NOTE FOR THE STUDY OF A 'SHĪ'Ī QUR'ĀN'

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In 1936, Arthur Jeffery published his collection of the qirāʿāt of Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 122/740), son of the quietist Fourth Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. ca. 94/712) and eponym of the Zaydi sect of Shīʿī Islam. His interest in singling out these particular readings had been stimulated by three facts: (1) a Codex of 'Alī was said to be in the hands of the Alid family when Ibn al-Nadīm wrote the Fihrist; (2) the existence of traditions in which 'Alī is made to express his unqualified approval of the text published by 'Uthmān; (3) the 'Uthmānic text was only one of many rival texts. His final opinion on the material that he had collected was that it really bore little resemblance to what could be thought of as a distinctly Shīʿī text: 'a text associated with 'Alī and the ahl al-bayt which also had a claim to consideration'. Nonetheless, he remained convinced that 'one of the as yet untouched problems of the textual criticism of the Qurʾān is that of the Shiʿa Qirāʿāt'1.

At the time Jeffery wrote this article, the extant literature on the subject was confined to three articles on the so-called 'Shīʿī suras'2 published in the Dabistān3, which had been proven forgeries, the study of Goldziher4, and a few remarks in the

current edition of *Geschichte des Qorans*\(^5\). Jeffery discounted the material in *al-Kāfī*\(^6\) as 'more than suspect'.\(^7\) Unfortunately, he did not give explicit reasons for this assessment and one assumes that it merely represents the once fashionable and widespread practice of discounting, ipso facto, any dissident information coming from a recognizably Shi‘ī source as so much sectarian propaganda.\(^8\)

The judgment on such sources has, in recent years, become somewhat optimistic. The question of a distinctly Shi‘ī attitude to the Qur’ān was treated at length in a series of articles which appeared in 1961-1962.\(^9\) In 1968, an important study of Shi‘ism appeared in which the specific problem of the Imāmi attitude towards the 'Uthmānic Codex was raised.\(^10\) In 1969, Eliash revised Goldziher’s conclusions.\(^11\) The latter had thought that the Shi‘a claim that the 'Uthmānic Qur’ān is not the true Qur’ān as revealed to Muḥammad; that many verses which supported the claims of the Shi‘a had been omitted and the order of the suras altered. 'Alī possessed the complete Qur’ān, three times longer than the present Text. This longer version disappeared with the Twelfth Imām. Until his return, all believers are required to follow the 'Uthmānic text.\(^12\) From his study of the Shi‘ī sources Goldziher had not taken into account, Eliash argued for the following adjustment of the above:

The Qur’ān in the form accepted by the Sunnīs as the Holy Qur’ān revealed to the Prophet, is the same book accepted by the Imāmi-Shī‘a as the Holy Qur’ān. The Imāmi Shī‘a maintain

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\(^{6}\) Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi*, one of the four books accepted as having canonical status by the Shī‘a. It occupies the same place of authority for the Shī‘a as the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* of Bukhārī and Muslim do for Sunnī Muslims.

\(^{7}\) Jeffery, 250.

\(^{8}\) On Shi‘ī *tafsīr* specifically: 'Nöldeke charakterisiert sie nicht mit Unrecht als elendes Gewebe von Lügen und Dummheit'. Goldziher, 309 citing *GdesQ*, xxix.


\(^{10}\) Abdolvad Falaturi, 'Die Zwölfer-Schia aus der Sicht eines Schiiten: Probleme ihrer Untersuchung', in *Festschrift Werner Caskel* (Leiden 1968), 62-95 (see esp. 91-95).


\(^{12}\) As summarized in Eliash, 15-16.
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that only the order of some of the suras as well as some of the odd verses, and not their content (except as far as differences which arose from various readings, qirā'āt, are concerned) was corrupted in the 'Uthmanic Codex. 'Ali and the eleven Imāms are the only ones after Muḥammad who know the right order. 'Ali's copy of the Qur'ān contained the suras and verses in their revealed order. It did not contain any additional revealed text and included 'Ali's explanatory notes. 'Ali's notes are revered by the Shi'a to the same extent as the revealed text.13

Finally, Eliash stated: 'It is beyond any doubt that at least as early as Kullānī (sic; d. 329/940), the 'Uthmanic Codex had been accepted by the Imāmī jurists'14.

