

Abrogation in the Qur'an and Its Relation to Contemporary Interpretation

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Abstract:

The persistent scholarly debate regarding the presence or absence of Abrogation (Naskh) within the Quranic text has significantly influenced contemporary exegetical methodologies. This study is devoted to an in-depth examination of this subject, employing a rigorous descriptive and critical approach to address and elucidate the complexities surrounding this issue. The study begins with an introduction that sets the preamble for the topic, followed by three main sections: the first focuses on defining Abrogation, the second examines scholarly views on its occurrence in the Quran, and the third analyzes contemporary perspectives on Abrogation through a practical case study. The research concludes that the dispute over Abrogation is real, yet the most compelling view is that it does not occur in the Quran. Furthermore, contemporary discussions on the issue differ significantly from classical approaches, particularly in the application to subsidiary rulings.

Keywords: Naskh, contemporary interpretation, the Quran, Ijtihad, stoning.

Introduction:

A group of scholars faced difficulties in interpreting certain Quranic verses that were revealed on the same subject but with different rulings, such as the verses on alcohol and usury. They found no resolution other than asserting that the later verse abrogated the earlier one. Meanwhile, another group

denied the existence of *Naskh* verses in the Quran. Consequently, the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran has been—and continues to be—a subject of serious and ongoing scholarly debate. This issue has also appeared in contemporary interpretations of the Quran, albeit with some differences.

Significance of the Topic and Reasons for Its Selection

The significance of this topic lies in the following:

1. The ongoing disagreement over the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran and the lack of a definitive resolution to this dispute.
2. The ambiguity that characterizes most contemporary interpretations and the resulting opinions that contradict the principles of Islamic law.

Research Problem:

This research seeks to reveal how heritage disputes about *Naskh* are exploited to justify contemporary interpretative readings by addressing the following central research question:

How has the heritage disputes about the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran contributed to justifying contemporary interpretative readings, both theoretically and practically?

This main question gives rise to several sub-questions, including:

1. What is the concept of *Naskh* in the Quran?
2. What are the views and doctrines of ancestors among early scholars regarding *Naskh* in the Quran?
3. How has contemporary interpretation dealt with the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran in practical applications?

Research Objectives:

The study aims to answer the research problem by achieving the following objectives:

1. Clarifying the positions of early scholars on the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran and presenting the most valid opinion.
2. Studying the relationship between the ancient disagreement on *Naskh* in the Quran and contemporary interpretations through the analysis and critique of a selected model.

Research Methodology:

The nature of the topic dictates the research methodology in this study, which relies on the following approaches:

1. **Descriptive-analytical method:** To present scholars' views on the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran, analyze their arguments, and evaluate their evidence.
2. **The comparative critical methodology:** examining and evaluating the evidence, then favoring the opinion with the strongest proof, followed by critiquing contemporary reasoning on the issue of *Naskh*.

Previous Studies:

No comprehensive independent study was found that exactly matches this research topic. However, there are several significant and serious studies that have examined the issue of *Naskh* in the Quran, including:

- *Facts and Doubts about Naskh in the Quran* by Professor Muhammad Amara, a crucial book that explores the heritage dispute on the issue and argues that there is no *Naskh* in the Quran in the sense of nullification or removal.
- *The Correct View on the Abrogated Verses of the Book* by Professor Jawad Musa Afana, which presents *Naskh* while discussing some practical cases based on his perspective. Though valuable, I differ with some of his conclusions.

Additionally, some studies have touched upon modernist interpretations of *Naskh* in the Quran but only as a minor aspect of their research rather than as a dedicated study. An example is:

- *The Modern Reading of Islamic Law and Its Sources* by Professor Abdel Salam Ahmed Fegho, who examined the modern approach to *Naskh* in a scientific manner but concisely, without analyzing specific applied models.

This research paper aims to contribute to the academic field by presenting an independent and contemporary study on *Naskh in the Quran and Its Relation to Contemporary Interpretation*. This study differs from previous ones in its independency to the topic and its combination of both theoretical and applied aspects, analyzing a model of contemporary interpretative readings, thus makes the research more serious.

