

Approaches of the Imāmī Shī'a to the Qur'ān in the Context of the Allegation of Distortion and the Collection of the Qur'ān*

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Abstract

Narratives regarding the allegations of distortion of the Qur'ān is a matter which has been long uttered by some orientalist. The gist of the matter is based on the idea that the Qur'ān revealed to the Holy Prophet by Allāh is larger than the one that we have today and that some of the words and verses of the Qur'ān were distorted. This means the Qur'ān has thereby been changed or reduced in size either by mistake or on purpose. The source of these discourses stands on the reports of ḥadīth and tafsīr scholars of Akhbarī school of the Imāmī Shī'a. Actually, the idea intended for the distortion of the Qur'ān is a situation that cannot include the majority of the Imāmī Shī'a, because a significant number of scholars who are the members of the Shī'ite-Imāmī tradition refused the idea since these kinds of reports are al-khabar al-wāḥid, and so they do not have the sufficient evidential and informative value. In this article, approaches of the Imāmī Shī'a –from early, classical and recent times- that present these allegations of distortion are analysed comparatively. In respect to its relation to the subject, the approaches of the Imāmī shia to the collection of the Qur'ān are also mentioned.

Keywords: Qirāah, Muṣḥaf, Taḥrīf (Distortion), Jam' al- Qur'ān (Collection of the Qur'ān), The Imāmī Shī'a.

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Tahrif İddiası ve Mushafın Cem‘i Bağlamında İmâmiyye Şîası’nın Kur’an’a Yaklaşımı

Öz

Kur’an’ın tahrif edildiğine yönelik söylemler, özellikle bazı müsteşrikler tarafından öteden beri dile getirilen bir husus olmuştur. Meselenin özü, Allah tarafından Hz. Peygamber’e inzâl olunan Kur’an’ın, bugün elimizde bulunan Kur’an’dan çok daha fazla olduğu, sehven veya kasten Kur’an’dan bazı lafiz ve âyetlerin değiştirilmek yahut eksiltilmek suretiyle tahrif edildiği iddiasına dayanmaktadır. Bu söylemlerin kaynağı, çoğunluğu İmâmiyye Şîası’nın Ahbârî ekolüne mensup muhaddis ve müfessirlerin rivâyetlerine itimat etmektedir. Lâkin ümmetin icmâi, noksanlık ve ziyâdelik anlamında Kur’an’ın sıhhat bütünlüğüne hâlel getirecek böylesi bir durumun asla vârid olmadığı yönündedir. Esasında Kur’an’ın tahrifine yönelik düşünce İmâmiyye Şîası’nın da geneline teşmil edilemeyecek bir durumdur. Zira Şîi-İmâmî geleneğine mensup çok sayıda âlim ve müfessir, bu türden rivâyetleri haber-i vâhid olduğu, bu yüzden kesin hüccet ve bilgi değeri taşıyamayacağı gerekçesiyle reddetmişlerdir. Bu makalede, İmâmiyye Şîası’nın -erken, klasik ve son dönem bağlamında- tahrif iddiasına yönelik yaklaşımları mukayeseli bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Konuyla bağlantılı olması bakımından İmâmiyye’nin mushafın cem‘i meselesine yaklaşımlarına da temas edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıraat, Mushaf, Tahrif, Cem‘, İmâmiyye Şîası.

مقاربة الشيعة الإمامية حول القرآن في سياق ادعاء التحريف وجمع

المصحف

المخلص

إن الأقاويل المتعلقة بتحريف القرآن أقاويل صدرت بشكل خاص من قبل المستشرقين منذ زمن بعيد. وجوهر الأمر هو الاعتماد على الادعاء بأن القرآن المنزل من الله إلى النبي عليه السلام أكثر بكثير من القرآن الذي بين أيدينا اليوم، وأن بعض الكلمات والآيات من القرآن قد تم تحريفها سهواً أو عمداً بتغييرها أو حذفها. وتعتمد مصادر هذه الأقاويل في معظمها على روايات العلماء والمفسرين المنسوبين إلى المدرسة الأخبارية من الشيعة الإمامية. إلا أن اجماع الأمة في اتجاه أنه لم يرد مثل هذا الوضع الذي يخل بصحة كلية القرآن بمعنى الزيادة والنقصان أصلاً. إن فكرة تحريف القرآن في أساسها موقف لا يمكن أن يشمل عموم الشيعة الإمامية. لأن العديد من العلماء الذين ينتمون إلى التقليد الشيعي الإمامي قد رفضوا مثل هذه الروايات على أساس أنها من أخبار الواحد، وبالتالي لا يمكن أن تحمل قيمة حجية وعلمية. في هذه المقالة تم دراسة مقاربات الشيعة الإمامية في ادعاء التزوير في سياق الفترات المبكرة والكلاسيكية والحديثة بشكل مقارن، كما تم التطرق أيضاً إلى مقاربات الإمامية لمسألة جمع المصحف من حيث علاقتها بالموضوع.

كلمات مفتاحية: القراءة، مصحف، تحريف، جمع، الشيعة الإمامية.

Introduction

The word *tahrīf* derived from the root of “ح ر ف” which means “bend, incline, turn, deform the original shape of something.” It means “change, distort the meaning of the word” or “to interpret the word which has two possible meanings in the one way.”¹ The word *tahrīf*, which has a close semantic relation with the words “*taghyīr*” and “*tabdīl*”, is a term that is used to express supporters' changing their own holy texts or misinterpreting it deliberately by adding, redacting or deleting.² According to this definition, there are two dimensions of this *tahrīf*. The first one is: “moral *tahrīf*” which occurs thereby interpreting another meaning the words by distorting its original meaning; the second one is: “verbal *tahrīf*” which occurs by making changes in the order of adding or extracting.³ The subject of this article is the reports intended for the verbal *tahrīf* of the Qur'ān and the interpretations put on them.

The basis of the accusation of the verbal *tahrīf* of the Qur'ān is based on the idea that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Holy Prophet by Allāh was larger than the one that we have today and that some of the words, verses, or surahs of the Qur'ān were distorted thereby changing the meaning or reducing its size, either by mistake or on purpose. Most of the origin of these statements are reports that belong to the Imāmī Shī'a Akhbārī school and part of them depends on

¹ Abū al-Qāsim Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Critical ed. Šafyān Adnān al-Dāwūdī (Dimashq: Dār al Qalam, 1412), 228; Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. 'Alī Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Šādūr, 1414/1993), 9/41-43.

