

## THE COLLECTION AND COMPILATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

1. Compilation of the holy Qur'an means the process of collecting all the written Qur'anic verses that were recorded during the prophet's time into a book form.
  2. During the prophet's time, the holy Qur'an was written on different loose materials such as barks of trees, skins, leaves, stones and others basing on his instructions and supervision.
  3. The compilation of the holy Qur'an was a process because it passed through gradual stages which were the prophet's time, the caliphate of Abu Bakar, the caliphate of Uthman and the Umayyad time.
  4. Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W) period ; this was the period between 610 and 632 AD, from the time of the first revelation until when the prophet died.
  5. Throughout this period, revelation was still coming down and although it came in portions, it had some kind of order and arrangement.
  6. Allah says in Q(25:32) "...and We have rehearsed it to you in slow well-arranged stages gradually."
- It was this format that the prophet PBUH and his scribes followed when collecting the various Qur'anic verses.
7. Traditionally, the Prophet PBUH assigned some of his companions the duty of writing down the Qur'anic verses as he instructed and supervised them.
  8. The popular scribes of the holy Qur'an among the prophet's companions were Zaid bin Thabit, Ali bin Abu Talib, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa, Abu Huraira, Abu Bakar, Uthman, Aisha and others.
  9. Whenever the Prophet PBUH received a verse, he immediately ordered his scribes to write it down under his supervision.

10. Verses were written on loose materials such as bones, barks of trees, skins, leaves, and others which were highly protected to avoid them landing in hands of the enemies of Islam.

11. To ensure purposeful recording of the holy Qur'an, the Prophet PBUH is reported to have given the following instructions;

“Do not write anything from me apart from the holy Qur'an.” “Do not take the holy Qur'an on journey with you, for, I am afraid that it may land into the hands of the enemy.”

12. Whenever a verse was revealed to the Prophet PBUH, he would instruct his writers that write it in such a chapter next to such and such a verse until when revelation stopped in 632 AD.

13. It should be noted that during the prophet's time, most of the Arabs were illiterate and relied mainly on their memories to preserve the divine revelation.

14. By the time of the prophet's death in 632AD, the holy Qur'an had been committed to memory by majority of the Muslims while they still kept the written scriptures.

15. It should further be noted that the Prophet PBUH did not leave a compiled text of the holy Qur'an. It was after his death that the holy Qur'an was compiled into a book form.

16. However, immediately after the prophet's death, a companion called Ali bin Abu Talib vowed not to leave his house before he had produced a compiled text of the holy Qur'an from his memory.

#### FACTORS THAT LIMITED THE COMPILATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN DURING THE PROPHET'S TIME

a) The Prophet PBUH died nine days just after the end of the revelation and so he did not get enough time to effect its compilation.

- b) In the last days of the prophet PBUH, he was very sick such that he could not organize the holy Qur'an into a book form.
- c) The compilation process was limited by the lack of adequate and suitable writing materials like pens and papers. Things like skins and leaves of trees could not be relied on.
- d) There were few Muslims who could read and write during the prophet's time and the prophet PBUH himself was illiterate.
- e) During the prophet's time, most of the Arabs were mainly good at memorization and they had committed the holy Qur'an to memory. So the need for compiling it was at its lowest.
- f) During the prophet's time, the Prophet PBUH and other Muslims were pre-occupied with wars against the enemies of Islam. So they did not have enough time to deal with Qur'anic compilation.
- g) Further still, during this time, Muslims were relatively few and almost everybody had memorized the holy Qur'an, hence a delay in its compilation.
- h) The Prophet PBUH who was the source of the holy Qur'an was still alive and any issue could be referred to him for a solution. So Muslims attached less importance on compiling the holy Qur'an into a book form.
- i) The concept of abrogation also limited the compilation of the holy Qur'an into a book form. The Prophet PBUH feared that he would include verses that would later be abrogated by Allah.
- j) During the prophet's time, revelation was still coming down and the Prophet PBUH did not know when it would end. So he could not compile it for fear of leaving out some verses that would be revealed after the compilation exercise.

k) The Prophet PBUH did not get instruction from his Master to compile the holy Qur'an into a book form until when he died. So he could not do what Allah had not instructed him to do.

l) Most of the companions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH were traders and so they had limited time to combine learning the holy Qur'an, trading and at the same time involve themselves in compiling it.

m) Following Q(36:82), it was due to Allah's will for the Prophet PBUH not to compile the holy Qur'an into a book form.