Research Structure:

To examine the issue of *Naskh in the Quran and Its Relation to Contemporary Interpretation*, the study is structured into an introduction, three main sections, and a conclusion, as follows:

- **Introduction**
- **Section One: Definition of *Naskh***
 - Subsection 1: The linguistic meaning of *Naskh*
 - Subsection 2: *Naskh* in the terminology of Quranic exegetes
 - Subsection 3: *Naskh* in the terminology of jurists
- **Section Two: Doctrines of ancestors about *Naskh* in the Quran**
 - Subsection 1: Those who deny *Naskh* in the Quran and their evidence
 - Subsection 2: Those who affirm the occurrence of *Naskh* in the Quran and their evidence
 - Subsection 3: The most well-supported view
- **Section Three: Contemporary Interpretative Approaches to *Naskh* – The punishment for married adulterers as a Case Study**
 - Subsection 1: Contemporary scholars' views on *Naskh*

- Subsection 2: The punishment for married adulterers
- **Conclusion.**

Section One: Definition of Naskh (Abrogation)

This section is dedicated to clarifying the meanings of "Naskh" in language, its interpretation in the terminology of exegetes, and its definition in the terminology of Islamic legal jurists.

First Subsection: Linguistic Meaning of Naskh

The term "Naskh" derives from the verb "Nasakha," which carries the meanings of **transfer** (Al-Jawhari, 1407H-1987, p. 1/433), **removal** (Al-Jawhari, 1407H-1987, p. 1/433; Al-Humairi, 1420H-1999, p. 10/6585), **change** (Al-Jawhari, 1407H-1987, p. 1/433), and **prohibition** (Murtadha, no date available, p. 7/355), which means nullification and replacing something with another (Al-Azhari, 2001, p. 7/84). Ibn Faris states: "The root letters 'n', 's', and 'kh' form a single root with differing interpretations. Some scholars argue it signifies the removal of something and the establishment of another in its place, while others assert it denotes transformation from one state to another. They cite examples such as the copying of a book or an action previously followed and later abrogated by another command" (Faris, 1399H-1979, p. 5/424).

Upon examining the linguistic meanings of Naskh, scholars have identified several closely related definitions:

1. **Absolute prohibition and nullification:** This meaning has no explicit examples in linguistic sources. It is likely that those who interpreted *Naskh* as nullification, removal, or prohibition intended the prohibition or nullification of its application while retaining its original existence. Thus, *Naskh* in this sense affirms the original ruling, even if its implementation has ceased.
2. **Change and transfer while preserving the original:** For example, copying a book maintains the original, while the copy serves as a copy.
3. **Removal, alteration, and substitution of something in place of another by eliminating and preventing the first,** as in the case of shadows being replaced by sunlight and vice versa. This meaning, when investigated, does not negate the first matter, nor does it prevent it except temporarily or apparently; the sun is fixed and permanent. It only moves from one place to another, then returns to it, whether it takes a long time or a short time. However, upon closer analysis, this does not indicate total elimination but rather temporary or apparent transition.

A thorough linguistic analysis indicates that Naskh encompasses both affirmation and transfer, without necessitating nullification. As Ibn Manzur states: "Naskh means transferring something from one place to another while it remains as it is" (Manzur, 1414H, p. 3/61). Copying the shadow of the sun

is proof of it, it does not eliminate the sun but merely changes its position. Similarly, copying a book does not erase the original but replicates its content. Copying (Naskh) the inheritance is proof of the right of the direct heir and then transferring it to his heirs after that. The same applies to the transmigration of souls. Copying (Naskh) works is proof of their occurrence and documentation of them through literal transmission. This concept is reflected in the Quranic verse: ﴿هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

«This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do." (Al-Jathiyah: 29). Such examples confirm that Naskh, linguistically, signifies affirmation and transfer rather than nullification.

This meaning is also supported by the verse: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا

"And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke, Satan threw into his recitation. But Allah abolishes what Satan throws in and then establishes His verses. And Allah is Knowing and Wise" (Al-Hajj: 52). Here, Satan's insinuations persist but are redirected from the prophets' aspirations to the deceptions of human and jinn devils as a test for those with diseased hearts (Amara, 1431H-2010, pp. 23-24). Allah says: ﴿لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُنْفِثُ الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾

"[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart. And indeed, the wrongdoers are in extreme dissension." (Al-Hajj: 53) Thus, linguistic analysis demonstrates that Naskh fundamentally involves affirmation and transfer.