² Frants Buhl, “Tahrīf”, *İslām Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: MEB Publication, 1979), 11/667; Muhammed Tarakçı, “Tahrīf”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Publication, 2010), 39/422-424; Sabuhi Şahavatov, “İmāmīyye Şi'ası'nın Kur'an'ın Tahrifi Konusuna Yaklaşımı”, *Usül: İslām Araştırmaları* 22 (Temmuz-Aralık 2014), 45. 46-50

³ Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Ukhdūbat al-tahrīf al-Qur'an bayn al-Shī'a wa-l-Sunnah* (Qum: Mumassiliyyat al-İmām, 1993), 12; Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Şi'yanat al-Qur'ān min al-tahrīf* (Qum: Nashr al-İslāmī, 1428/2007), 14-19.

recountings of a group which belongs to *Khashwiyya*⁴ in Sunnī Muslims.⁵ Depending on these reports, some orientalist assaulted the reliability of the Qur'ān.⁶ In contrast, the general concurrence of the Muslims is that the Qur'ān which is taken great care of its preserving and its maintenance is never exposed to changes in the meaning of deficiency or excess. Actually, the idea intended for the distortion of the Qur'ān does not embrace the general of the Imāmī Shī'a. As a matter of fact, distinguishing two different groups of Imāmīyya, as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/936) says in his work *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, is that:

The Shī'a separates in two groups concerning their attitude to addition in and extraction from the Qur'ān. The first group argues that the Qur'ān was distorted by being extracted some words from it. According to them, the knowledge of the Imām includes those words removed. The second group which consists of those who support the idea of Imāmate also, and they believe that there is no adding in nor extraction from the Qur'ān, it was not exposed to any interference as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet by Allāh the most High, it was not exposed to distortion in any terms or changed, and it continued in its original form.⁷

These two schools which manifest two different approaches, namely, report-based (*riwāyah*) and rational (*dirāyah*) in interpreting the Islamic base texts are respectively named as *Akhbāriyya* and *Uṣūliyya* in the Shī'a -Imāmī tradition. In the Shī'a, *Akhbāriyya*, which refers to one of the understandings opposite to each other in interpreting the religion, is called as a school that defends the Imām's statements and his written reports such as tafsīr, fiqh, tenets of faith etc., which emanate from him, are the only source in religious matters because of the absolute

⁴ *Khashwiyya*: It is a concept used for some "ahl al-ḥadīth" that refuses to reason in religious matters, accepts all the narrations attributed to the Prophet, regardless of whether they are ṣaḥīḥ or not, and shapes their understanding of religion according to The Zāhir of these narrations. During the historical process, they were mentioned by different names such as "aṣḥab al-akhbar", "ahl al-akhbar", "aṣḥab al ḥadīth". Similar names were used for the groups, which have the same understandings, of both the Sunnis and Imāmīyya. (See for detailed information. Muḥammad Abd al-Ḥasan Muhsin al-Gharāwī, *Maṣādir al-iṣṭinbāt bayn al-Uṣūliyyīn wa-l-Akhbāriyyīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1412/1992), 51; Metin Yurdağūr, "Haṣviyye", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi*, (Ankara: TDV Publication, 1997), 16/426-427.

⁵ Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabāī, *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Muassasat al-'A'lām li-l-Matbū'āt, 1973) 12/108-109; Muḥammad Hādī Ma'arafat, *Kur'an İlimleri*, Translated Burhanettin Dağ (İstanbul: Kevser Publication, 2009), 477.

⁶ See for extented information: Abdurrahman Çetin, "Kur'an Kırâatlarına Yönelik Oryantalist Yaklaşımlar", *Marife: Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* (Oryantalizm Özel Sayısı), 2/3 (2002), 65-106.

⁷ Abū al-Ḥasan İsmāil b. Ishāk al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, Critical ed. Na'im Dhardūr (Beirut: Maktabat al-'Aṣriyye, 1426/2005), 1/55.

loyalty to the authority of the imams.⁸ This school whose intellectual bases depend on Kulaynī (d. 329/941) and Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), who are accepted as the pioneers of the Imāmiyya, emerged much earlier than the Uṣūliyya.⁹ In Shī'a literature, four works which are known as *al-Kutub al-Arba'* are the basic reference resources of the Akhbāriyya. These four resources are composed of books of Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī's (Shaykh Ṣadūq) *Kitābu men lā yaḥduruh al-faqīh*, Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) *Kitābu Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and *Kitābu al-Istibṣār*. The Akhbāriyya believe that all the reports in the four ḥadīth corpus mentioned above are valid and express certain knowledge.¹⁰ The Akhbārī approach, which depends on reports alone in understanding and interpreting the Qur'an, continued its dominance in this way until the end of the fourth/tenth century.¹¹ The first struggle against the Akhbārī understanding was started by Shaykh Muḥfid (d. 413/1022), who was the leader of the school of Baghdād and Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), who was the fiqh authority of the school of Baghdād and Abū Ja'far Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century in the time of Būveyhī. Writers mentioned above broke the dominance of the Akhbārī understanding.¹²

The *Uṣūliyya*, the name of the group which believes that imāms' statements and reports cannot be the resource of all sciences of shari'a and they cannot always meet all the needs of the people in every era, therefore, it accepts that religious verdicts can be achieved by the Qur'an, sunnah, general consensus (Ijma') and intellectual deduction.¹³ Uṣūlī mentality was formed by Sherīf al-Murtaḍā, who was Shaykh Muḥfid's student, thereby accepting the kalam principles the Mu'tazila and it became more systematic with Ṭūsī, who was called with the title of *Shaykh al-Tāiifa*, and in this respect Islamic tafsīr which was based on

⁸ Gharāwī, *Maṣādir al-istinbāt*, 55-56; Metin Yurdagür, "Ahbāriyye", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi*, (Ankara: TDV Publication, 1998), 1/490-491.

⁹ Mazlum Uyar, *Imāmiyye Şi'ası'nda Düşünce Ekolleri -Ahbārīlik-* (İstanbul: Ayışığı, 2000), 68-69.

¹⁰ Yurdagür, "Ahbāriyye", 1/490. For the detailed information about *al-Kutub al-Arba'a* which constitute the ḥadīth resources of the Imāmi Shīte see. Bekir Kuzudişli, *Şi'a ve Hadis: Başlangıçtan Kütüb-i Erba'a'ya Hadis Rivâyeti ve İsnâd* (İstanbul: Klasik, 2017), 401-510.

¹¹ Uyar, *Ahbārīlik*, 68.

¹² Gharāwī, *Maṣādir al-istinbāt*, 54; Uyar, *Ahbārīlik*, 88.

¹³ Muḥsin Amīn al-Āmilī, *A'yān al-Shī'a* (Beirut: Matbā'atu'l-İnsāf, 1370/1951), 17/453; Gharāwī, *Maṣādir al-istinbāt*, 39; Mustafa Öz, "Uṣūliyye", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Publication, 2012) 42/214. 214-215

Uşûlî/hermeneutical mentality was originated.¹⁴ As is in many shar'î disciplines, normalisation process begun in tafsîr as well. In the tradition of tafsîr in the group of Uşûlî, matters as severely rejecting the distortion of the Qur'ân and giving up extreme comments and pieces of information based on insulting and deriding of three of the rightly guided caliphs and some companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, can be mentioned as the basic signs of normalisation process which was begun by especially Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsî and Abū 'Alî Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsî (d. 548/1153).¹⁵

The Imāmīyya-Uşûliyya tradition continued its dominance until the eleventh/ seventeenth century. In this century, the tendency towards the Akhbārî mentality increased because of the rallying of Akhbārî thought cast, and this tendency also revealed itself in tafsîr. The surging dominance struggle between Akhbārīyya-Uşûliyya which begun from the first period and showed itself in tafsîr in Imāmīyya, result in favor of Uşûliyya in time and after all this thought died out in today's Imāmī Shī'a.¹⁶

