# Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an: The Case of Arthur Jeffery

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Arthur Jeffery, an Australian–American orientalist who conducted research on various aspects of the Qur'an, was interested in the variant readings of the Qur'an. Among his works, the most celebrated is his *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an.*[1] Jeffery also contributed a number of articles pertaining to Qur'anic studies to *The Muslim World* and other journals.

Along with his invaluable work on biblical studies, he pursued his research on the Qur'an while serving in Cairo as the director of the American Research Center, as a professor of Semitic languages at Columbia University, and as an adjunct professor at the Union Theological Seminary.[2] Besides his studies on variant readings, he wrote on such topics as foreign vocabulary in the Qur'an and the collection of Judeo–Christian sources of the Qur'an. He also translated selected *sūrahs* of the Qur'an and devised a new arrangement to establish "development in Muhammad's thought."[3] In fact, Jeffery belongs to that category of orientalists who, in postcolonial times, shifted to textual and philological studies and, unlike their predecessors, had no chance to act as advisor to the colonial masters of Muslim Asia and Africa.[4] Many contemporary orientalists, such as Bernard Lewis and John O. Voll, have shifted further to area studies and Islamic culture.

## Sources

Jeffery, whose field of interest is the Qur'an, is fully aware of what it actually means for the Muslims: "It is sometimes said that Christianity could exist without the New Testament, but Islam certainly could not exist

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without the Qur'an."[5] Probably the central and pivotal position of the Qur'an in the religious schema of Islam induced and encouraged him to choose it for life-long study. To establish that "the Qur'an is Muhammad's book [and] the impress of his personality is on it from the first word to the last,"[6] he translated selected *sūrahs* under his own new arrangement and collected about six thousand variant readings from books dealing with commentary (*tafsīr*), linguistics (*lughah*), literature (*adab*), and reading styles (*qirā'āt*). His main source was the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif* of Ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 316 A.H.).

Jeffery cherishes and applauds the "independent studies" of Bell and Torry and their application of the principles of "higher criticism" to the Qur'an, which led to their reaching the "remarkable" conclusion that "Muhammad had been gathering, recasting, and revising in written form the material he planned to issue as his Book . . . [but] the Prophet, however, died before he had issued the Book."[7] Following Bell and Torry, he applies the principles of higher criticism to his textual studies of the Qur'an and contends that the committee to whom 'Uthmān ibn al 'Affān entrusted with making recension produced an official recension that is genuinely from the Prophet, with the exception of a very few passages of doubtful authenticity.

However, he claims, the committee left out quite a bit of material contained in the "metropolitan codices" at the time of 'Uthmān and included a good deal of material that the Prophet would not have included had he lived to issue his book.[8] But he is unable to furnish us with any examples of information that would fit into the latter category and that are accompanied by an authentic chain of transmission (*isnād*). A large number of variant reading entries listed in his *Materials* lack proper and authentic chains of transmission, a fact which he himself realizes.[9] He also gives no evidence to support his contention concerning "the Prophet's awkwardness of expression" in the Qur'an.[10] Moreover, while listing variant readings in his *Materials*, Jeffery never mentions his source. As for his earliest basic source, Ibn Abī Dāwūd's *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, he concedes that its *isnād* is weak and that the orthodoxy may not accept it.[11]

## Primary and Secondary Codices

Jeffery, after having spent many years collecting the variant readings in order to prepare a critical edition of the Qur'an, began to collaborate in 1926 with Professor Bergstrasser, who established a Qur'anic Archive in Munich. After the professor's death in 1933, he continued his collaboration with the Archive's new director, Dr. Otto Pretzl. Unfortunately, Pretzl was killed in Sebastopol during World War II and the Archive was destroyed during the Allied bombing campaigns and the subsequent fires. The gigantic task of publishing his critical edition of the Qur'an could not, therefore, be realized. Jeffery expresssed his pain and anguish: "It is thus extremely doubtful if our generation will see the completion of a really

critical edition of the text of the Qur'an."[12] Jeffery, in fact, intended to publish a critical edition featuring one column of Kūfī script facing a critically edited Ḥafṣ text on the opposite page.[13]

In his attempt to introduce "rival codices"[14] to the Uthmānic Codex on the basis of variant readings mentioned in works by Muslim scholars, he produced approximately fifteen "primary" codices and thirteen "secondary" codices. The fifteen primary codices are ascribed to 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, Abū Mūsā, Ḥafṣah, Anas ibn Mālik, 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb, Zayd ibn Thābit, 'Abd 'Allāh ibn Zubayr, Ibn 'Amr, 'Ā'ishah, Sālim, Umm Salamah, and 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr. He also ascribed some secondary codices to members of the next generation, among them al Aswad 'Alqamah, Ḥiṭṭān, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Ṭalḥah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ, al Rabī' ibn Khuthaym, al A'mash, Ja'far al Ṣādiq, Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān, and al Ḥārith ibn Suwayd. In addition, he lists some unnamed codices with a number of variant readings. It should be remembered that not every person purported to have a certain codex actually possessed a personal copy of the Qur'an. However, based on some variant readings ascribed to these individuals that differ from the reading of the 'Uthmānic Codex, Jeffery assigns to each of them a rival codex, regardless of whether or not the person concerned claimed or insisted upon a particular reading ascribed to him/her after the appearance of the official recension. It is also worthy of mention that none of these rival codices, some of which were said to exist in the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*[15] and other sources[16] before the time of the official recension, have survived until our own time. As Jeffery says: "It is unfortunate that not sufficient [material] has survived to enable us to get a real picture of the text of any one of them."[17] Nevertheless, "in some cases, Jeffery was able to determine the primary codex from which a secondary one was derived."[18]

