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CRITICAL STUDY OF DR. ŞUBĤĪ ŞĀLIĤ'S STANCES IN THE QUR'ĀNIC SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

The field of Qur'ānic Sciences owes to numerous Muslim scholars for their commendable literary contributions. A notable endeavor of the twentieth century is "Mabāĥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān" by Dr. ŞubĤĪ al-ŞāliĤ, an eminent Lebanese scholar. He aimed to present his indagations in relatively eclectic manner, rather than prevalent traditional approach. The literature available by now to critically analyze his solitude and reproach towards some significant topics of the subject was deemed to be insufficient. Hence, this article will censoriously analyze those stances of the author in which either he showed indulgence or secluded from the majority; for instance: his misconceived explorations about the first book of the Qur'ānic Sciences, Descent of the Qur'ān, Maxims of Haġrat 'Alī and 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (May Allah be pleased with them), Abrogation in the Qur'ān, divinity of the 'Uthmānic Script and its obligatory compliance. Moreover, his reservations will be concluded through assertive justifications aided by Qur'ānic verses, Prophetic Traditions and scholarly opinions.

INTRODUCTION:

One of those sciences which have been founded by Muslim scholars to preserve the words and meanings of the Book of Allāh is the Qur'ānic Sciences. This subject deals in the discussions of the Qur'ānic history, readings, inimitability, words with their connotations and also in analyzing the methodology of the Qur'ānic Commentary. A vast range of literature has been created by past and present scholars related to this science. In the twentieth century, a distinctive opus was "Mabāĥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān" by Dr. ŞubĤĪ ŞāliĤ, an attempt among

the books written to present traditional topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences in relatively divergent manner.

Şubĥī Ibrāhīm al-Şāliĥ, commonly known as Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ, was born in Tripoli, Lebanon. He acquired his religious and temporal education from Dār al-Tarbiyya wa'l Ta'lim. Later on, he was edified in Al-Azhar University, Cairo in the field of Fundamentals of Religion (Uşūl al-Dīn). From the same university, he obtained a degree of Shahādāt al-'Āliyya in 1947 and a degree of Shahādāt al-'Ālamiyya in 1949. In 1950, he made his way to France for higher education and after completing his Doctorate of Arts in 1954, he came back to Tripoli. He served as a professor of Islamic Studies and Philology in the University of Lebanon and also in various educational institutes like the Universities of Baghdad, Damascus, Jordon, Tunis, Muhammad b. Saud Islamic University, Riyāḍ etc. In addition to his educational services, he was deputed on various national and international religious posts.¹ His authorship includes Al-Islāmu wa'l Mujtama' al-'Aşarī, Dirāsātu fī Fiqh al-Lugha, Al-Islāmu wa Mustaḡbil al-Ḥaḍāra, 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Muşṭalaḥa etc.

Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's book Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān was published in 1958 for the very first time and comprised of only those lectures which were delivered by him in the University of Damascus to the learners of Arabic language and literature. Those lectures were of prime importance for understanding the Qur'ānic commentary; therefore, instead of going deep into the topic, ease and brevity were made priority by the author. Later on, various editions of the book got published. In the latest one, the author penned down the basic topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences which have been originally derived from the books of past scholars, but rephrased by the writer. His discretions and distinctions can be well observed in his book. In Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, eighteen topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences have been discussed. The book comprises of four Chapters and sub-sections. The attributes which substantiate the existence of this book among the contemporary ones include: Critical analysis of the available data, preference of maxims over another, logical refutation of Orientalists' criticism and author's innovative explorations.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The research works which could be reviewed on Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, discussing the modus operandi and approach of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ as well as his proclivity and censure towards various concepts of the Qur'ānic Sciences, are as under:

1. صبحي الصالح وجهوده في علوم القرآن من خلال كتابه مباحث في علوم القرآن

This article has been written by Dr. 'Abd al-'Azīz Ḥājī, a member to faculty of shari'a in the University of Damascus. It was published by the Journal of Al-Turāth al-'Arabī, volume 115, in the year 1430 A.H. Almost Eighteen pages out of Twenty Seven consist of general introduction to the author and his book; and to critically analyze the contents of the subject book, he selected Four topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences which include: Names of the Qur'ān, Divine Revelation, the gradual Descent of the Qur'ān with its wisdom and Collection of the Qur'ān.

For recapitulation of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's life and for a brief introduction to his book, the above-mentioned article is a notable endeavor, however it does not accommodate the critique on his distinctive propositions.