17. Caliph Abubakar's period; this was the period between AD 632 and 634, immediately after the death of the Prophet PBUH.

18. After the prophet's death, there emerged wars of apostasy especially during Abu Bakar's caliphate.

19. During one of the battles called Yamamah, many Qur'anic memorizers were killed and each died with his portion of the holy Qur'an.

20. After the battle, one of the great companions of the Prophet PBUH called Umar bin Khattab became concerned after seeing many Qur'anic reciters dying.

21. He cautioned Caliph Abu Bakar that if the same incident happened again, part of the Qur'an in memories of the companions would be lost. He thus proposed that the holy Qur'an be compiled into a book form.

22. At first, Caliph Abu Bakar was hesitant to compile the holy Qur'an into a book form because the Prophet PBUH never did it nor did he instruct the Muslims to do so. So he feared to make innovation in Islam.

23. However, Umar bin Khattab continued to make his point and at last after consulting other prominent companions of the Prophet PBUH, Caliph Abu Bakar accepted to have the holy Qur'an compiled.

24. Abu Bakar chose a committee chaired by Zaid bin Thabit assisted by companions like Abdallah Ibn Masuud to effect the compilation of the holy Qur'an. Thus, Zaid bin Thabit reports;

"I collected the holy Qur'an from its original recording and from the memories of men."

25. The holy Qur'an was compiled from the pieces left behind by the Prophet PBUH and its order had to be certified by the companions who had it by heart like Lady Aisha and Hafiswat.

26. The holy Qur'an compiled by Caliph Abu Bakar was in Quraish dialect. A copy of it was kept by the caliph and another one with Lady Hafiswat. Many other copies of different dialects were produced and circulated in the Muslim world. This remained a state of affairs during the caliphate of Umar bin Khattab.

27. Caliph Uthman's period; during his reign, Caliph Uthman realized that there were many copies of the holy Qur'an in the Muslim state being read in different dialects (languages) thereby bringing a difference in its reading and meaning.

28. As a result, Muslims understood the holy Qur'an differently and for it being the basic code of Sharia, Muslims got divided on the major teachings of the holy book.

29. Caliph Uthman reacted swiftly to solve the problem and with the consent of other prominent companions, he collected and burnt all the copies that were not in the original dialect of the holy Qur'an (Quraish).

30. They were replaced with a standard copy written according to the prophet's accent and language.

31. The caliph kept one copy at Madiina and distributed many others in all Muslim cities with a reciter to demonstrate the correct recitation of the holy Qur'an.

32. Thus, since then, the standardized copy (Uthmanic text) has been in use without any slightest change in words, order or even punctuation marks.

33. N.B: During the Umayyads period, the Arabs found it difficult to read the holy Qur'an without vowels. A man called Hajjaj bin Yusuf ,- saved the situation by inserting vowels in the standardized copy. Hence, making it easier to read.

### **WHY WAS THE HOLY QUR'AN COMPILED INTO A BOOK FORM?**

1. Death of many Qur'anic memorizers as a result of Ridah wars during Abu Bakar's caliphate especially during the battle of Yamamah.
2. The materials on which the holy Qur'an was previously collected and written were loose and could easily be lost e.g bones, leaves, and others. So there was need to remove it from scattered materials.
3. There was need to deal with false prophets such as Talha and Musailama who wanted to mix their words with the words of Allah.
4. The rise of conflicts about the interpretation of the holy Qur'an also necessitated its compilation into a book form.
5. Need to teach Islam to the new converts using the holy Qur'an dictated its compilation into a book form.
6. Need to preserve the holy Qur'an for the future generation.
7. Death of the Prophet PBUH yet he was the source of guidance for the Muslims.
8. Need to have the laws of the holy Qur'an compiled in one volume as a source of sharia.
9. The development of technology that saw the emergence of suitable writing materials such as pens and papers.
10. The expansion of the Islamic empire that necessitated the sending of Allah's message to all corners of the Muslim world.