In 1972, Kohlberg summarized much of the previous scholarship on the question and, in the process, drew our attention to some of the more interesting aspects of the problem.15 Chief among these was the persistent suspicion in the writings of Shi'i writers about the integrity of the so-called 'Uthmanic Qur'ān. He concluded his study as follows:

[The attitude that the Qur'ān we have is corrupt]16 seems to be

13 Ibid., 24.
14 Ibid., 24. Italics added.
16 The most recent representative of this view mentioned by Kohlberg is Husayn b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Nūrī al-Tabarsī (d. 1320/1902), Faṣl al-khitāb fi iḥbāt tahrīf kitāb rabb al-‘arbāb, n.p., 1298.

al-Nūrī al-Tabarsī, who is better known for his Mustadrak al-wasā'ī, held that Ibn Babawayh (d. 381/991), Murtadā (d. 436/1044) and Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), who figure among Eliash's jurists, are in the minority in their opposition to tahrīf. He rejected al-Mufid's equation of Qur'ān with tafsīr on grounds of inconsistency and argued, with Murtadā al-Ansārī (d. 1281/1864, the sole marja' al-taqlīd of the Shi'i world from 1266/1850) 'that the corruption of the Qur'ān does not imply that one should not follow its apparent (zāhir) meaning ... especially in the sections dealing with practical religious duties ... since there is no general knowledge that the apparent meaning was affected by the corruption'. Further:

In three introductory sections he attempts to prove that since the Gospels were corrupted, it is not impossible that the same fate should have befallen the Qur'ān. He also maintains that 'Ali had a copy of the Qur'ān which included additional material that was neither a 'divine tradition' (ḥadīth qudsī) nor a commentary (tafsīr) ... and hence must be regarded as having formed part of the original revelation. ... [He] defines tahrīf as 'abandoning and omitting parts of the revelation' and says that most Imāmīs accepted the theory of tahrīf thus defined. Ibn Babawayh (al-Ṣadūq) was 'the first who introduced (abdalibha)
the exception rather than the rule among modern Shi’ites, most of whom take a diametrically opposed view which totally rejects any doubts concerning the integrity of the Qur’ān. Their attitude is ... that only some uncritical traditionists (bashwiyya) and the ascetics (mussāk) were led astray by the leaders of extreme sects in the beginning of Islam ... The internal discussion and dissension within the Imāmīte community on the attitude to the ‘Uthmanic Codex is a product of the intricate political and religious history of Shi’ism.

By way of a footnote, the author hazarded the following speculation:

It may not be entirely wrong to suppose that this insistence on the integrity of the Qur’ān and the regulation of all traditions to the contrary reflect the wish to find more common ground with Sunnite Islam. The fact is that some modern Sunnite scholars still accuse the Imamites of believing in the ‘omission theory’.

Kohlberg’s final word was: ‘Various shades of opinion, however, persist to our own day, and we can agree with Prof. G. E. von Grunebaum that “the Shi’ites themselves have never been able to agree on the alleged distortion of the sacred text by their adversaries”.

This conclusion may be found reproduced in the recent general work on Shi’ism by Momen. In 1985, Mahmoud this opinion (i.e. the denial of tahrif) into the Shi’a’, and the implied accusation is that he was guilty of heretical innovation (Kohlberg, 218).

17 Kohlberg, 218-219, who refers to one Hibat al-Din al-Shahrastānī and the better known al-Khū’ī (on whom see below) as representative of ‘most modern Shi’ites’.

18 Kohlberg, 223 which see for the books by the Sunnite authors referred to. In this connection, it is worth noting that the modern edition of Tābarṣī’s tafsīr (see below), which argues against the falsification theory, was published by the Dār al-taqrīb al-madhāhib al-islāmiyya (‘Centre for the reconciliation of the various sects of Islam’) and contains an introduction by Mahmūd Shaltūt, erstwhile ecumenist Shaykh of al-Azhar.


20 Moojan Momen, An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985), 172-173:

There is ... considerable evidence that the early Shi’a did not accept the standard text of the Qur’ān. Even as late as the time of Shakyh al-Mufid [d. 413/1022], there was considerable discussion among the Shi’a as to what had been omitted from the Qur’ān by the enemies of ‘Ali, although by that time there was a consensus that nothing had been added. In other words, it was felt that although the standard text of the Qur’ān represented God’s word with no
Ayoub raised the question of the authenticity of the present Qur'ān text according to the Shi'a. Here it was again emphasized that the belief in the corruption of the present Text is 'extremist', and that the Buwayhid Shi'i scholars had established that this belief was erroneous. Just as recently, scholarship has more sharply defined a process of accommodation of belief to changing times by these tenth and eleventh century Shi'i authors and that part of this accommodation involved denouncing previously held views on the corruption of the Qur'ān. In what follows, I would like to ask about the contemporary Shi'i attitude to the venerable topic of the corruption of the Qur'ān text. To do this, I would like to begin in the 4th/10th century with the work of Kulaynī.

_al-Kāfī_

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī al-Rāzi al-Salsalī (d. 328/939 or 329/940) was the author of what is regarded as one of the four canonical _ḥadīth_ books of the Shi'a, _al-Kāfī fi 'ilm al-dīn_. This huge compendium of more than 16,000 human additions, part of the text extolling 'Ali and pointing to his Imamate had been excised by his enemies. Although most Shi'is eventually took the view that nothing had been omitted or added to the Qur'ān, traces of the earlier view are enshrined among some of the _ḥadīth_ and are even reproduced in some of the later books.