Second Subsection: Naskh in the Terminology of Exegetes

Among most exegetes, Naskh is commonly understood as substitution, removal, or nullification. The truth is that the starting point for saying that Naskh occurred in the Holy Quran in the sense of nullification, removal and replacement goes back to the understanding of two Quranic verses:

- ﴿مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ "We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things competent?" (Al-Baqarah: 106)
- ﴿وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنْزِلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ "And when We change a Verse (of the Qur'ân,) in place of another - and Allâh knows best what He sends down - they (the disbelievers) say: "You (O

Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) are but a Muftari! (forger, liar)." Nay, but most of them know not." (An-Nahl: 101)

Exegetes have interpreted the term "Ayah"(a verse) in these verses as referring to Quranic passages, Hence, the result of this interpretation was the permissibility and occurrence of Naskh in the sense of replacing the verses and words of the Holy Quran. Then this understanding was transmitted from them. In fact the verse is used to refer to the Quranic sentence, such as the Almighty's saying: ﴿الرَّءِىَ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ﴾ ("Alif, Lam, Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book" (Yunus: 01)). However, the term "Ayah" in the Quran may be used to mean other things, such as **a miracle** Allah says; ﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ

آيَةً مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَن يُنْزِلَ آيَةً وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ("And they say, "Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Indeed, Allah is Able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know " (Al-An'am: 37)), **a sign**

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّي آيَةً ۚ قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا زَمْزَاءً وَادَّحْنَكَ رَبُّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ("He said, "My Lord, make for me a sign." He Said, "Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to the people for three days except by gesture. And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the evening and the morning" (Aal 'Imran: 41)), or **a lesson** ﴿وَإِنظُرْ إِلَىٰ جَمَازِكَ وَنَجْعَلْكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ

﴿("And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people." (Al-Baqarah: 259)).

Returning to the context of the two previous verses of Al-Baqarah and Al-Nahl, it is noted that the intended meaning of the word "Ayah"(verse) in them comes from the meaning of *a miracle*. In Surat Al-Baqarah, it refers to the *physical miracle*, while in Surat An-Nahl, it refers to the *Quranic miracle* (the entire Quran), as it is the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), to the worlds, "Allah Almighty replaced the physical miracles - in the previous messages - with the Quranic miracle... to suit humanity reaching the age of maturity...and to be the final, eternal, and universal proof. " (Amara, 1431H-2010, p. 35). Supporting this interpretation is the fact that "Ayah" appears in its singular form 84 times in the Quran, always signifying a sign, proof, miracle, or lesson, including the two previous verses of Al-Baqarah and Al-Nahl (Amara, 1431H-2010, pp. 35-39; Figo, 2014, pp. 85-87). However, a group of prominent exegetes such as Abu Muslim Al-Isfahani (254H-322H), Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi (544H-606H), and most of Mu'tazilites denied the occurrence of Naskh in the Holy Quran in the sense of nullification and replacement, and this is the right opinion that is accepted by reason, supported by Islamic law, and that people find comfort in and hearts feel reassured by.

Third Subsection: Naskh in the Terminology of Jurists

Islamic jurists have defined Naskh in various ways, with one of the most common beings: " Naskh of a fixed ruling established by an earlier text through a later text." This definition was endorsed by scholars such as Al-Baqillani, Al-Ghazali, Al-Shirazi, Al-Amidi, Ibn Al-Hajib, and Al-Tabrizi (Al-Namlah, 1420H-1999, p. 2/530). Another definition states: "It is the declaration of the termination of a legal ruling that we would have assumed to continue indefinitely were it not for the abrogating text" (Al-Kafawi, no date, p. 892). Abdul Karim Al-Namlah distinguishes between ending the duration of a ruling and abruptly ceasing its validity, categorizing the latter as true Naskh, which The difference between them is that certainty is preceded by a presumption of permanence, while the statement of the end of the ruling's period is preceded by knowledge of its timing.(Al-Namlah, 1420H-1999, p. 2/530). The legal rulings are considered to be permanent until the abrogating verse is issued and the timing of their implementation is known.

This understanding broadens Naskh to include specification of general rulings, restriction of absolute statements, clarification of ambiguous texts, and elaboration of concise rulings. Imam Al-Shatibi states "Most of what is claimed to be abrogated, if you reflect upon it, you will find it disputed, open to interpretation, and close to being interpreted by combining the two proofs in a way that the second is an explanation of a generality, or a specification of a generality, or a restriction of an absolute, and other similar ways of combining while maintaining the original rulings in the first and second." (Al-Shatibi, 1417H-1997, p. 3/340). In the words of Imam Al-Shatibi, there is precision and intelligence, for he did not imitate the common meaning of Naskh expressed by removal instead of nullification - in their best expressions- rather, he emphasized the stability and permanence of the first ruling, even if it is changed from one situation to another or from one time to another- from the absolute to the restricted, from the general to the specific, and from the vague to the clear.- And this is exactly the same linguistic meaning of Naskh when examined closely, which means stability and transmission.