# Orthographic Peculiarities of the 'Uthmānic Recension

In his attempt to revive precanonical readings, Jeffery seems to be very concerned about Ibn Shanabudh (d. 328 A.H.) and Ibn Miqsam (d. 362 A.H.), who were not allowed uncanonical readings or to make use of the old variants that existed before the fixing of the text.[19] He is also very critical of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 A.H.), who settled on seven reading styles and decreed that only they were the canonical and permissible ways of vowelling and reading the 'Uthmānic recension.[20] It is important to note that in some later works on reading styles, some Muslim scholars added three and others even seven more reading styles to the seven of Ibn Mujāhid. However, all of these readings conformed to the 'Uthmānic text's orthography, and the major interests of the reciters (*qurrā'*) were confined to questions of orthography (*rasm*) and pause (*waqf*).

Jeffery, while dealing with the orthographic peculiarities of the 'Uthmānic recension, calls them "oddities" and "mistakes." He criticizes al Dānī (d. 444 A.H.) who, in his *al Muqnī*, which is a book of instructions for Qur'anic scribes, insists on the following spellings: رحمت with final ت in 19:1, لكا with a long ا *alif* instead of the normal لكن in 18:36, يبنؤم instead of يابناؤم in 20:95, مال هذا instead of ما لهذا in 18:47, and أل ياسين instead of الياسين in 37:130.[21] Without going into the issue of whether the 'Uthmānic script is God-given (*tawqīfī*) or not, it is necessary to point out that it is confirmed by the unanimous judgment (*ijmā'*) of the Companions and the following generation.[22] It is also important to note that, in most cases, the peculiarities of the 'Uthmānic script represent non-Qurayshī dialects. For example, the Banū Ṭayy wrote the final ت rather than ة (*tā' marbūṭah*).[23]

We can conclude the discussion on orthographic variants by saying that the peculiarities of the 'Uthmānic script, like writing *ṣalāt* and *zakāt* with a *wāw*, should not be overemphasized and exaggerated. Doing so runs counter to conventional orthography only in the case of certain specific words that can be singled out easily for explanation.

# Variant Readings of al Fātiḥah

To analyze critically Jeffery's treatment of various Qur'anic readings, it seems better to use one *sūrah* as an example. We will use *Sūrah al Fātiḥah*. He states that 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have read:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| مَلِك | for | مَالِك | |
| أرْشِدنا | for | إهْدِنا | |
| مَنْ | for | الَّذِين | and |
| غَيْرَ | for | غَيرِ | [24] |

Ubayy ibn Ka'b is reported to have read

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| مَلِّكُ | and | مَلِك | for | مَالِك |
| إيَّاكَ | for | إيَّاكَ | | |
| ثَبِّتْنا | and | دُلَّنا | for | إهْدِنا | [25] |
| صراط المستقيم | | for | الصراط المستقيم | |
| الَّذِينْ | for | الَّذِينَ | and | |
| غَيْرَ | for | لا | [26] | |

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is reported to have read:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| مَلِك | and | مَلَكَ يَوْمَ | for | مَالِكِ |
| ثَبِّتْنا | for | إهْدِنا | , and | |
| غَيْرَ | for | لا | [27] | |

'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās is reported to have read:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| سِراط | for | صِراط | all through the Qur'an.[28] |

'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb is reported to have read:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| مَلِكِ | for | مَالِكِ | , |
| مَنْ | for | الَّذِينَ | , and |
| وَغَيْرِ الضَّالِّينَ | for | وَلا الضَّالِّينَ | [29] |

'Ā'ishah and Sa'ad ibn Abī Waqqāṣ are reported to have read:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| مَلِك | for | مَالِك | [30] |

Some of Jeffery's secondary codices followed the primary codices in variant readings of al Fātiḥah. Abū Rabī ibn Khuthaym, who generally followed ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd in variant readings, is reported to have read الزراط for الصراط in al Fātiḥah and in the rest of the Qur'an.[31] Al Aʿmash, another follower of Ibn Masʿūd, is also reported to have read الزراط for الصراط throughout the Qur'an.[32]

With regard to al Fātiḥah, in addition to what Jeffery has mentioned in his *Materials*, many other variant readings have been mentioned by Muslim scholars on the various reading styles (*qirāʾāt*). For example, Abū Muḥammad Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib al Qaysī (d. 437 A.H.) along with many other variants of this *sūrah*, ascribes some more readings to the Companions. He says that Abū Hurayrah is reported to have read مَلِك for مَالِك,[33] and ʿAbd Allāh ibn al Zubayr (as well as ʿUmar ibn al Khaṭṭāb) to have read صِراطَ مَنْ أَنْعَتَ for صِراطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَتَ.[34] He has also mentioned that Yaḥyā ibn Waththāb, a member of the following generation, has read نِسْتَعِينُ with *kasrah* on the first *nūn* for نَسْتَعِينُ with *fātiḥah* on the first *nūn*, and that Abū Sawār al Ghanawī, one of the most eloquent Arabs in history, read مَّيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَمَيَّاكَ for إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ.[35] Ibn Khālawayh (d. 376 A.H.), on the authority of al Asmaʿī, says that Abū ʿAmr read الزراط for الصراط.[36]