11.The great influx into Islam and the increase in the number of Muslims.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPILED TEXT OF THE HOLY QUR'AN**

1. It helped to save the holy Qur'an for the future generation because its memorizers were dying in Riddah wars (wars of apostasy).
2. It made it easy for the spread of Islam because all the divine laws of Allah were intact and moving with them became simple.
- 3.It also facilitated its memorization because it is easier to memorise from the same book than reading from scattered scripts.
4. It made it easy for Muslims to use the holy Qur'an in administration because all its laws were collected in one text book.
5. The standardized copy produced by Caliph Uthman saved the Muslim community from getting divided because it came with uniform reading and meaning.
6. The holy Qur'an contains a lot of information in our contemporary life and therefore compiling it facilitated research in various aspects like science.
7. It displayed the passion and love the companions of the Prophet PBUH had for Islam which is a lesson for modern Muslims to follow.
8. The burning of the disputed copies of the holy Qur'an by Caliph Uthman is a lesson to Muslims that they should always be on alert to deal with anything bound to bring disunity among the Muslims.
9. It facilitated the recitation of the holy Qur'an especially for non-Arab Muslims by Hujaji bin Yusuf who added vowels to it.

10. The reluctance Caliph Abu Bakar showed when he was first approached by Umar bin Khattab to compile the holy Qur'an is a lesson for the Muslims to be strictly mindful of innovation (Bida'a) in Islam.

11. Caliph Abu Bakar accepted to compile the holy Qur'an into a book form after mutual consultation with the prominent companions of the Prophet PBUH. This is a lesson for modern Muslim leaders not to be dictators but also involve others (consultation) in matters affecting Islam.

12. We learn from the prophet's time that whenever he received a verse, he instructed his companions to write it down. Muslims should also take writing down of Muslim documents seriously and keep them safely.

13. It helped to differentiate the prophet's words (hadith) and those of his companions (Athar) from Allah's words because the later were compiled in one uniform book.

## **HARDSHIPS FACED IN COMPILING THE HOLY QUR'AN**

1. The holy Qur'an was compiled after the death of the Prophet PBUH and this became a problem because he was the supreme source of knowledge for the Muslims.

2. The Islamic state had a problem of the enemies of Islam especially from the Byzantine Empire who wanted to destroy Islam completely.

3. There was a problem of hypocrites in Islam. These behaved like real Muslims but wanted to fight Islam from within after failing to fight it from out.



4. Death of the memorizers of the holy Qur'an especially during the battle of Yamamah posed a big problem because they were part of the sources of the divine message in absence of the prophet PBUH.
5. Illiteracy among the Muslims. By this time, most of the Muslims still could not read and write and this meant that the compilation exercise was left in hands of the few literate and trustworthy Muslims.
6. Writing materials such as pens and papers were still inadequate and this proved a problem to the compilers of the holy Qur'an and those present were of poor quality.
7. The exercise faced stiff opposition from the prominent companions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH arguing that it was Bidi-a (innovation) in Islam since the Prophet PBUH never did it nor did he instruct the Muslims to do it.
8. There was too much controversy among the great reciters of Islam on whether to include some of the abrogated verses or not. This delayed the compilation exercise.
9. The Islamic state had grown too big and Muslims had scattered in different parts of the world. So it became hard to collect the verses of the holy Qur'an from the memorisers in scattered areas.
10. The compilers lacked adequate funds to facilitate the exercise. For example money was needed for buying writing materials and transporting the compilers to different parts of the Islamic state to meet the memorisers.
11. Some of the materials on which the holy Qur'an was written during the prophet's time had disappeared while others had rotten. This became a problem in collecting the Qur'anic verses for compilation.
12. Different Muslim groups wanted to write the holy Qur'an in their original languages and this brought about difference in its understanding, reading and meaning until when caliph Uthman bin Affan standardized it.

