.

Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajam be inflicted on him who commits illegal sexual intercourse, if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession."

Sufyan added, "I have memorized this narration in this way."

Umar added, "Surely Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him."

Bukhari 82.816

In a hadith collected by respected Sunni scholar Ibn Hanbal, the verse was eaten by a goat.

[Narrated Aisha:] "The verse of the stoning and of suckling an adult ten times were revealed, and they were (written) on a paper and kept under my bed. When the messenger of Allah expired and we were preoccupied with his death, a goat entered and ate away the paper."

One Abrogating Many 58

So there you have it. When you hear of a woman being stoned to death for committing adultery or having pre-marital relations in conservative Muslim jurisdictions such as Iran, Nigeria or Saudi Arabia, the justification just might be this lost verse of the Koran. Shahabuddin, always helpful, also explains why it is always women who get stoned even though the punishment is supposed to apply equally to both sexes.

Apart from the brutality of the 'Rajm' (stoning), repugnant to conscience, here is an element of gender injustice in the operation of the traditional law which allows the male partner to get off scot-free, even if he has coerced and raped the female. If the woman lodges a complaint, her complaint is taken as a testimony against herself and, therefore, amounts to admission and requires no further evidence while it is necessary to get 4 witnesses against the man. Also the woman may bear a child which is admitted as evidence of zena (guilt) against the woman. Man suffers from no such disability.

(Recommended reading: *1,001 Sayings and Deed of Prophet Muhammad*, Boreal Books – *Stoning*)

An argument has been made on IslamicStudies.Info that the progressive nature of revelations pertaining to adultery aimed to get the Arabs to gradually accept harsher punishments for what many did not consider a crime. In fact, this idea of illegal intercourse came as a surprise to the Meccans after the takeover of their city by the Muslims. During his first address to the newly conquered, Muhammad admonished the women of Mecca to stop committing illegal intercourse, at which point he was interrupted by Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, a leader of the Meccans, who asked God's spokesman how it was possible for a free woman to commit such a crime.

If scholars are correct that Allah, in His revelations about His increasingly cruel punishment for adultery and other reveal truths that replace less harsh, more tolerant decrees with more brutal ones, was to get the Muslims to gradually become as pitiless as Him, this gives credence to what Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg said about religion making good people do bad things; it also supports the conclusion reached by an apostate friend of mine that "evil is learned behaviour."

Myth of the Month of Revelations

The Koran was progressively revealed to Muhammad during a period of twenty-three years; Allah even admits that it was delivered piecemeal.

17:106 It is a Qur'an which we have divided into parts that you may recite it with deliberation, and We revealed it piecemeal.

In response to unbelievers who would only believe the Koran if it was sent down all at once, God explained why He sent it to Muhammad in stages (unlike what He did for Moses).

25:32 The unbelievers say: "If only this Qur'an had been sent down on him all at once." That is how We wanted to strengthen your heart with it and We have revealed it in stages.

25:33 They never bring you any simile but We bring the truth and a better exposition.

25:34 Those who are mustered on their faces in Hell; those are in a worse position and are more wayward.

These unbelievers, judging from Allah's trademark overreaction, i.e., the face down in Hell reference, probably wanted a complete Koran as proof that Muhammad was not just making it up as he went along.

25:4 The unbelievers say: "This (the Qur'an) is nothing but deceit, which he (Muhammad) has invented and was assisted therein by other people (the Jews)." They have simply come up with wrongdoing and falsehood.

Yet, the idea persists that the Koran was delivered during the month of Ramadan, which an abrogating revelation does nothing to dispel. Verse 2:185 is not unlike other revealed truths where the idea seems to come to God to be more specific about one of His many requirements; in this instance, when to fast and for how long.

2:183 O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may be

2:185 The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed, providing guidance for mankind, with

God-fearing;

2:184 For a fixed number of days. If any of you is sick or on a journey, then [an equal] number of other days. And those who find it extremely difficult (to fast) should, as a penance, feed a poor man. He who spontaneously does more good (increases the penance) it is for his own good. To fast is better for you, if only you knew.

clear verses to guide and to distinguish right from wrong. He who witnesses that month should fast it. But if anyone is sick or on a journey, [he ought to fast] a number of other days. Allah desires ease and does not desire hardship for you, that you may complete the total number [of fasting days]; glorify Allah for His Guidance, and that you may be thankful.

Something for the Tax Collector

Abrogating Revelation 2:215 allocates part of the obligatory charity to those charged with collecting it and sanctions its use to buy off enemies of Islam, to pay those who will not help the believers unless there is something in it for them, and generally to fund the war on Allah's behalf.

2:215 They ask you (the question was put to the Messenger by a wealthy old man) what they should spend. Say: "Whatever bounty you give is for the parents, the near of kin, the orphans the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, Allah is fully cognizant of it."

51:19 And of their possessions, the beggar and the destitute had as share.

9:60 The alms are for the poor, the needy, their collectors and those whose hearts are bound together, as well as for the freeing of slaves, [repaying] the debtors, spending in Allah's Path, and for the wayfarer. Thus Allah commands. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Abrogated Revelation 51:19 is part of a series of revealed truths about another aspect of Judgement Day. Make of it what you will! In any event, it is no longer valid.

51:12 They ask: "When is the Day of Judgement coming?"

Let Me Rephrase That! 61

51:13 The Day they shall be exposed to the Fire.

51:14 “Taste your ordeal; this is what you were trying to hasten (the Meccan unbelievers made fun of the Prophet by asking him to hasten the punishment).”

51:15 The God-fearing shall be amidst gardens and springs;

51:16 Availing themselves of what their Lord has given them. Before that time, they were beneficent.

51:17 They used to sleep but a short watch of the night;

51:18 And at daybreak, they used to ask for forgiveness,

51:19 And of their possessions, the beggar and the destitute had as share.

(Recommended reading: *The Islamic Hereafter*, Boreal Books, *Judgement Day*)

More Brides for Believers

There may have been method to Allah’s abrogation of a revealed truth about not marrying polytheist women with a revelation that reminds believers that Christian and Jewish females, “those who were given the Book before you” in Revelation 5:5, are eligible to marry.

