

ALI 389: THE MAKKI AND MADANI REVELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

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- The Qur'an was revealed over 20-23 years, principally in the holy cities of Makka and Madina.
- The situation of the Muslims was different in each of the cities
- Factors:
 - Strength of Islam and Muslims
 - Nature of the non Muslim audience

MAKKA v MADINA

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- In Makka, the Qur'an addressed the polytheists of the Quraysh.
- In Madina, the Qur'an addressed the people of the Book, mainly the Jews.
- In Makka, the Muslims were very few, they were in the minority and had no government.
- Conversely, in Madina, the Muslims were the majority and moreover, had established an Islamic state.

THE SPLIT OF MAKKI AND MADANI REVELATIONS

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- According to statistics from the traditions on the order of revelation:
 - 86 chapters of the Qur'an are Makkan and
 - 28 are Madinan.
- In fact roughly:
 - two-thirds of the Qur'an was revealed in the 13 years of the Prophetic mission in Makka
 - and the remaining one-third during the 10 years that the Prophet lived in Madina.

DEFINITION OF THE TERMS MAKKI AND MADANI

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For the definition and classification of the verses of the Qur'an into these two groups, three main criteria are employed.

These are:

1. The criterion of location
2. The criterion of addressee
3. The criterion of period

THE CRITERION OF LOCATION

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- In this definition, the criterion for a verse being Makki or Madani is governed by the place of revelation.
 - If the verse was revealed in Makka, then it is classified as Makki,
 - And if it was revealed in Madina, then it is classified as Madani.
- A problem with this definition is that, if a verse was not revealed either in Makka or Madina (eg. the verses revealed at Tabuk), then, according to this definition, it cannot be classified as either Makki or Madani.
- Suyuti narrates that the Prophet (S) said, “The Qur’an was sent down in three places: Makka, Madina, and Sham.”
- And Ibn al-Kathir says: Sham is Tabuk.

THE CRITERION OF THE ADDRESSEE

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- In this definition, the criterion of a verse being Makki or Madani is governed by the addressee of the verse. For instance:
 - If the verse is meant for the Quraysh and the polytheists of Makka, then the verse is classified as Makki,
 - And if the verse is addressed to the Muslims, Jews or the hypocrites (*munafiqun*) of Madina, then the verse is classified as Madani.
- A problem with this definition is that there are verses present in the Qur'an, that are either addressed to mankind in general (e.g. "O people!") or to a specific portion of mankind (e.g. "the people of the book") these verses then cannot be classified as either Makki or Madani.

THE CRITERION OF PERIOD

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- Most scholars believe that the criterion of a verse being Makki or Madani is governed by the Prophet's historic migration from Makka to Madina (*hijra*).
 - Any verse revealed prior to the migration, is classified as Makki,
 - And any verse revealed after the migration, is classified as Madani.
- Therefore, the verses revealed at the conquest of Makka, in 8AH, or at the farewell pilgrimage, in 10AH, are considered Madani under this definition. This is because these verses were revealed after the migration, although the actual place of revelation was Makka.

DEFINITION: THE CRITERION OF PERIOD

- According to this preferred definition:
 - The Makki phase lasted about 13 years – from the time of the first revelation until the entry of the Prophet (S) into Madina after his migration.
 - The Madani phase lasted about 10 years – from the time of the entry of the Prophet (S) into Madina until his death in 11 AH.
- Using this definition:
 - A Makki chapter is one in which most of the verses had been revealed before the migration, even though its completion may have occurred after the migration.
 - Similarly, a Madani chapter is one in which most of the verses were revealed after the migration.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAKKI AND THE MADANI VERSES

■ In Makka:

- Islam had been a relatively new religion,
- and the tenets of Islam had not yet been firmly established.
- In addition, the Muslims were oppressed and had very little power, and thus needed continual moral encouragement.

■ In Madina:

- After the migration, the Muslims had their own state and were relatively established.
- The basic beliefs of Islam had been revealed and now the Muslims were in need of Divine guidance in their daily and social lives.
- They also needed to know the rules and conduct of Jihad and the laws of inter-religious dialogue. As the needs of the Muslim community began to change, so did the style and content of the verses of the Qur'an

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN MAKKI AND MADANI VERSES

In the absence of clear traditions, other methods have been employed, such as:

1. The theme of the verses:

- The Makki verses mostly describe the matters of belief (*usul*). They refute the beliefs of the idolaters. They give evidence of the Unity of God and His attributes. They warn about the Day of Judgement.
- The Madani verses, on the other hand, mostly deal with the matter of rulings (*furu'*). These include the legislation regarding the daily prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, alms, holy war, family affairs, social conduct and so on.

2. Form of address:

- In the Makki verses, the audience has been addressed as, “O People!” or “O Children of Adam!”
- In the Madani verses the words “O You who believe!” have been used.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN MAKKI AND MADANI VERSES

3. The length of the verses and chapters:

- The Makki verses tend to be short [exception: while the 29th and 30th *juz'* (mostly Makki chapters) have 431 and 570 verses respectively]
- The Makki chapters tend to be short (eg. those in the 30th *juz'*).
- The Madani verses tend to be long [the whole of the 28th *juz'* (mostly Madani chapters) contains 137 verses]
- The Madani chapters tend to be long (eg. al-Baqarah and Ali 'Imran).

4. Direct references about a certain person or event in the Makki or Madani period:

- For example, *al-Lahab* is definitely Makki, because his enmity to Islam was from before the migration
- And the verses mentioning the battle of Badr is Madani, because the battle occurred after the migration.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING IF A VERSE IS MAKKI OR MADANI

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The importance of knowing whether a verse is Makki or Madani are:

1. Its relevance in jurisprudence.

E.g. The Abrogation of the Verse of Mut'a

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا تَرَضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ
أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ... فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ

... So with those among them whom you have married (istamta'tum), give them their required due, but if you agree mutually (to give more) after the requirement (has been determined), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allah is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise [4:24]

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ; وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ; إِلَّا عَلَى
أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

And who are givers of poor-rate, And who guard their private parts, Except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable. [23:4-6]

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING IF A VERSE IS MAKKI OR MADANI

2. To understand the history of the progress of the Muslim community and also the development of Islamic legislations, and how the Prophet (S) dealt with different sects such as polytheists, Christians and Jews.
3. It enables us to understand the verse properly and benefit from its guidance if we know when the verse was revealed, especially when the exegetes encounter different occasions of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) about the verse.

EXCEPTIONS IN THE MAKKI AND MADANI CHAPTERS

- Most scholars accept that some Makki chapters contain Madani verses, and very occasionally, Madani chapters contain some Makki verses.
- The table below summarises the exceptions and is based on the opinions cited in Zamakhshari in his *al-Kashshaf* and Zanjani in his *Tarikh al-Qur'an*.

Type of chapter	Number of chapters	Total number of verses	Number of Makki verses	Number of Madani verses
Makki	51	1683	1683	-
Madani	26	1419	-	1419
Makki incl. Madani verses	35	2930	2776	154
Madani incl. Makki verses	2	204	9	195
Total	114	6236	4468	1768