In this study, the Imāmī Shī'a approach regarding the allegation of distortion and collection of the Qur'ân is scrutinised. Under this analysis, the stages of the Imāmī Shī'a tradition is considered, and thus it is attempted to be determined whether or not the Imāmī Shī'a have the same opinion for the mentioned subjects. Within the study, the first period resources of the Imāmī Shī'a, particularly Furāt al-Kūfî's (d. 310/923) *Tafsîru Furāt al-Kūfî*, Muḥammed b. Mes'ūd al-'Ayyāshî's (d. 320/93) *Tafsîr al-'Ayyāshî*, 'Alî b. Ibrāhîm al-Qummî's (d. 329/942) *Tafsîru al-Qummî*, Kulaynî's (d. 329/941) *al-Kāfî*, Shaykh Şadūq's (d. 381/991) *Risālat al-i'tiqādāt al-Imāmīyya* and of the classical period which are Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsî's *al-Tibyān fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân* and Abū 'Alî Ḥasan at-Ṭabarsî's *Majma' al-bayān fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân* and of the late period which are Fayḍ-i Kāshānî's (d. 1091/1680) *Tafsîr al-şāfî*'s, Bahrānî's (d. 1108/1696) *Burhān*'s and Huweyḍî's (d. 1112/1700) *Tafsîru nūr al-thaqalayn* and of the recent period which are Muḥammed Huseyn al-Ṭabātabā'î's (d. 1402/1981) *al-Mizān fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, Abū al-Qāsim Khū'î's (d. 1413/1992) *al-Bayān fî tafsîr*

¹⁴ Mustafa Öz, "Ṭūsî, Ebû Ca'fer", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Publication, 2011), 41/434 (433-435)

¹⁵ Mustafa Öztürk, "Şii-İmâmî Kültürünün Genel Karakteristikleri", *Tarihten Günümüze Kur'an'a Yaklaşımlar, İlim Yayma Vakfı Kur'an ve Tefsir Akademisi*, ed. Bilal Gökçür (Ankara: Özkan Matbaacılık, 2010), 262.

¹⁶ Yurdagür, "Ahbârīyye", 1/490-491

al-Qur'an, Hādī Ma'refat's *al-Tamhīd fī 'ulūm al-Qur'an* and *Şiyānat al-Qur'an min al-tahrīf*, Rasūl Ja'fariyān's, *Ukdhūbat al-tahrīf al-Qur'an*, Sayyid Murtaḍā Razawī's, *al-Burhān fī 'adami tahrīf al-Qur'an* are among the basic references that are use.

While approaches of the Imāmī Shī'a in the related subjects are introduced, the materials in the resources of Ahl al-Sunna are of course also referred to. Likewise, while Shī'a scholars grounded work on the subjects mentioned above, they often included information in the Sunnī literature.

A. The Distortion Viewpoints of the Imāmī Shī'a Oriented at the Qur'an

The historical developments in Quranic exegesis (tafsīr) of the Imāmī Shī'a can be assorted according to the phases of dominant Akhbāriyya and Uṣūliyya rule. This are as follows: 1. The first, or Akhbārī, narrative, period (spanning from the 1st to 4th century hijrī); 2. The middle, or classical, period, also known as the first Uṣūlī hermeneutical period (spanning form the 5th to 10th century hijrī); 3. The Late, or second, Akhbārī narrative period (stretching from the 11th to 12th centuries hijrī); 4. The Final, or second, Uṣūlī hermeneutical period (covering the 13th to 14th centuries hijrī).¹⁷

In this section, the distortion issue will be analysed under three headings considering those stages that Imāmī Shī'a passed through. In the first heading, reportings of the Imāmī Shī'a about distortion will be examined. In the second heading, the approaches of the Imāmīyya Shī'a of the classical period, notably Ṭūsī and Ṭabarsī, on distortion is going to be discussed. Finally, In the third heading, approaches of the Imāmī Shī'a of the late period will be evaluated.

1. The viewpoint of Distortion of the Imāmī Shī'a of the Early Period

There are plenty of narratives about the literal distortion of the Qur'an in the Imāmīyya Shī'a resources and tafsīr of the early period. Some of the reports about the literal distortion voice the allegation that many verses were taken out from the Qur'ānic text. For example, in a work called *al-Kāfi*, which belongs to

¹⁷ See for the categorization related to these stages Aslan Habibov, *İlk Dönem Şi' Tefsir Anlayışı* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2007), 13-24; Öztürk, "Şi'îmâmî Kültürünün Genel Karakteristikleri", 256.

Kulaynī and is accepted as the first respected ḥadīth resource of the Imāmīyya, a report as like “the Qur’ān which Jabrā’īl brought to the Holy Prophet consisted of seventeen thousand verses.” was reported from Ja‘far al-Şādiq (d. 148/765).¹⁸

According to another report in the same work, Abū al-Ḥasan (Imām Riḍa) (d. 202/818) gave a Qur’ān to Muḥammad b. Abū al-Nasr, and when he opened it, he claimed that he saw names of seventy people from Quraysh written one by one with their fathers.¹⁹

Again, another report mentioned in al-Kulaynī, Sālim b. Salama heard that a man was reciting the Qur’ān apart from the one people recite as usual to Ja‘far al-Şādiq. Ja‘far al-Şādiq, stopped that man’s reciting and said to him, “Recite the way the people recite, until the extant imām (Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Mahdī) rises, after He has arisen he will recite the Qur’ān in its original/real form.”²⁰

In another report which is based on Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), the 23rd verse of al-Baqarah was revealed by Jabrā’īl as *وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ* *فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ* *عَبْدِنَا - فِي عَلِيٍّ - فَإِنَّا نَسُورُهُ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ* “If thou are in doubt as to what we revealed to our subject— about ‘Alī-, then bring a sūrah like that”.²¹

In the essence of these narrations, it is claimed that the Qur’ān, which is revealed to Prophet by Allah, was reduced or that its original text was falsified. In that the first and second narrations, the verses of the Qur’ān are actually much more than the Qur’ān we have, in the third narration, when the Qāim (the riser) Imām appears, he will read the Qur’ān in its original form, the final narration, the expression “*فِي عَلِيٍّ*” which refers to the guardianship of ‘Alī, his Holiness, was removed. Sharīf al-Murtaḍā described those ḥadīth scholars, who were defined as *aṣḥab al-ḥadīth* by him, as the people who narrated every report preceded them, and they see and hear without putting those reports to analysis.²²

Reports related to the distortion are found in the tafsīr resources of the Imāmīyyah. Virtually all verses allegedly exposed to distortion are either specifically related to the guardianship of ‘Alī, his holiness, or generally to the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt and the imāms. In this sense, the guardianship of ‘Alī, his

¹⁸ Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī, *Furū‘ al-Kāfī*, Critical ed. ‘Alī Akbar al-Ghifārī (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-İslāmiyya, 1968), 2/634.

¹⁹ Kulaynī, *Furū‘ al-Kāfī*, 1/631.

²⁰ Kulaynī, *Furū‘ al-Kāfī*, 1/633.

²¹ Baqarah 2/23.

²² Kulaynī, *Furū‘ al-Kāfī*, 1/417.