2:221 Do not marry unbelieving women (polytheists) until they believe. A believing slave-girl is certainly better than an unbelieving woman, even if the latter pleases you. And do not give your women (believing women) in marriage to polytheists until they believe. A believing slave is certainly better than a polytheist even if the latter pleases you. Those (the polytheists) call to the Fire and Allah calls to Paradise and Forgiveness by His Leave; and He makes clear His Revelations to mankind so that they may be mindful.

6:121 And do not eat from that over which the Name of Allah has not been

5:5 This day the good things have been made lawful to you; the food of the People of the Book is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them; and so are the believing women who are chaste, and the chaste women of those who were given the Book before you, provided you give them their dowries and take them in marriage, not in fornication or as

One Abrogating Many 62

mentioned; it is indeed sinful. The devils shall insinuate to their followers to dispute with you; but if you obey them, then you will surely be polytheists.

mistresses. If any one denies the faith, his work shall be of no avail to him, and in the Hereafter he will rank with the losers.

Finding a bride in pre- and post-Islamic Arabia, if you were not wealthy or powerful, was problematic. The fact that rich men could purchase as many women and slave-girls as they could afford, and powerful ones kept as many as they could abscond with, meant that young, frustrated fighting-age men were plentiful.

Allah took advantage of this situation by promising these desperate-for-intimacy young men that they could have, as their share of the booty, the widows and daughters of the men they killed on His behalf. And it worked; young fighting men flocked to Muhammad's banner, giving the Muslims an immediate tactical advantage over adversaries who did not, or could not, offer females as an incentive to slaughter their opponents.

With Revelation 5.5, God also improved the long-term prospect for His believers. Of all the gods I have studied, none has proven as effective a strategic thinker as Allah. By making the females of People of the Book (Christians and Jews) eligible for matrimony, He increased the progeny of believers at the expense of the unbelievers. In addition, a child born in a Muslim household is considered a Muslim for life; to even think of leaving the "religion of truth" for one of lies, or for no religion at all, is a death sentence.

48:28 It is He Who sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above every other religion. Allah suffices as Witness.

4:89 They wish that you disbelieve, as they have disbelieved, so that you will all be alike. Do not, then, take any companions from them, until they emigrate in the Way of Allah. Then should they turn back, seize them and kill them wherever you find them; and do not take from them any companions or supporter; ...

Muhammad echoed his Mentor's decree to "kill them wherever you find them":

Narrated Ikrima:

The Prophet said, "if a Muslim discards his religion, kill him."

Bukhari: 52:260.

The late Muammar Gaddafi boasted that the Muslim birth rate (and death for those who would abandon Islam, I would add), will, without the need for swords, guns or military conquests in a matter of a few decades, overwhelm the European kuffars (pejorative term for non-Muslims). A few decades may have been overly optimistic.

First, Kill All the Unbelievers

A Christian reading abrogating Revelation 2:286 will be reminded of the Lord's Prayer; that is, until they get to the last sentence.

2:284 To Allah belongs whatever in the heavens and on earth. And whether you reveal or conceal what is in your hearts, Allah will call you to account for it. He will then forgive whom He wills, and punish whom He wills. He is Able to do everything.

2:285 The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers too. All believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. We make no distinction between any of His Messengers. And they (the believers) say: "We hear and obey. Grant us Your Forgiveness, our Lord. And to you is our return."

2:286 Allah does not charge any soul beyond its capacity. It gets [rewarded for] what [good] it has earned, and is called to account for what [evil] it has committed. Lord, forgive us if we have forgotten or erred. Lord, do not lay on us a burden like that You laid on those before us, and do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy on us. You are our Protector. Give us victory over the unbelieving people.

One Abrogating Many 64

Like all of Allah's seemingly universal declarations, there is a catch. Those who do not believe in the Koran can do all the good they can and live an exemplary life; it won't matter a whit.

22:50 Those who believe and do the righteous deeds will receive forgiveness and a bountiful provision,

22:51 But who strive against our Revelations defying Us – those are the people of Hell.

Hell Is for Those Who Love Life

Just in case you didn't get what Allah meant by "in the Hereafter, he will have no share," revealed truth 42:20, the abrogating revelation leaves no doubt: you're going to Hell.

3:145 It is not given to any soul to die, except with Allah's Leave, at a fixed time. He who desires the reward of this world, We will give him [part] of it, and he who desires the reward of the life to come, We will give him [part] of it; and We shall reward the thankful.

42:20 He who wishes the tillage of the Hereafter, We will increase his tillage, and he who wishes the tillage of the present life, We will give him thereof; but in the Hereafter, he will have no share.

17:18 He who desires the transitory life, We hasten to him and to whomsoever We desire whatever We please. Later We consign him to Hell in which he will burn despised and rejected.

The Bedouins Learn Their Lesson

Early on, the Bedouins joined Allah's Cause strictly for the plunder. This made them unreliable allies. For example, after the successful defence of Medina (recommended reading: *Jihad in the Koran*, Boreal Books, *Battle of the Ditch*), Muhammad decided to attempt a pilgrimage to Mecca with only lightly-armed volunteers, which the Meccans could have easily annihilated if they were so inclined. This is the famous trek south during which he ended up negotiating the *Treaty of Hudaibiyah*. With no promise of plunder, the Bedouins refused to accompany him using transparent excuses, which God saw right through.

48:11 The Bedouins who stayed behind will say to you (Muhammad): "Our possessions and our families preoccupied us; so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: "Who can avail you anything against Allah, if He wishes to harm you or He wishes to profit you? No, Allah is fully aware of what you do.

48:12 "Rather, you thought that the Messenger and the believers will never return to their families; and that was embellished in your hearts and you entertained evil thoughts and were a useless people."

With Medina secured from attacks from Mecca, Muhammad could now move against the vulnerable and prosperous Jewish settlement of Khaibar. This would be an easy victory with plenty for a holy warrior to plunder.

(Recommended reading: *1,001 Sayings and Deeds of the Prophet Muhammad*, Boreal Books, Khaibar)

Needless to say, the Bedouins were now more than eager to join the attack. God's spokesman would deny the Bedouins Khaibar and all further plunder unless they demonstrated a genuine commitment to Allah's Cause by doing what was asked of them without hesitation. The "desert Arabs," as Allah referred to them, had learned their lesson; from that point on, they showed a devotion to Islam and Muhammad that prompted God to revise His earlier assessment of their character.

