

113070 - “They are among the best and earliest and they are among the first I received”

the question

What is the meaning of the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) concerning al-Isra', al-Kahf and Maryam, “They are among the best and earliest and they are among the first I received”?

Detailed answer

These are not the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), rather they are the words of the Sahaabi ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him). Al-Bukhaari narrated in his Saheeh (4994) with his isnaad from ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Yazeed who said: I heard Ibn Mas’ood say concerning Bani Israa’eel, al-Kahf, Maryam, Ta-Ha and al-Anbiya’: “They are among the best and earliest and they are among the first I received”.

Perhaps the oldest explanation that has come down to us is what was stated by Imam Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qaasim ibn Salaam in his book Fadaa’il al-Qur’aan (hadeeth no. 385) where he says, after narrating it:

The words “among the best and earliest” mean: the earliest words I learned of the Qur’aan, and that is because these soorahs were revealed in Makkah. End quote.

The scholars quote this report from Ibn Mas’ood as evidence that the order of the soorahs in the Mus-haf of ‘Uthmaan (may Allaah be pleased with him) is tawqeefi (i.e., fixed and not subject to ijtihaad) and is as it was at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer says in Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem (1/49): al-Bukhaari is the only one who narrated it, and what is meant is that the order of these soorahs in the Mus-haf of Ibn Mas’ood is the same as that in the Mushafs of ‘Uthmaan. The words “among the best and earliest” mean that they were among the first to be revealed, and the words “they are among the first I received” mean among the first that I acquired and memorized. End quote.

See: al-Burhaan fi ‘Uloom al-Qur’aan (1/257).

The Standing Committee (al-Majmoo’ah al-Thaaniyah, 3/128) was asked the following question:
How sound is this hadeeth: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said concerning Bani Israa’eel, al-Kahf, Maryam, Ta-Ha and al-Anbiya’: “They are among the best and earliest and they are among the first I received”?

They replied: The hadeeth mentioned was narrated by al-Bukhaari in a mawqoof report going back to Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him), and it means that they were among the first soorahs to be revealed. The phrase “they are among the first I received” mean they were among the first that I memorized. End quote.

See also the answer to question no. [90186](#).

And Allaah knows best.