Kohlberg also draws attention to 'al-Muṣfīd's careful formulations' which are in fact full of conditionals quite out of character with the rest of the book and supports the view that Ṭūṣī was forced to express such views in order to conceal his true beliefs by saying that Ṭūṣī 'lived to witness the downfall of the Buwayhids and the resurgence of anti-Shi'ite sentiments ... [and] was personally affected by these events: his house was burnt down and he had to flee Baghdad and spend the remaining twelve years of his life in exile in Najaf'. Kohlberg, 216 and 223 n. 92.

23 In what follows, reference is restricted to the first two volumes of this work: _al-Urūl min al-kāfī_. 2 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiya, 1374/1954). The other three works are _Man lā yahdarubu al-faqīḥ_ by Ibn Babawayh (d. 381/991); _Tahdhib al-ahkām_ and _al-Iṣtibsār_ by Ṭūṣī (d. 460/1070).
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reports (akhbār) traced to the Prophet or one of the members of the Holy Family revered by the Twelver Shi'a, was compiled over a period of twenty years. With special reference to the material in this work which upholds, either explicitly or implicitly, the deliberate alteration of the Qur'ān text by forces hostile to the claims of the Shi'a, opinion varies widely. Some authors have said that despite Kāfī's enormous prestige, much of his material falls into the category of khabar al-ahād, and therefore such statements are not absolutely compelling.

Other views are that every hadith in Kāfī is sound and trustworthy by virtue of its having been compiled during the period of the Lesser Occultation (A.D. 873-939) and must have therefore had the approval of the Hidden Imam. Indeed some have referred to Kulaynī as the first deputy (nā'ib) of the Hidden Imam. At the very minimum, therefore, the material cited below can be read with the secure knowledge that it was received by some, if not many, as trustworthy and veracious, to borrow a Sunnī term — ṣahīh.

While all of the above-mentioned studies have referred to this work in the course of their analyses of the problem of the Shi'i attitude towards the 'Uthmānic Codex, none has called sufficient attention to a specific type of khabar whose explicit and emphatic expression is thought to be worthy of notice. Several such reports may be found in a chapter of Kāfī entitled in the edition at hand as: ‘Various statements culled from the

24 So Murtada (d. 436/1046) who 'went further than many mujtahidūn by claiming that a tradition which is translated on the authority of a single person ... cannot be cited as legal proof' (Kohlberg, 222 n. 70), and Majlisī (d. 1110/1700), ibid., 218. On the polemic revolving around the use of akhbār al-ahād, see Newman, 1:42-49. See also 'Khabar al-wāhid', EP and now Norman Calder, 'Doubt and Prerogative: the emergence of an Imāmī Shi'i theory of jurisprudence', Studia Islamica 70 (1989), 57-78. For other aspects of hadith criticism in connection with this subject, see Kohlberg, 219.

25 Newman, 47-49. Here Majlisī is quoted as saying that all akhbār in Kāfī and Faqīh are ṣabīh al-Qazwīnī is cited (from Khwānsārī) as saying that all akhbār in Kāfī are correct because they had been accepted by the Hidden Imām imasmuch as Kulaynī had compiled the collection during the lesser occultation and that 'rawī' in Kāfī refers to the Imām himself, while 'ālim refers to one of his deputies.

26 Or, as Kohlberg, 219: 'The traditions, even if mostly forged, which implied that deliberate omissions had occurred grew out of the deep frustration and reflect widely held views among the Imamites'.
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revelation (tanzīl) concerning guardianship (walāya)\textsuperscript{27}. Such a chapter heading may in fact be the reason this material seems not to have been noticed previously inasmuch as there is no explicit reference to the 'hot' words taghyīr, tabrīf, muharraf, to name a few, usually associated with this subject. That the central concern of this chapter is stated to be walāya indicates just how important this idea is for the study of otherwise unlikely aspects of Shi'ism. In any case, containing no less than 92 separate reports, this is one of the more extensive chapters in the Kitab al-hujja, and all of its akhbār concur, in some way or another, that the present 'Uthmānic text is decidedly not the text revealed to the Prophet. For example, the next to last report in it has as its subject several verses, all of which are discussed in a conversation between the Eighth Imām and his disciple Muḥammad b. al-Fudayl. The exchange follows the formula of the Imām being asked about a verse, to which he replies by pointing out its original form (i.e., the standard text plus some reference to 'Alī or the abl al-bayt). His questioner then seeks confirmation by asking: 'Is this really Revelation (ḥādhā tanṣīl)\textsuperscript{28}' to which the response is always a brief and authoritative 'na'm\textsuperscript{28}'. Numerous other verses are discussed in this chapter which employ similarly explicit language. The type of report to which I would like to call attention is represented by the following three examples, presented here in Qur'ānic order\textsuperscript{29}.

