

Their Conflict with Reason

The greatness of the Qur'an itself, and the painstaking effort by the Prophet ('s) to arrange for its memorization and reading, and the inclination of the Muslims to do the same with reverence and expectation of being rewarded by Allah, all point to the fact that the Qur'an could not have been compiled in the haphazard manner shown in the reports. The Qur'an itself has an inherent quality which would make it absolutely imperative for Muslims to preserve it and to make it known popularly by all, even the ladies and the children. These qualities are:

(a) The Eloquence and Rhetoric of the Qur'an

The Arabs had a tendency of preserving their glorious literature, like the famous poems and speeches of pre-Islamic era. The Qur'an should receive all the more attention because it challenged all the existing fine literature, surpassing them all in excellence. The result was that it captured the attention of all, believers and disbelievers alike. A Muslim committed it to memory driven by his faith, while the disbeliever tried to remember it so that it could be eventually opposed or refuted.

(b) The Prophet's inclination to preserve the Qur'an

As is known, he had an absolute control over his people, and when such a leader expresses a desire that a particular book be read or preserved, it becomes a popular handbook among the followers, especially if the book is meant to be for earning the pleasure of Allah, here and hereafter.

(c) Memorization

Those who committed the Qur'an to memory were held in high esteem by the people, and this is very well evidenced in the history of Islam. This was a strong impetus which motivated many to memorize the Qur'an fully or even partially.

(d) Rewards

The reward and the blessings from Allah upon those who recite or memorize the Qur'an was perhaps the greatest incentive for Muslims to preserve it. In fact, the Muslims revered the Qur'an, and valued it much more than their own souls, wealth and families. We have reports which indicate that even some of the ladies had compiled the whole Qur'an.

Ibn Sa'd says in al-Tabaqat:

"Al-Fadhl b. Dakin informed us through al-Walid b. Abdillah b. Jami', who reported from his grandmother that Ummu Waraqah bint Abdillah b. Harith was frequently visited by the Prophet (ﷺ), and he called her a Shahidah. She had compiled the Qur'an. When the prophet (ﷺ) advanced to the battle of Badr she asked him if she could go along with him for nursing the ill and tending the wounded so that Allah may bless her with martyrdom. And the Prophet answered: `Allah has prepared for you the martyrdom'¹.

If the ladies had undertaken such a task, we can expect men to have done better. A large group of people was known to have known the Qur'an by heart in the era of the Prophet (ﷺ). Al-Qurutbi says:

"Seventy of the reciters were killed in the battle of Yamamah, and in the days of the Prophet (ﷺ) nearly the same number were killed at Bir Maunah".

And in the preceding tenth report, we find that four hundred reciters had been killed at Yamamah. The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) showed particular concern about compilation of the Qur'an, with several scribes at his disposal, and that the Qur'an was revealed to him piece by piece during twenty three years, gives us justifiable certitude that the Prophet asked for the Qur'an to be written down in full.

Zaid b. Thabit says:

"We used to organize the Qur'an from the parchments, in presence of the Prophet (ﷺ)".

Al Hakim says: "This report is authentic, based on the conditions laid down by the two Sheikhs (Bukhari and Muslim) though they have not recorded it".

And in this there is a clear evidence that the Qur'an was collected during the era of the Prophet (ﷺ).²

And as for committing certain Surahs or parts thereof to memory, we know that it was a common practice. There was hardly a Muslim male or female, who did not do that. Ubadah b. Samit says:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) used to remain occupied. So when any Muhajir called upon him, he would entrust him to one of us for teaching him the Qur'an".³

And Kulaib reports:

"I was with Ali (‘a) when he heard loud voices of people in the mosque, reciting the Qur'an. He said: "They are blessed..." [4](#)

And another report from Ubadah b. Samit says:

"Whenever someone migrated to Medina, the Prophet (‘s) would send him to us for learning the Qur'an. And loud voices of recitation of the Qur'an could be usually heard from the mosque, till the Prophet (‘s) asked them to lower the voices so as to avoid errors in confusion". [5](#)

Yes, the memorization of the Qur'an or its parts was current among the Muslims, so much so that a Muslim lady would ask for being taught one *Surah* or more from the Qur'an in lieu of her *Mahr* (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, al-Taj). With all these pointers, how could we accept the proposition that the collection of the Qur'an was delayed till the days of Abu Bakr, and that Abu Bakr had to depend upon two witnesses asserting that they had heard it from the Prophet (‘s)?

[1.](#) al Itqan, v1, p.215

[2.](#) Mustadrak, v1, p.611

[3.](#) Musnad, Hanbal, v15, p.324

[4.](#) Kanz al Ummal, 2nd Edition v2, p. 185

[5.](#) Manahiul Irfan, p.324

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