9:97 The desert Arabs are more steeped in unbelief and hypocrisy and are more likely not to know the bounds of what Allah has revealed to His Messenger. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

9:98 And some of the desert Arabs regard what they spend as a fine, and await the turns of fortune to go against you. May the evil turn against them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

9:99 And some of the desert Arabs believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they spend [in the way of Allah] as a means to get closer to Allah and to earn the prayers of the Messenger. Indeed, that will bring them closer [to Allah]. He will admit them into His Mercy. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

No More Mr. Nice Guy III

The business of civil wars tends to be a nasty one. The Arab civil war was no different, except that a vengeful, pitiless god took a personal interest in the conflict. This was to be expected; after all, the war was about Him. Unexpected was Allah dropping all pretences of tolerance once the war that Muhammad made inevitable, as his raids on Meccan caravans passing between the Red Sea and Medina morphed into a universal jihad.

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in Koran*, Boreal Books, *Battle of Badr*)

Before the onset of the war between the so-called pagans of Mecca and the believers of Medina, God expected the believers to unconditionally honour their parents. With the onset of hostilities that would consume the entire Peninsula, Allah's intolerant nature exploded into a hatred of all generations that had not submitted to His Will, as reflected in the abrogating revelation.

17:23 Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and to be kind to your parents. If either of them or both reach old age with you, do not say to them "Fie", nor tell them off, but say to them kind words.

17:24 And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say: "Lord have mercy on them, as they took care of me when I was a child."

9:113 It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to ask for forgiveness for the polytheists even if they are near relatives, after it becomes clear to [the believers] that they are the people of the Fire.

Adultery IV

25:68 And those who do not call upon any other god than Allah, and do not kill the soul which Allah forbade, except justly; and they do not commit adultery. He who does that shall meet with retribution.

25:69 Punishment shall be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection (Judgement Day) and he will dwell

25:70 Except for him who repents, believes and does the righteous deed. Those Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds. Allah is ever All-Forgiving, Merciful.

forever in it down-trodden; ...

Unlike when a woman who was accused of adultery appeared before him, Muhammad tried his best to find a reason not to have a male adulterer stoned. The chagrin he experienced in being left with no choice but to sentence a man to death is evident in his demand that those who said he was “stoned like a dog” should eat from the decaying corpse of an ass.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah:

A man of the tribe of Aslam came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and testified four times against himself that he had had illicit intercourse with a woman, while all the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was turning away from him. Then when he confessed a fifth time, he turned round and asked: Did you have intercourse with her?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Have you done it so that your sexual organ penetrated hers?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Have you done it like a collyrium stick when enclosed in its case and a rope in a well?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Do you know what fornication is?

He replied: Yes. I have done with her unlawfully what a man may lawfully do with his wife.

He then asked: What do you want from what you have said?

He said: I want you to purify me.

So he gave orders regarding him and he was stoned to death. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard one of his companions saying to another: Look at this man whose fault was concealed by Allah but who would not leave the matter alone, so that he was stoned like a dog.

One Abrogating Many 68

He said nothing to them but walked on for a time till he came to the corpse of an ass with its legs in the air. He asked: Where are so and so?

They said: Here we are, Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him)!

He said: Go down and eat some of this ass's corpse.

They replied: Apostle of Allah! Who can eat any of this?

He said: The dishonour you have just shown to your brother is more serious than eating some of it. By Him in Whose hand my soul is, he is now among the rivers of Paradise and plunging into them.

Abu Dawud 38.4414

The act of stoning an adulterer may purify his soul and allow him to enter Paradise, but not so for the adulteress.

From: **Alice visits a Mosque to learn about Judgement Day** - A play about what to expect, *Boreal Books*, 2012.

Imam: Allah's Mercy is for unwavering believers who have committed offenses such as stealing, killing another without just cause and so on, repented and made amends and remained steadfast in their belief in Allah's Mercy.

Alice: Am I to understand that a steadfast believer will be forgiven his transgressions if he believes he will be forgiven his transgressions?

Imam: Despairing of Allah's Mercy is not only the second greatest sin in Islam, but it is a sin against God, just like believing in other gods, and he who commits an unforgivable act, like women who commit adultery, will burn in Hell for an eternity.

Alice: Adultery is not a sin against Allah or His Messenger, so why is an adulteress not deserving of Allah's Mercy?

Imam: Because there is no way for a woman to make amends for having had sex with someone other than her husband.

How would you undo that? How could she undo the dishonour that she has brought on herself, her family and her husband? It is not enough that the adulteress will roast in Hell for eternity, but steps must be taken in the here-and-now to eradicate the reminder of this dishonour and to discourage such destructive behavior.

Alice: Such as stoning the adulteress to death...

Not All Poets Are Perverts

Thorns in Muhammad's side until his victory over the Meccans included the poets who mocked him in verse. In victory, Allah's spokesman exhibited the same unforgiving pitilessness as the God he spoke for; he had them killed, as he did most of his critics, when the opportunity presented itself. Of course, poets who wrote verses in praise of Allah did not attract perverts and that needed to be made clear.

26:224 And as to the poets, the perverse follow them.

26:225 Do you not see that they wander aimlessly in every glen?

26:226 And that they say what they do not do.

26:227 Except for those who believe and do the righteous deeds, mention Allah frequently, and are victorious after they were wronged. Surely, the wrongdoers shall know what outcome is ultimately theirs.

(Recommended reading: *1,001 Sayings and Deeds of the Prophet Muhammad*, Boreal Books, *Dead Poets*)

If Only...

42:39 And those who, if they are oppressed, will overcome.

42:40 *The reward of evil is an evil like it, but he who pardons and makes amends, his wage is with Allah. Indeed, He does not like the wrongdoers.*

42:41 He who overcomes after being wronged – upon those there is no reproach.

42:43 Be he who bears patiently and forgives – that is a sign of real resolve.

One Abrogating Many 70

Revelation 42:43 is one of those sacred truths that are a tribute to sacred truths. If only there were more like it, and if only it had been revealed later during Muhammad's Call, when sacred truths took on a brutal, unforgiving persona.