Holiness, and virtues of the imams, called innocent (*ma‘sum*), get shaded by allegedly distorted verses. Thus, according to a report in the tafsīr of Qummī, while the Holy Prophet was sitting with his companions in an assembly, he said: “Someone who looked like Jesus the son of Mary would join us soon.” They made room for him, it is ‘Alī, his Holiness, who came a little later. Such promotion of ‘Alī, his holiness, caused astonishment among some companions in the assembly. Thereupon Allāh, the Exalted, revealed the verse of al-Zukhruf which was - *إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ* - “*Alī was a servant we bestowed our favor upon and made him an example to the Israelites*”²³ about that assembly but the expression mentioned as ‘Alī was removed. Similar situation also occurs in the verse of the same surah which is *فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ فِي الْعِلْمِ - إِنْكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ* “*So grab on to what was revealed to you – about ‘Alī - because you are on a Straight Way.*”²⁴ And the expression *فِي الْعِلْمِ* was removed. Without distortion the verse means that “*You are on the guardianship of ‘Alī beyond any doubt, as ‘Alī is the Straight Way.*”²⁵

According to Qummī, many verses stating the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt have been violated were exposed to distortion. For example, in the verse revealed as *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا - آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَقَّهُمْ - لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا* “*Those who deny and do wrong – to Ahl al-Bayt – Allāh will never forgive them nor guide them to the right way.*”²⁶ the expression “*آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَقَّهُمْ*” was removed from the Qur’ān. Similarly, in the verse revealed as *وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا - آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَقَّهُمْ - أَيُّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ* “*Those who behave unjustly regarding the rights of Ahl al-Bayt will soon experience the consequences.*”²⁷ and states that it was not looked after Ahl al-Bayt’s rights, the expression “*آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَقَّهُمْ*” was written to the Qur’ān by distorting.²⁸

²³ Zukhruf 43/59. About the verse in the Qur’ān *إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ* “*Jesus was a servant we bestowed our favor upon and made him an example to the Israelites*”

²⁴ al-Zukhruf 43/43.

²⁵ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, Critical ed. Ṭayyeb Mūsawī (Qum: Dar al-Hujja, 1426/2005) 2/259-260. See for the other variants of the reports, Abū al-Qāsim Furāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr al-Furāt al-Kūfī*, Critical ed. Muḥammad al-Kāzīm (Beirut: Muassasat al-Nu‘mān, 1412/1992), 2/402-405; Hashīm b. Sulaymān al-Bahrānī, *al-Burhān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Critical ed. Qāsim al-Dirāsāt al-Īslāmiyya (Qum: Muassasat al-Bi’sa, 1415/1995) 4/866.

²⁶ al-Nisā’ 4/168.

²⁷ al-Shu‘arā’ 26/227.

²⁸ Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1/23. See for the other variants of the reports Mulla Muḥsīn Muḥammad b. Shāh Mahmūd al-Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-ṣāfi*, Proofreader Ḥusayn ‘Ālamī, 2.

However, Qur'ānic expressions are mentioned as “ummah/امة” but recited as “aimmah/ائمة” to indicate imāms of the Imāmiyyah Shī‘a are words subject to literal distortion.²⁹ For example, the Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq said to a man who recited the verse *كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ*, “*You are the most auspicious ummah of the people brought out for mankind*,”³⁰ as how it was in the Qur‘ān that “Were those who slaughtered Caliph’s Ḥusayn the most auspicious ummah of the people?” and stated that that verse was revealed as *كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أَيْمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ* “*You are the most auspicious imāms of all brought out for the mankind*” and the praise at the end of the verse as “enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, believing in Allāh...” referred to them.³¹

According to another report which was depended to Ahl al-Bayt by Qummī, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq said for the mentioned verse, which was *وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا* “*Assign us as leaders for the devout*”,³² that “They wanted a major thing from Allāh by asking for being leaders for the devout.” and the verse mentioned was revealed as *وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا* “*Give us an imām from the devout ones*”.³³ This report is an implied reference for the matter of imamate, which is the most important doctrine of the Imāmī Shī‘a.

Similar reports are in Kūfī and ‘Ayyāshī which are the tafsirs of Imāmiyya of the first period. For example, according to the report that Furāt al-Kūfī transferred by depending it on Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the eighth verse of the sūrat al-Furqān³⁴ was revealed as *وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ - لَالِ مُحَمَّدٍ حَقَّهُمْ - إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا* “*And the oppressors said that – about Muḥammad’s Ahl al-Bayt – “If you follow this man, you will follow no one but bewitched.”*”³⁵ Also, according to the report that ‘Ayyāshī narrated based on Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the twenty-fourth

Edition (Beirut: Muassasat al-‘Ālamī li-l-Matbū‘āt, 1402/1982, 1/50; Baḥrānī, *al-Burhān*, 4/195).

²⁹ Meir M. Bar & Ashar, “Imāmiyye Şiası’nın Kıraat Farklılıkları ve Kur’an’a İlaveleri”, Translated by Ömer Kara & Mehmet Dağ, *EKEV Akademi Dergisi* 1/3 (Kasım 1998), 211. (207-235)

³⁰ ‘Āl-i ‘Imrān 3/110.

³¹ Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1/22. See for the similar reports Abū al-Naṣr Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, Proofreader Hashīm Rasulī Muḥallātī (Beirut: Muassasat al-‘Ālamī li-l-Matbū‘āt, 1411/1991) 2/219.

³² al-Furqān 25/74.

³³ Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1/22. Also see Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-ṣāfi*, 1/50

³⁴ al-Furqān 25/8. *وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا* “*And the unjusts said that “If you followed this man, you would follow noone but bewitched”*”

³⁵ Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr al-Furāt*, 1/291. See for the similar report Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1/88. ‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, 1/20.

verse of the sūrat al-Nahl³⁶ was revealed by Jabrā‘īl as *وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أُنزِلَ رَبُّكُمْ فِيهِ* - *على* - *قَالُوا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ* “When it is said to them “What was revealed to you –about ‘Alī- by your Lord?” They say “tales of antecedents”.³⁷

As is seen, the reports mostly dependant on Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja‘far al-Šādiq, attempt to prove the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt, ‘Alī, his holiness, and the imāms regarded as innocent. Besides, matters such as Imamah and guardianship central the Shī‘ite understanding attempted to be further proved by those reports.

Although this is the general approach in the early period Imāmī Shī‘a, there are also opinions that partially reject the claim of distortion in the Qur’ān, contrary to the general approach in the same periods. In the work of *Risālat al-Ī‘tiqādātī al-Īmāmiyyah* which belongs to Ībn Bābeweyh el-Qummī, who is known as Shaykh Šadūq and is accepted as the one of the people upon whom the Akhbārī tradition depends on, his statement starting with “Our belief about al-Qur’ān al-Karīm is this,” and meaning that the Qur’ān was preserved from distortion is vital in this respect. Shaykh Šadūq says: “al-Qur’ān al-Karīm is Allāh’s revelation, revealed word and his book. Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm revealed to Muḥammed, who is the prophet of Allāh, is between two covers (the two covers of a book) and it is the one that Muslims have at present and is more of than its existing form. Those who assert that we say the Qur’ān is more than its existing form are liars.”³⁸

Shaykh Šadūq, accepted those reports dependant on Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja‘far al-Šādiq in general. However, he construed them differently from the Akhbārī scholars to which he also belonged. According to Shaykh Šadūq, all those are originated from revelation, yet they are not the Qur’ān. If they were the Qur’ān, they would no doubt be between its two covers, not outside them.³⁹

As seen with Shaykh Šadūq, although some disparities in approach exist, there are plenty of narratives alleging the Qur’ān was distorted in its meaning and words in first period resources of the Imāmī Shī‘a. Therefore, it is possible to say that the Imāmī Shī‘a of the early period embraces the allegation of distortion. Thus, Hādī Ma‘refat, who is one of the scholars of the Imāmī Shī‘a of the recent

³⁶ al-Nahl 16/24. *وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أُنزِلَ رَبُّكُمْ فِيهِ قَالُوا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ* “When it is said to them ‘What was revealed to you by your Lord?’ They say ‘tales of antecedents’”

³⁷ ‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, 2/279. See for the similar reports Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr al-Furāt*, 1/234; Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, II, 385

³⁸ Abū Ja‘far Ibn Bābawāyḥ al-Qummī, *Risālat al-ī‘tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, Translated Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1978), 99.