Other variant readings of al Fātiḥah have been given by Jeffery. In view of its central character in the Qur'an and because of its encompassing central theme of the unity of God, he tries to make it a counterpart to the Lord's Prayer of Christianity and concludes:

> [The Fātiḥah], when we examine it, proves to be more or less a cento of ideas and expressions taken from other parts of the Qur'an. It is possible, of course, that as a prayer it was constructed by the Prophet himself, but its use and its position in our present Qur'an are due to the compilers, who placed it there, perhaps on the fly-leaf of the Standard Codex.[37]

In this article, he reproduced a variant text of al Fātiḥah from some Shiʿī traditions.[38] The text reads as follows:

نَحمد الله ربَّ العالمين. الرحمن الرحيم . مَلاَّكَ يؤم الدين . هَيَّاكَ نعبدُ وَ يَّاكَ نُسْتَعِينُ . تُرشِدُ سَبيلَ المستقيم. سَبيلَ الّذِينَ نَعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِم. سِوَى المغضوب عَلَيهِم وَلاَ الضَّالِينَ.

He then introduces another unauthentic version of this *sūrah* that, comprised of variant readings, is different from the ʿUthmānic recension in a most sensational and journalistic way. This new version does not have a complete chain of narrators, although it has "survived" to our day. Moreover, the dates of the manuscript and the name of the scribe are not ascertainable. Jeffery says:

Last summer in Cairo I came across a similar variant version. It is
given in a little manual of *fiqh*, whose beginning, unfortunately, is
missing, so that we do not know the name of the author. It is a
quite unimportant summary of Shāfi'ī *fiqh*, written, if one may
venture a judgement from the writing, about one hundred and fifty
years ago, perhaps a little earlier, in a clerkly hand, and the vari-
ant version is written on the inside cover under the rubric: *qirā'at
shādhdhah li al Fātiḥah*. The MS is in private possession, and
though the owner was willing to lend me the copy of the passage,
and use it if I saw it fit, he was not willing that his name be
revealed, lest he come into disrepute among his orthodox neigh-
bors for allowing an unbeliever to see such an uncanonical version
of the opening *Sūra* of their Holy Book.[39]

The text of this variant has some certain similarities to that already
given, and runs[40]:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمدُ للهِ سيّدِ العَالمينَ . الرّزّاق الرحيم. مَلَّكِ يوم الدِّينَ. إِنَّا لَكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِنَّا لَكَ نَستعين. أرْشِدْنا سبيلَ المستقيم. سبيلَ الَّذِينَ مَنَنْتَ
عَلَيْهِم. سِوَى المَغضوب عَلَيْهِم وَلاَ الضّالِّينَ.

He goes on to say that under the text there is a statement about its
chain of transmission:

رواية أبي الفتح الجبائي عن شيخه السوسي عن النهرواني عن أبي السعاداتي الميداني عن المرزباني عن الخليل بن أحمد

and, in the end, concludes: "[It is] quite possible that Khalil had access to
good old tradition as the primitive reading of the Fātiḥa. I can make noth-
ing of the rest of the *isnād* from Khalil to al-Jubbā'ī, and possibly it is
much later than the *matn* from Khalil."[41]

## Sab'at Aḥruf

When analyzing the above-mentioned variant readings in the opening
*sūrah* of the Qur'an, it seems imperative to discuss how they arose. This
subject has been discussed abundantly in the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, the
*Muqaddimatān*, and other books on variant readings. These are also the
sources used by Jeffery in his studies. The Prophet is reported to have said
that the Qur'an was revealed to him in seven ways (in seven *aḥruf*, plural
of *ḥarf*), by which he meant dialects or seven different ways of recitation.[42]
It is narrated by Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet said: "Gabriel recited the
Qur'an to me in one way. Then I requested him (to read it another way),
and continued asking him to recite it in other ways. He recited it in sever-
al ways till he ultimately recited it in seven different ways (*aḥruf*)."[43] To
make it easier for the elderly, the illiterate, and the nomadic people to
recite the Qur'an, the Prophet allowed them to recite various dialectal vari-
ants in their own way, which eventually led to diversification in reading

styles. The books on variant readings show that the Companions used this concession fully and continued to do so until 'Uthmān finalized the codex and issued an official recension that abrogated all other readings and dialectal usages and maintained the readings used by the Prophet.