2. ترجيحات الشيخ صبحي الصالح في علوم القرآن جمعا ودراسة

It is a thesis submitted to obtain a degree of M.A by Boko Jamal. He, after prefatory notes, divided the thesis into three sections and sub-topics. The first Section enlightens the words of preference and reasons of preference; the second section, after delineating the detail of Descent and Collection of the Qur'ān, explicates Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's inclinations; however, the third and final section, elaborates preferences of Dr. Şubĥī in the topics of Inimitability, Commentary and Styles of Addresses in the Qur'ān. The thesis comprises of 261 pages and has been completed under the patronage of Dr. Muĥammad Rājī in 1434 A.H. in the Department of Languages and Arabic Islamic Civilization at the University of Algiers.

The subject thesis does not accommodate the critical analysis of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's stances and indagations.

3. كتاب مباحث في علوم القرآن للدكتور صبحي الصالح دراسة تحليلية نقدية

Sīrīn 'Umar Sabbāgh, a scholar of Damascus, opted to write an article of 30 pages on Dr. Şāliĥ's book Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān. The first 10 pages encompass a detailed introduction to the author and his book, rest of the article critically analyzes some of his stances in the Qur'ānic Sciences; but some of them have not been satisfactorily retorted e.g. Dr. Şāliĥ's standpoint towards the first book of the Qur'ānic Sciences and his solitary opinion about the compliance of 'Uthmānic Script.

After reviewing the aforementioned literature on the subject book, it was deemed to be essential to critically analyze some of the unaddressed significant topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences.

Research Questions:

1. What are the explorations of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ about history of the Qur'ānic Sciences?
2. What is the worth and specification of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's solitude in discussions of the Qur'ānic Sciences?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive, Analytical and most importantly, Critical approach has been opted in this research article for accentuating the following opinions of the author, in which he misapprehended the facts and deviated from the stances of majority Muslim scholars:

- a) The foremost books of the Qur'ānic Sciences and studies of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ
- b) The three staged Qur'ānic Descent and opinion of the author

- c) The maxims of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (May Allah be pleased with them) and author's viewpoint
- d) The individuality of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ about the divinity of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān and its obligatory compliance

Primitive Books of the Qur'ānic Sciences and Perspective of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ:

While elaborating the Qur'ānic history, Dr. Şāliĥ asserted that 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān as an organized science was incepted and recorded in the third century; previously, it used to be discussed only as a part of the Qur'ānic commentaries. About those books written in the third century, he states:

أما علوم القرآن الأخرى فقد ألف: في القرن الثالث: علي بن المديني شيخ البخاري في أسباب النزول، وأبو عبيد القاسم بن سلام في الناسخ والمنسوخ، وفي القراءات وفضائل القرآن، ومحمد بن أيوب الضريس (ت ٢٩٤ هـ) فيما نزل بمكة وما نزل بالمدينة،² "ومحمد بن خلف بن المرزبان (ت ٣٠٩ هـ): "الحاوي في علوم القرآن

For the books written in fourth Century, he enlisted three names:

- 1) 'Ajā'ibu fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān by Abū Bakr Qāsim al-Anbārī (d. 328 A.H.)
- 2) Al-Mukhtazin fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān by Abu'l Ḥassan al-Ash'arī (d. 334 A.H.)
- 3) Al-Istighnā' fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Adhfawī (d. 388 A.H.)³

In the fifth Century, he mentioned the name of Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān by 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Sa'īd al-Ḥūfī (d. 430 A.H.).⁴

Reproach Of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ Regarding History of The Qur'ān:

The stance to consider Shaykh Ḥūfī's book Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān as the first book on the subject has been repudiated by Dr. Şāliĥ. He states:

Some researchers propound that the term 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān as a widespread concept was introduced for the first time with the discovery of Shaykh Ḥūfī's book Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān in thirty volumes; fifteen volumes of which are present at Dār al-Kutub, Cairo in an unorganized form and in the section of the Qur'ānic exegeses, its number is 59. Although it comprises of some topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences, however it is basically a Qur'ānic commentary. As I have clarified earlier that in that era, the books categorically titling 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān were meant to discuss the Qur'ānic Studies; and as per my research, the very first book of the Qur'ānic Sciences was authored by Ibn Marzubān in the third century.⁵

Although Dr. Şāliĥ did not impute the aforestated opinion to any specific scholar and used the word of researchers, but in fact, it has been deduced from 'Imām Zurqānī's famous book Manāhil al-'Irfān.⁶ Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ criticized his viewpoint regarding the first ever book on the Qur'ānic Sciences, yet his own assertion about the subject matter is also objectionable in many ways.