³⁹ Shaykh Šadūq, *Ī‘tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, 100-101.

period, accepts this aspect. According to him, it is true that some Akhbārīs who are not in the class of the famous scholars of the Imāmī Shī'a went too far and made some statements that did not have a scientific value. However, the reports of the Akhbārī Shī'a should not be attributed to all members of their tradition.⁴⁰

2. The Viewpoint of Distortion of the Imāmī Shī'a of the Classical Period

The first serious approach to rejecting the claim of falsifying the Qur'ān was initiated by scholars considered to be pioneers of the Uṣūlī tradition, such as Shaykh Muḥīd, Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī and Ṭabarsī. These scholars mentioned the groups that accepted the Akhbārī understanding and criticised them in their works. They rejected the reports that the Qur'ān was literally distorted on the basis that those reports were al-khabar al-wāḥid and so did not have sufficient evidential and informative value.⁴¹

At the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century, the first man who started the struggle against the mentality of Akhbārī was Shaykh Muḥīd. He defined people who believed in this mentality as the ones who determined their point of view according to the ḥadīth/reports they heard, and did not check the titles of those reports, and could not tell the rightness and mistakes in the reports and did not understand the meanings of those reports and called them as "people that lack understanding".⁴²

In the preface of his work called as *al-Tibyān*, Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī, who was one of the significant authors of that period, described the approaches alleging excess and deficiency in the Qur'ān as wrong and inappropriate. According to Ṭūsī, discussing that there were excesses and deficiency in the Divine Word was an assertion that did not pertain to it. The assertion that there were excesses and deficiency in the Qur'ān was declined by Muslims unanimously. According to our sect, this is the most accurate view and is also supported by al-Murtaḍā.⁴³ In fact, it was narrated by the Imāmī Shī'a (*khāssa*) and Ahl al-Sunnah (*āmma*) in many

⁴⁰ Muḥammad Hādī Ma' refat, *Ṣiyānat al-Qur'ān min al-tahrīf* (Qum: Muassasat al-Nashr al-İslāmī, 1428/2007), 60; Id., *Kur'an İlimleri*, 487.

⁴¹ See Sayyid Murtaḍā Razwī, *al-Burhān fī 'adami tahrīf al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: İrshād al-Atıbbā' wa-l-Nashr, 1991), 239-261; Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Ukdhubat al-tahrīf*, 117-121.

⁴² Gharāwī, *Maṣādir al-istınbāt*, 52.

⁴³ See for the views of Sherīf al-Murtaḍā related to the subject, Mehmet Zülfü Cennet, *Şii/Usūlī Geleneğin Kur'an Yorumu (Şerif Murtazâ Örneği)* (Ankara: Fecr, 2016), 95-106.

reports that there were additions and redactions made to the Qur'ān. However, as al-khabar al-wāhid reports, these do not express information reliably and are not binding in terms of practice. There is no Muslim found to assert otherwise nor approve this claim.⁴⁴

Ṭabarsī was another author who declined speculation about the distortion of the Qur'ān in the classical period. He evidently opposed the assertion of the distortion in the Qur'ān, just as his predecessor did, and discussed the subject in the preface of his work called *Majma' u al-bayān*. In brief, his opinions about this case are as follows: the claims made that there were additions and redactions in the Qur'ān are ugly imputations which are impossible to explain. A group from our sect and a group from the khashwiyya 'āmmah (ahl al-sunnah) narrated reports of alterations and redactions of the Qur'ān. According to the eminent scholars of our sect, the correct view is that the assertion of distortion is untrue. This is a view which also al-Murtaḍā supports.⁴⁵

Ṭabarsī, from al-Murtaḍā, stated that knowing the trueness of the Qur'ān's narration spread by mouth to mouth is as certain as knowing the cities of the world, the great events of history, and the famous books and poems literature. Moreover, none of these could achieve the level of correctness which the Qur'ān could. Muslim scholars took great care in protecting and memorising the Qur'ān. They analysed its every detail, its pronunciation in reciting (*qira'at*), case endings (*'irab*), indeed its number of the verses and letters, and they acquired the knowledge of them all. Therefore, it is impossible for the Qur'ān, of which was taken great care and grace, and which was subject to great efforts to record, memorise and protect, to have been altered or redacted.⁴⁶

In sum, there is no way to take seriously the allegations by the Imāmiyya and Khashwiyya that the Qur'ān was distorted. The dispute about this matter is based on weak reports narrated by Ahl al-Ḥadīth (Akhbārīyya) as they think that it was true. It is impossible to give up because of the weak reports on the integrity of the truth of the Qur'ān, which is exact and certain.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Critical ed. Aḥmad Ḥabīb 'Āmilī (Beirut: Dār al-Īhyā' al-Tūrāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 1/3-4.

⁴⁵ Abū 'Alī Ḥasan b. Faḍl al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Lajna Min al-Muhaqqiqīn (Beirut: Muassasat al-'A'lā, 1415/1995), 1/42.

⁴⁶ Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, 1/43.

⁴⁷ Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān*, 1/43. Ṭabarsī's opinions on the distortion reported above were attributed to Ṭūsī by some researchers. In fact, those informations were in the preface of

As is seen, some reports in the Shī'ite resources of the first era and intended that the Qur'ān was literally distorted were severely rejected by the authors belonged to the tradition of Uşūliyya. Those reports were narrated by the exorbitant men due to being thought that they were true and were regarded as the weak and nonbinding reports.

3. The Viewpoint of Distortion of the Imāmī Shī'a of the Recent Period

Shaykh Mufīd, Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Ṭābarsī and Ṭūsī, who prioritised rational deduction among the Imāmī Shī'a and were the pioneers of the Uşūlī tradition, rejected the thoughts of distortion of the tafsīr scholars and well-known intellectuals – putting aside some reports in the works the later period Akhbārīs⁴⁸ – and this continued as a dominant view over the next centuries.⁴⁹

Shī'a scholars of the later period vehemently rejected assertions that the Qur'ān was distorted and they wrote independent works related to that subject. Muḥammed al-Ḥusayn the Kāshif al-Ghīṭā'(d. 1877/1954) who is one of the authors of the recent era, defined the Qur'ān Muslims possess as a book which has no deficiency nor change or redaction. According to him, the Imāmīyya are allied in this belief. That is why, the reports from the Imāmī Shī'a or other currents stating that the Qur'ān is redacted or altered are *al-Khabar al-wāḥid*, and so are weak, minority and do not have any informative value and cannot be a basis for practice.⁵⁰

Ṭabātabāī, who also is one of the most important writers to leave his mark on the era, analyses the reports narrated from both Ahl al-Sunnah and Imāmīyya under the heading “The Qur'ān Was Protected from Distortion”⁵¹ in his tafsīr *al-*

Ṭabarsī. Probably, the first researcher overlooked this point and other ones transferred them without studying. See for the related works, Şaban Karataş, *Şīa'da ve Sünni Kaynaklarda Kur'an Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ekin Yayınları, 1996), 176-179; Habibov, *Şii Tefsir Anlayışı*, 132-133; Ziya Şen, *Şīa'nın Kırâatlere ve Kur'an Tarihine Bakışı* (İstanbul: Düşün Yayınları, 2013), 275-276.

