

What is Mushaf Fatimah?

The most prevalent question about this *Mushaf*, the most tumultuous and confusing issue is, “What exactly does “*Mushaf*” mean?” The assumption is that this *Mushaf* is a special type of Quran. However, as we will show in the following sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet Mohammad(s.a.w) and the Imams(a.s), this *Mushaf* doesn't contain a single verse (*ayah*) of the Quran. However, some of the uninformed think that because it is called a “*Mushaf*” that it must mean “Quran”. In fact, some Sunnis come to Qom¹ asking to see the *Mushaf* which they allege is another Quran. However, when they understand the reality that the Shiites have none other than and only that very Quran that other Muslims possess, they are stunned at the accusations made against the Shiites. A great deal of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* (i.e. Sunnis) thinks that the Shiites have another Quran—besides the present Quran—at their disposal! They suppose that *Mushaf* Fatimah is that other Quran! These allegations even make their way into secular Arab publications. For example, the Sudanese Newspaper, “*Aakhir Khabar*” on 6 Rajab, 1416 included an article claiming that the Shiites have another Quran by the name of *Mushaf Fatimah*!

It has gotten to the point that some Shiites believe that *Mushaf Fatimah* is another Quran. In this way they will assume that the narrations presented in this book have little import (because they are meant to mislead Sunnis) and doubt the chain of authority of the narrators. It is amazing in this light to see that such a personage as Imam Khomeini not only didn't hide or deny its existence, rather, he took pride in it: “We are honored that . . . *Sahifah Fatemiyyah* (i.e *Mushaf Fatimah*) which was inspired by God most excellent to Zahra Mardhiyyah (i.e. Lady Fatimah) is our (heritage).”²

What do such people mean that they are honored or take pride in *Mushaf Fatimah*? It's because no one had seen its contents³ came out after nightfall and said several times: ‘(There will be) a grumbling and a moaning and a dark night, and then the Imam (al-Mahdi) will come out to you wearing the shirt of Adam, and on his hand will be the ring of Solomon, and the staff of Moses.”⁴.) and it is only through narrations that we know what the subject matter is. Subsequently, I must confess that the existence of the *Mushaf Fatimah* has been proven and the proofs exist, however, we must approach it in a round about way. Heretofore an independent work has not been published; (other works) have indirectly mentioned it.

Some of the hadith about *Mushaf Fatimah* have used this very word "*Mushaf*" in which case the aforementioned thoughts are reinforced. Mohammad bin Muslim narrates from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq(a.s), "Fatimah left a *Mushaf* which is not the Quran."⁵

'Ali bin Sa'id narrated from Imam al-Sadiq(a.s), "And it is with us. By Allah, *Mushaf Fatimah* does not contain a single verse from the Book of Allah!"⁶ Imam al-Sadiq(a.s) says, "In it is what is like your Quran, only three times (in size)."^{7,8}

Some have conjectured that *Mushaf* is a word exclusively in reference to the Quran. If it is said that "*Mushaf Fatimah*", means "Fatimah's Quran" because the last hadith says "It is like your Quran, only three times (in size)", they conclude that the Shiites believe that the present Quran is inadequate. These people are oblivious to the fact that the preceding hadith stated emphatically that this *Mushaf* doesn't contain a single verse of Quran. In any case, now we will start the discussion with the meaning of "*Mushaf*".

Connotation of "Mushaf"

That which has the appearance of sheets of text between two covers is called a "*Mushaf*". In *Sahah taj al-lughah*, and , *Sahah al-'arabiyyah* it says, "*Al jam'e lil suhuf al maktubeh bayn al dafatayn*".^{9,10} "Suhuf" (صُحُف)

the plural of "sahifeh" (صَحِيفَة) connotes a leaf or folio on which one writes. "dafatayn" (دَفَتَيْن) is derived from "dafah" (دَفَّة) which connotes something which is contiguous or adjoining something. "*daftan al-Mushaf*" (المصنف دفتاً) means the cover on both sides of a book. ^{11,12} Consequently, a *Mushaf* has more than one page, not just one, although it could on occasion have no more than one page; it's still a *Mushaf* if it's between two covers so that the pages are contained within it. ¹³

In conclusion, it must be said that "*Mushaf*" connotes a bound book inclusive to any book and is not exclusive to the Quran, although it must be said here that that well known meaning of *Mushaf* is "Quran". Etymologically speaking, it can be said that *Mushaf* connotes the Quran (but doesn't denote it—tr.).