Critical Analysis of Dr. Şubhî ŞāliḤ's Stances:

The verdict of Dr. ŞāliḤ, regarding the first book of the Qur'ānic Sciences, is debatable in various ways. Although, his opinion that Shaykh Ḥūfī's book *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān* cannot be considered to be the first book on the subject, is truthful because: firstly, it is not a writing on the Qur'ānic Sciences but an exegesis and secondly, it is not the earliest one. However, the first statement satisfies the query that whether Shaykh Ḥūfī's book *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān* is the earliest composition on the subject or not. Indeed, the stance adopted by Dr. ŞāliḤ, after his reproach, cannot be validated.

Those books which have been categorized by Dr. ŞāliḤ, either under the title of the Qur'ānic Sciences or as the first book on the subject or as the book mistakenly attributed to Ibn al-Anbārī, will be analyzed one after the other.

Analysis Of the Primal Books Under the Title 'Ulūm Al- Qur'ān:

1. Al-Ḥāwī fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: This book has been penned down by Ibn Marzubān (d. 309 A.H.) and consists of 27 volumes.⁷ Undoubtedly, it was the first book found with the title 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān, as expounded by Dr. ŞāliḤ too, but it cannot be declared as an autonomous writing of the Qur'ānic Sciences. This book is unavailable and the only information available about it is the number of volumes. No indication about its subject of discussion, either the Qur'ānic commentary or the Qur'ānic Sciences, is existing in any other book. Although the title of the book evinces a word of 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān, yet it cannot be professed as the first book of the Qur'ānic Sciences; because there were many books composed in fourth and fifth century with the title 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān, but basically, they were the Qur'ānic commentaries. Predominant assumption about *Al-Ḥāwī fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān* is exegetical nature of the book because in that era, and even till the inception of twenty first century, a book composed of 27 volumes on the subject of the Qur'ānic Sciences has not been reckoned.

As under, those two books have also been analyzed which were enlisted by Dr. ŞāliḤ as the books of the Qur'ānic Sciences but their exegetical nature was not clarified by him.

2. Al-Mukhtazin fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: The author of this book is 'Alī b. Ismā'īl Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (d. 334 A.H.)⁸ This book is originally an exegesis with the title 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān, Da'ūdī stated:

كتاب عظيم جدا بلغ فيه سورة الكهف و قد انتهى مائة جزء، و قيل انه اكبر من هذا⁹

The above statement clearly depicts the exegetical disposition of the book. Like *Al-Ḥāwī*, this book is also not available.

3. Al-Istighnā' fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: It is a composition of Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Adhfawī (d. 388 A.H.)¹⁰ which comprises of 20 volumes.¹¹ This book was also a Qur'ānic Commentary. Imām Suyūṭī mentioned in the author's profile:

وله كتاب تفسير القرآن في مائة وعشرين مجلدة¹²

Da'ūdī wrote:

Adhfawī wrote an exegesis of the Qur'ān and entitled it Al-Istighnā'. It had 120 volumes and was completed in a period of twelve years.¹³
This book could also not be preserved due to historical catastrophes.

The foregoing investigations clearly proffer that the aforementioned three books were a part of exegetical literature and did not pertain to that of the Qur'ānic Sciences.

'Ajā'ibu fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: Another book mentioned by Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ is 'Ajā'ibu fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān but mistakenly ascribed to Abū Bakr Qāsim al-Anbārī. An abridged overview of the book is as under:

It is a writing of Abū Bakr Qāsim al-Anbārī (d. 328 A.H.). The topics of the book include: Virtues of the Qur'ān, Revelation of the Qur'ān on Seven Dialects, Compilation of the Qur'ān, number of the Qur'ānic Chapters, verses and words.¹⁴ This information has been mentioned by Dr. Şubĥī in footnotes. A transcript of this book is available in library of Al-Baladiya, Alexandria.¹⁵

This book, in fact, has been written by Imām Ibn Jawzī (d. 597 A.H.). Shaykh Fahd Rūmī clarified in the footnotes that the book has not been written by Ibn al-Anbārī but Imām Jawzī with the title Funūn al-Afnān fī 'Ajā'ibi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān. The confusion arose due to erroneous imputation of the book towards Ibn al-Anbārī in the library of Al-Baladiya, Alexandria.¹⁶

The First Book Of The Qur'ānic Sciences With The Title 'Ulūm Al- Qur'ān:

By scrutinizing the historical evidences of the Qur'ānic Sciences, it is revealed that various topics of the subject had been discussed in numerous modes. However, the first ever book found with the label of 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān, having purely discussions of the Qur'ānic Sciences, is Al-Tanbīh 'ala Faḍli 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.