\textit{Example A ad 2:23}\textsuperscript{30}

[From 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm\textsuperscript{31} from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Barqī from his father] from Muḥammad b. Sinān from 'Ammār b. Marwān from Munakḥkhal from Jābir:

Abū Ja'far [i.e., the Fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, b. 57/676, d. 117/735] said:

\textsuperscript{27} Bāb šībi nukat wa nutaf min al-tamjīl fī 'l-walāya: Kāfī, 1:412-432. See \textit{ibid.}, 433 for the following chapter with the parallel title: Bāb šībi nukat wa nutaf min al-riwāya fī 'l-walāya.

\textsuperscript{28} Kāfī, 1:432-5, # 91. See the varying definitions of tamjīl in the literature.

\textsuperscript{29} Kāfī, 1:417 cites examples A and C (nos. 26 and 24) in reversed order.

\textsuperscript{30} 'Egyptian' verse numbers are used here; the editor of Kāfī refers to this verse as 2:21, the following as 2:36, and the last as 2:84.

\textsuperscript{31} al-Qumml (d. 307/919-920), the author of one of the earliest Shi'i works of \textit{tafsīr}, a teacher and frequent source of Kulaynl.
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Gabriel, upon him peace, came down with this verse to Muhammad thus: AND IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE REVEALED UNTO OUR SERVANT (CONCERNING 'ALI) THEN PRODUCE A SURA THE LIKE THEREOF.

Example B ad 2:19

From Ahmad b. Mihrān from 'Abd al-'Azīm b. 'Abd Allāh from Muḥammad b. al-Fudayl from Abū Hamza from Abū Ja'far:

Gabriel, upon him peace, came down with this verse to Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, thus: BUT THOSE WHO DID WRONG AGAINST (THE FAMILY OF MUḤAMMAD) CHANGED THE WORD WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN THEM FOR ANOTHER SAYING, AND WE SENT DOWN UPON THOSE WHO WRONGED (AGAINST THE RIGHTFUL CLAIM OF THE FAMILY OF MUḤAMMAD) WRATH OUT OF HEAVEN FOR THEIR EVIL-DOING.

Example C ad 2:90

From 'Aḥī b. Ibrahim from Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Barqī from his father, from Muḥammad b. Sinān from 'Ammār b. Marwān from Munakkhkal from Jābir from Abū Ja'far, upon him peace, he said:

Gabriel, upon him peace, came down with this verse to Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, thus: EVIL IS THAT FOR WHICH THEY SELL THEIR SOULS: THAT THEY SHOULD DISBELIEVE IN THAT WHICH GOD HATH REVEALED (CONCERNING 'ALI) GRUDGINGLY ...

While these and various other examples of the Shi'i 'qirā'āl'...

33 Kāfī, 1:423, # 58. Cf. ibid., # 57.
34 Kāfī, 1:417: Nazala Jibril 'alayhi al-salām bi-hādbhi 'l-āya 'alā Muḥam-mad ᵣ ᵣ Allāh 'alayhi wa-ālīhī hākadhā.

35 The parentheses are in the printed text to which the editor has commented as follows: ja'ni bi-hādbh 'l-mā'na nazīlāt, arguing that this was merely the esoteric meaning of this verse, but for the other two examples he adds only the sura and verse numbers. It is not clear whether we are supposed to understand the other statements as also representing only the esoteric understanding of the verses. This recalls the debate about whether the mushaf of 'Alī contained verses which were actually different from the 'Uthmānic Codex, or was valued by the Shi'i community only for the First Imām's exegesis which it contained in the margins.

36 Classification of such verses as qirā'āt (rather than, say, muḥarrafa'āt) may have served to defuse the whole controversy within a milieu in which variant readings were 'tolerated'.

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have been published in which the alleged omissions (indicated here by parentheses) have been noticed\textsuperscript{37}, as far I am able to determine, the particular type of khabar, complete with isnād and matn, has not\textsuperscript{38}. Surely by having the angel of revelation involved in the report we are meant to be in the presence of a unit of truth of the highest possible order, comparable to a hadith qudsi\textsuperscript{39}, or, as the title of this chapter plainly states, the Quranic revelation itself. The comments of Kulaynī's modern editor notwithstanding, these traditions cannot be taken as suggesting that the Shi‘ī material merely 'inheres' as the esoteric meaning of the verses in question. Nor, as the following will demonstrate, have these traditions been abandoned as irresponsibly promiscuous insults to the integrity of the Holy Text.