It is the same meaning mentioned by the great scholars of jusists; they carefully examined the topic of Naskh and concluded that Naskh is actually a form of clarification of rulings, not canceling or nullifying them. The lead in this is attributed to Imam Al-Shafi'i, may Allah be pleased with him, and a group of established scholars agreed with him on this. Carrying the Naskh in this sense removes the disagreement about its occurrence. This is because it is outside the scope of controversy, and there is abundant evidence of the existence of such a thing.

The Second Section: The Views of the Salaf on the Occurrence of Naskh in the Holy Quran

Scholars have differed on the occurrence of Naskh in the Quran, in the sense of nullifying rulings, and have split into two groups:

The First Subsection: *Those who Deny the occurrence of Naskh in the Quran and Their Evidence*

The most famous person attributed to denying the occurrence of Naskh in the Quran is Abu Muslim al-Isfahani, along with some Mu'tazilites. This was stated by the proponents of the rationalist school and many of the later scholars, such as: Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad al-Khudari Bek, Rashid Rida, Muhammad Abu Zahra, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Abdul Karim al-Khatib, Sheikh Abdullah Daraz, Sayyid Abdul Mutaal al-Jabri, Dr. Ahmed Hegazy al-Saqqa, Muhammad Amara, Jawad Musa Muhammad Afana, and Abdul Salam Figu. In fact, this is the stance of most modern scholars. Dr. Abdul Salam Figu attributed it to all contemporary scholars (Figu, 2014, p. 82). It is a stance that one finds comfort in, brings joy to the heart, reassures the mind, accepted by reason, and is supported by strong evidence.

1. **First:** The meaning of Naskh is transmission and affirmation. Even if we accept that it can mean removal, it refers to temporary removal that necessitates affirmation, not absolute nullification. For example, the shadow's disappearance due to the sun is not its nullification but its relocation, which means transmission with affirmation, as it returns to the same place later. Similarly, the inheritance laws abrogate prior inheritance rights by transferring them to heirs, without negating the initial right.

2. **Second:** If we assume that Naskh means nullification, then the abrogated verses would be considered invalid. However, no Muslim would accept this, as the Quran states: ﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾ "Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy " (Fussilat: 42). Additionally, claiming that Naskh in the Quran entails nullification opens the door for critics to attack the Quran and attribute imperfection to Allah, which contradicts His words: ﴿وَأَنذِرْ مَا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا﴾ "And recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His words, and never will you find in other than Him a refuge." (Al-Kahf: 27).

3. **Third: Verses Affirming the Unchangeability of Allah's Words:** Several verses explicitly state that Allah's words cannot be altered, such as: ﴿وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأَوَدُّوا حَتَّىٰ آتَاهُم نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَّبِيِّ الْأَوَّلِينَ﴾ "And certainly were messengers denied before you, but they were patient over [the effects of] denial, and they were harmed until Our victory came to them. And none can alter the words of Allah. And there has certainly come to you some information about the [previous] messengers.." (Al-An'am: 34). And: وَنَمَّتْ

﴿وَأَنزَلْنَا مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِن كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ *"And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing."* (Al-An'am: 115). And : ﴿وَأَنزَلْنَا مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِن كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ *"And recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His words, and never will you find in other than Him a refuge."* (Al-Kahf: 27).

These verses emphasize the impossibility of any modification or alteration of Allah's words.

4. **Fourth:** Most of what is claimed to be abrogated can be combined with the two pieces of evidence, and combining is better than neglecting it. Hence, there is no need to resort to Naskh.

5. **Fifth:** There is no definitive proof of Naskh in the Quran. Those who claim Naskh rely on solitary reports (Ahad hadiths), which cannot be used as evidence to abrogate definitive rulings (Islamboli, 2020, p. 65).