There's no doubt that the word *Mushaf* has been used in reference to the Quran innumerable but can't be said that it is interchangeable with the word "Quran" even if it is the most common connotation or if it has been used in the sunnah as referring to the Quran. Take for example this narration: "The Prophet(S) said, 'Whosoever recites the collected and bound (*Mushaf*) Quran will have 2000 good things written for him."¹⁴ He also said, "Grant your eyes a share from your worship." They said, "And what is the share for the eyes, oh Prophet of Allah?" He said, "Looking at the *Mushaf* (i.e. the Quran) and pondering over it..."¹⁵

We can take away from this narration that the Quran had been collected and bound in the time of the

prophet(s.a.w).

The Term Mushaf in the Time of The Companions of The Prophet (s.a.w)

Despite the fact that the Prophet referred to the Quran as a *Mushaf* (in the above narration collected by a Sunni author—tr.), the Sunni sources state that the Prophet(s.a.w) absolutely did not use the word *Mushaf* because its first usage was in the time of Abu Bakr (the first Caliph). Suyuti¹⁶ states, “When Abu Bakr had collected the Quran, [the Muslim community] began searching for a name for it. Some suggested, “Let's call it the Gospel (*Injeel*).” However, others were not pleased with that (because it is what the Christians call their book). Someone said, “Let's call it ”*Sifr*” but again others were displeased because the Jews (called their book that). Ibn Mas'ud said, “In Abyssinia, I saw a book which they called “*Mushaf*”. From this suggestion, they called the bound Quran '*Mushaf*’.”^{17,18}

There are three problems with this narration:

This doesn't correspond with the prior narration (in the Sunni canon of hadith) in which the Prophet (S) referred to the Quran as *Mushaf*.

It opposes the fact that the same narration also demonstrates that the Quran had been bound during the Prophet's(s.a.w) lifetime.

The word “*Mushaf*” is an 'Arabic word, so it couldn't have been introduced from Abyssinia.

Imam Ali (A) says, “The heart is the *Mushaf* of the eye.”¹⁹

The Connotation of Mushaf among Non-Muslims

Among the multitude of references that demonstrate that *Mushaf* doesn't exclusively connote the Quran, are those used by non-Muslim 'Arab writers. For example, ibn S'ad (a Muslim writer) in *Tabaqaat al-Kabari* conveys the story of one “Sahal the Christian” in which [Sahal] refers to the Gospel and other holy writings amongst [the Christians] with the word *Mushaf*²⁰ as did 'Arab Muslims. If it were the case that *Mushaf* only referred to the Quran, they wouldn't have used it for (their writings). For example, Umm Salamah, the wife of the prophet(s.a.w) recounts the story of the Abyssinians as such: “They would unravel their scripture around and about themselves; their patriarch would begin scribing until that volume was soaked with ink.”²¹ As well, one “Owzaa'i”, born 33 AH, living 157 years (he died 9 years after the martyrdom of Imam al-Sadiq(a.s)) referred to Byzantine manuscripts as *Mushaf*.^{22,23}

Mushaf According to the Expressions and Lexicon of the Sahabah (Companions)

The companions of the Prophet of Allah(s.a.w) used *Mushaf* to refer to other than the Quran. For example, the famous companion Abi Sa'id Khudri in answering some people who wanted him to narrate hadith to them said, "I won't say a thing for you to write until you've read the *Mushaf* (of hadith already compiled)." ²⁴ Also, Uthmaan ibn 'Affan (the third Caliph) requested of Hafsah, ²⁵ "Send us the (unbound and fragmentary) manuscripts (of Qur'an) so that we may compile and make a *Mushaf* of them (*nunsakha fil masahif*) . . ." ²⁶