⁴⁸ See for the opinions of Akhbārī of the last period Razawī, *Burhān*, 251-267; Ca'feriyān, *Ukdhūbat It-tahrīf*, 117-121; 157-190; Karataş, *Kur'an Tarihi*, 157-190.

⁴⁹ Mustafa Öztürk, *Tefsirde Ehl-i Sünnet & Şīa Polemikleri* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu, 2009), 186.

⁵⁰ Kāshif al-Ghīṭā, *Caferi Mezhebi ve Esasları ('Asl al-Shia wa usūluhā)*, 5. Edition, Translated Abdūlbâki Gölpınarlı (Qum: Ansāriyān, 1992), 48-49.

⁵¹ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabātabāī, *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 2. Edition (Beirut: Muassasat al-'Ālamī li-l-Matbū'āt, 1973), 9/104-133.

Mīzān. There he states: History categorically proves that the Qur'ān we have today is the same book revealed to Muḥammad and which he recited in his times. It has never lost its superior quality, blessings and effects. The Qur'ān, which Allāh, the Exalted, revealed to Muḥammad and declared that he would preserve it as He revealed, was put under protection against any change, redaction, and addition with the preservation of Allāh himself.⁵² Thus, whether narrated by different branches of the Ahl al-Sunnah or Imāmīyya, these reports that the Qur'ān was distorted are weak in their chain of narration, contrary to the Qur'ān and impossible to accept.⁵³

Āyatallāh Khomaynī (1902-1989) who was the leader of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, remarked: Everyone who knows about the care and efforts in transcribing, recording, collecting, preserving and reciting the noble Qur'ān is convinced that the assertion it was exposed to distortion has no factual basis. As for the reports narrated in the resources related to the subject; one part of these reports is too weak to constitute evidential value, one part is made of the indeterminate (*mawḍū'*) ḥadīth reports determined to be fictitious, and the other part is composed of the explanations oriented tafsir and ta'wīl of the word of Allāh.⁵⁴

As for Hādī Ma'rifat, he indicated that the root of the discourse of the distortion was based on some reports narrated in the ḥadīth sources of the Ahl al-Sunnah (*Khashwiyya*) and the Shī'ites (*Akhbārīyya*)⁵⁵ and briefly said: "These kinds of reports which vitiate and harm the Sharī'ah and the book of Allāh were made up by unknown or weak people and are rejected and discredited reports by the prominent scholar of the Imāmī Shī'a. Thus, these sorts of sayings related to distortion uttered by a heterodox group should be disregarded, and their fallacies should not be attributed to the Imāmīyya, who are fair and clear."⁵⁶ According to Hādī Ma'rifat, the belief of the majority of the Imāmīyya about the Qur'ān is that there is neither any deficiency nor addition made to the Qur'ān and it reached the

⁵² Ṭabāṭabāī, *al-Mīzān*, 12/107-108.

⁵³ Ṭabāṭabāī, *al-Mīzān*, 12/117.

⁵⁴ Sayyid Rıdḥā Ḥusaynī, *Cevaplıyoruz: Kur'an Tahrif Edilmiş midir?*, Translated Muḥammad Mücāhidī (İstanbul: Kevser, 2005), 83.

⁵⁵ See for the reports asserted to be in the sources of Ahl al-Sunnah Ma'rifat, *Şiyānat al-Qur'ān*, 157-195.

⁵⁶ See Ma'rifat, *Şiyānat al-Qur'ān*, 60, 82, 197; Id., *Kur'an İlimleri*, 487.

present day in absolute terms without being subject to any alteration as Allāh revealed to Muḥammad.⁵⁷

In sum, as the Ja'fariyās noted,⁵⁸ no matter what some reports narrated about the Qur'ān being literally distorted, such reports exist in the sources of Imāmiyyah of the first period. However, prominent writers of the Uṣūlī tradition, like Shaykh Muḥid most notably, and Sherīf al-Murtaḍā Ṭūsī and Ṭabarsī, denied the assertion of distortion in their sources in person and accepted that those were the weak *al-khabar al-wāḥid* reports. Abovementioned authors' views reject the claim that there is a distortion in the Qur'ān continued its existence as a prevailing point of view after that.

B. The Problem of the Collection of the Qur'ān

Within the context of the History of the Qur'an, one of the discussions between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Imāmī Shī'a concerns the collection of the Qur'ān. This subject becomes more of an issue since it has a close connection to the allegation of distortion. On the contrary to prevalent belief in Ahl al-Sunnah,⁵⁹ the common approach in the references of the Shī'a of the first period is that after the Prophet of Allāh passed away the Qur'ān was collected by 'Alī, his Holiness, for the first time, being all of it free from the distortion. Besides, he carried out

⁵⁷ Ma' refat, *Şiyānat al-Qur'ān*, 80-81. See for the attributed opinion to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 1/55.

⁵⁸ Ja'fariyān, *Ukdūbat al-tahrīf*, 121.

⁵⁹ General approach of Ahl al-Sunnah is that the Qur'ān was turned into a book for the first time by Abū Bakr (d. 13/634) by the advice of 'Umar al-Farrūkh (d. 23/644). Upon the martyrdom of a large number of Qur'rās in the Battle of Yamāmah, which took place during the time of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, concerned about that as this might happen again and this would cause to loss of most part of the Qur'ān. So a committee was established under the presidency of Zayd b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 45/665) by the warning of 'Umar and by means of this committee dispersed verses of the Qur'ān were gathered and collected for the first time. This collected Qur'ān was kept by Abū Bakr until his death then it was inherited to 'Umar, his Holiness, after Abū Bakr's death and then it was commended to Ḥaḥṣah bint 'Umar (d. 45/665) who was the daughter of 'Umar, his Holiness, for the reports about this see al-Bukhārī, "Fedhāil al-Qur'ān", 3; Abū al-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Critical ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl İbrāhīm (Kahire: Hay'at al-Miṣriyya, 1394/1974), 1/ 203.

this mission at the bequest of the Holy Prophet.⁶⁰ There are plenty of narratives that support this in the sources of the Shī‘ia of the first period.⁶¹

According to a report narrated from Ja‘far al-Šādiq, the Holy Prophet (probably when he was on his deathbed) addressed ‘Alī, his holiness, and said: “Oh ‘Alī! The Qur’ān written on papers and silk clothes and pages is under my bed. Take and collect them! Do not lose the noble Qur’ān just as the Jews lost the Torah.” ‘Alī, his Holiness, placed the things on which the verses of the Qur’ān were written in a parcel and took them to his home. Then, he swore he would never appear before the people in his woolen cloak until he turned those dispersed pieces into the Qur’ān. And he abided by his oath.⁶²

Similar reports are in Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) and Ya‘qūbī (d. 284/897) who were assumed that they had the Imāmī Shī‘a tendencies. Ibn al-Nadīm indicated that it was ‘Alī, his holiness, who collected the noble Qur’ān and he saw the Qur’ān written in the handwriting of ‘Alī, his Holiness, and according to Abū Ya‘la Ḥamzah Ḥasanī this Qur’ān passed to the children of Ḥasan b. ‘Alī. (d. 49/669).⁶³

Again according to the information narrated by Ya‘qūbī, Ali, his Holiness, set to work collecting the Qur’ān after the Holy Prophet had died. Eventually, after he had done this, he saddled the Qur’ān he gathered on a camel and brought

⁶⁰ See Muḥammad Hādī Ma‘refat, *al-Tamhīd fi ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta‘āraf li-l-Matbūāt, 1432/2011), 1/292.