The Second Subsection: Advocates of Naskh in the Qur'an and Their Evidence

The saying that Naskh occurred in the Quran in the sense of substitution and nullification is attributed to the majority of scholars. However, upon closer examination, many scholars attributed to this view are not actually part of the dispute. They often refer to specification of general statements, restriction of absolute statements, clarification of ambiguous texts, and explanation of unclear rulings as forms of "Naskh." Nevertheless, a significant number of scholars believe that Naskh occurs in the Quran, meaning that the later ruling (nasikh) nullified the earlier ruling (mansukh). (Al-Najjar, 1418H-1997, p. 3/536; Al-Sam'ani, 1418H-1999, p. 1/419; Al-Hanafi, p. 3/175; Qudamah, 1423H-2002, p. 1/227), To eliminate the apparent contradiction that appears in some texts. They justify their view with several arguments:

1. **Rational Justification:** If it is rationally permissible for interests to differ according to different times, it is not impossible for Allah to command the person responsible to do an action at a time because **He** knows that it benefits his interest at that time and forbids it at another time for the same reason, just as a doctor prescribes a certain medication at one stage of illness but forbids it later when circumstances change (Al-Amidi, p. 3/116; Qudamah, 1423H-2002, p. 1/228). Naskh of legal rulings falls within this framework.

Imam Al-Ghazali refutes this by explaining: "The legislation issued on a matter is arranged in a precise order, with each verse functioning in its appropriate context. When one context ends, another verse takes over with appropriate guidance... Medicines remain as long as the illness for which they are prescribed remain, and a medicine that is successful in treating one condition may not be useful in treating another different condition, this is not

to detract from its value... Indeed, a single disease may require a successive series of cures, in line with the stages of its course, the types of its complications, and the consequences of its recovery!... There is no point in weakening a medicine that is no longer needed now, as others may need it. (Amara, 1431H-2010, p. 162).

Second: Auditory Occurrence

Scholars have cited numerous Quranic verses to support the occurrence of *Naskh* (abrogation), many of which can be combined without contradiction. Among them are:

1. Allah, the Almighty, states says: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ "And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - for their wives is a bequest: maintenance for one year without turning [them] out. But if they leave [of their own accord], then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable way. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." (Al-Baqarah: 240), some claim that this verse was abrogated by the following verse: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغَ أَحْلَاهُ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا "And those of you who die and leave wives behind—they shall wait [through] four months and ten [days]. And when they have fulfilled their term, then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable manner. And Allah is [fully] aware of what you do." (Al-Baqarah: 234), the response is that there is no absolute contradiction between the two verses. The first verse discusses the *right* of a widow to remain in her deceased husband's home for an entire year, provided that it is part of the inheritance. This is a *shared* right among all heirs, and they have no authority to expel her before the end of the year. The second verse, however, outlines the widow's *obligation* to observe a waiting period (*iddah*) of four months and ten days after her husband's passing. Thus, there is no valid reason to claim *Naskh*.

- Verses Concerning the Prohibition of Alcohol: Some argue that the verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ ۚ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ "Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?" (Al-Ma'idah: 91) abrogates earlier verses about alcohol. The response is in several points that refute this claim:

- The prohibition of alcohol is a fixed ruling established by the texts of the Holy Quran. Alcohol was never permitted in the Quran—there is no single verse explicitly allowing its consumption before later verses supposedly "abrogated" it. Instead, the prohibition was introduced gradually. (See: *Truths and Misconceptions about Naskh in the Quran*, p. 163)

- Gradual prohibition aligns with divine wisdom—Allah, in His knowledge and mercy, did not forbid alcohol immediately but rather introduced the

prohibition progressively. Arabs were deeply attached to alcohol, so Allah first highlighted its harms, then clarified its impurity and connection to Satan, before explicitly forbidding it. (Amara, 2010, pp. 163-164)

- The Quran remains relevant to all times and circumstances—If a European, Russian, or American individual, raised in an environment of disbelief and accustomed to alcohol from a young age, were to convert to Islam, which verse would they be expected to follow first? Similarly, if alcohol addiction were widespread globally, *all* Quranic verses on the matter would still hold significance and should be applied contextually.

Misinterpretation of certain verses: Some believe that the verse: ﴿وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ

النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ *"And from the fruits of date palms and grapevines, you take intoxicants and good provision."* (An-Nahl: 67). suggests that alcohol was initially permitted because it is mentioned alongside lawful provisions. This is incorrect. The verse could mean: *"From these fruits, you create both intoxicants (a vice) and good sustenance (lawful food and drink)."* This aligns with the broader Quranic message, which explicitly classifies alcohol as *"an abomination of Satan's handiwork"* and warns against its consumption ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ

وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجَسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ *"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful"* (Al-Ma'idah: 90). The mind was created to distinguish truth from falsehood and good from bad. ﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ

يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ *"Indeed in that is a sign for a people who reason"* (An-Nahl: 67)

Moreover, this verse is *informational*, and it is well established that Quranic narrative statements cannot be subject to abrogation. (Amara, 2010, p. 165)

Third: Apparent Indications of Naskh.