Mushaf in the Lexicon of the Taabi'een (The Companions Of The Companions Of The Prophet(s.a.w))

In the same way that the sahabah had used *Mushaf* to refer to other than the Quran, the taabi'een followed suit. In this regard, there are commentaries and lexicons; we will site here a sentence from Mohammad bin Sirin Ansaari: "Ali swore to not don his cloak (i.e. not leave his house) except on Fridays (for public prayers) until he had collected the Quran into a book (*fi Mushaf*)." ²⁷

If the term *Mushaf* in this report meant Quran, it would be redundant. It would be like saying that he (A) was collecting the book of Quran into a book. Then, the literal meaning of *Mushaf* is clear. The second report comes from Rafi' bin Mehraan who narrated, "[The companions] collected the Quran into a book (*fi Mushaf*)." ²⁸

- ^{1.} Qom, Iran is one of the oldest Shiite cities, settled in the 2nd century, AH. It is one of the premiere centers of Shiite theological learning and the pilgrimage site for the sister of the eighth Imam, Fatimah al-Ma'sumah (A).
- ^{2.} Khomeini SRM. Last Will and Testament, page 3.
- ^{3.} The Imams(a.s) possessed this mushaf, along with the seal of the Prophet (s.a.w), the staff of prophet Moses(a.s), etc. as proofs of their vice regency. The twelfth Imam, Al-Mahdi(a.s) (may Allah hasten his appearance) currently possesses it. For example, in one hadith it says, "One night, Amir al-Mu'mineen (i.e. Imam 'Ali(a.s
- ^{4.} Al-Kafi, v. 1, hadith #619
- ^{5.} Majlisi MB. Bihar al-Anwar, v.26, p.41, hadith #73. Darul kutub al islamiyyah, Tehran, Iran.
- ^{6.} Majlisi MB. Bihar al-Anwar, v.27, p.271, hadith #3. Darul kutub al islamiyyah, Tehran, Iran.
- ^{7.} Kulaini M. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.613.
- ^{8.} Majlisi MB. Bihar al-Anwar, v. 26, p.39, hadith #10. Darul kutub al islamiyyah, Tehran, Iran.
- ^{9.} Juhari, Sahah taj al-lughah, and , Sahah al-'arabiyyah, v. 4, p. 1383
- ^{10.} Zubaydi, Taj al-'aroods, v. 6, p. 161.
- ^{11.} Fayyumi, Misbah al-munir, p.197
- ^{12.} Abu Hilaal al-'Askari, al-furuq al-lughwiyyeh, p.241, Qom, Basirti Publication
- ^{13.} Zarqaani, Minahil al-irfaan, v. 1, p.384, Beirut, Daaraahiya' Al-Tiraath Publication, 1412 AH/1994
- ^{14.} Zarkeshi, Al Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Quran, v. 1, p.546. Beirut, Daar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyeh, 1403 AH/1983
- ^{15.} Tirmidhi, Navaadir al-Usul, v.3, p.254, Beirut, Daar al-Jeel, 1412 AH/1992
- ^{16.} Suyuti was a renowned Sunni scholar and prolific author with over 700 extent works attributed to him. He was also a Shadhili Sufi. He was considered to be the foremost authority of hadith and 'Arabic language of his day. While he lauded

Imam 'Ali in his work, *Al-qawl al-jali fi fada'il 'Ali* (The manifest discourse on the virtues of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib), he was no friend of the Shi'a. For example, he penned the polemic, *Risala al-sayf al-qati' al-lami' li ahl al-i'tirad al-shawai'* (Epistle of the sharp and glistening sword to the Shi'i people of opposition) as well.

