The Doctrine of Abrogation (Al Naskh wa Al Mansukh)

This is a difficult doctrine for Muslims for it reflects poorly on the supposed textual perfection of the Quran. The doctrine is based on sura 2:106, *"None of our revelations do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but we substitute something better or similar. Don't you know that God has the power over all things?"*

So in the early days these texts (given in the Meccan period) could become 'Mansukh' (abrogated) while new fresh revelations (the Naskh texts) were sent down to replace them.

Later authoritative legal commentators – like Al-Baidawi and Zamrakshari – taught that the abrogated verses should no longer be recited and that any laws based on them were to be regarded as annulled. Some Muslim scholars have claimed that it was the Tawrat, Zabour and Injil that were abrogated, but not the Quran. But this is not general, since it is unsupportable from the text of the Quran .

Sura 3:3 says that the Quran *"confirms that which went before"* – namely the Tawrat and the Injil which are mentioned in 3:4. Sura 5:47 says expressly that the Jews will be judged by what is written in the Old Testament. Sura 5:50 says that Christians will be judged by the Injil. In addition, both Jews and Christians are called to stand fast to their Scriptures – the Tawrat and Injil respectively – and all that their Lord had revealed to them (suras 5:71).

In the Quran, one of the most famous instances of abrogation is the change in the direction in which believers pray – from Jerusalem to Mecca. Another change is the gradual prohibition against wine drinking.

The dates and order of the suras in the Quran

The Meccan Suras

1st period – *from* the 1st year to the 5th year of Muhammad's "revelations" (612-617 A.D.)

In order: 96, 74, 111, 106, 108, 104, 107, 102, 105, 92, 90, 94, 93, 86, 91, 68, 87, 103, 85, 73, 101, 99, 82, 81, 53, 84, 100, 79, 78, 88, 89, 75, 83, 69, 51, 52, 56, 70, 112, 109, 113, 114, 1.

2nd period – the 5th to 6th years of Muhammad's "revelations" (617-619 A.D.)

54, 37, 71, 76, 44, 50, 20, 26, 15, 19, 38, 36, 43, 72, 67, 23, 21, 17, 27, 18.

3rd period – the 7th year to the Hijra (619-622 A.D.)

32, 41, 45, 16, 30, 11, 14, 12, 40, 28, 39, 29, 31, 42, 10, 34, 35, 7, 46, 6, 13.

The Medinan Suras

From the Hijra to the end (622-632 A.D.)

2, 98, 64, 62, 8, 47, 3, 61, 57, 4, 65, 59, 33, 63, 24, 58, 22, 48, 66, 110, 49, 9, 5.