

The Abrogation In The Qur'an And Islamic Law By Louay Fatohi

Posted on October 16, 2018

Book Review

This is a book review of the book '*The Abrogation in the Qur'an and Islamic Law*,' which was authored by Louay Fatohi. (Fatoohi, 2012) The book was published by Routledge in 2013.

Overview

Louay Fatohi is an expert in Islamic Studies who has published several books based on Islam. This book is considered to be one of the most important books, as it has highlighted many important issues about the Abrogation in the Quran and the Sunnah by evaluating them in light of the view of the scholars. While approaching the subject of abrogation, its existence cannot be denied in the Quran due to the complexities in the interpretation of the Quranic verses, all of the events that occurred in Islamic history, and the authenticity of the Hadiths. However, Fatohi has put in all his efforts to refute the abrogation of the Quran.

In chapter one (p12-31), the author introduced the subject of abrogation in the Quran and the Sunnah by offering the history of the concept's origin in the Quran. At first, he gave the meaning of Naskh in Arabic. According to the Arabic dictionary, Fatohi offers three different interpretations in order to give a clear idea of the meaning of Naskh. Next, he introduced the gist of Naskh's theory in the Quran and the Sunnah by presenting the Quranic verses and Hadiths. Interestingly, he presents all his evidence based on the history of abrogation by scholars in a chronological manner.

In addition, Fathi has given the views of different scholars about the concept of abrogation and its three modes. While addressing the subject, Fatohi revisited the academic sources to authenticate the matter. For example, when Safi said the Sunnah could not abrogate the Quran, Fatohi revisited Safi'i's book, and he found that Safi'i had addressed the concept of the abrogation of the Quran from the lens of the Sunnah.

Aside from Safi'i, another great scholar that Fatohi has addressed in his book is Abu 'Ubaid al-Qasim. He has compared their views about abrogation by conducting an in-depth analysis. Fatohi then shifted to another significant aspect that focused on those scholars who denied the existence of abrogation. Fatohi stated in his book that a minority of scholars had denied the abrogation of the Quran. He also highlighted the scholars of Shia and referred to Imam Abu al-Qasim al-Khui, who had denied the abrogation of the Quran.

In Chapter 2 (p32-36), Fatohi referred to the existence of abrogation in the Ibrahimic religion -Judaism and Christianity- based on the Quranic verses. However, he has concluded that there is no evidence of having the abrogation as Islamic scholars have proclaimed.

In Chapter 3 (p37-54), Fatohi claimed that scholars produced the abrogation, and he said, "The Quran does not contain a single verse explicitly stating that any verse was abrogated by another! Similarly, there is no statement attributed to the Prophet that confirms that a verse was abrogated by Quranic or non-Quranic revelation." He has also asserted that exegetes of the Quran claimed abrogation. However, there is evidence that contradicts his statement.

The book shows that Fatohi was quite successful in refuting the abrogation of some of the verses, which are found in the Tafsir, such as the story of Gharaniq. He has also illustrated the evidence of scholars in order to ascertain that the story of Gharaniq is simply a myth. In addition, Fatohi has referred to four scholars who denied the abrogation and supported his argument by providing evidence.

In chapter 4 (p55-73), Fatohi investigated two verses that are linked to the abrogation of the Quran. Although he has referred to the views of many scholars, it is evident that Fatohi negated their views regarding abrogation in the Quran. However, he could not offer robust evidence for his hypotheses. Fatohi's evidence relied on the word 'Naskh,' which has diverse meanings in the Quran. Moreover, he asserted that the word 'Aya,' which means verse, has varying meanings too, such as the 'divine song,' 'verse,' 'miracle,' etc. At the end of the chapter, Fatohi alleged that the word Aya in verse 2.106 means the divine song rather than the verse. He claims that abrogation can be found in Hadith.

In chapter 5 (p73-91), Fatohi highlights an interesting issue that many scholars hold different views regarding the number of verses that have been abrogated. He presents the views of all scholars in a proper manner. In addition, Fatohi has presented a table that contains the number of verses that were abrogated and the chapters that contain the abrogation. Therefore, it shows that throughout history, there were always disagreements between scholars.

In chapter 6 (p92-113), Fatohi claimed that he would have proved the rejection of the two modes of abrogation in the Quran since his analysis is compatible with Burton's conclusion. Furthermore, he has highlighted several verses in the Quran to prove that they have not been abrogated. Fatohi's attempts are quite interesting, and further investigation is needed of those verses, which are related to The Night Prayer, Fighting Fewer Enemies, and Fasting Penance. (Qur'an 17:1, Abdel Haleem trans., 2004) He could not prove whether the forbidden intoxicants verse 5.91 is an abrogation of verse 4.43, which indicates that Muslims avoid intoxicants while they are offering prayers. He has tried to distinguish the words Sukara in verse 4.43 and intoxicants in verse 5.91 in order to prove that intoxicants do not abrogate the word Sukara. However, the word in the Arabic language does imply that it means intoxicant. Therefore, the concepts of verses are related to each other, and the scholars point out that verse 5.91 abrogates verse 4.43.