⁶¹ For example, about this case, a report in Kulaynī and depended on Muḥammad Bāqir is as below:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ ابْنِ مَخْبُوبٍ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ أَبِي الْمِقْدَامِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ مَا ادَّعَى أَحَدٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ أَنَّهُ جَمَعَ الْقُرْآنَ كُلَّهُ كَمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَّا كَذَابٌ وَ مَا جَمَعَهُ وَ حَفِظَهُ كَمَا نَزَّلَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَّا عَلَيَّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) وَ الْأَيْمَةَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام)

“As far as the audition of Jābir from Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir- concerned he said as below: “Whoever from people says that he collected the whole of the Qur’ān- as the way it revealed- he is a liar. Because it was ‘Alī and following imāms who collected the Qur’ān- as the way it revealed- and memorized it.” (See Kulaynī, *Furū‘ al-Kāfi*, 1/228). Again according to a report in Qummī and depended on Muḥammad Bāqir, “Nobody collected the Qur’ān but the Holy Prophet’s Ahl al-Bayt.” See Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 2/405.

⁶² Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 2/405. Same report is also in Ibn Abī Dāwūd. See Abū Bakr ‘Abdallāh b. Abī Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Aṣ‘as al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, Critical ed. Muḥammad b. ‘Abduh (Kahire: al-Fārūq al-Hadītha, 1423/2002), 59.

⁶³ Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad b. Īdrīs al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, Critical ed. Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1417/1997), 45-46.

it to the masjid. There he turned to the crowd and said: “This is the Qur’ān that I collected.”⁶⁴

As can be understood from the reports cited above, ‘Alī, his holiness, set to collect the Qur’ān after the Holy Prophet passed away. Although some Sunnī references⁶⁵ noted that the word “collect” mentioned here meant “memorising the Qur’ān”, according to the references of the Shī’a, the meaning for “collecting” was not “memorising”, it was to gather the Qur’ān between two covers. As according to the Shī’a sources after ‘Alī, his holiness, had gathered the Qur’ān between two covers, he presented this Qur’ān to the people and said: “This is the Book revealed to your Prophet by your Lord Allāh and there is no letter added nor a letter taken away.” They responded to him: “We do not need the things in it. We have the Qur’ān you have.” He walked away from them replying by reciting this verse: “But they did not keep their promises, they changed it for a favour. What a bad trade it is.”⁶⁶ This event with some variations is related Abū Manşūr al-Ṭabarsī, who Kulaynī and Hādī Ma’refat defined⁶⁷ as an unknown person.⁶⁸

As far as the reports narrated from the references of the Imāmiyyah of the first period are concerned, even though we do not have the real Qur’ān, it appears that it did not disappear entirely and it was transferred by imāms one after another and finally was placed in the care of the twelfth extant Imām (Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Mahdī).⁶⁹

The Imāmī Shī’a, which believes that the Qur’ān was collected by ‘Alī, his holiness, due the order of the Prophet of Allāh, did not put forth an exact explanation for when and by whom the Qur’ān we have collected. However, based on the reports we narrated in the context of rejection of the Qur’ān ‘Alī, his Holiness, prepared, it is possible to deduct that the Imāmī Shī’a of the first period, implicitly though, accept the actual Qur’ān was collected in the time of Abū Bakr, his holiness.

⁶⁴ Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. İshāq al-Ya’qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya’qūbī* (Beirut: Dār al Sādir, 1432/2011), 2/135.

⁶⁵ Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, 59; Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1/204.

⁶⁶ Āl-i ‘Imrān 3/187. Shaykh Ṣadūq, *İ’tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, 101.

⁶⁷ Ma’refat, *Şiyānat al-Qur’ān*, 231-233.

⁶⁸ See Kuleynī, *Furū’ al-Kāfi*, 2/633; Abū Manşūr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ṭabarsī, *al-İhtijāj*, 2. Edition (Beirut: Muassasat al-‘Ālamī li-l-Matbū’āt, 1983), 1/156.

⁶⁹ Kuleynī, *Furū’ al-Kāfi*, 2/633; ‘Alī Akbar Bābāi, *Tefsir Ekolleri*, Translated Kenan Hamurcu (İstanbul: al-Mustafa Yayınları), 2014, 1/74.

As for the Imāmī Shī'a of the classical era, some scholars said in the point of declaring the Qur'an's being preserved from the distortion that the Qur'an was gathered while the Messenger of Allāh was alive and was compiled with the existing version we have today. Ṭabarsī is the one of the authors who mentioned this. According to him, the present version of the Qur'an was compiled in the time of the Prophet of Allāh. The proof that the Qur'an was compiled in the time of the Prophet, his holiness, is that the whole of was read and memorised in that period. Moreover, it is known that the Holy Prophet charged one group from the companions with memorising the Qur'an and those people recited it by presenting it to the Holy Prophet. Herein, a group of companions like 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/653) and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b (d. 33/653) read the Qur'an from beginning to end in the presence of the Prophet of Allāh. According to Ṭabarsī, all these things are doubtless important proof that the Qur'an was collected without being dispersed, split or literally distorted.⁷⁰ With this approach, Ṭabarsī did not share the common view of the Imāmī Shī'a that "the Qur'an was collected by 'Alī, his Holiness, on the order of the Holy Prophet after he had passed away."⁷¹

Some of the scholars of the contemporary Shī'a followed Ṭabarsī, and asserted that the Qur'an was collected as its existing version while the Holy Prophet was alive. Abū al-Qāsim Khūi and Makārim Shīrāzī also share this idea. Khūi claimed that the Qur'an was gathered in the time of the Holy Prophet by taking into consideration the reports as "the Qur'an was collected by six people from the anṣār."⁷² which was in the references in different versions.⁷³ Makārim Shīrāzī claimed a similar opinion. According to him, calling the first sūrah of the Qur'an as "Fātiḥat al-Kitāb" is an evident proof that it was gathered in the time of the Holy Prophet.⁷⁴

As for Ṭabātabāī, who is one of the Shī'a Interpreters, thinks differs. According to him, although 'Alī was not involved in those who contributed to the collection of the Qur'an in the first and second time both in the time of Abū Bakr,

⁷⁰ Ṭabarsī, *Mejma' al-bayān*, 1/43.

⁷¹ See Kuleynī, *Furū' al-Kāfi*, 1/228.

⁷² Al-Bukhārī, "Fedāil al-Kur'an", 16.

⁷³ Abū al-Qāsim Khūi, *al-Bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā, 1992/1412), 250-252.