Supporters of *Naskh* in the Quran cite two key verses:

1. ﴿مَا نَسَخَ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ *"Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring forth one better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?"* (Al-Baqarah: 106) Some exegetes interpret this as referring to *Naskh* of certain Quranic verses in their rulings or recitations, or both. They cite examples like the alleged *stoning (arradjem)* verse, which they claim that its recitation was abrogated while its ruling remained in effect, as well as rulings on widowhood and alcohol and usury prohibition. (See: Kathir, 1419H, 1/258; Al-Jassas, 1405H, 1/70; Al-Baydawi, 1418H, 1/99; Al-Alusi, 1415H, 1/200). It has been shown that there is no contradiction between these verses, such that it would be permissible to claim that they have been abrogated
2. ﴿وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَّكَانَ آيَةٍ ۖ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۚ بَلْ أَتَاهُمْ لَآ يَعْهَدُونَ﴾ *"And when We substitute a verse in place of a verse - and Allah is most knowing of what He sends down*

- they say, "You, [O Muhammad], are but an inventor [of lies]." But most of them do not know." (An-Nahl: 101) This means Allah knows best what He sends down of *Naskh*, what is best for His creation, and what He changes and alters of His rulings. This verse is often interpreted as confirming the divine practice of replacing Quranic rulings. (Kathir, 1419 AH, page 4/517) (Al-Razi, 1420 AH, page 7/316)

The response to these two proofs, which are understood from their appearance as changing the ruling of the Quranic verses, their recitation, or both. This understanding – in our view- is wrong. Instead, they refer to the replacement of miracles (divine signs), not legal rulings. This interpretation is supported by several points:

- The context is clear that there is no place for the claim of abrogation of obligation here; the discussion in them is about ability and sensory miracles, not about the rulings of obligation. (See: Veigu, 2014, p. 84) What is meant by His Almighty's saying in the first verse (Al-Baqarah: 106) that is, if a miracle disappears after it occurs, then God is able to bring something "better than it," meaning something stronger and more evident than it, because physical, sensory miracles vary in magnitude and the strength of their effect on those who see them. (See: Veigu, 2014, p. 84)
- As for Allah, forgetting or causing to forget the physical, sensory miracles, this is an innate, "natural" matter, because those miracles were in the memory of those who witnessed them at the moment they occurred, and then they began to disappear and be forgotten, generation after generation. (See: Veigu, 2014, p. 84)
- The term "Ayah" in the Quran consistently refers to signs, miracles, and evidences, appearing 84 times with this meaning. It does not refer to specific Quranic verses or legal rulings.

The Third Subsection: Final Judgment (the Most Correct Opinion)

A thorough examination of the arguments from both perspectives strongly supports the view that *Naskh* (abrogation) does not occur in the Quran. While *Naskh* may have existed within revelation *during* the Prophet's lifetime—since the Sunnah is also a form of revelation—there is no evidence of any Quranic verse remaining for recitation while its ruling has been abrogated. Likewise, there is no Quranic ruling that remains in effect without a corresponding verse.

The Third Section: Contemporary Interpretations of the Issue of *Naskh* – The Case of the Punishment for a Married Adulterer as a Model

Renewal advocates in the modern era have not left any disputed issue without exploiting it to serve their agendas. The following presents the position of contemporary scholars on the issue of *Naskh*.

First Section: Contemporary Schools of Thought on the Issue of *Naskh*

The debate over whether *Naskh* has occurred in the Quran continues, with some denying it and others affirming it.

First: Those Who Deny the Occurrence of *Naskh* in the Quran:

The majority of precise scholars, proponents of the rationalist school, and many Quranists and modernists deny the occurrence of *Naskh*. Professor Abdel Salam Figo states: "In reality, this is the prevailing stance among all modern scholars—they reject the interpretation that became common among later scholars, which asserts that *Naskh*, meaning the nullification of Quranic verses, exists" (Figo, 2014, p. 82).

Second: Those Who Affirm the Occurrence of *Naskh* in the Quran

Despite the existence of rigorous research and scholarly studies that have scrutinized the issue of *Naskh* and dispelled doubts surrounding it, a group of contemporary scholars continues to follow the traditional claims that *Naskh* exists in the Quran, meaning the nullification of verses in terms of ruling, recitation, or both.