Examples A and C care related on the authority of the famous Shi‘ī exegete 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 307/919-920)\textsuperscript{40} who was in fact one of Kulaynī's teachers. Qummī has apparently related this report from the Imām on the ultimate authority of Jābir b. al-Ju‘fī (d. 128/745). There is of course no agreement in the sources on the reliability of Jābir\textsuperscript{41}. It may be of some interest to note that in the published editions of Qummī's Tafsīr, the commentary on 2:23 is much less detailed than that which Kāfī repeats on his authority. There is no mention of Gabriel or 'Alī; Qummī is concerned with this verse only to gloss rayb as shakk and to identify the shubdā\textsuperscript{42}.

As for 2:59, Qummī does repeat the verse as given in the above example, but does not mention a 'naẓala Jibrīl hākadā khabar'\textsuperscript{43}.

\textsuperscript{37} Kohlberg, 211-212 summarizes the introduction to the Tafsīr al-Qummi in which these and other alterations of the text are mentioned, but without the introductory isnād or mention of Gabriel.

\textsuperscript{38} Kohlberg, 'An Unusual Shi‘ī isnād', Israel Oriental Studies 5 (1975), 142-149, 144-145 mentions a similar report in which Gabriel figures. But this report has nothing to do with the explicit text of the Qur'ān.

\textsuperscript{39} As already mentioned, al-Nūrī al-Tabarsi (d. 1320/1902) is quite explicit about such a comparison claiming that 'Alī had a Qur'ān which contained material that was neither ahādith qudsī nor tafsīr, but rather revelation.

\textsuperscript{40} Not 'the second half of the 4th/tenth century' as in Kohlberg, 211.

\textsuperscript{41} On Jābir especially see Kohlberg, ‘Unusual’, 144, n. 13.

\textsuperscript{42} Tafsīr al-Qummi (Tabriz 1315/1897), 18-19.

\textsuperscript{43} E.g.: wa gâlā allâh: jâbaddâla 'l-ladhiba qalamū 'alā Muhammad ḫaggabam qawlūn ... Qummi, 25. The Tafsīr of the Eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-'Askârl (b. 232/846, d. 260/873), printed on the margin of this edition of Qummi, makes no mention of these reports in the appropriate places, or, as far as has been determined, elsewhere in the commentary.
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It has not been possible to find his commentary on 2:90 in the expected place in available editions of the Tafsîr.

This interesting type of tradition does not figure in either of the two ‘authoritative’ works of Shi‘î Qur’ân commentary, those of Tûsî (d. 460/1067) and Tabarsi (d. 548/1153). We know, in any case, that the attitude of these authorities on the subject of the acceptability of the ‘Uthmanic Codex was quite clear: it was to be accepted. However, in what has been described as the third major stage in Shi‘î history, we see that these traditions had remained viable, as a brief look at the following three separate works of exegesis from the Safavî period will confirm.

al-Şâîfî

This work was completed in 1664 by the famous student and son-in-law of the great Safavî philosopher Mulla Šadrâ, Mulla Muḥammad b. Murtadâ Muḥsin-i Fayd, known as Fayd al-Kâshî (d. 1091/1680). In the context of the Uṣûlî/Akhbârî debate as it was being articulated during his lifetime, Muḥsin Fayd was accounted among the Akhbarîyyîn. He was also one of the teachers of the famous Muḥammad Bâqir Majlisî (d. 1110/1699), author of the Bihâr al-anwâr, and the author of what is now regarded as one of the three canonical hadîth collections of later Ithnâ-‘asharî Shi‘îsm, al-Wâfi. The full title of his commentary is al-Şâîfî fi tafsîr kalâm Allâh al-wâfi. In


45 Eliash, 21; we would not agree that Kulaynî be included in the statement here: ‘it becomes clear that Kulaynî (sic) and other Imâmî jurists ... do not claim deliberate corruption of the contents of the ’Uthmanic Codex’; see also Kohlberg, 217.

46 Ayoub, 185.

47 Goldziher, 278.

48 We are advised, however, to avoid the common equivalence Akhbarî/literalist. See Henry Corbin, En Islam iranien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971-1972), 4:230.

49 The other two are Wâsâ’il al-shî‘a by Al-Hurr al-‘Amîlî (d. 1104/1692) and Bihâr al-anwâr by Muḥammad Bâqir Majlisî (d. 1110/1699).
addition to gathering the pertinent sayings of the Prophet and Imāms around a given verse, Ṣafi also borrows from the very popular Sunnī commentary by Baydawī (d. 685/1286), Anwār al-tanẓīl.

There seems to be no consensus on how to characterise Muḥsin Fayd’s position in the tahrif debate. In this regard, some refer to him (together with Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī) as an extremist 50, while others call him a moderate 51. And Ṣafi is apparently sufficiently ambiguous on the question to enable another author to cite it in support of his own argument that the Shi‘a do not hold that the present Qur‘ān is somehow defective 52. Ṣafi is introduced with twelve ‘prologues’ (muqaddamāt), which contain the basic presuppositions informing the work 53. The most extensive of these prologues is entitled: ‘Concerning those traditions about the collection of the Qur‘ān, its corruption, its augmentation and its diminution, and the explanation of this’ 54.