⁷⁴ Musa K. Yılmaz, "Şīa'nın Kur'an İlimleri İle İlgili Görüşleri", *Şiilik Sempozyumu, İSAV* (İstanbul: 13-15 Şubat 1993), 166.

his holiness, and ‘Uthmān, his holiness,⁷⁵ nobody has any doubt that the Qur’ān we have today was gathered after the Holy Prophet had died.⁷⁶

Again, Hādī Ma‘refat, one of the contemporary Shī‘a scholars, does not share the idea that the noble Qur’ān was collected in the time of the Messenger of Allāh. According to him, the gathering and arrangement of the sūrahs of the Qur’ān came about after the Messenger of Allāh had died and there is no doubt in this. The first person who gathered the verses was ‘Alī, his holiness. Then Zayd b. Thābit was charged with the process of collecting by order of Abū Bakr, his holiness, and within that period some companions also got to work on collecting of the Qur’ān. In the time of ‘Uthmān, his holiness, the Qur’ānic texts, which were likely to different reflect different recitations, were regularised by copying it and sent to different regions.⁷⁷

Even though the Imāmī Shī‘a dispute when and by whom the Qur’ān was collected, they agreed that ‘Alī, his holiness, is the one who gathered and arranged the Qur’ān by the will of the Messenger of Allāh.⁷⁸ They regarded some kinds of differences allegedly existed in his Qur’ān as explanations based on tafsīr and ta’vīl.

Thus, according to Ṭabātabāī, ‘Alī’s, his holiness, collected the Qur’ān along with the death of the Prophet of Allāh, representing it to the people. Though the people did embrace this text does not mean that the Qur’ān he prepared was different from the others prepared in terms of the fundamental realities of the religion. At the most, it consists of some differences related to arrangements of suraahs or verses which this does not have any influence on the meaning the verses denoted. If there were any differences between his Qur’ān and the others’ in the sense of fundamental realities of the religion, he would oppose it either then or in later times. Whereas this kind of case never came into existence.⁷⁹

Khūī says in the context of the Qur’an imputed to ‘Alī, his holiness: It is doubtless true that there is a Qur’ān whose collating sequence is different from the Qur’ān we have on hand. The agreement of the great scholars saves us from having to prove this fact. Again although it is true that there is an additional part

⁷⁵ Ṭabātabāī, *al-Mīzān*, 12/108.

⁷⁶ Ṭabātabāī, *al-Mīzān*, 12/120.

⁷⁷ Ma‘refat, *al-Tamhīd*, 1/285-286.

⁷⁸ Karataş, *Kur’an Tarihi*, 139.

⁷⁹ Ṭabātabāī, *al-Mīzān*, 12/116.

in the Qur'ān collected by 'Alī's, his holiness, it does not indicate that this excess is a part of the Qur'ān and removed it by distorting it. What is inferred from the reports is that the Qur'ān collected by 'Alī, his Holiness, is a version that includes his tafsīr or ta'wīl of the verses, not any addition to the Qur'ānic text.⁸⁰

In brief, as far as reports related to the subject concerned it is quite possible that 'Alī, his holiness, compiled a Qur'ān individually. However, it appears that this Qur'ān was his own use and does not have the authority of the Qur'ān that Abū Bakr, his holiness, had it collected. Although it is indicated that it includes some differences in the sequence of verses and surahs,⁸¹ it is also understood that this did not affect the meaning of the verses. 'Alī's, his holiness, not demanding for the alteration related to the official Qur'ān, later on, supports this.

Conclusion

The approaches of the Imāmī Shī'a to the Qur'ān in regarding the alleged distortion and the collection of the Qur'ān has been analysed in this article. Statements alleging a distortion in the Qur'ān is a matter that has been long discussed by some orientalists. The essence of the matter consists in the belief that the Qur'ān revealed to Muḥammed by Allāh included more verses than the one that we have today and that some of the words and verses of the Qur'ān were distorted, thereby changing them or reducing their number, either by mistake or on purpose. The source of these discourses are reports of ḥadīth and tafsīr scholars of the Akhbarī school of the Imāmī Shī'a. Almost all verses allegedly exposed to literal distortion are related to the guardianship of 'Alī, his holiness, and the virtues of the imāms of Ahl al-Bayt in general. By use of these reports, emphasis is placed on the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt, especially 'Alī, his holiness, and *ma'sum* imāms, on the other hand, issues regarding the Imāmate and guardianship, which constitute the basis of the Shī'a-Imāmī doctrine, are sought to be proved. Their activities in this aspect can be understood as efforts directed towards placing into the Qur'ān the central thoughts of the Shī'ite understanding.

However, the majority of the Imāmī Shī'a should not be included in this appraisal. Because from the beginnings of the fifth/eleventh century, scholars such as Shaykh Mufīd, Sherīf al-Murtaḍa Ja'far al-Ṭūsī and Ṭabarsī, who are of the Shī'a-Uṣūlī tradition, pointed out the groups adopting the thought of the

⁸⁰ Khūī, *al-Bayān*, 223-225; Bābāī, *Tefsīr Ekolleri*, 1/72.

⁸¹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 45-46; Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, 2/135; Suyūfī, *al-Itqān*, 1/216.

Akhbārī in their works and criticise them and rejected the reports for the Qur'ān's being literally distorted since those reports are al-khabar al-wāḥid and cannot have much evidential or information value. They stated that Muslims took great care in protecting and memorising the Qur'ān and analysed its every detail, such as its pronunciation, case endings and recitation. Therefore, it is impossible that the Qur'ān to have been altered or redacted, as it was taken great care of and bestowed grace, with great efforts made to and record and protect it. Relevant writers' rejected the allegation of distortion, and this continued as the prevailing opinion among the Imāmī Shī'a.

One of the subjects related to the alleged distortion is the collection of the Qur'ān. The Imāmī Shī'a of the first period asserted that the Qur'ān was first collected by 'Alī, his holiness, who protected the text from distortion. They claim that the content of this Qur'ān was different from the one gathered and copied in the time of Abū Bakr, by Abū Bakr, his holiness, and 'Uthman, his holiness, regarding verses about 'Alī, his holiness, and Ahl al-Bayt, since these verses were distorted. When the reports in the sources of Ahl al-Sunnah and the Imāmī Shī'a are concerned, it seems most probable that 'Alī, his holiness, compiled a Qur'ān individually. However, it is understood that this Qur'ān was personal just like the ones held by different companions of the Prophet and that it does not have the official character and the authority of the one Abū Bakr, his holiness, collected. Although it is mentioned that it includes some differences in the sequence of the verses or the surahs, it appears that this does not change the meaning of the verses. This point is also made by the prominent scholars of the Imāmī Shī'a. Moreover, 'Alī's, his holiness, not amending the official Qur'ān during his caliphate period is the most important indication of this. Besides, the Qur'ān which allegedly belonged to 'Alī, his holiness, (predicted to actually belong to the children of the major of Yemen) was published in Sanaa, the capital city of Yemen.⁸² It is confirmed that this Qur'ān does not have any differences regarding the surahs or the arrangement and sequence of verses in the surahs from the existing Qur'ān.⁸³

In sum, reports about the distortion were made up by weak and unknown people and were deemed by the chief scholars of the Imāmī Shī'a to not be worthy

⁸² Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Hız. Ali'ye Nispet Edilen Mushaf-ı Şerif (San'a Nushası)* (İstanbul: IRCICA, 1432/2011), 153.

⁸³ Tayyar Altıkulaç, "Hız. Ali ve İlk Mushaf Nushaları", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (Darul Funun İlahiyat) 21 (İstanbul: 2012), 24.

of attention. The belief about the Qur'an of the Islamic ummah is that it has been subject to no redaction nor addition and it has reached us as Allāh revealed it to the Holy Prophet without being exposed to interference in any terms.

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