It is reported that Anas ibn Mālik recited الم نشرح لك صدرك وحللنا عنك وزرك (94:1-2). When this was objected to, he said حللنا. حططنا. وضعنا all the various different readings [dialects] from the same.[44] On the authority of Ibn Sīrīn, it is narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said that هلم. تعال and اقبل are one and the same.[45] It is said that Ubayy ibn Ka'b was teaching a Persian Sūrah 44:44 ان شجرة الزقوم طعام الاثيم . The man said repeatedly طعام اليتيم . When the Prophet learned of this, he asked him to recite طعام الظالم instead of طعام الاثيم , which was easier for him.[46]

# Dialectal Variants in the Arabian Peninsula

The interaction and overlapping of various Arabian dialects has been a complex issue in the history of the Arabic language. Jeffery, a western scholar who lacked facility in Arabic, could not understand the extent of dialectal variants and their usages in the times of the pre-'Uthmānic recension. Therefore, after seeing a variety of variant readings ascribed to the Companions, he developed the idea of introducing "rival codices" to the 'Uthmānic recension.

To understand the extent and role of various Arabic dialects as regards the various reading styles without going into dialectal details, it is important to point out that it is generally accepted that the Qur'an was revealed in the common Arabic (al lughah al 'Arabīyah al mushtarakah), a language understood throughout the peninsula and used by poets and orators as a medium of communication.[47] As this common Arabic, which was the vehicle for Qur'anic expression, had a vivid impress of the Qurayshī dialect on it, it is generally assumed that the Qur'an was revealed in that particular dialect. A small book on the dialects used in the Qur'an,[48] ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās (d. c. 68 A.H.),[49] and transmitted by Ibn Ḥasnūn, contains numerous entries from different tribal dialects. Although probably not comprehensive, the work determines the dialectal origin of at least 265 words used in the Qur'an. Of these, 104 are derived from the dialect of the Quraysh, 45 from the Hudhayl, 36 from the Kinānah, 23 from the Ḥimyar, 21 from the Jurham, 13 from the Tamīm and the Qays 'Ilān, 6 from the 'Ammān, the Azd Shanū'ah, and the Khath'am; 5 from the Ṭay', the Midhḥaj, the Madyan, and the Ghassān; 4 from the Banū Ḥanīfah, the Ḥaḍramawt, and the Ash'ar; 3 from the 'Ammār; 2 from the Khuzā'ah, the Sabā', the Yamāmah, the Muzaynah, and the Thaqīf; 1 from the Azd; 1 from the Khazraj; and 1 from the al 'Amāliqah, Sadūs, and Sa'ad al 'Ashīrah.[50]

It should also be kept in mind that while the Qur'an represented an amalgam of Arabian dialects, it was in the most eloquent and inimitable style and was a code of life and a book for everybody. All who adhered to

Islam, whether illiterate, bedouin, or non-Arab, was expected to recite it. The hadith dealing with the seven accepted reading styles (*sab'at ahruf*) and many other stories[51] indicate that the Prophet, while teaching the Qur'an, always made sure that the message was understood by those who were being addressed. In such a situation, especially in the early years of Islamic history, it seems very natural to have variant readings or to use synonyms when necessary.

The topic of tribal dialects and their appreciation in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times can be understood better by narrating a frequently repeated story concerning a man of the Banū Kilāb or the Banū 'Āmir. This man visited Dhū Jadan, a king of Yemen, who was sitting on a raised platform. The king said to him: "Thib" ( ثِبْ ), i.e., which means "sit," in the Yemeni dialect. The visitor understood it as meaing "jump" (from *wathaba, yathibu*) and therefore jumped from the platform and died.[52] In another report, it is said that one day when Abū Hurayrah was with the Prophet, the latter dropped a knife and said to him: " ناوِلْيِ السِّكِّينَ ." Abū Hurayrah did not understand, and so the Prophet repeated his request. At last Abū Hurayrah asked: " المُدْيَةَ تُرِيدُ؟ ." *Sikkīn* is a Hijāzī word and does not appear in the Azdī dialect, where the relevant word is *mudyah*.[53] It is thus clear that not all Arabs in preofficial recension times understood the implications of the Qur'an's vocabulary and, logically, they would feel more inclined to read it if the text were closer to their own dialect.

The orthographic variations of the rival codices, which have not been recorded in the 'Uthmānic codex (i.e., reading *al sirāt* with *ṣād, sīn*, and *zā'* in the opening *sūrah*), and the use of synonyms (i.e., reading حَطَطْنَا and حَلَلْنَا for the 'Uthmānic text's وَضَعْنَا in Sūrah 94) can be understood in the light of the statement by Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 A.H.):

وكلَّما كثرت الالفاظُ على المعنى الواحد كان ذلك أولى بأن تكون لغات الجماعات

"Wherever there are more words to give the same meaning, there is every likelihood that those words are representing different dialects [and linguistic units]."[54] He also cites, on the authority of al Aṣma'ī, an interesting controversy between two men over the word *ṣaqr*. One pronounced it with a *ṣād* while the other used a *sīn*. They decided to ask for a third opinion. The third man, who pronounced it with a *zā'*, differed from both of them. What this shows is that each individual was using his own dialect to pronounce the word in question.[55]