Verse of the Sword

The *Verse of the Sword* abrogates more than half of the repealed revealed truths. It is, without a doubt, the most far-reaching revelation of the Koran. The aptly named verse is undoubtedly familiar to every jihadist and is the overriding revelation for these holy warriors. According to the imminent Egyptian theologian Abu al-Fadl 'Abd ar-Rahman Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti (d. 1505), "Everything in the Qur'an about forgiveness and peace is abrogated by verse 9:5."

9:5 Then, when the Sacred Months (these are the four months during which war was prohibited in pre-Islamic times) are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them [as captives], besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every point of observation. If they repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms then release them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

You will find the *Verse of the Sword* in the incendiary surah *Ultimatum* in Muhsin Khan's Saudi-approved and promoted translation of the Koran, making it the most widely available Koran in the English-speaking world.

Khan, born in 1927, is unequivocal about the reach of the surah where the *Verse of the Sword* can be found, and I quote: "God revealed *Ultimatum* in order to discard restraint and to command Muslims to fight against all the pagans as well as against the People of the Book if they do not embrace Islam or until they pay religious taxes."

Christians and Jews are not to be killed or forced to convert if they pay the right-to-live tax, the *jizya*, while acknowledging your superiority as a Muslim. The *jizya* is the subject of the next chapter, *Verse of the Tax*.

You may spare the "idolaters," i.e., infidels, you have corralled if they "repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms," that is, become Muslim. Otherwise, it's off with their heads! The same goes for Christians and Jews who refuse to pay the *jizya*.

Abrogation and Genocide

Based on Muslim chronicles of the period and the demographic calculations done by historian K.S. Lal in his book *Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India*, the Verse of the Sword is in all likelihood responsible for the largest known slaughter of polytheists. Dr. Lal estimates that between 1000 AD and 1500 AD, the population of Hindus decreased by 80 million, meaning that for much of that period the death rate among Hindus exceeded their birthrate. If the eminent historian's estimates are even remotely accurate, this period would have witnessed the largest cold-blooded killing of an indigenous people in all written history.

A Declaration of War

The *Verse of the Sword* has a companion verse, Revelation 9:111, the *Salvific Covenant*: do this for me and I will do this for you, save you, give you Paradise.

9:111 Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for Paradise; they fight in the Way of Allah, kill and get killed. That is a true promise from Him in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an; and who fulfills his promise better than Allah? Rejoice then at the bargain you have made with Him; for that is the great triumph.

The *Verse of the Sword* and the *Salvific Covenant*, taken together, are the Koran's equivalent of a Declaration of War on humanity, a universal jihad until all of humankind submits to the Will of Allah. Such a declaration was actually issued by Muhammad to the various rulers of the kingdoms and provinces that bordered the Peninsula. They must convert or be invaded and converted by force. A copy of his ultimatum has been preserved in the old Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. It is addressed to the governor of Egypt, a fellow by the name of Muqawqis. The last sentence of the ultimatum has a particularly ominous tone (*italics mine*).

From Muhammad the servant and Prophet of Allah, to Muqawqis, the leader of the Coptic tribe. There is safety and security for those believers who follow the correct path. Therefore I invite you to accept Islam. If you accept it, you shall find security, save your throne,

and gain twice as much reward for having introduced Islam to your followers. If you refuse this invitation, let the sin of calamity which awaits your followers be upon you. You too are People of the Book; therefore let us come to a word common between us that we worship none but Allah and shall equalise anything with him. Let us not abandon Allah and take others for lords other than him. If you do not consent to this invitation, *bear witness that we are Muslims.*

If you do not consent, we are Muslims; we do not make idle threats. Allah echoed His spokesman's warning to the People of the Book:

3:64 Say: 'O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between you and us, that we worship none but Allah, do not associate anything with Him and do not set each other as lords besides Allah.' If they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

The *Verse of the Sword* does more than nullify the scattering of verses that could be interpreted as recommending mercy and compassion for unbelievers, or believers who don't believe hard enough; it consolidates for the holy warrior many of the revelations about killing Allah's real and imaginary enemies into one concise paragraph.

The following are 112 revealed truths that most scholars who support the concept of abrogation agree were annulled or modified by the *Verse of the Sword*. The list, in numerical order, is from WikiIslam.

2:83 When We made a covenant with the Children of Israel (saying): "You shall worship none other than Allah; show kindness to your parents, to the near of kin, to the orphans and to the poor; speak to people; perform the prayers; give the alms-tax." But, with the exception of a few, you did not abide by the covenant and you turned away.

2:139 Say: "Do you dispute with us concerning Allah when He is our Lord and your Lord? We have our works (by which we shall be judged) and you have your works (by which you shall be judged). To Him alone we are devoted.

2:190 And fight for the Cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not be aggressive. Surely Allah does not like the aggressor.

Verse of the Sword 74

Revelation 2:190 is also abrogated by a verse about the right religion, the right months and the benefits of fighting as a group. In this abrogating revelation, there is no caution about being the aggressor.

9:36 The number of months, with Allah, is twelve months by Allah's Ordinance from the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of these are Sacred. This is the right religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them; but fight the polytheists all together just as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is on the side of the righteous.

(Recommended reading: *Jihad in the Koran*: Boreal Books, *Killing During the Sacred Months*)

2:191 Kill them wherever you find them and drive them out wherever they drove you out (from Mecca). Sedition is worse than slaughter. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight you at it. If they fight you there kill them. Such is the reward for the unbelievers.

2:192 But if they desist, Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

2:217 They ask you about the sacred month: "Is there fighting in it?" Say: "Fighting in it is a great sin; but to debar people from Allah's Way and to deny Him and the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people out of it is a greater sin in Allah's Sight. Sedition is worse than murder." Nor will they cease to fight you until they make you, if they can, renounce your religion. Those of you who renounce their religion and die, while they are unbelievers, are those whose works come to grief, [both] in this world and in the Hereafter. And they are the people of the Fire, abiding in it forever.

2:256 There is no compulsion in religion; true guidance has become distinct from error. Thus he who disbelieves in the Devil and believes in Allah grasps the firmest handle that will never break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

3:20 So, if they dispute with you, say: "I have submitted myself to Allah and so have those who followed me"; and say also to those who have received the Book and to the unlearned (the Arab idolaters of Mecca): "Have you

submitted?" If they have submitted, then they are rightly guided; but if they have turned their backs, then your duty is simply to deliver the Message. Allah perceives His servants well.

