

companions. This also helped to reveal the rules and regulations of Islamic law in appropriate time, place and necessity. The gradual revelation of Islamic laws made it easier for the Prophet's companions to follow and implement those in the society. For example drinking alcohol was wide spread among Arabs during the time of the Prophet (pbuh), so the first of 4 verses revealed regarding alcohol was 4:43 where Allah says not to approach prayer (salah) while intoxicated and later on laws forbidding intoxicants altogether were revealed in verse 5:90.

PRESERVATION AND COMPILATION OF THE QURAN

(1) During Prophet's lifetime: From the very beginning as soon as revelation came to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), he would first commit to his own memory and then he would recite, what was revealed, to his Companions (sahaba) and instruct them to memorize it. This is the first and most important step in preservation of the Quran. This tradition made the Quran well preserved in the memories of the companions and from them to successive generations. We know that prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered (could not read or write, Quran; 7:157). From very early on, he would tell his scribes among his companions to immediately write down what was revealed to him. Scribes (companions) would write down these revelations on whatever material was available including palm stalks, thin white stone, planks of wood, pieces of cloth, parchments and camel shoulder bones etc. This way, the entire Quran was memorized by many companions, written down in different materials and kept in secured possession of the Prophet and other prominent companions.

(2) During Abu Bakr's Caliphate (11-13 AH/632-634 CE): Immediately after the Prophet's (pbuh) death, Abu Bakr became the caliph (leader of the believers). Abu Bakr gathered all of the main scribes, huffaz (memorizers of Quran), all written materials of the Quran, and had it written down on parchment and made a single volume which was accurate, authentic and complete. This manuscript stayed with him until his death. This process began shortly after Prophet Muhammad's

(pbuh) death and completed in less than two years after his death.

(3) During Uthman's Caliphate (23-35 AH/644-656 CE): By the time Uthman became caliph (twelve years after Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) death) Islam reached far beyond the border of Arabian peninsula to Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. For many reasons official manuscripts of the Quran became a necessity in far away land to resolve confusion and disputes. Responding to that necessity Uthman, in consultation with other prominent companions of the Prophet decided to make several official manuscripts from the single volume using the same methodology that was used by Abu Bakr. Uthman then sent these official texts along with a Quranic expert companion to each Muslim province and ordered to destroy all other partial and personal Quranic materials.

Many of the old original official manuscripts (Uthmanic manuscripts) are in existence today in many parts of the world like the Quran in Topkai museum, Istanbul, Turkey; the Quran in Al-Hussein Mosque, Cairo, Egypt; the Quran in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and many others.

The Quran we use today in all over the world are made from those manuscripts. Unlike other religious texts that were changed with human interpolations, deletion and omissions, the Quran has remained unchanged (over fourteen hundred years now) and will remain so as God Himself has guaranteed its preservation and protection.

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE QURAN

The Quran is only available in Arabic, its original language. The Quran's **beauty, style, miraculous nature** and its **message** can only be understood in full extent by understanding Arabic. But for the benefit of the non-Arabs the meaning of the Quran has been translated in most languages. By

reading these translations one can only get an idea of the message of the Quran. However the beauty, style, and miraculous nature remains out of her/his grasp.

The Quran has 114 chapters (Surahs) which have more than 6000 verses. Surahs within Quran are not organized in the chronological sequence of their revelation. In some cases verses within a surah are not organized in the chronological order of their revelation. The order of the verses within a surah and the order of the surahs within the Quran were revealed from God as angel Gabriel would not only bring revelation but also tell Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) where to place the verse within a surah.

The word Quran means reading or recitation indicating the fact that the Quran is to be both recited from memory and read from text. All Muslims have to memorize at least some parts of the Quran and there are many who have memorized the entire Quran. It was a tradition that began in the time of Prophet Muhammad and continues till today. Therefore, there are millions of Muslims today who have memorized the entire Quran.

The Quran's fundamental message is the absolute unity of God, to submit to God and worship Him alone. As a complete guide, it covers all aspects of life. Examples of some topics in the Quran include the following but are not limited to: defining the creed; expounding moral instruction; admonishing believers and non-believers; inviting people to explore, question and validate the truth it proclaims; giving good news of afterlife; laying down laws from dealing with mundane matters of daily lives to matters of warfare; drawing lessons from historical events etc.

It is generally recognized that verses revealed before Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) migration known as Hijra to Madina are known as Makki, and those revealed after migration (Hijra) to Madina are known as Madani (with few exceptions). Makki and Madani verses differ in their attributes, style and contents. In general, Makki surahs deal with the Unity of God and