Second Section: The Punishment for a Married Adulterer

The issue of stoning (*arradjem*) has occupied a significant space in contemporary readings and has been a source of intense debate and disagreement among modern researchers. It is one of the most prominent topics closely related to the question of *Naskh* in the Quran.

The controversy surrounding this issue stems from two main aspects:

1. **The claim that a verse on stoning was abrogated in its wording but not in its ruling.** Many books on Qur'anic sciences and Islamic jurisprudence cite the so-called "stoning verse" as an example of this type of *Naskh*. It is alleged that the verse used to be recited as follows: "The elderly man and the elderly woman, if they commit adultery, stone them absolutely as a deterrent from Allah. And Allah is Mighty, Wise." References: (Al-Jawzi, 1423H, pp. 30-31), (Al-Qayrawani, 1428H/2007, p. 150), (Al-Fayruzabadi, vol. 1, p. 124), (Al-Maqdisi, p. 25), (Al-Zurqani, vol. 2, p. 196), (Rushd, 1408H/1988, vol. 18, p. 216), (Al-Shawkani, 1419H/1999, vol. 2, p. 64), (Juzi, 1431H, p. 218).

2. **The claim that the ruling of stoning (*arradjem*) is an instance of Quranic *Naskh* by the Sunnah.** Some scholars argue that the punishment of stoning for adultery is an example of a ruling in the Quran being abrogated by the Sunnah. Professor Abdul Monem Al-Qi'i states: "If we add the ruling of stoning—established in the Sunnah—to Allah's command: ﴿الرَّائِيَةُ وَالرَّائِي فَاَجْلِدُوهُمَا كُلَّ

وَاجِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ ' The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for

them in the religion of Allah, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment.' (Surah An-Nur 24:2), then the Sunnah serves as a specification of this general ruling. Thus, an unmarried adulterer is punished with flogging according to the Quran, while a married adulterer is punished with stoning according to the Sunnah. This is an example of the *Naskh* of a ruling while the verse remains recitable" (Al-Qi'i, 1417H/1996, pp. 83-84).

However, considering the stoning punishment as a Quranic ruling is not acceptable, as "its absence from the Quranic text that the Prophet (peace be upon him) left behind proves that it is not part of the Quran. Therefore, the ruling of stoning is based on the Sunnah" (Al-Qi'i, 1417H/1996, p. 83). Furthermore, the claim that the ruling in Surah An-Nur was abrogated by the Sunnah's ruling on stoning is unnecessary. It is more appropriate to view it as a specification. Even Al-Qi'i himself admitted this when he stated, "It was a specification of the general ruling." However, he then insisted on calling it *Naskh*, saying, "Thus, an unmarried adulterer is punished with flogging according to the Quran, while a married adulterer is punished with stoning according to the Sunnah. This is an example of the *Naskh* of a ruling while the verse remains recitable," which is an unnecessary claim (Al-Qi'i, 1417H/1996, p. 83).

However, Professor Jawad Afaneh denied the existence of stoning in Islamic law entirely and considered that "the ruling of stoning, which has been authentically reported and which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ruled and implemented, was merely a form of emergency relief, a ruling for a specific case and an unrepeatable circumstance, revealed by Allah to His Messenger (peace be upon him) in a verse that was frequently mentioned in books of exegesis, jurisprudence, and authentic collections of hadith. Then, that verse was abrogated after the situation stabilized on the natural human disposition (*fitrah*), reaching a permanent and stable state, and the final and permanent ruling of Allah was revealed, prescribing flogging for the adulterer and the adulteress" (Afaneh, 1438H, p. 137).

The difference between Afaneh's view and the mainstream scholarly opinion is that he considers the verse of stoning to be abrogated both in its recitation and ruling, as he does not acknowledge the existence of *Naskh* in the words or rulings of the Quran after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In contrast, the majority of scholars hold that the verse was abrogated in its recitation but that its ruling remains valid.

Afaneh also rejected the notion that the verse was abrogated by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) actions, arguing that there is no evidence proving whether his actions took place before or after the revelation of Surah An-

Nur. He based this on a hadith recorded by Al-Bukhari, in which Ash-Shaybani said: "I asked Abdullah bin Abi Awfa, 'Did the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) carry out the punishment of stoning?' He replied, 'Yes.' I asked, 'Was it before or after the revelation of Surah An-Nur?' He said, 'I do not know'" (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, vol. 8, p. 204). Afaneh viewed this hadith as a form of doubt regarding the validity of stoning (Afaneh, 1438H, pp. 139-140).

