

Partial Listing of Some Variants in the Qur'an

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Muslims commonly tell others that both the Tanakh (Old Testament) and New Testament are corrupted and seriously changed. Jewish and Christian people usually say that small manuscript variations do not mean they are corrupted; but Muslims disagree. They say for a Scripture to be authoritative it has to be preserved without any changes at all, and point to their Qur'an. Since they say that, it makes sense to look at their Qur'an and changes that have occurred.

Not too long ago a manuscript was discovered in Samarkand, and over 15,000 pages of old Koran text were discovered in Yemen. According to an article by in the Jan. 1999 *Atlantic Monthly* p.43-56. "Some of the parchment pages in the Yemeni hoard seemed to date back to the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., or Islam's first two centuries -- they were fragments, in other words, of perhaps the oldest Korans in existence. What's more, some of these fragments revealed small but intriguing aberrations from the standard Koranic text. Such aberrations, though not surprising to textual historians, are troublingly at odds with the orthodox Muslim belief that the Koran as it has reached us today is quite simply the perfect, timeless, and unchanging Word of God."

The point of this paper is simply to show that variants exist, and these cannot be swept under the rug. The Tenth Century Compendium of Islamic Literature called *The Fihrist* (p.62) says, "According to the statement of Ubayy ibn Ka'b the total number of the verses of the Qur'an is 6,210. The total of the surahs of the Qur'an in according to the statement of 'Ata ibn Yasar is 114, its verses are 6,170, its words 77,439, and its letters 323,015. According to the statement of 'Asim al-Jahdari, there are 113 surahs. The total number of verses of the Qur'an as stated by Yahya ibn al-Harith al-Dhamari is 6,226, while its letters are 321,530." [The original quote spelled out the numbers.]

Today the Qur'an has approximately 78,090 Arabic words; see www.isos.org for more details. By contrast, the New Testament has about 133,892 words in Greek, and 109,499 words in Arabic.

Verses and Whole Suras Removed Lost sura of the valley of gold: Abu Harb b. Abu al-Aswad reported on the authority of his father that Abu Musa al-Ash'ari said: "...We used to recite a Sura which resembled in length and severity to (Sura) *Bara'at*. I have, however, forgotten it with the exception of this which I remember out of it: 'If there were two valleys full of riches for the son of Adam, he would long for a third valley, and nothing would fill the stomach of the son of Adam but dust.' And we used to so recite a Sura which resembled one of the suras of *Musabbihat*, and I have forgotten it, but remember (this much) out of it: 'O people who believe, why do you say that which you do not practice' (Ixi 2.) and 'that is recorded in your necks as a witness (against you) and you would be asked about in on the Day of Resurrection'" (xvii. 13). *Sahih Muslim* vol.2 no.2286 p.500,501

Likewise *Bukhari* vol.8 book 76 ch.10 no.444-447 p.296-299 also recounts this. 444, 445, and 447 simply say that the prophet said this: no mention of it being a sura. 446 says that Ibn Az-Zubair said this in a sermon, and "We considered this as a saying from the Qur'an till the Sura ... 102:1 was revealed."

Narrated Nafi': Ibn 'Umar recited the verse: "They had a choice either to fast or to feed a poor person for every day", and said that the order of this Verse was cancelled." *Bukhari* vol.3, book 31 ch.39 no.170 p.97

"Yahya related to me from Malik from Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Hazm from Amra bint Abd ar-Rahman that A'isha, the wife of the Prophet [Mohammed],... said, 'Amongst what was sent down of the Qur'an was 'ten known sucklings make haram' – then it was abrogated by 'five known sucklings'. When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, died, it was what is now recited of the Qur'an.'" A man would go and have intercourse with his slave-girl and his wife went and suckled her. Afterwards his wife warned her he could no longer do that because of what she did. So the man went to 'Umar, and 'Umar told him to beat his wife and go to his slave-girl, because suckling only applied to the young. *Muwatta' Malik* 30.3.17

"Narrated Anas bin Malik: ... There was revealed about those who were killed at Bi'r-Ma'una a Qur'anic Verse we used to recite, but it was cancelled later on. The verse was: 'Inform our people that we have met our Lord. He is pleased with us and He has made us pleased.'" *Bukhari* vol.4:69 p.53. See also the *History of al-Tabari* vol.7 p.156. Other references to cancelled verses are *Bukhari* vol.4:57 p.45, *Bukhari* vol.4:299 p.191, and *Bukhari* vol.5 book 59 no.421 p.293 all repeat the same thing about the same verse. "Then Allah revealed to us a verse that was

among the cancelled ones later on.” *Bukhari* v.5 book 59 no.416 p.288.