3:28 Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends, rather than the believers. Whoever does that has nothing to do with Allah, unless you guard against them fully! Allah warns you to beware of Him (warns you of His anger); and unto Him is the ultimate return!

Revelation 3:28 is also abrogated by Revelation 8:57, in which Allah replaces a decree about not associating with unbelievers with one demanding brutal treatment of them for reasons He makes obvious.

8:57 So, if you should come upon them in the war, scatter (punish them severely) them with those behind them, that perchance they may pay heed.

4:63 Allah knows what is in the hearts of those ones; so leave them alone, admonish them and say to them effective words about themselves.

4:80 Whoever obeys the Messenger actually obeys Allah. As for those who turn away, We have not sent you to be their helpers.

4:81 They say: "Obedience"; but when they leave you, a group of them secretly plan something other than what you say. Allah writes down what they have in mind. So shun them and put your trust in Allah; Allah is the All-Sufficient Guardian.

4:84 So, fight for the cause of Allah; you are charged only of yourself. Urge the believers on that Allah may perchance restrain the unbelievers' might. Allah's might is greater, and greater is His Retribution!

4:90 Except for those who seek refuge with a people with whom you are bound by a compact, or come to you because their hearts forbid them to fight you or fight their own people. Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you; and then they would have certainly fought

Verse of the Sword 76

you. If, however, they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them.

4:91 You shall find others who wish to be secure from you and secure from their own people; yet whenever they are called back to sedition (polytheism) they plunge into it. If these do not keep away from you, nor offer you peace, nor hold their hands back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them. Those we have given you clear authority over them.

4:140 He has revealed to you in the Book that, should you hear the Revelations of Allah being denied or mocked, you should not sit with them until they engage in some other discussion. Otherwise, you are like them. Allah shall assemble all the hypocrites and the unbelievers in Hell;

5:2 O believers, do not violate the Rites of Allah, or the Sacred Month, or the sacrificial offerings, or the animals with garlands, or those who repair to the Sacred House seeking the bounty and pleasure of their Lord. When you are through with the rites of pilgrimage, you can go hunting. And let not the hatred of those who debar you from the Sacred Mosque prompt you to transgress. Help one another in righteousness and piety, but not in sin and aggression. Fear Allah; Allah is Severe in retribution.

5:13 And on account of them violating their covenant, We cursed them and caused their hearts to harden; they take the words (the words in the Torah) out of their context and forget part of what they were enjoined, and you do not cease to find them treacherous, except for a few of them. Yet, pardon them and forgive; Allah surely loves those who do good to others.

5:99 The duty of the Messenger is only to deliver the Message, and Allah knows what you reveal and you conceal.

6:66 And your people deny it (the Qur'an), whereas it is the truth. Say: "I am not your guardian."

6:68 And when you see those who talk scornfully about Our Revelations, turn away from them, until they engage in

another discourse. And should the devil cause you to forget, do not sit down with the evil-doing-people.

6:70 And leave those who take their religion for sport and who are deluded by the life of this world, and remind by it (the Qur'an), lest any soul should perish of what it has earned (on account of the person's deeds). Apart from Allah, it has no protector or intercessor; and if it offers any ransom, it will not be accepted from it. Such are those who are turned over [to be punished] on account of what they have earned. They will have a drink of boiling water and a very painful punishment, because they disbelieved.

6:91 They do not show proper regard for Allah's Greatness when they say: "Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal." Say: "Who revealed the Book which was brought by Moses as a light and guidance to mankind? You put it in scrolls which you reveal, while you conceal much. And [now] you are taught (in the Koran) what neither you nor your fathers knew." Say: "Allah [revealed it]. Then leave them to revel in their nonsense."

6:104 Clear proofs have come to you from your Lord. Thus he who perceives, perceives for his own advantage, and he who is blind, that is to his lost; and I am not your Keeper.

6:106 Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord; for there is no god but He; and turn away from the polytheists.

6:107 Had Allah pleased, they would not have associated [other gods]; and We have not made you their keeper, and you are not their guardian.

6:108 Do not curse (Muhammad) those [deities] whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they wrongfully curse Allah without knowledge. Thus We have made the deeds of every nation seem fair to them; then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they were doing.

6:112 Likewise, We have assigned to every Prophet an enemy, the devils of men and jinn, revealing one to the other tawdry speech in order to deceive; but had your Lord willed, they would not have done it. So leave them to what they invent;

Verse of the Sword 78

6:137 And likewise, their associate-gods have insinuated to them the killing of their children, so as to destroy them and confound them in their religion. Had Allah pleased they would not have done it. So leave them (Muhammad) to their fabrications.

6:159 Surely, you are not in any way part of those who have differentiated between parts of their religion and split into sects. Their fate is in Allah's Hands. He will inform them if what they have done.

7:183 And I will grant them respite. Surely My Scheme is very effective.

7:199 Hold to forgiveness, enjoin the good and turn away from the ignorant.

8:61 And if they incline to peace, incline to it too, and put your trust in Allah. He is truly the Hearer, the Knower.

8:72 Those who have believed and emigrated and struggled with their wealth and their lives in the part of Allah, and those who gave refuge and support – those are friends of one another; but those who have believed, yet did not emigrate, you will not be responsible for their protection until they emigrate. Should they seek your support for religion's sake, you ought to support them, but not against a people with whom you have a compact. Allah is Fully Aware of what you do.

8:73 As to the unbelievers, they are friends of one another. If you do not do this (subdue the unbelievers), there will be great sedition and corruption in the land.

9:2 Travel, then, in the land freely for four months, and know that you will never be able to thwart Allah, and that Allah shall disgrace the unbelievers.

9:7 How can the idolaters have a compact with Allah and His Messenger, except for those you made a compact (a formal treaty) with at the Sacred Mosque? So long as these honour their obligations to you, honour yours to them. Allah loves the righteous.

10:41 If they deny what you say, then say (O Muhammad): "What I do is mine, and what you do is yours. You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do."

10:99 Had your Lord willed, everybody on earth would have believed. Will you then compel people to become believers?

10:108 Say: "O people, the truth has come to you from your Lord; whoever is well-guided is well-guided only to his own advantage, and whoever goes astray goes astray only to his disadvantage, and I am not a guardian over you."