Ayoub points out that Muḥsin Fayd claimed that the first transmitters of the exegetic tradition were limited in what they related by taqiyya (‘pious dissimulation’), with the result that much of the true tradition might have been lost. ‘This, of course, left great scope for new ideas in tafsīr in the name of recovering the tradition’ 55. One of the relevant passages in Ṣafi is:

The Qur‘ān which is in our hands is not the entire Qur‘ān sent down by God to Muḥammad. Rather, there is in it that which contradicts that which God had sent down. There is, moreover, in it that which was altered and changed. There were many things deleted from it, such as the name of ‘Ali in many places and the phrase Al Muhammad (the family of Muhammad), as well as the names of the ‘hypocrites’, where they occur ... The Qur‘ān, furthermore, was not arranged in accordance with the pleasure of God and his apostle 56.

Later, however, Muḥsin Fayd, appears to soften this position somewhat. This is explained by Ayoub as follows: Muḥsin

50 Ayoub, 182.
51 Newman, 1:42.
53 Ṣafi, 1:15-78.
54 Ṣafi, 1:40-55.
55 Ayoub, 186.
56 Translated in Ayoub, 190; cf. Ṣafi, 1:49.
Fayd was bound by tradition, as represented by such venerated Shi'i scholars as Tusi and Tabarsi who had insisted on the authenticity of the text. Ayoub explains, paraphrasing Safi:

The Qur'an as it now stands is the word of God which, if interpreted correctly, contains all that the community now needs in the way of legal sanctions and prohibitions, as well as the necessary proofs of the Imams' high office as its guardians and sole authorities on its exegesis. The Qur'an which is in our hands must, [Muhsin Fayd] argues, be followed during the occultation (ghayba) of the Twelfth Imam. It must be assumed that the true Qur'an is with him57.

In light of these rather strong and undisguised statements, it is somewhat surprising that in his commentary for 2:23, Muhsin Fayd does quote Kafi, but not the khabar which is of interest here. Rather, it is a different tradition completely from the Seventh Imam, Musa al-Kazim (d. 183/799). The purpose is merely to identify those to whom the verse was addressed. No mention is made of an alternate reading, whether through tabrīf, tabdil, or any other process, let alone the one quoted above in which Gabriel is said to have brought the verse down as explicitly mentioning 'Ali58. In his commentary at 2:59, however, we find Muhsin Fayd quoting the 'nazala Jibril khabar from al-Baqir but not from Kafi. He quotes directly from another great early master of Shi'i commentary, Abu al-Nasr Muhammad b. Mas'ud b. 'Ayyash al-Sulami al-Samarqandi, known most widely as 'Ayyash (d. ca. late ninth/early tenth cent. A.D.)59. Although the verse is given a typically Shi'i interpretation, in his commentary for 2:90 we find neither mention of tabrīf nor of the khabar quoted above from Kafi60.

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57 Ayoub, 190; cf. Safi, 1:55.
58 Safi, 1:102.
59 Died late 3rd/9th early 10th century; he was a contemporary of al-Qummi who converted from Sunnism to Shi'ism. His commentary, much of which is collected from such sources as Safi, the two Safavi commentaries referred to below, and Bihar al-anwar, is published as: Tafsir 'Ayyashi, 2 vols. in 1. Edited by Hashim al-Rausuli al-Mahallati (Qum 1380/1960).
60 Safi, 1:162-163.
NOTE FOR THE STUDY OF A SHI'I QU'RĀN

Nūr al-thaqalayn

This work⁶¹ was written by 'Abd 'Alī al-Ḥuwayzī (d. 1112/1700), Kitāb tafsīr nūr al-thaqalayn, (Nūr). Not much is known about his life, but as indicated by his nisba, he was from the small town of Ḥuwayza (the old headquarters of the Musha'sha' movement), near Aḥwāz in southwest Iran. His work contains none of the introductory material found in Ṣāfī; rather, it begins after a few words of doxology in veneration of the Prophet and the Imāms, with a discussion of the Fāṭiḥa by way of pertinent ḥadīths. The only known edition was edited by Ḥāshim al-Raslūlī al-Mahallātī (the editor of 'Ayyāṣhi's tafsīr) and printed in Qum during the years 1963-1965. This edition is based on three manuscripts of varying completeness⁶². A preface by the highly regarded Shi'i scholar Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭābā'ī refers to this commentary as ‘one of the best ... if not the best’ work of its kind⁶³. The author of Dharī'a complains about the tafsīr's lack of organization⁶⁴, and discusses briefly the history of its composition, stating that it was completed in 1656⁶⁵. This indicates that the work was probably extant while Muḥsin Fayd was writing Ṣāfī, but it appears to have been unknown to him.