‘Ubai bin Ka’b, one of Mohammed’s secretaries, has extra suras, and omits about 12 suras in the Qur’an today. (*The Fihrist* p.61 footnotes 43-48) Abu Musa, of Basra, also had a text that was the same as ‘Ubai’s. (Suyuti, *Itqan I*, p. 65; Ibn Abi Dawud, *Masahif*, pp. 180-181, also Noeldeke, *Geschichte des Quran's*, pp. 33-38.)

‘Ubai bin Ka’b and Ibn Abbas also have this extra sura: O Allah, we seek your help and ask your forgiveness, and we praise you and do not disbelieve in you. We separate from and leave who sin against you. (*al-Khal of ‘Ubai bin Ka’b*, ‘Separation’)

‘Ubai bin Ka’b and Ibn Abbas have this extra sura: O Allah, we worship you and to you we pray and prostrate and to you we run and hasten to serve you. We hope for your mercy and we fear your punishment. Your punishment will certainly reach the unbelievers (*al-Hafd*, ‘Haste’)

‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib had his own version of the Qur’an. *al-Tabari* vol.39 p.37. He was close to Mohammed, and there is nothing strange about him collecting his own Qur’an. However, the caliph ‘Uthman’s copy has verses ‘Ali did not have, and vice versa. Among the verses not in ‘Uthman’s official copy are these. “Am I not your Lord, and Muhammad is My Messenger, and Ali the prince of the believers?” “... and his parents were believers, while he was an unbeliever.” “... and We have sent before thee, neither a Messenger, nor a Prophet, nor a speech-carrier.” “... and their mothers' husbands, and he is a father unto them ...” “Surely man is in a loss, and in it he shall remain till the end of the age ...” www.AnsweringIslam.org/distortionInTheQuran.htm has more info. Omission of the verse of Al-Rajm (stoning)

[www.AnsweringIslam.org/distortionInTheQuran.htm]

These are some of the sixty places the Shiites believe have been distorted, according to the studies of Professor Muhammad Mallallaah.

The phrases they consider as authentic, though not existent in the copies we have now, are enclosed between two brackets. Abi Baseer reported, on the strength of Ubayy Abdillaah:

"Whosoever obeys God and His Messenger (in the rule of the Imams) has won a mighty triumph." (Sura 33:71). The Shiites believes that Muhammad's Companions omitted "in the rule of the Imams." Abu Baseer reported, on the strength of Ubayy Ibn Abdillaah: "So We shall let the unbelievers (who forsook the rule of the prince of the believers) taste a terrible chastisement, and recompense them with the worst of what they were working." (41:27).

[www.AnsweringIslam.org/distortionInTheQuran.htm]

Abu Hamza also reported: "Yet most men refuse (the rule of Ali) all but unbelief." (Sura 17:89).

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‘Abdallah ibn Mas’ud was one of the four people Mohammed said to learn the Qur’an from. Yet Al-Nuri lists verses in Ibn Mas’ud’s version that are not in the Qur’an today.

“For surely God chose Adam, Noah, the house of Abraham, and the house of Muhammad above all beings.”

“Did We not expand thy breast from thee and lifted from thee thy burden? Did We not exalt thy fame by Ali thy son-in-law?”

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Partial List of Other Variants

Suras 1, 113, 114 - Absent in Ibn Mas’ud version (*The Fihrist* p.57). Ibn Mas’ud was a per-

sonal secretary of Mohammed’s. Mohammed told other people to learn the Qur’an from Ibn Mas’ud and three others. (*Bukhari* vol.6 book 60 no.521 p.486-487)

Sura 2:106: “And for whatever verse We abrogate or cast into oblivion, We bring a better or the like of it” did not originally have “or the like of it.” [www.AnsweringIslam.org/distortionInTheQuran.htm]

Sura 2:208: Abu Yunus the freed slave of ‘Aisha transcribed a copy of the Qur’an for ‘Aisha. It was a little bit different in Sura 2:208. “Abu Yunus, the freed slave of ‘A’isha said: ‘A’isha (Allah be pleased with her) ordered me to transcribe a copy of the Qur’an for her and said: When you reach this verse: ‘Guard the prayers and the middle prayer’ (2:28) inform me; so when I reached it, I informed her and she gave me dictation (like this): Guard the prayer and the middle prayer and the afternoon prayer, and stand up truly obedient to Allah. ‘A’isha (Allah be please with her) said: This is how I have heard from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)” *Sunan Nasa’i* vol.1 no.475 p.340

Sura 33:6 “The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers...” Some manuscripts including ‘Ubai bin Ka’b also have “and he is a father to them...” (A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran*, 1975 edition, note 3674). [<http://www.isaalmasih.net/bible-isa/history.html>]

‘Umar “stabilized” the Qur’an in 644 A.D. *al-Tabari* vol.39 p.22-23

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