Qn: Examine the role played by the following individuals in the compilation of the holy Qur'an. a) Prophet Muhammad PBUH. c) Zaid bin Thabit b) Abu baker d) Uthman bin Affan

a) Prophet Muhammad PBUH

Refer to the notes on the prophet's time during the compilation of the holy Qur'an. b) Abu Baker

He was the first successor of Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

It was during his reign that the idea was conceived.

He carried out Ridah wars against false prophets in which memorisers of the Qur'an and caused alarm to companions like Umar bin Khattab.

He resisted the idea in the beginning to avoid Bidi-a in Islam but later accepted it.

He carried out consultations with the prominent companions of the prophet PBUH before effecting the compilation of the holy Qur'an.

He elected a committee chaired by Zaid bin Thabit and charged it with the duty of compilation the holy Qur'an.

He looked for suitable writing materials for compilation of the divine book.

He was an active member of the committee by giving advice on conditions guaranteeing the purity and authenticity of verses.

He ordered that only the scripts that were written and supervised by the prophet PBUH be used in the process of compilation.

He was among the undisputed memorisers of the holy Qur'an and therefore, he was referred to when cross-checking and verifying the verses.

He kept the original compiled copy by the committee until his death.

He wanted to have abrogated verses included in the compiled text. c) Zaid bin Thabit

He was one of the prominent companions of the prophet PBUH and his chief scribe.

He used to write down Qur'anic verses as they came down to the prophet PBUH.

He was one of the best reciters of the holy Qur'an and he used to recite it for the prophet PBUH.

He was among the best memorisers of the holy Qur'an.

He was the chairman of the compilation committee appointed by Abu Baker.

He was among the companions consulted on whether the Qur'an be compiled or not.

He carefully checked the authenticity of each verse before compiling it.

He actively involved in the decision whether to include abrogated verses or not.

He continued his role to Uthman's caliphate where he led acted as the chairman of the committee that standardized the holy Qur'an.

All the issues related to Qur'anic compilation were referred to him. d)  
Uthman bin Affan

Third caliph (success) of the prophet PBUH.

Was among the scribes of the prophet PBUH.

Was among the committee nominated by Abu Baker.

He standardized the holy Qur'an.

Distributed the holy Qur'an to different learning centres.

Ordered the burning of the false copies of the holy Qur'an.

Established Qur'anic compilation centres in Persia, Madina, Yemen and others.

Was a great memorizer of the holy Qur'an.

Taught people how to read and write which simplified the work of compilation.

### **PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN**

1. Preservation of the holy Qur'an means the measures taken by Muslims to protect the holy Qur'an in order to retain its spiritual status as it was revealed by Allah through Angel Jibril to Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

2. It is certainly clear that the holy Qur'an has purely retained its purity without a slight change in words, order or punctuation marks despite being in use for fourteen centuries.

3. The protection and preservation of the holy Qur'an rests entirely on Allah and man through Him also offers protection to the holy book. In this case, man refers to the Prophet PBUH, the caliphs and the entire Muslim community.

## Allah's Protection

4. It should be noted that the first protection offered by Allah to the holy Qur'an occurred when it was still in heaven on the tablet preserved.

Q (85:21-22) says; "This is a Glorious Qur'an on the Preserved Tablet"

5. In addition, Allah scornfully replied to those who thought that they could corrupt the holy Qur'an when He said in Q (41:42); "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it..."