11:12 Perhaps you are passing over (not reciting) a part of what is revealed to you, and your heart is distressed lest they should say: "If only a treasure was sent down upon him or an angel accompanied him!" You are only a warner, and Allah is in charge of everything.

11:121 "And say to the unbelievers: "Continue with what you are doing, and We shall continue with ours.

11:122 And wait; we too are waiting."

13:40 And whether We show you part of what We promised them or cause you to die, your duty is to deliver the Message and it is for Us to do the reckoning.

15:3 Leave them to eat, enjoy themselves and let [false] hopes beguile them; for they will soon know.

15:85 We have not created the heavens and the earth and what lies between them save in truth; and the Hour (Judgement Day) is surely coming. So forgive them (your detractors) magnanimously.

15:88 Do not strain your gaze towards what We gave certain groups of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and lower your wing (be modest) to the believers.

15:89 And say: "I am truly the plain warner."

15:94 So proclaim what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists.

16:82 Then, if they turn away, your duty (Muhammad) is to deliver the clear Message.

Verse of the Sword 80

16:125 Call to the Way of Your Lord with wisdom and mild exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Your Lord surely knows those who stray from His Path, and He knows well those who are rightly guided.

16:127 Be patient; yet your patience is only through Allah. Do not grieve for them (the unbelievers), and do not be distressed on account of what they devise.

17:54 Your Lord knows you best. If He pleases, He will have mercy on you, and if He pleases He will torture you. We have not sent you (Muhammad) to be their guardian.

19:39 And warn them of the Day of sorrow, when the issue is decided, while they are heedless and do not believe.

19:75 Say (O Muhammad): "Whoever is in error, let the Compassionate prolong his term; so that when they are threatened with, whether it be the punishment or the Hour, they will know who is worse in position and weaker in supporters."

19:84 So do not hasten (O Muhammad) [their punishment] We are indeed counting for them the days.

20:130 So bear (Muhammad) patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and glorify him during the hours of the night and at the two ends of the day, that you may be well-pleased.

20:135 Say: "Everybody is waiting, so wait; and then you will know who are the people of the Straight Path and who are the well-guided."

22:68 And if they dispute with you, say: "Allah knows best what you are doing."

23:54 So, leave them in their error for a while.

24:54 Say: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away, then upon him (the Prophet) rests what he was charged with, and upon you what you were charged with. However, if you obey him, you will be well-guided. It is only incumbent on the Messenger to deliver the manifest message."

25:63 And the servants of the Compassionate who walk in the land gently and, if the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace."

27:92 And to recite the Qur'an. He who is well-guided is only well-guided to his own advantage, and to him who goes astray, say: "I am only one of the warners."

28:55 And when they hear idle talk, they turn away from it and say: "We have our works and you have your works. Peace be upon you; we do not desire the company of the ignorant."

29:50 They said: "If only signs from his Lord were sent down on him (Muhammad)." Say: "Signs are only with Allah, and I am only a manifest warner."

30:60 Be patient then, for Allah's Promise is true; and do not be disheartened by those who lack the certitude of faith.

31:23 Whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief sadden you. Unto us is their return and then We will tell them what they did. Allah knows well the secret of the breasts.

32:30 So turn away from them and wait; they too shall be waiting.

33:48 And do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites, overlook their injury, and trust in Allah. For Allah suffices as Guardian.

34:25 Say: "You will not be questioned about our misdeeds and we will not be questioned about what you do."

35:23 You are only a warner.

36:76 Do not let their words cause you grief; We know what they reveal and what they conceal.

37:174 So, turn away (O Muhammad) from them for a while.

37:175 And look at them; they shall soon be able to see (their defeat and your victory with their own eyes, Moududi).

37:178 And turn away from them a while.

37:179 And look, for they shall be able to see.

38:70 "It is only revealed to me that I am a manifest warner."

Verse of the Sword 82

38:88 "And you will learn its message after a while."

39:3 Sincere religion belongs to Allah. Those who took other protectors, apart from Him, say: "We only worship them so as to bring us closer to Allah in rank". Allah surely judges between them with respect with what they differ upon. Allah surely does not guide him who is a thankless liar.

39:14 Say (O Muhammad): "Allah alone I worship professing to Him my religion sincerely.

39:15 "Worship, then, what you wish, apart from Him." Say: "Indeed, those who have lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection are the real losers. That is truly the manifest lost."

39:36 Does not Allah suffice His servant? Yet they frightened you with those apart from Him (that is, idols). Whomever Allah leads astray will have no other guide.

39:39 Say: "My people, act according to your ability. I am acting; then you will know.

39:40 "Whoever is visited by punishment will be degraded by it and a lasting punishment will befall him."

39:41 We have sent the Book upon you for all mankind in truth. He who is well-guided is guided to his own gain, and he who goes astray, will go astray to his loss. You are not their overseer.

39:46 Say: "O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, you shall judge between your servants regarding that whereon they used to differ."

40:12 That is because if Allah is called upon alone, you disbelieve; but if others are associated with Him, you believe. Judgement is Allah's the All-High, the All-Great.

40:55 So stand fast; Allah's Promise is true. Seek the forgiveness of your sin and proclaim the praise of your Lord evenings and mornings.

40:77 So, bear up patiently; Allah's Promise is true. We will either show you (Muhammad), what We are promising them,

or We will call you unto Us. Then unto us they will be brought back.

41:34 The fair and evil deeds are not equal. Respond with that which is fairer, so that he against whom you have a grudge shall be like an intimate friend.

42:6 Those who have taken other protectors, apart from Him, Allah oversees them and you are not their guardian.

42:15 Therefore, summon and be upright as you were commanded, and do not follow their fancies, but say: "I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down. I have been commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord; we have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no dispute between us and you; Allah will gather us together and unto Him is our ultimate return."

42:48 Should they turn away, We have not sent you as guardian to watch over them; incumbent on you is delivering the Message only. Indeed, when We make man taste a mercy from Us, he rejoices in it, but when they are afflicted with a misfortune, on account of what their hands had previously perpetrated, then man is truly thankless.

43:83 So leave them to romp and frolic till they encounter their Day (Judgement Day) which they have been promised.

43:89 So turn away from them, and say: "Peace." For they will certainly come to know.

44:59 So wait and watch; they are waiting and watching.