In the edition at hand, Quranic material is set off from the text in bold type. Qur'ān 2:23 is mentioned solely in the above-mentioned khabar, introducing it only with 'an Jābir qala: ...⁶⁶. The editor has made no attempt to distinguish the 'Shī'ī content of the report through the use of parentheses, or any other device. Indeed, the fi 'Alī appears to be a natural part of the verse. This procedure is followed for the remaining two

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⁶² Nūr, 1:iv and 5:ii.
⁶³ Nūr, 1:iii. 'Allāma Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn al-Ṭabāṭābā'ī also wrote a brief introduction to Tafsīr 'Ayyāṣhi and is the author of al-Mīḍānī tafsīr al-Qur'ān, the first several volumes of which have appeared in English: al-Mīḍān: An Exegesis of the Qur'ān. Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1404/1984).
⁶⁵ Ibid.
⁶⁶ Nūr, 1:36, # 55.
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verses, both of which are introduced as coming from Kāfī. The difference between the way our edition of Kāfī and our edition of Nūr use this material is of course striking. Neither Huwayzī, the author, nor Mahallātī, the editor, has made any effort to explain away what might appear a troublesome khābār.

al-Burhān

The title of this work is Kitāb al-burhān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān (Burhān). The author, al-Bahrānī (d. 1107/1695 or 1109/1697, his date of birth is unknown), was born in a village in one of the districts of Bahrayn. He is said to have been a compiler of hadīths, comparable in his efforts only to Majlisī himself. He is also said to have written seventy-five works, mostly dealing with religious sciences. The Tafsīr was written sometime during the reign of the Safavid Shāh Sulaymān or al-Šāfī (r. 1077/1666-1106/1694). The commentary contains introductory material similar to Sūfī and, in addition to other khābār which are not found in Sūfī, carries many of the same traditions which are adduced at corresponding verses in the more famous tafsīr.

For each verse or group of verses, the author lists a series of pertinent akhbār from the Prophet or the Imāms. It begins with a number of reports against tafsīr bi'l-rā'y, and other reports which assert that only the Prophet and the Imāms were able to interpret the Qur'ān. 'God taught the Prophet the literal text (tanzīl) and He taught 'Alī its interpretation (ta'wīl)'. The author of this work laments that not withstan-

67 For 2:59 see Nūr, 1:70, # 214; for 2:90, Nūr, 1:86, # 286. It should be mentioned that while other akhbār are adduced for 2:59 and 2:90, 2:23 is carried in the single report, although other statements are brought forth to identify some of the features in it which are also common to other verses.


69 For a list of forty-three of these works see Burhān, 4:555–559. All that is known of his life is found in ibid., 4:555 where the editor has summarized the information on his biography from the Lu'lu'at al-Bahrayn by Yusuf al-Bahrānī, apparently the only work which deals with this subject. It mentions nothing of his early life or education. Information about his writings is taken from Dhārī'a, 1:111. On this work specifically see ibid., 3:93, # 294, where it is compared with a number of other works, some in manuscript, and others, like the Tafsīr nūr al-thaqalayn.

70 Burhān, 1:2-40.

71 Ibid., 1:3.
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ding such a statement, he finds the people of his time persistent in interpreting the Qur'ân without referring to the Imâms, and cites the works of Zamakhsharî (d. 539/1144) and Baydawî (d. 685/1286) as examples. In any case, Bahrânî (or his editor) makes no attempt at setting off the Shi'î material from verse 2:23, which is cited, complete with isnâd, as it is found in Kâfî. Bahrânî treats 2:59 as part of a Quranic exegetical unit which includes all of the verses 2:58-62. In explanation of this unit, eleven akhbâr of varying lengths are quoted, the second of which is our example B above. Here, as was the case with Nur, the Shi'î material is reproduced as being an integral part of the text. In addition, the fifth khabar carries a similar reading, but through a different isnâd: 'an Zayd al-Shihâm 'an Safwân, 'an Abî Ja'far. To explain the final verse, 2:90, Bahrânî has brought forth three akhbâr, the first is the same one quoted by Muhsin Fayd, the second is the one mentioned in Kâfî and the third presents an interesting variant in the way opposition to the 'Uthmânî Codex may be expressed:

‘Ayyâshî said Abû Ja'far, upon him peace, said this verse came down upon the Messenger of God, may God bless him and give him peace, thus: ‘Evil is that for which they sold their souls that they disbelieve in that which God hath revealed concerning 'Ali grudgingly’ and God said concerning ‘Ali, upon him peace. ‘God sends down of His bounty upon whom He will of His servants’ that is ‘Ali (ya'ni 'Ali) God said ‘They have incurred anger upon anger’ that is the Banî Umayya ‘For disbelievers a shameful doom’.