Jeffrey's claim that "the mass of variant readings that has survived to us from the codices of Ubayy and Ibn Mas'ūd shows that they were real textual variants and not mere dialectal peculiarities"[56] indicates that the substitution of one word with a synonym[57] from another dialect in the rival codices led him to the above conclusion. He does not seem to have understood the Prophet's permission for new Muslims, many of whom were elderly, illiterate, bedouin, and without any background in Arabic, to use variant readings. It is also evident from the above-mentioned example of Ubayy and the Persian who could not pronounce a certain word. In an oft-

quoted hadith on the seven reading styles mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī*, it is very clear that the Prophet, after listening to Hishām ibn Ḥakīm's and 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb's differing recitations of Sūrah al Furqān, approved each reading. In fact, it is recorded that the Prophet had taught these different readings to them. He said: "This Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven different *aḥruf* (ways), so recite it whichever (way) is easier for you."[58] Pearson seems to have difficulty in understanding the word *aḥruf* and says: "The meaning of this expression in the hadith is uncertain, the term *aḥruf* being the plural of *ḥarf*, 'letter.' "[59] Nevertheless, Ibn Mujāhid has made it quite clear that it means "seven readings,"[60] regardless of whether they belong to different dialects or are different dialectal readings for the same word.[61]

It is interesting to note that Jeffery, in view of the unauthenticated chain of transmissions that accompany such uncanonical variant readings, could not venture to bring any reading *par excellence* with that of the 'Uthmānic text. On the contrary, he says that "some of the variants, in the form in which they have survived to us, seem linguistically impossible, and in certain cases this has been noted in the source which quotes the variant."[62] He concedes further that

> Bergstrasser in his preliminary collection of the uncanonical readings of Ibn Mas'ūd and Uba'i made an attempt to estimate the value of these two texts as compared with the 'Uthmānic text. With the increase of material one feels less inclined to venture on such a judgment of the value.[63]

He tries to explain the variants found in the uncanonical codices as being improvements on the 'Uthmānic text, as Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās are reported to have read ـمـا  instead of بمثلـما in 2:137. Jeffery suggests further that these Companions may have suggested such variants out of piety.[64] One should be aware, however, that when Jeffery deals with any aspect of Islam, he does so through a Christian paradigm. For example, he states that Islam, like Christianity, has a sacred book but never goes on to say that it is one of the three Abrahamic religions.[65] In the case of the New Testament, it is generally held that

> all the gospels originally circulated anonymously. Authoritative names were later assigned to them by unknown figures in the early church. In most cases the names are guesses or perhaps the result of pious wishes.[66]

In order to equate the Qur'an with the Bible, Jeffery suggests that some of the Companions made "changes and improvements" in the Qur'anic text based on "motives of piety." Unfortunately for him, he seems to have missed the fact that any addition or deletion to the Qur'an is such a heinous crime that one cannot imagine that a Companion would do such a thing. It also would not have been tolerated by his/her fellow Companions.

# Conclusion

We can sum up the discussion in the following points:

1. It is clear that variant readings, such as pronouncing *al ṣirāṭ* in Sūrah al Fātiḥah with a *ṣād*, a *sīn*, or a *zā'* or Ibn Mas'ūd's reading of *'ttā* for *ḥattā* in Sūrah 12:35, reflect the tribal dialect of the individual reciter.[67] It should be noted that *ḥā* and *'ayn*, as well as *alif* and *qāf*, are interchanged in various Arab dialects.[68] Similarly, the readings of *iyyāka, wiyyāka,* and *hayyāka* in al Fātiḥah are dialectal variants, as the *alif* is interchanged with the *wāw* and the *hā'* in various dialects.[69] The reading of *nista'inu* with *kas-rah* on the first *nūn* is also a dialectal variant, as *yi'lamūna* is read for *ya'lamūna* in Sūrah 2:56 and *tiswaddu* for *taswaddu* in Sūrah 3:106 in the Banū Asad dialect.[70] The readings of *malik, mallak, malk, mālik,* and *malīk* in Sūrah al Fātiḥah are also dialectal variants and represent allowed reading styles. These dialectal variants of *malik* have been ascribed to the Prophet, who is reported to have read them.[71] Had these variants been inadmissible, the Companions would not have differed in their recitation of this most-repeated *sūrah*.

The substitution of *ihdinā* and *lā* with their respective synonyms *arshidnā* and *ghayra* in Sūrah al Fātiḥah also represent dialectal variants that are among the permitted recitations. Jeffery, in his attempt to introduce rival codices, has ignored the facts that this *sūrah* is recited out loud in most of the daily prayers and that a reading not allowed by the Prophet would not have been allowed or perpetuated. Moreover, Jeffery has failed to bring any objection from a Companion that this *sūrah*, as it appears in the 'Uthmānic recension, was not in accord with the Prophet's recitation.