45:14 Tell the believers to forgive those who do not hope for Allah's Days (evil days from Allah, Moududi, calamities mostly, Fakhry), that He may reward a people for what they used to earn.

46:35 So bear patiently, as the Constant Messengers (Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus) bore up, and do not seek to hasten it (the punishment) for them. On that Day they shall see what they were promised, as if they had not lingered except for a single hour of the day. This is a proclamation. Shall any but the sinful people be destroyed?

47:4 So when you meet the unbelievers, strike their necks till you have bloodied them then fasten the shackles. Thereupon,

Verse of the Sword 84

release them freely or for a ransom till the war is over. So be it. Yet had Allah wished, He would have taken vengeance upon them, but he wanted to test you by one another. Those who die in the Cause of Allah, He will not render their works perverse.

50:39 Bear up with what they say and proclaim the Praise of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset.

50:45 We know better what they say and you are not a tyrant terrorizing them. So, remind, by the Qur'an, him who fears My Warning.

52:31 Say: "Await, I am indeed with you awaiting."

52:45 Leave them, then, till they encounter the Day on which they will be thunderstruck;

52:48 Bear with your Lord's Judgement, for you are in Our Thoughts; and proclaim the Praise of Your Lord when you arise;

53:29 So turn away from him who has given up Our Reminder (the Qur'an) and only desire the present life.

54:6 Turn away from them. On the Day the caller shall call out an abominable thing;

60:11 If any of your wives desert you to the unbelievers, and you decide to penalize them, then give those [husbands] whose wives have gone away the like of what they have spent (the dowry), and fear Allah in whom you believe.

68:44 So, leave Me alone with those who disbelieve this discourse. We shall draw them out whence they do not know.

68:48 Bear up with your Lord's Judgement, then, and do not be like the Man in the Whale (Jonah), when he called out fully distressed.

70:5 Bear up patiently then (Muhammad).

70:42 So leave them to romp and play till they meet their Day, which they have been promised.

73:10 And bear up with what they say, and forsake them graciously.

Let Me Rephrase That! 85

73:11 And let Me deal with those who deny and live in luxury; and give them a little respite.

74:11 Leave Me with him (al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah) whom I created alone,

76:8 And they give food, despite their love of it, to the destitute, the orphans and the captive.

76:24 So bear up with your Lord's Judgement and do not obey (Muhammad) any sinful or thankless one of them.

76:29 This indeed is a reminder; so he who wishes will follow, unto His Lord, a path.

86:17 So (Muhammad), give the unbelievers some respite. Respite them slowly.

88:21 So, exhort, you (Muhammad) are a mere exhorter;

88:22 You are not supposed to dominate (compel, Moududi) them;

88:23 Except for him who turns away and disbelieves;

95:8 Is not Allah the Best of Judges?

109:6 "You have your religion and I have mine."

Verse of the Tax

After the *Verse of the Sword*, what I refer to as the *Verse of the Tax* impacts the most revelations, although the Verse of the Sword remains the master abrogator, and by a substantial margin. In the Verse of the Tax, Allah commands that the People of the Book humbly pay the *jizya*, a yearly poll-tax (a tax on people as opposed to property).

9:29 Fight those among the People of the Book who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and do not profess the true religion, till they pay the poll-tax out of hand and submissively.

This concession to a modicum of mercy, if you paid for it, is not available to infidels, i.e., those who do not worship the One God. When Muhammad first tried to impose the *jizya*, the Jews of Medina, when they were still a power to be reckoned with, ridiculed his proposal saying that Allah could not be so poor as to require their money.

The Verse of the Tax abrogates some of the same revealed truths modified or invalidated by the Verse of the Sword (Revelations 5:13, 6:70, 8:61, 42:15) and are not repeated here. The first revelation, in numerical order, abrogated by the Verse of the Tax is another of those revealed truths where Allah admits He needs more time to come up with a more permanent solution to a perceived problem, and that He will get back to you.

2:109 Many of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) wish, out of envy, to turn you back into unbelievers after the Truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and overlook, until Allah makes known His Will. Surely Allah has the power over all things.

Verse 2:109 was abrogated, along with Revelations 3:111 and 3:186 (the part about Christians and Jews), once God came up with His people tax which not only relegated the *People of the Book* to second class citizens

but which would compel them to, in essence, finance Islam's wars of expansion⁵.

3:111 They will only cause you a little harm; and if they fight you, they will turn their backs on you (run away), and will have no support.

3:186 You shall be tried in your possessions and yourselves, and shall hear from those who received the Book before you (the Jews and Christians) and from the idolaters, a lot of abuse; but if you forebear and guard against evil, that indeed is a mark of great determination.

Probably the most significant and the most lamented (by the people targeted by Allah's people tax) invalidated revealed truths is verse 29:46 where God displays a rare tolerance of other faiths whose followers worship a variation of His Eminence. You guessed it; it is a revealed truth from the more accommodating Meccan period. Pity!

29:46 Do not dispute with the people of the Book save in the fairest way; except for those of them who are evildoers. And say: "We believe in what has been sent down to us and what has been sent down to you. Our God and your God are one and to Him we are submissive."

⁵ One argument made for Islam's failure to conquer all of Europe was the limit placed by Ottoman caliphs on converts from the conquered people of the Balkans. Muslim rule was preferable to the rule of the Christian feudal lords from which the Ottomans had liberated them, but the Ottomans needed people to tax, which is why they placed strict quotas on how many Christians could convert to Islam in a given year.

Afterword

Putting Words in God's Mouth

56:13 A throng of the ancients. 56:39 A (goodly) throng of the ancients,

In the Koran, duplicate revelations are commonplace. I cannot fathom why scholars would consider it necessary to abrogate Revelation 56:13 with what would have been an identical revelation if not for the addition of the word “goodly” within brackets. Surely, if God had meant “a goodly throng” He would have said so.

For example, in abrogated Revelation 56:14, God obviously realized that the latecomers were not “a small band” but a much larger group, and sent a revelation correcting His previous estimate.

56:14 And a small band of the latecomers. 56:40 And a throng of the latecomers.

It may be that Allah was not as much into rephrasing His revelations as were the scholars who tried to bring order to what British historian Thomas Carlyle described as “a confused jumble, crude, incondite, endless iteration...” and Edward Gibbon called “as toilsome a reading as I ever undertook; a wearisome confused jumble.”