He further argued that the term "punishment" (عَذَاب) in Quranic usage—according to his interpretation—refers to a form of retribution and penalty that does not extend to execution or death. He supported this with the verse:

﴿وَمَا نُرِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾ " And We showed

them not a sign except that it was greater than its sister, and We seized them with affliction that perhaps they might return [to faith]." (Az-Zukhruf: 48).

Afaneh stated: "Otherwise, how could they be punished so that they might return? Can one who has died (in this world) return? How could they come back and break their covenant if they were already dead?! Thus, it is certain that the punishment of flogging does not include stoning (nor does it reach the level of execution), and specification (i.e., distinguishing between punishments) is not applicable here at all, because the punishment was not given in a general or ambiguous manner; rather, it was explicitly and definitively stated as 'one hundred lashes'" (Afaneh, 1438H, p. 145).

A response to his argument is that it is not necessarily true that worldly punishment cannot lead to death. On the contrary, it can include direct execution, as seen in how Allah dealt with previous nations when they transgressed and became arrogant on earth, as well as in cases of retribution for intentional murder and in the context of jihad. Allah says: ﴿فَاتْلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

﴿بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَبْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ " Fight them; Allah will punish

them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts of a believing people " (At-Tawbah: 14). Here, Allah made punishment synonymous with execution.

Additionally, the temptation for an adulterer who is already married (muhsan) is less than that of an unmarried person, meaning that if they engage in adultery, it is a deliberate abandonment of lawful intimacy in favor of forbidden acts—may Allah protect us. Furthermore, if their act reaches the extent that four trustworthy Muslim witnesses testify against them, this suggests that they have committed the sin openly and defiantly. In such a case, their execution serves as a deterrent to prevent the spread of immorality

and to make an example for those tempted by unlawful desires despite having lawful alternatives. Therefore, their punishment is justifiably more severe.

If stoning were merely a temporary or exceptional ruling, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have explicitly stated so during his lifetime, as delaying clarification when needed is not permissible.

Conclusion:

This research paper has focused on studying the issues related to abrogation (*naskh*) in the Quran and its connection to contemporary interpretations. Upon completing this study, the following findings were reached:

First: Findings

1. **Naskh** has multiple closely related meanings, including transfer, removal, nullification, and affirmation. However, most classical scholars interpreted it primarily as transfer, removal, and nullification, neglecting the meaning of "affirmation," which is actually inherent in the examples they cited for transfer, removal, and nullification, as clarified in this study.
2. The abrogation (*Naskh*) of revelation during the time of its descent is confirmed by sound evidence and is not a subject of dispute; therefore, it was not addressed in this study.
3. The abrogation(*Naskh*) of the Quran, which was preserved as it was at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and transmitted to us by uninterrupted consensus until today, is rationally and textually impossible if taken to mean removal and nullification. This view was adopted by Abu Muslim Al-Isfahani and later by scholars of the rationalist school, and it has become the predominant opinion among contemporary scholars, which, upon investigation, appears to be the most accurate.
4. If **naskh** were understood as temporary transfer, removal, or nullification, the scholarly disagreement regarding the occurrence of **naskh** in the Quran could be resolved. In that case, the debate would become merely terminological—where affirming the *Naskh* of certain verses would mean their suspension only temporarily, allowing their reinstatement if circumstances change. Meanwhile, rejecting *Naskh* outright would imply a denial of its absolute occurrence, thereby making the dispute purely semantic, as both sides would not be arguing about the same issue.
5. Some contemporary scholars have exploited the issue of **naskh** in the Quran to fabricate modern interpretations that contradict and nullify certain divine rulings explicitly stated in the Quran, using **naskh** as their justification.

Second: Recommendations

1. This study confirms that several issues still require further research, scrutiny, and independent reasoning, such as investigating whether the ruling on stoning (*rajm*) in the Sunnah was established before or after the revelation of Surah An-Nur.

2. The dignity and strength of the Muslim Ummah are tied to its adherence to its religion. Therefore, scholars must dedicate their efforts to clarifying Allah's rulings to His servants, as this is a significant form of intellectual and spiritual resistance, especially in light of Western dominance over various fields.
3. Anyone aspiring to engage in **ijtihād** (independent reasoning) in the religion of Allah must equip themselves with the necessary religious, scholarly, and ethical knowledge that qualifies them to undertake this great and complex responsibility, which involves difficult challenges and serious consequences.

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