2. While creating doubts and making insinuations about the 'Uthmānic recension and despite his acceptance that the transmission of the variants is through weak chains of transmission, Jeffery is nevertheless hesitant to admit the reality of the Muslim world consensus (*ijmā'*) on it. If we suppose that some variants are genuine and were used in pre-'Uthmānic recension times due to their conformity to the seven permissible readings, even then a text transmitted through one narrator (*āḥād*) cannot be preferred to a text handed down by one generation to the next (*tawātur*).[72]

3. While dealing with the variant readings, Jeffery has ignored completely the important factor of the Qur'an's oral transmission. The 'Uthmānic recension was not just another official document to be shelved after the committee had completed it. The canonical version was available to everyone. One copy of the official recension (*al Muṣḥaf al Imām*) was kept in Madinah, while copies were sent to other cities in the Islamic state of that time. Thousands of Companions who had memorized most, if not all, of the Qur'an and who had first-hand knowledge of how the Prophet had recited the Qur'an, were in Madinah. It must also be remem-

bered that all of the Companions, despite the fact that the scribes and many Companions had written materials with them, approved the 'Uthmānic recension as the recitation of the Prophet and accepted its authenticity and accuracy.

4. In his zealous drive to introduce rival codices, Jeffery ignored the fact that Ibn Mas'ūd, although after some hesitation, surrendered his codex to 'Uthmān[73] and thereafter never appears to have insisted on any reading ascribed to him. Moreover, Jeffery has failed utterly to produce any statement from Ibn Mas'ūd implying that what was in the 'Uthmānic recension was not from the Prophet. After Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy ibn Ka'b is the second Companion to whom a bulk of variant readings has been ascribed. Although Jeffery recognizes that all secondary codices have been derived from Ibn Mas'ūd's and that no codex has been derived from Ubayy's, he gives primary importace to the variants ascribed to the latter and thus ignores the fact that Ubayy participated in the gigantic task of completing the 'Uthmānic recension. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who is held to have had a codex before the official recension, is reported to have showed his gratitude and satisfaction with the 'Uthmānic recension by saying: "If I were in command in place of 'Uthmān, I would have done the same."[74]

5. Despite his admission that many variant readings have been invented by later theologians, philologers, and grammarians and then ascribed to early authorities in order to gain prestige,[75] Jeffery is still interested in restoring the "original reading" of the Qur'an.[76] More recently, two other orientalists—John Burton and John Wansbrough—have concluded that all of the accounts about "Companion codices," "metropolitan codices," and individual variants were fabricated by later jurists and philologers.[77] Jeffery has also ignored the fact that the earliest basic sources for variant readings are the reports of Ibn Ābī Dāwūd (d. 316 A.H.), Ibn al Anbārī (d. 328 A.H.), and Ibn al Ashṭah (d. 360 A.H.). However, their reports do not have proper narration chains and are not supported by genuine transmission chains.

6. As was the case with his predecessor Bell, Jeffery has failed to camouflage his prejudice against Islam and the Qur'an when dealing with its compilation. Following Bell,[78] he declares that the recension of Abū Bakr was his own purely private affair.[79] It is very surprising to note that he accepts as valid all of the variants indicated in the *Muqaddimatān* and the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif* but ignores (without explaining why) these same sources' assertion about Abū Bakr's collection of the Qur'an, a fact that has been supported powerfully by early sources of history and hadith.[80] Nevertheless, it is indubitable that the Qur'anic recension prepared by Abū Bakr served as the principal basis for the 'Uthmānic recension.

7. Jeffery has also failed to understand 'Uthmān's reasons for under-taking his recension and to acknowledge the factors of propagating dialectal variants and 'Uthmān's concern with complaints stemming from variant readings. Abū Muḥammad Makkī, like other Muslim exegetes, makes it clear that 'Uthmān sought to deal with this issue by codifying the Qur'anic text (the Prophet's reading) and abrogating all other readings, even if they had been permitted by the Prophet during his lifetime.[81] Al Qaysī also mentions that a team of at least twelve thousand Companions and Followers (Tābi'īn) worked on the official recension and destroyed the uncanonical versions.[82] It is inconceivable that such a large team of eminent Muslims could enforce a recension containing readings that, although ascribed to the Prophet, were of a doubtful nature.

8. Despite his claim, Jeffery could not observe the principles of higher criticism while dealing with the Qur'an and its variant readings. In his lecture on "The Textual History of the Qur'an," delivered in Jerusalem (1946) and published in his The Qur'an as Scripture (1952), he fails to mention the Archive's conclusion regarding the collection of the Qur'an and the textual differences in various versions. Dr. Ḥamīdullāh, who had met Dr. Pretzl when the latter came to Paris to collect photocopies of the Qur'anic scriptures available in the libraries there,[83] says that Pretzl told him: "Our institute (Archive) has collected the photographs of 42,000 copies of the Qur'an and we are collating them"[84] and that, after accomplishing this task before its destruction, issued a "provisional report" that, according to him, reads:

> The work of collation of various copies of the Qur'an is not completed yet. However, on the basis of the work accomplished so far, we can say that there are occasional mistakes of the copyists, but there is no textual difference found [in the 42,000 copies of the Qur'an, which have been collated].[85]

Jeffery, in his treatment of the Qur'an, talks exclusively about the Archive and his collaboration with Professors Bergstrasser and Pretzl, but surprisingly omits the mention of the Archive's report and findings.

9. Finally, it seems appropriate to suggest that such orientalists as Pearson, who continues to pursue Jeffery's mission to invalidate the character of the Qur'an as an unadulterated revealed book, should apply the principles of higher criticism in an affirmative way. By so doing, they would discover for themselves the truth of the Qur'anic claims: "Had it been from other than Allah they would surely have found much discrepancies and contradictions in it" (4:82) and "We have, without doubt, sent down the message [Qur'an] and We will surely guard it (from corruption and adulteration)" (15:9).