You decide for yourself.

Then there is Muhammad himself apparently correcting God on the fly, so to speak. The situation is this: God’s spokesman is dictating a verse to his scribe (which was highly unusual in itself; see explanation at the end of this chapter) about how those who kill and die on Allah’s behalf will get “a great reward” when a blind man sitting next to him asked what he could do to get the “great reward.” Was it God or Muhammad who first realized that denying the “great reward” to someone who can’t possibly fulfill Allah’s conditions due to disability is terribly unfair, and quickly abrogated what was revealed just moments earlier?

In the fastest abrogated revealed truth known, God now only expects able-bodied men to go out and fight on his behalf, those "suffering from no injury":

4:95 Those of the believers who stay at home while suffering from no injury are not equal to those who fight for the Cause of Allah with their possessions and persons. Allah has raised those who fight with their possessions and persons one degree over those who stay at home; and to each Allah has promised the fairest good. Yet Allah has granted a great reward to those who fight and not to those who stay behind.

The example above, where a blind man asks God's spokesman what the Almighty expects of him, led to the immediate rephrasing of Revelation 4:95.

Narrated Al-Bara:

There was revealed: 'Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allah.' (4.95)

The Prophet said, "Call Zaid for me and let him bring the board, the inkpot and the scapula bone (or the scapula bone and the ink pot)."

Then he said, "Write: 'Not equal are those Believers who sit...', and at that time 'Amr bin Um Maktum, the blind man was sitting behind the Prophet. He said, "O Allah's Apostle! What is your order for me (as regards the above Verse) as I am a blind man?"

So, instead of the above Verse, the following Verse was revealed: 'Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled (by injury or are blind or lame etc.) and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah.' (4.95)

Bukhari 61.512

When Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor, asked Thabit to put together the first written Koran after the death of some of the best memorizers at the battle of Yamama, during the period known as the War of the Apostates, Thabit initially objected: "How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?"

Narrated Zaid bin Thabit Al-Ansari who was one of those who used to write the Divine Revelation:

Abu Bakr sent for me after the (heavy) casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Qurra' (reciters of the Koran) were killed). 'Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said, "'Umar has come to me and said, 'The people have suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be more casualties among the Qurra' (those who know the Qur'an by heart) at other battle-fields, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost, unless you collect it. And I am of the opinion that you should collect the Qur'an.'"

Abu Bakr added, "I said to 'Umar, 'How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?'"

'Umar said (to me), "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing."

So 'Umar kept on pressing, trying to persuade me to accept his proposal, till Allah opened my bosom for it and I had the same opinion as 'Umar.

...

The manuscript on which the Quran was collected, remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him, and then with 'Umar till Allah took him unto Him, and finally it remained with Hafsa, Umar's daughter.

Bukhari 60.201

The finished product appears to have been put together in a haphazard manner, which probably made abrogation inevitable when, a few hundred years later, scholars took a serious look at exactly what Thabit had produced. There is little scholarship evident in its production, although some editing may have been done in producing copies for distribution from Thabit's original, which the daughter of Caliph Umar kept under her bed. It was retrieved on order of Uthman who succeeded Umar as caliph.

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were Waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of

their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Quran) as Jews and the Christians did before."

So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you."

Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, 'Abdullah bin AzZubair, Said bin Al-As and 'Abdur Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies.

'Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, "In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue."

They did so, and when they had written many copies, 'Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa.

'Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt.

Said bin Thabit added, "A Verse from Surat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari. (That Verse was): 'Among the Believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allah.'" (33:23)

Bukhari 61.510

Epilogue

God acknowledged that His changing His mind was causing problems for His spokesman whose detractors thought it strange, an omnipotent all-knowing deity having to abrogate his earlier words. These open-minded individuals reached the only possible conclusion: Muhammad was making it up as he went along, and they told him so to his face, calling him a forger.

16:101 And if We replace a verse by another – and Allah knows best what He reveals – they say: “You [Muhammad] are only a forger.” Surely, most of them do not know.

The Arabs of old knew more than Allah was willing to admit, judging by the non-answer Gabriel communicated to Muhammad in response to the forgery accusation.

16:102 Say: “The Holy Spirit has brought it down from our Lord in truth, in order to reassure the believers, as a guidance and good news to those who submit.”

For the rational mind, it is inconceivable that a god, in a book Sunnis believe to be eternal and in which the Author claims infallibility, could not get everything right the first time around.

The incongruity takes even more bizarre proportions when you consider that God carved His book into a tablet⁶ which He keeps close⁷, and from which He quotes to the angel Gabriel, who would then inform Muhammad of the latest unassailable truth about the observable universe and our place in it. An incontrovertible observation that God himself would later disprove by second-guessing Himself *in that same book!*

It is absurd! Absurdities, T. H. Lawrence noted, had not troubled the Arabs with whom he came into contact.

⁶ 85:21 Yet, it is a glorious Qur'an,
85:22 In a Well-Preserved Tablet.

⁷ 43:4 And, indeed, it is in the Mother of the Book, with Us, lofty and wise.

They were a people of primary colours, or rather of black and white... They were a dogmatic people, despising doubt, our modern crown of thorns. They did not understand our metaphysical difficulties, our introspective questioning. They only knew truth and untruth, belief and unbelief, without our hesitating retinue of finer shades.

This people was black and white not merely in clarity, but in apposition. Their thoughts were at ease only in extremes... they never compromised; they pursued the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity.

T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom

The Arabs were not always comfortable with absurdities. In the Koran, you get a glimpse of the Arabs before Islam, not as unthinking pagans, as God would have us believe, but as rational to the core.

45:24 They say: "There is nothing but this our present life. We die and we live and we are only destroyed by time." However, they have no certain knowledge of this; they are only conjecturing.

Conjecturing, to use Allah's terminology, about what we know and what we don't know has been associated with the beginning of wisdom, if not wisdom itself. It took God opening the gates of Hell for the rational and insightful Arabs to give in to "utter despair."

23:76 We seized them with the punishment; but they would not submit to their Lord and they would not supplicate.

23:77 Until We opened up against them a gate of terrible punishment and, behold, they were in utter despair.

We must not give in to "utter despair" but challenge, like the Arabs of old, the irrational that threatens to engulf us all.