[17.](#) Suyuti J, *Al-Atqaan*, v. 1, p.53

[18.](#) Kitaabi, *Al-Tarteeb al-Aadaariyyeh*, v.2, p.231, Daar al-Kitab al-'Arabi

[19.](#) Ibn Abi Talib A. *Nahj al-Balagha*, saying #408

[20.](#) Ibn S'ad, *Tabaqaat al-Kabari*, v. 1, p.363, Dar Sadr Publications

[21.](#) Ibn Hishaam, *Seerah al-Nabi*, v. 1, p.353, Beirut; Dar al-Fikr Publications, 1401 AH/1981

[22.](#) Ibn S'ad, *Tabaqaat al-Kabari*, v.7, p.433, Dar Sadr Publications

[23.](#) *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal*, v. 17, p.315, Mu'asassah al-Risalah

[24.](#) Baghdadi K, *Taqyeed al-'Ilm*, p.36, Beirut; Daar al-Sunnat al-Nabawiyah, 1974

[25.](#) Hafsah was the daughter of 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second Caliph. Hafsah was also a wife of the prophet Muhammad (s.a.w).

[26.](#) Bukhari M, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, v.6, book 61, hadith #4938, p. 120, Beirut; Daar al-Fikr, 1411 AH/1991 (hadith #510, book 61: Virtues of the Quran according to

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/061.sbt.ht...> [1]

[27.](#) Sijstani, *Al-Musahaf*, p. 10, Egypt; Rahmaaniyyah publications

[28.](#) Sijstani, *Al-Musahaf*, p.9, Egypt; Rahmaaniyyah publications

Mushaf in classical writings

Mushaf was used by classical writers in their manuscripts in reference to a bound book. For example the author Jaahidh referred to each section of his book *Al-Haywaan* as a *Mushaf* and

at the end of each section he would write, "thus ends the first *Mushaf* and begins the second *Mushaf*. . ."

Also, Sheikh Aba Bakr bin 'Iqaal Saqli in *Fawaa'id* says, "The sahabah didn't collect the sunnah of the Prophet of Allah(s.a.w) in a book (*Mushaf*)."¹

It's worth pointing out that the word *Mushaf* is mentioned neither in the Quran itself nor was it counted among the names of the Quran. Jalaaluddin Suyuti² and Abu Al-Ma'aali al-Saaleh, who was one of the transmitters of hadith of Islam, counted 55 titles for the Quran and the word "*Mushaf*" was not among them.

It's interesting to know that no one objected to Seebway's calling his book *Al-Keetaab*, despite the fact that that was one of the titles of the Quran, but they object to the book of Lady Fatimah(a.s) being called "*Mushaf*".

Mushaf in Contemporary Writings

Dr. Imtiyaz Ahmad in his book *Dalaa'il al-towtheeq al-mobakkir lil sunnah wa al-hadeeth* says that *Mushaf* doesn't just refer to the Quran, but can refer to (any) book. In order to prove his claim, he cites several sources.³ Also professor Bakir Bin 'Abdullah in his book *Ma'rifat al-nasakh wa al-sahhaf al-Hadeeth* says, "*Mushaf* is an idiomatic expression which is inclusive to any collected work used by speakers."⁴

Dr. Nasiraddin Asad in *Masaadir al-shu'ur al-jaahili* writes, "They called any bound book a "*Mushaf*" and it strictly refers to a book, not just the Quran."⁵

¹. Abu Rayhah, *Adhwa'ala al-sunnat al-mohammadiyah*, p.259, Al-Batha' publication.

². *Al-Itiqaan fi 'ulum al-Quran*, v. 1, pp.51-52, Beirut; Daar al-Fikr

³. Ahmad I, *Dalaa'il al-towtheeq al-mobakkir lil sunnah wa al-hadeeth*, pp.263-269, A. Amin tr., Pakistan; Islamic Research Publications

⁴. bin 'Abdullah B, *Ma'rifat al-nasakh wa al-sahhaf al-Hadeeth*, pp.23-31, Jeddah; Daar al-Raayah.

⁵. Asad N, *Masaadir al-shu'ur al-jaahili*, p. 139, Cairo; Daar al-Ma'arif, 1969.

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