# Endnotes

1. Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an* (London: E. J. Brill, 1937). This book, edited by Jeffery, appeared in one volume with the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif* by Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Dāwūd Sulaymān al Sijistānī (d. 316 A.H.). Jeffery also edited two other manuscripts under the title of *Muqaddimatān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān,* 2d ed (Cairo: Maktabat al Khānjī, 1972). This book deals with the collection and variant readings of the Qur'an. One portion contains the *Muqaddimah Kitāb al Mabānī,* whose author is unknown (the manuscript lacks the essential first folio). However, on the second page of the manuscript, the author mentions that he started writing his book in 425 A.H. and entitled it *Kitāb al Mabānī fī Naẓm al Ma'ānī.* The second portion, entitled *al Jāmi' al Muḥarrar,* is by Ibn 'Aṭiyah (d. c. 543 A.H.), who wrote it as an introduction to his Qur'anic commentary. Both Noeldeke and his pupil Schwally have based their research on these works. The language, style, and chains of transmission employed therein reveal that the authors of these works belonged to Muslim Spain.

2. For details, see *Journal of Biblical Studies,* 79 (March 1960): 1:viii-ix.

3. Arthur Jeffery, *The Koran - Selected Suras* (New York: Heritage Press, 1958), 20.

4. For a detailed account of orientalists, see 'Abdur Raḥmān Momin, "Islamic Fundamentalism," *Hamdard Islamicus* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 35-40.

5. Arthur Jeffery, *The Qur'an as Scripture* (New York: Russell F. Moore Co., 1952), 1.

6. Ibid.

7. Jeffery, *Koran,* 14-15.

8. Ibid., 15. See also Jeffery, *Qur'an as Scripture,* 93-97.

9. Jeffery, *Materials,* viii.

10. Jeffery, *Koran,* 21.

11. Jeffery, *Materials,* viii.

12. Jeffery, *Qur'an as Scripture,* 103.

13. Ibid.

14. Jeffery calls the personal collections of some Companions "rival codices." These collections were surrendered to 'Uthmān after the official recension had been compiled. Some details can be seen in the work edited by Jeffery himself: Ibn Mas'ūd surrendered his codex to 'Uthmān. See Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān,* 95. Pearson also classifies the personal collections of the Companions in the preofficial recension period as "rivals." He has relied mainly on Jeffery's *Materials* when dealing with variant readings in his essay "Al-Kur'an," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 5:406-8.

15. According to Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Abū Bakr was the first to collect the Qur'an. He mentions the names of ten Companions said by Jeffery as having "primary codices." Although Ibn Abī Dāwūd never implies that all of them had written copies of the Qur'an, he mentions variant readings ascribed to them under the title of *Muṣḥaf.* He also uses such phrases as *jama'a al Qur'ān* (lit., "he collected the Qur'an") for one who has memorized it. See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif,* ed. by Arthur Jeffery 1st ed. (Cairo: 1936), 5, 10, 50-87. Ibn Abī Dāwūd has made it even clearer by saying that he uses the word *muṣḥaf* to mean *ḥarf* or *qirā'ah* (reading) so that the variants he quotes need not be regarded as coming from actual written codices. See Jeffery, *Materials,* 15.

16. For a detailed account of the recensions of Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān, see Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah, *Khuṭubāt-e-Bahawalpur* (Bahawalpur, Pakistan: Islamic University, 1401 AH), 3-29.

17. Jeffery, *Materials,* x.

18. Pearson, "Al-Kur'an," 407.

19. Jeffery, *Materials,* 1-3.

20. These seven systems are ascribed to Nāfi' of Madinah (d. 169 A.H.), Ibn Kathīr of Makkah (d. 120 A.H.), Ibn 'Āmir of Damascus (d. 118 A.H.), Abū 'Amr of Baṣrah (d. 154 A.H.), 'Aṣim of Kūfah (d. 128 A.H.), Ḥamzah of Kūfah (d. 158 A.H.), and al Kisā'ī of Kūfah (d. 189 A.H.).

21. Jeffery, *Qur'an as Scripture*, 100-102.

22. For details, see Labīb al Saʿīd, *The Recited Koran*, trans. Bernard Weiss, M. A. Rauf, and Morroe Berger (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1975), 45-50.

23. Ibid., 49-50, 139.

24. Jeffery, *Materials*, 75.

25. While enlisting the variants, Jeffery has read it incorrectly: دَلَّنَا يَدُّكَ إِهْدِنَا

for      دَلَّنَا بَدُلْ إِهْدِنَا . See Jeffery, *Materials*, 117. As Jeffery never gives the sources of his entries in *Materials*, it cannot be determined from where he has taken the phrase          دَلَّنَا يَدُّكَ إِهْدِنَا          , which obviously seems to be incorrect.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 185.