Al-Tanbīh 'ala Faḍli 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: The author of this book is Ḥassan b. Muḥammad Abu'l Qāsim Nīshāpurī (d. 204 A.H.). It was published in the Journal of Al-Mawrid, vol. 17, issue 4, 1988 at Baghdad with necessary editing by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm Rāzī. Only two topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences were canvassed in it; Descent of the Qur'ān and Addressees of the Qur'ān.

Funūn al-Afnān fī 'Uyūni 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān: After Al-Tanbīh, a complete and compendious manual of the Qur'ānic Sciences is Funūn al-Afnān. It has been authored by an eminent Exegete and Traditionist of Sixth Century, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 A.H.). Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ mentioned two books of the Qur'ānic Sciences by Ibn Jawzī:

وفى القرن السادس الف ابن جوزى (ت ٥٩٧) كتابين احدهما (فنون الافنان فى عجائب علوم القرآن) و الثانى (المجتبى فى علوم تتعلق بالقرآن) و هما مخطوطان فى دار الكتب بالقاهرة¹⁷

Dr. Ḥassan Zi'ā al-Dīn compiled this book after reviewing its different transcripts and preferred the name *Funūn al-Afnān fī 'Uyūni 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*.¹⁸

The Three Staged Descent of the Qur'ān:

Outlook of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ:

Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ refuted the three staged descent of the Qur'ān because he considers it not to be proved through the Qur'ānic text; he objects that since the subject matter is related to the revelation of the Qur'ān, hence it is a divine secret which needs a successive proof to be believed in. He states:

ولسنا نميل إلى الرأي القائل: إن للقرآن تنزلات ثلاثة: الأولى إلى اللوح المحفوظ، والثاني إلى بيت العزة في السماء الدنيا، والثالث تفريقه منجما بحسب الحوادث، وإن كانت أسانيد هذا الرأي كلها صحيحة، لأن هذه التنزلات المذكورة من عالم الغيب الذي لا يؤخذ فيه إلا بما تواتر يقينا في الكتاب والسنة، فصحة الأسانيد في هذا القول لا تكفي وحدها لوجوب اعتقاده، فكيف وقد نطق القرآن بخلافه؟¹⁹

I am not inclined towards accepting three stages of the Qur'ānic divulgence: The first on the Guarded Tablet, the second on the House of Honour in the Heavens and the third on the Prophet (PBUH) intermittently according to the need. Although this stance has been backed up by authentic transmitted chains, yet foregoing three stages pertain to divine unseen secrets, therefore it is essential to be proven by successive testimony from the Qur'ān or Sunna. Obligation to build belief in it cannot be sufficed with mere authenticity of transmitted chain, especially when the Qur'ānic statement is contrary to it.

Critical Analysis of Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ's Opinion:

Affirmation to different stages of the Qur'ānic Descent is proved through the Qur'ān itself, e.g.

1. Preservation of the Qur'ān in the Guarded Tablet

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾²⁰

“But this is an honored Qur'an. [Inscribed] in a Guarded Tablet”

2. The word ²¹ (وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ) used in a Qur'ānic verse.

There are various traditions regarding veracity of Bayt al-Māmūr, which reveal that it is a place in the Heavens where thousands of angels circumambulate.²²

3. The usage of two words in the Qur'ān for its revelation i.e. انزَالٌ and تنزِيلٌ prove its simultaneous and intermittent descent.

As far as the second descent is concerned, from the Guarded Tablet to the House of Honour in the Heavens, it has also been authenticated by narrations of Ibn 'Abbās (May Allah be pleased with him). On the basis of these narrations, the majority scholars have accepted second and third descent of the Qur'ān. Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ did not demur the authenticity of these narrations, rather acknowledged their legitimacy, yet he deemed it necessary to have an absolute proof (Qaṭ'āi Dalīl) from the Qur'ān or Sunna for accepting the stages of descent. It is to clarify here that the narrations of Ibn 'Abbās (May Allah be pleased with him) are considered to be Marfū' (attributed to the Prophet ﷺ);

because a Companion's maxim is statured as *Marfū'*, subjected to few conditions. Ibn Ḥajar, a renowned Traditionist, elaborated this point in the following words:

ومثال المرفوع من القول، حكما لا تصريحاً: أن يقول الصحابي -الذي لم يأخذ عن الإسرائيليات- ما لا مجال للاجتهاد فيه، ولا له تعلق ببيان لغة أو شرح غريب، كالإخبار عن الأمور الماضية: من بدء الخلق، وأخبار الأنبياء، أو الآتية: كالملاحم، والفتن، وأحوال يوم القيامة، وكذا الإخبار عما يحصل بفعله ثواب مخصوص، أو عقاب مخصوص. وإنما كان له حكم المرفوع؛ لأن إخباره بذلك يقتضي مخبراً له، وما لا مجال للاجتهاد فيه يقتضي موقفاً للقائل به، ولا موقف للصحابة إلا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، أو بعض من يخبر عن الكتب القديمة؛ فلهذا وقع الاحتراز عن القسم الثاني. فإذا كان كذلك، فله حكم ما لو قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فهو مرفوع سواء كان مما سمعه منه، أو عنه بواسطة²³

An example of *Marfū' Qawli Ḥukmī* is that maxim of a Companion (who abstains himself from Israelites) which neither pertains to *Ijtihād* (self-endeavor to find a legal ruling) nor to explanation of any word nor to elaboration of any Obscure word; like the reports of the past e.g. origin of Life, accounts of the Prophets; or prognostics, like warfare, afflictions, reports of Doomsday; and similarly narrating a particular reward or punishment for performing some task. It is legally called *Marfū'* because, if it is a report, there would be some reporter as well and moreover, if there is no margin of *Ijtihād* in it, existence of a reporter is implied therein. There was no one else other than the Prophet (PBUH) to inform such reports to the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them); or only a few other than him (PBUH) who used to narrate from the previous divine scriptures. Since the second presumption belongs to Israelites, therefore must be avoided and it becomes implicit to consider the first option; whether the Companions listened directly from the Prophet (PBUH) or through some channel.

Since these narrations pertain to *Marfū'* category of traditions and they do not contradict with any of *Sharī'a* principles, hence there is no valid reason to reject them and even Dr. ŞāliḤ could not present any effective plea against these narrations. Secondly, the matter is not to vindicate the Holy Scripture *Qur'ān* itself so as to demand absolute proof for it. The discussion is only about its descent which can be sufficiently proved by speculative evidence (*Zannī Dalīl*).

The aforementioned testimonials clearly demonstrate that the *Qur'ān* has been revealed in stages; and importantly, if someone is hesitant in accepting these evidences, he should present strong evidence against them, mere a claim is not sufficient.

Maxims of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (May Allah be pleased with them) and Dr. ŞāliḤ's viewpoint:

Dr. ŞāliḤ divided the *Qur'ānic* verses with respect to the Cause of Revelation into two parts:

- i. Those verses which are directly related to some cause of revelation
- ii. Those verses which are not related to some apparent cause of revelation

In this context, Dr. ŞāliḤ quoted the maxims of two Companions who claimed to know the causes of revelation for every *Qur'ānic* verse. Both maxims are mentioned as under:

• **Maxim of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (May Allah be pleased with him):**

والله ما نزلت آية إلا وقد علمت فيم انزلت و اين انزلت و على من نزلت؟ ان ربي وهب لي قلباً²⁴ عقولاً و لساناً طلاقاً.

I swear upon Allah, there is not even a single Qur’ānic verse about which I do not know the cause of revelation, place of revelation and upon whom was it revealed. Indeed my Allah has blessed me with intellectual heart and eloquent vernacular.

• **Maxim of Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd (May Allah be pleased with him):**

والله الذى لا اله غيره، ما انزلت، سورة من كتاب الله الا انا اعلم اين نزلت و لا انزلت آية من كتاب الله الا انا اعلم فيم انزلت، ولو اعلم احدا اعلم منى بكتاب الله تبلغه الابل لركبت اليه.²⁵

Dr. ŞāliḤ did not quote the complete maxims but a part of them has been mentioned in the footnotes.²⁶ The reservations he had about the above-mentioned maxims can be enlisted in following three points:

1. There are many verses of the Qur’ān which are not related to the Cause of Revelation, therefore, actual meaning of the maxims is different to that of literal ones.
2. Both Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) gave hyperbolic statements for emphasizing.
3. There is a probability of some addition in words by the transmitters of maxims.²⁷

Dr. ŞāliḤ confined the meanings of the subject maxims to their literal meaning only, though the intentions of both the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) are unequivocal and depict their passionate affection towards the Qur’ān. It is not justified to deduce that some verses were revealed without any cause. There should nothing be detaining to accept what has been said by such reverent Companions like Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd (May Allah be pleased with them), even though their statements were for preponderant portion of the Qur’ān. Therefore, Dr. ŞāliḤ has neither any cogent evidence nor any compelling foundation to repudiate both axioms.