Conclusion

Why Muhsin Fayd would have been so selective in his use of such material is open to speculation. That it was selectivity, and not mere ignorance of the material in Kâfî, is confirmed by reference to the two other late-Safavî works of Tafsîr, both of which employ these akhbâr. If an edition of Kâfî containing

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 1:70, # 3.
74 Ibid., 1:104, # 2.
75 Ibid., 1:104, # 5; this report does not employ the adverb hâkadâhâ.
76 Strangely misnumbered as '33'.
77 Burhân, 1:139, # 3.
such material was known to other authors who were, for all practical purposes, contemporaries of Muḥṣin Fayḍ, it would most certainly have been known to Muḥṣin Fayḍ. Whatever his reasons, it is clear that these commentators felt that such traditions had sufficient merit that they took the trouble to reproduce them in their works. It may also be conjectured that such material has continued to be looked upon as in some way edifying, inasmuch as all three commentaries have been published in recent editions, in which there seems to be no attempt to ‘explain away’ the explicit language of these ḥkbār. It is also worth mentioning that such ‘explosive’ material continued to be reproduced during the three centuries which intervened between the original composition of these commentaries and their recent publication over the last thirty years. Not only was an edition of Ṣāfī published in lithograph in Tabrīz in 1869, but these traditions are found quoted in a manuscript tafsīr which was probably written shortly before 1844, by ‘Ali Muḥammad Shīrāzī, known as the Bāb. The likelihood that such ḥkbār were known and regarded with a measure of respect by a large segment of the Shi‘ī population at this time is strengthened by the fact that the Bāb did not come from a typical scholastic background, but was a member of the merchant class.

The question that arises, therefore, is one partly answered by Kohlberg and others, namely: What is the Imāmi Shi‘ī attitude to the tahrīf al-Qur‘ān problem? The answer thus far has been that the majority of Shi‘ītes hold that the Qur‘ān we now have is the integral Qur‘ān as communicated to the Prophet Muḥammad. But it seems that Kohlberg based this conclusion mainly on the statement of one Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī, and the arguments of Ayatullāh al-Khu‘l. It is interesting to note that


Kohlberg, 218-219 and references.
Khū'ī, who is one of the, if not the, leading marja' of the Imāmī Shi'a and is currently under house arrest in Iran\(^{82}\), quotes Muḥsin Fayd to support his position, but the work he cites is \emph{al-Wāfi}, not the \emph{tafsir}\(^{83}\).

The question remains as to how representative such statements really are. The continued reproduction of these `\textit{nazala Jibrīl ... bākadhā} akhbār would appear to support one of the conclusions of a recent study of the history of the Usūli/Akhbāri dispute in Shi'ism which says that the writing of men like Muḥfīd, Muṭṭaḍā, and Ṭūsī, whom Usūli's regard as the fathers of their school, and all of whom argued strenuously in their works for the acceptance of the 'Uthmānic Codex, represents an accommodation to changing historical religio-political conditions\(^{84}\). It is suggested that this analysis will continue to be borne out with the continued study of Shi'ism, particularly in the little-known period between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Of course, it has already been recognized that the position on the \textit{tahrif} question was conditioned by historical circumstances\(^{85}\). It is important to acknowledge, however, that the continued publication of these \textit{akhbār} suggests that certain issues of the Usūli/Akhbāri argument are still being debated. One of the things called for, therefore, is an in-depth, diachronic study of all the various commentaries on this section of \textit{al-Kāfī}. In the meantime, it seems that it may not be entirely accurate to state that the Shi'a have never been able to agree amongst themselves on the status of the Qur'ān. Rather, a more accurate characterization suggests itself: that the Shi'a view the Qur'ān as being simultaneously flawed and inerrant — inerrant for the purposes of \textit{fiqh} but deficient as an explicit guide to the recognition of the locus and bearer of \textit{wala'ya}.

\(^{82}\) Moojan Momen, \textit{An Introduction to Shi'i Islam}, 262; here Momen also says that Khū'ī opposed Khomaini's early political activity.

\(^{83}\) \textit{al-Bayān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān} (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā, 1401/1980), 223. Khū'ī (2nd ed. Najaf 1966), 215-254. Ayoub, 10 also singles out al-Khu'ī's position on the \textit{tahrif} question but does not claim that this statement represents a Shi'i consensus.

\(^{84}\) 'Together these developments in doctrine and practice represented a significant alteration, and, in some cases, an outright reversal of the dominant, Imāmī \textit{akhbāriyya} generally anti-rationalist, individual-oriented, non-authoritarian and anti-accommodationist tendencies as represented in both \textit{al-Kāfī} and [\textit{Man la yahdurub} al-Faqih [by al-Ṣadūq, Ibn Babāwayh]'] Newman, 1:196.

\(^{85}\) Kohlberg, 219.