28. Ibid., 195.

29. Ibid., 220.

30. Ibid., 233.

31. Ibid., 287-88.

32. Ibid., 314-15.

33. Abū Muḥammad al Qaysī, *Kitāb al Ibānah fī Maʿānī al Qirāʾāt*, 1st ed. (Damascus: 1979): 94.

34. Ibid., 96.

35. Ibid., 94.

36. Ibn Khālawayh, *Iʿrāb Thalāthīn Sūrah min al Qurʾān al Karīm* (Cairo: Dār al Kutub al Miṣrīyah, 1941), 28-30.

37. Arthur Jeffery, "A Variant Text of the Fatiha," *The Moslem World*, 29 (1939): 158. Jeffery, although he included the translation of al Fātiḥah and al Muʿawwadhatān (Two Charms) in *The Koran - Selected Surahs*, does not consider them to be part of the Qurʾan: "The form in which we have it [i.e., al-Qurʾan] comprising one hundred and eleven suras" and says in the introduction to the translation of al Fātiḥah: "This short Sura does not belong to the Qurʾan proper, but [is] a little prayer, a kind of cento made up of Koranic phrases, placed as an introduction to the Book, and commonly recited before the reading of any portion thereof." Jeffery, *Koran*, 15, 23.

38. Published in Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Tadhkirat al Aʾimmah* (Tehran: 1331 A.H.) p. 18. It has not been ascribed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

39. Jeffery, "A Variant Text," 159.

40. Ibid., 159.

41. Ibid., 160-62.

42. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, trans., *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī* (Riyādh: Maktabat al Riyādh al Hadīthah, 1981), 6:483; Ibn Jarīr al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al Ṭabarī* (Cairo: Dār al Maʿārif, 1946), 1:32; Jeffery (ed.), *Muqaddimatān*, 207, 234.

43. Khan, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 481-82.

44. Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān*, 229.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 229-30.

47. ʿAbd al Waḥīd Wāfī, *Fiqh al Lughah*, 8th ed. (Cairo: n.d.), 108; Ibrāhīm Anīs, *Fī al Lahajāt al ʿArabīyah* (Cairo: 1965), 40. For characteristics of common Arabic, see "Ẓurūf Takawwun al ʿArabīyah al Fuṣḥā wa Khaṣāʾiṣuhā," in ʿAbd al Tawwāb Ramaḍān, *Fuṣūl fī Fiqh al ʿArabīyah* (Cairo: 1973), 62-78.

48. There are discussions on this topic scattered throughout the various books on the Arabic language. Al Suyūṭī has a detailed chapter on it in his *al Itqān fī ʿUlūm al Qurʾān*.

49. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, *Kitāb al Lughāt fī al Qurʾān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al Dīn al Munajjid (Cairo: 1946).

50. Ibid., 5-7.

51. For details, see Jeffery (ed.), *Muqqadimatān*, 229-30.

52. Anīs, *Fī al Lahajāt al ʿArabīyah*, 117; Ṣubḥī al Ṣāliḥ, *Dirāsāt fī Fiqh al Lughah* (Beirut: 1978), 300.

53. ʿAbd al Ḥamīd al Shalqānī, *Riwāyat al Lughah* (Cairo: 1971), 336-37; Ḥasan Ẓāẓā, *Kalām al ʿArab min Qaḍāyā al Lughah al ʿArabīyah* (Beirut: 1976), 104.

54. Ibn Jinnī, *al Khaṣā'iṣ*, 1:374

55. Ibid.

56. Jeffery, *Qur'an as Scripture*, 97.

57. In a number of cases, variants in the old codices are merely synonyms for words used in the 'Uthmānic text. Jeffery, *Materials*, 16.

58. Khan, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6:482-83.

59. Pearson, "Al-Kur'an," 408.

60. Ibid., 409.

61. For details, see Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān*, 218-30.

62. Jeffery, *Materials*, 16.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Jeffery, *Qur'an as Scripture*, 1.

66. Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 20.

67. Jeffery, *Materials*, 49. See also Ibn Manẓūr, *al Lisān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 14:163-64.

68. For example, in Sūrah 77:11, *uqqitat* is read as *wuqqitat* by Ibn Mas'ūd. Jeffery, *Materials*, 107. In the same way, *wāw* and *alif* are interchangeable, as in *wujūh* and *'ujūh*. See Ibn Manẓūr, *al Lisān*, 2:107-8 (*w-q-t*).

69. Ibn Manẓūr, *al Lisān*. See *Al-Alif al Layyinah* and *ayā*, 15:427, 438-441.

70. Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān*, 220.

71. Ibn Khālawayh, *I'rāb*, 22-24.

72. For details, see Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān*, 38; al Qaysī, *al Ibānah*, 73.

73. Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān*, 95.

74. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 23.

75. Jeffery, *Materials*, 2, 15.

76. Ibid., 16.

77. Pearson, "Al-Kur'an," 407-408. For details, see also John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: 1977), 199-212; John Wansbrough, *Qur'an Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: 1977), 44-46, 202-7.

78. See, for example, W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh: 1977), 43.

79. Jeffery, *Materials*, 6-7.

80. See, for example, Khan, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6:476-80.

81. al Qaysī, *al Ibānah*, 96-97.

82. Ibid., 22-23.

83. Ḥamīdullah, Khutubāt, 15-16.

84. Ibid., 16.

85. Ibid., 15-16.