Abrogation in the Qur’ān and Dr. ŞāliḤ’s Reservations:

Apprehension of Abrogation is a source to get acquainted with the Qur’ānic injunctions. This science leads to the knowledge of prevalent rulings and also to the knowledge of those verses for which recitation is valid but ruling has been abrogated; consequently, cognizance to various aspects of graduation and adaptation of rulings is achieved. That’s why, the science of Abrogation is not only an important topic of the Qur’ānic Sciences but to the fundamental Principles (Usūl) as well.

Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ did not accept two forms of Abrogation out of three. His verdict is stated as under:

The search for abrogated verses has led many researchers to misunderstandings; it was a matter to be refrained from. It paves the way for raising objections on the Qur'ān. Although they are well aware of successive Qur'ānic transmission, despite they classify Abrogation in three forms: Verses having abrogated ruling but valid recitation, Verses having abrogated recitation but valid ruling and Verses having recitation and ruling both abrogated. They can present various testimonies to the first form because the Qur'ānic text remains valid but its ruling gets abrogated due to some legislative expedience and wisdom. Nevertheless, in the case of second and third form, an eccentric audacity has been noticed; because recitation of specific verses gets abrogated, then either the ruling also is abrogated or remains valid. Any person who observes irrational behaviour of abrogation convincers, their mistake is revealed on him sooner. It is not justified to categorize Abrogation in various forms; there should, if not sufficient, then at least enough proofs to support them. Albeit, they have only one or two evidences for the second and third form of abrogation. They take plea from a singular report (khabar-i-wahid); **although, to infer from a singular report is not vindicated in case of Abrogation or Descent of the Qur'ān.** Ibn Zafar adopted the same stance in his book *Al-Yanbū'* that the Qur'ān can never be verified through a singular report.²⁸

The pronouncements of Dr. Şubĥī clearly manifest that he accepted the phenomenon of abrogation only for the legal rulings in the Qur'ān and adopted a strong stance to support it. He proffers that it is among various conditions for the phenomenon of abrogation that since there is successive transmission of the Qur'ān, so the proof of abrogated recitation without ruling and abrogated recitation with ruling cannot be validated through a singular report for any part of the Qur'ān.

Whereas, Imām Zurqānī quoted consensus of Muslim community on this form of abrogation. For argumentation, he inferred from Prophetic Tradition of Sucking and declared it authentic (Şaĥīĥ). Although it is an abeyant transmission (Mawqūf) by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha (May Allah be pleased with her) but it would have ruling of a transmission attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) (Marfu'), because this narration is from the category in which there is no intrusion of personal opinion but its divinity is indispensable.²⁹

Imām Zurqānī, after elaborating all three forms of abrogation with examples, proclaim that averment of those people who negate contingency of these forms is null and void.³⁰

Affirmation of abrogation is a matter quite different from that of Descent of the Qur'ān. For abrogation, speculative proof from singular reports suffices; as far as Descent of the Qur'ān is concerned, absolute proof obtained from successive transmission is essential. Hitherto, proof to abrogation is required which is validated through singular reports as well; if it is claimed that it is not validated by Recurrent Reading, it would be justified statement.³¹

For Dr. Şālih, succession (Tawātur) is mandatory for affirming abrogation in the Qur'ān, otherwise singular reports do not suffice to prove the phenomenon. Therefore, he did not endorse the claim of abrogated recitation; whereas the supporters of this form of abrogation consider the singular reports enough to corroborate their assertion.

Divinity of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān and Solitude of Dr. Şubhî Şālih for its obligatory compliance:

Divinity of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān: The scholars dissent in accepting divinity of 'Uthmānic Script. There are two opinions about the subject matter:

- **The Qur'ānic Script is divine (Tawqīfī):** Majority scholars believe that the Qur'ānic Script is divine.³²
- **The Qur'ānic Script is mundane (Ghair Tawqīfī):** Some scholars assert that the Qur'ānic Script is terminological (Iştilāhī) because its divinity has not been validated by any text (Naşş). Imām Bāqilānī ascertained non-divinity of the Qur'ānic Script through various arguments in his book *Al-Intişār*.³³ The summary of his declarations is as under:

If someone claims that the compliance of a specific and particular script is obligatory for inscription of the Qur'ān and renunciation towards any other script is not legitimate, it is mandatory for him to validate his argument through a strong evidence.³⁴

Dr. Şālih cited the arguments of Imām Bāqilānī in detail by transcribing from the book of Imām Zurqānī and extolled them much.³⁵

Dr. Şālih criticized divinity of Qur'ānic Script and stated:

Some scholars exaggerated to the extent that they proclaimed the Qur'ānic script to be divine and that the Prophet (PBUH) narrated on the prescription of the Almighty Allāh Himself.³⁶

After aforestated citation, Dr. Şālih reproduced the arguments in favour of the Qur'ānic Script being divine. The author quoted them from Imām Zurqānī's book *Manāhil al-'Irfān*.³⁷

Dr. Şubhî did not accept them, rather vehemently countered them in the following words:

Undoubtedly, aforementioned statement comprises of much exalted and inflated commendation towards 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān; an inclination which is nonpareil. The divinity of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān, that it has been instructed by the Almighty Allāh, does not comply with acumen and rationality. It is also illogical to claim that the Qur'ānic Script is as esoteric as the incepting words (Fawātiḥ) of the Qur'ānic Chapters. The divinity of the Qur'ānic Script has not been supported by any Prophetic Tradition as well. Nor can it be declared analogous to Disjoint Letters (Ḥurūf al-Muqaṭṭa'āt) because these letters have been proved to be a part of the Qur'ān through succession. As a matter of fact, the amanuenses in 'Uthmānic era concurred on that particular script. Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (May Allah be pleased with him) also corroborated with their opinion and established a rule for the scribes. He addressed the three Quraishī Prophetic Companions (May Allah be pleased with them): "In case

you disagree with Zaid b. Thābit on any point in the Qur'ān, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur'ān was revealed in their tongue." ³⁸ The grandeur and superiority of 'Uthmānic Script cannot be amplified to an extent that it may have been declared divine. ³⁹

Contrary to the above-mentioned profession of Dr. Şālih, majority Muslim scholars are supporters of 'Uthmānic Script's divinity because the script followed these days is the same as observed in the era of the Prophet (PBUH) and so does in the era of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddīq (May Allah be pleased with him). Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (May Allah be pleased with him) only transcribed the scripture preserved in the era of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddīq (May Allah be pleased with him). After the era of Companions, their followers (Tābi'īn) and then subsequent followers (Taba' Tābi'īn), all followed the same Qur'ānic Script; neither did anyone oppose it nor did anyone invent or adopt another. Assuredly, any act of the Companions not opposed by the Prophet (PBUH), is considered to be tacit approval of the Prophet (PBUH) and its abidance is compulsory. Same is the case of the Qur'ānic Script, it was inscribed in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH) and he did not disapprove it, hence it is obligatory to abide by it.

Many traditions provide substantial proof to the acts of Companions and their stance adopted in the matter of the Qur'ānic Script; twelve thousand Şahāba had consensus on this script, hence its compliance is obligatory and its opposition is illegitimate. Thus, every person who intends to inscribe the Qur'ān, he should write it in the script congruent to that of 'Uthmānic one; but if he follows Standard Script (Rasm al-Qiyāsī), he certainly not only opposes the Prophetic Traditions instructing to follow the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) but also the consensus of the Companions and the scholars thereafter. ⁴⁰

Hence, the arguments cited by the scholars in support of 'Uthmānic Script, fervently rejected by Dr. Şālih, are indeed substantial proofs to its divinity and rejoinder to negation of its non-divinity. ⁴¹

Compliance of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān:

There are three axioms regarding obligation and option in compliance of 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān.

1. It is obligatory to comply with 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān. It is an assertion of Majority. ⁴²
2. It is not obligatory to comply with 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān, rather it is legitimate to withstand against it. This proclamation has been espoused by Imām Bāqilānī and Ibn Khaldūn. ⁴³
3. It is obligatory to set face against 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān. This edict has been advocated by 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām, cited by Imām Zarkashī in Al-Burhān. ⁴⁴

Dr. Şubĥī Şāliĥ embraced the third opinion and states in support of it:

I ameliorate the stance of Imām Bāqilānī by moving a step forward, who does not avow defying 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān, and I endorse the stance of 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām.⁴⁵

Dr. Şāliĥ quoted the below mentioned statement in Al-Burhān by Imām Zarkashī:

Currently, it is not licit to inscribe the Qur'ān in 'Uthmānic Script because eradication of wisdom is being envisioned. The prevalent practice of ancestors should not be abandoned on the discretion of benighted as the world of Creator has not scarcity of pious souls.⁴⁶

Afterwards, he commented:

Common populace is unable to recite the Qur'ān in 'Uthmānic Script; therefore, it is advisable, rather essential to publish the Qur'ān in traditional script; but it does not mean at all to oblivate 'Uthmānic Script totally because it would result in abolition of a holy insignia upon which Muslims have had their consensus and due to which the Muslims were salvaged from disunion. There have always been a few scholars in Muslim community who take heed of even minute differences in the 'Uthmānic Script. For instance, it is stated in the Journal of Al-Azhar that it is also necessary to elaborate in the footnotes of every page about the deviation from the diction of traditional script.⁴⁷

Dr. Şubĥī erred in transcription of 'Izz al-Dīn's pronouncement from Al-Burhān. He muddled the remarks of Imām Zarkashī and 'Izz al-Dīn's opinion and presented the whole statement on account of 'Izz al-Dīn.