In chapter 7 (p114-121), Fatohi devoted a whole chapter to proving that the 'verse of the Sword' does

not abrogate the peaceful verses. He alleged that this verse has been written specifically for a certain time and group. However, scholars believe this verse is a generalization and not specified for a certain time period. I believe if we consider this verse to be only for a specific time, then in light of this view, it can be claimed that the verses for the time of the Prophet are not valid today. Secondly, if the verse of the sword is not valid nowadays, it means technically, there is abrogation in the Quran, and the verse of the Sword was abrogated over the years. In spite of this, the scholars provide evidence of abrogation of the 'Verse of the Swor.'. Yet, Fatohi still believes that this verse is not related to the abrogation in the Quran.

In chapter 8 (p122-128), Fatohi clarified the confusion among the majority of the people who did not recognize the difference between Mushaf and the Quran. Based on the view of Burton, he expanded on the source of confusion and stated, "Quran refers to the revelation that was read to Prophet Muhammad whereas the term Mushaf denotes the written form of that revelation."

In chapter 9 (p129-137), Fatohi believes that he could correct the concept of the clause of verse 2.106, which caused it to be forgotten, which scholars have misunderstood. His view corresponds to the view of the Sufi Shaikh Junaid al-Baghdadi, who believed that the meaning of 'forgotten' in this clause means that the Prophet forgot to apply the Quran and not the [verse Quran](#). Aside from this, Fatohi has referred to some Hadith, whose references seem to be incorrect. For example, he numbered the Hadith of Al-Bukhari as 4849, but in fact, the number is 4751. I have found two other Hadith with No. 4750 & No.4750, which are similar to his Hadith, and the references are not compatible with the number that Fatohi has mentioned. Also, I could not find the numbers of the two Hadiths of Musnad Ahmad, whose names are '15365' and '21140'.

In Chapter 10 (p138-155), Fatohi illustrated a few verses that scholars have claimed to be abrogated. He investigated those verses and asserted that they are not associated with any command or prohibition. In addition to this, he believed the Hadith, which implies that those verses are fabricated. In addition, he has claimed that those verses were lost and have nothing to do with abrogation.

In chapter 11 (p156-199), Fatohi dedicated a long chapter to resolving the matter of the stoning of adulterers in Islam by examining all Hadith, which relate to 'The Verse of Stoning.' Fatohi challenged scholars who believed in stoning adulterers by providing an analysis of two aspects. The first aspect focuses on the terminology that is used in the verse of stoning. The second aspect focuses on finding different versions of the wording of this verse in different Hadith with different terminologies. For example, the words Shikh and Shikha have different meanings according to scholars. In addition, the terms Shikh and Shikha in the Quran mean old man and old woman. In the verse stoning, some scholars stated that these words meant a married Muslim woman and a married Muslim man, and other scholars interpreted the words to mean non-virgin.

Chapter 12 (p200-206), this chapter is devoted to the abrogation of the verse 'Ten-Suckling' by the 'Five-Suckling' verse. Fatohi examined all Hadith regarding the mentioned verses, and he concluded that the verses are no more than a fabrication, illogical, and the work of imagination. However, the

fact is, if it is illogical to the modern day, then it does not imply that the event did not happen historically.

In chapters 13-14 (p207-237): Fatohi has continued with the subject of abrogation of the Sunnah and the Quran as he has mentioned in previous chapters. He goes through all the details from previous chapters and highlights them in chapter 13, while in chapter 14, he sheds light on **Islamic law** in general.

Chapter 15 (p238-246), offers a conclusion of Fatohi's view regarding the abrogation in the Quran. He stated that the misunderstanding related to the meaning of Nasikh by scholars led to the creation of the abrogation law that defended the Quran against the critics, as they believed there was a contradiction in the verses of the Quran. In addition, Fatohi calculated all missing verses, which are 729 verses. The number of forgotten verses amounts to 10.5% of the Quran. He also believes that in the earlier 2nd century, a number of Hadith were introduced regarding the abrogation that led to the creation of verses, such as the verse Adultery that focused on stoning the adulterers.

He believes that scholars link only the word Nasikh in verse 2.106 and the replacement word in verse 16.101 to the abrogation of the Quran, while both terms do not indicate any abrogation. In the end, Fatohi concluded his views that abrogation has no link to the Quran, that it is baseless, and that scholars developed it in order to decrease the perceived contradiction between Quranic verses.

Conclusion

Fatohi's book is academically credible, as the author has carried out an in-depth analysis based on the topic of abrogation. Even though the topic at hand is complex in nature, the author has done an excellent job at reforming some aspects, which were highlighted by many critics. In addition, he tried to correct many mistakes in the interpretation of verses by different scholars. The author presented the sources well; however, there were some mistakes, such as the wrong references to Hadith. While analyzing his work, it is evident that Fatohi is an Islamic scholar, and therefore, the author does not intend to be blasphemous, as it can be seen from his work that he has validated his argument by taking references from the Quran. Despite some disagreements with his views and his analysis, the book is enriched with information for those readers who want to know about the abrogation in the Quran and Sunnah.

References

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