6. Furthermore, Allah continued to protect the holy Qur'an even after revealing it to Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Q (15:9) says; "We have, without doubt, sent down the message and will surely guard it from corruption"

7. Again, it should be noted that even at the time of collection and compilation of the holy Qur'an when it seemed easy for the pagan Quraish to corrupt the Qur'anic message if they desired, Allah continued to protect it when He said in Q (75:17); "It is for to collect it and to promulgate it"

8. Following the above verse, the Arabs who maybe wanted to introduce their words in the holy Qur'an did not manage as its promulgation lies with Allah.

9. However, Muslims through the grace of Allah have also put in place measures to protect the holy Qur'an right from the Prophet's time to date.

### **The Role of man in the protection and preservation of the holy Qur'an**

10. It is reported that whenever the Prophet PBUH received a verse, he would call on his scribes to write it immediately by telling them that put it in such and such a chapter next to such and such a verse. This saved the Qur'anic message from getting lost.

11. The prophet PBUH discouraged his followers from writing down anything from him apart from the holy Qur'an. He at one time said; "Do not write anything from me except the holy Qur'an"

12. In addition, the Prophet PBUH looked for suitable writing materials at that time where to record the holy Qur'an. He encouraged his followers to write it on stones, leaves and barks of trees, bones, hard rocks and others for purposes of saving it from getting lost.

13. Today, the holy Qur'an has continued to be preserved in the same method. Many copies of it have been printed including Qur'anic pamphlets, charts, textbooks, and others. This is aimed at preserving the divine message.

14. Prophet Muhammad PBUH encouraged his followers to memorise the holy Qur'an. He said;

"Whoever puts the holy Qur'an to memory shall be saved from the torment of hell"

With this, many Muslims memorized the holy Qur'an, thereby offering protection to it.

15. Today, Muslims have continued to preserve the holy Qur'an in the same way. Adult and young Muslims have committed it to memory and most cases prizes are given to the best memorisers to encourage others to do the same. Hence, offering protection to the divine book.

16. Frequent recitation of the holy Qur'an was another method employed by the prophet PBUH to protect and preserve the holy Qur'an. He encouraged his followers to read the holy Qur'an every day especially in prayer to enable them learn and understand it.

17. Today, Muslims also recite the holy Qur'an especially in the five daily prayers. They also organize Qur'anic recitation competitions and award

winners so as to encourage them read more of the holy book, hence protecting it.

18. Transmission as a method was also applied by the prophet PBUH to protect and preserve the holy book. He encouraged his followers to transmit Qur'anic knowledge to those who would be absent during his preachings. Many companions in turn taught their fellows especially on how to read the holy Qur'an.

19. Today, transmission still applies as many Muslims are taught in mosques, public seminars and several women are taught by their husbands at home. Hence ensuring that the holy message is protected.

20. Prophet Muhammad PBUH trained his companions with the aim of teaching the holy Qur'an to others especially in far distant places. This served to protect the holy Qur'an.

21. He further used to supervise his Qur'anic reciters to ensure that they gave clear instructions to their students. This ensured that pure message was passed on to the Muslims.

22. During the caliphate period, Abu Bakar (RA), on the advice of Umar bin Khattab, compiled the holy Qur'an into a book form as a way of preserving it after noticing the death of many Qur'anic memorisers in the battle of Yamamah.

23. During the caliphate of Uthman bin Affan, the Qur'an was standardized by burning all the Qur'anic copies that were not in the original dialect in which it was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH). Thereby bringing about unified recitation and meaning of the divine message.

24. The Umayyads through Hujaji bin Yusuf added vowels in the compiled text of the holy Qur'an to make it easy for reading especially by non-Arab Muslims.

25. Due to improved technology, Muslims have recorded the Qur'an on modern gadgets e.g tapes, discs, computers and others. All this is aimed at protecting and preserving the heavenly message.

26. Muslims have set up libraries and museums where copies of the holy Qur'an are kept. Certainly, whatever item bearing any Qur'anic message is highly preserved.

27. In many Muslim families, copies of the Qur'an are kept and at least a copy in every mosque. Many Muslim agencies have distributed copies of the holy Qur'an in schools and mosques to encourage Muslims to recite and memorise it as a way of protecting and preserving it.