Imām Zarkashī, at first, quoted the statement of 'Izz al-Dīn: Currently, it is not licit to inscribe the Qur'ān in 'Uthmānic Script because eradication of wisdom is being envisioned. Later on, he trailed his opprobrium by stating: The prevalent practice of ancestors should not be abandoned on the discretion of benighted as the world of Creator has not scarcity of pious souls.

Assertion of Dr. Şāliĥ to espouse traditional script instead of 'Uthmānic ones cannot be espoused due to various disparities:

1. There is a possibility of several Qur'ānic Readings in the 'Uthmānic Script; not following it would result in variation of these readings which have been divulged on the Prophet (PBUH) and have been narrated to us through successive chain of transmitters. The traditional script would not be able to accommodate these readings. Consequently, it would become indispensable to not only abandon but to negate some parts of the Qur'ān. Denial of whole or even any part of the Qur'ān is infidelity.⁴⁸

2. The same menace is foreseen by following the traditional script as undergone during the era of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (May Allah be pleased with him) and it was being said that our script was better than yours and our scripture was better than yours.⁴⁹

3. Even all the formulators of rules governing regular Arabic script are not agreed upon them, because with the passage of time, they undergo through various phases of mutation. Hence, it should be avoided and cautioned. It is a need of the hour that Muslims should preclude the Qur'ān from those rules which remain in a state of modification. It is also anticipated that Muslims would accuse others of conviction if the Qur'ān is written in the traditional script.⁵⁰
4. The Qur'ān is preserved in the 'Uthmānic Script, rather in every era, it has been safeguarded in the same script. There has not been any epoch where either this script was not observed or the learners were not in opulent quantity. What need is pinching to inscribe the scripture in the traditional script which would induce a new sedition.

The aforestated arguments clearly depict the superiority of majority's stance i.e. the compliance of 'Uthmānic Script to inscribe the Qur'ān is mandatory.

CONCLUSION:

1. Among the literature compiled in twentieth and twenty first century on the subject of the Qur'ānic Sciences, "Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān" by Dr. Şubhî Şālih holds a distinguished position therein.
2. In his book, some of his indagations and views are relatively unique, enabling him to be individualized among other scholars of the Qur'ānic Sciences.
3. Dr. Şubhî Şālih declared Al-Ḥāwī fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān as the foremost book of the Qur'ānic Sciences, though it is the first according to mere its title; predominantly, it is an exegesis and not a solitary book on the subject.
4. According to Dr. Şālih, the author of 'Ajā'ibu fī 'Ulūm al- Qur'ān is Abū Bakr Qāsim al-Anbārī but in fact, it is an opus of Imām Ibn al-Jawzī.
5. Dr. Şubhî Şālih did not espouse the three staged Descent of the Qur'ān. He asserts that these propositions are related to the matters of the unseen, hence there should be absolute testimony from the Qur'ān or Sunna through succession to have faith therein. His viewpoint is not precise because that maxim of a Prophetic Companion, pertaining to the matters of the unseen, is considered to be a transmission attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) (Marfu'). There is no intrusion of Companion's Ijtihād (self-endeavor) in it. Moreover, three stages of the descent are affirmed through various Prophetic Traditions; additionally, authenticity of the Qur'ān is not a matter of discussion here but only its stages of descent so as to require absolute testimony.
6. By analyzing those maxims of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (May Allah be pleased with them), which have been refuted by Dr. Şālih, it is revealed that both the narrated and rationalistic arguments provided by the author are blemished. Moreover, there is no plea against negating these maxims.
7. Dr. Şubhî Şālih did not endorse the claim of abrogated recitation of any Qur'ānic verse because this form of abrogation should be backed up by successive testimony; whereas, the supporters of this form provide evidence from singular reports.
8. Dr. Şubhî Şālih considers the 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān neither divine nor he accepts the obligation of its compliance. This stance of his cannot be accepted because there is option of various Qur'ānic Readings in the

‘Uthmānic Script, abandoning it would cause loss of what has been revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) through successive chain of transmitters and indeed, the traditional script would not suffice for these readings.

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