

Jumah Lecture 15th April 2011
Topic: Transmission of The Holy Quran

The revelation contained in the Quran has been transmitted to us by numerous persons in two ways: orally and in written form.

Memorisation and Oral Transmission:

Memorisation by the Holy Prophet (SAW)

Oral transmission of the Holy Quran was based on hifz (memorization) and the Beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself was the first to memorize the revelation after the Angel Djibrael (a.s.) has brought it to him;

Memorisation by the Companions (Sahabah)

The Prophet (SAW) would declare the revelation and instructed his Companions to memorise it. Ibn Masud (r.a.), who was the first man to recite the Quran publicly in Makkah, shows that in very early phase of the Islam recital by memorization was practiced by the Companions (Sirah Ibn Hisham)

The Prophet (SAW) used to encourage Memorization:

There are many Ahadith which are proof that Prophet (SAW) encouraged memorization of the Holy Quran:

- Holy Prophet (saw) said : ‘The most Superior among you are those who earn the Quran and teach it’ (Bukhari;546)
- Recital during daily prayers is required and hence Companions would repeatedly hear passages of the Holy Quran
- Prophet (SAW) used to listen to the recitation of the Quran by the Sahabah (Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masud r.a. once recited Surah Nisa verse 41 and the Prophet (SAW) asked him to stop because his eyes were shedding tears continuously.
- Prophet (SAW) would send those Companions as teachers that memorized parts of the Quran (Hadhrat Mus’ab Bin Umair r.a. is an example that this happened even before the Hijrah, as he was sent to Madinah.)

Quran Readers Among the Companions:

Imam Suyuti (r.a.) mentions more than 20 wellknown persons who memorized the Quran:

Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, Ali, Ibn Masud, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullan bin Amar bin Al-As, Aishah, Hafsa and Umme Salmah

Umar r.a. memorized **Surat Al-Baqara** (1) in twelve years, and when he had learned it completely he slaughtered a camel.

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr more than 700 Huffaaz were martyred. This illustrates that many were Huffaaz.

Compilation of Holy Qur'an (Written Transmission)

Five stages:

1. Period of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him)
2. Period of first Khalifah Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddique RA
3. Period of third Khalifah Hadhrat Uthman Ghani RA
4. Period of dotting and diacritization
5. Printing period.

During the life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) (570-632 CE)

- ☞ The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the Holy Qur'an to Hadhrat Jibra'il AS once every Ramadhaan, but he (peace be upon him) recited it twice (in the same order we have today) in the last Ramadhaan before he (peace be upon him) was veiled from us. Hadhrat Jibra'il AS also taught the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) the seven modes of recitation.
- ☞ Each verse received was recited by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and he identified its location relative to other verses and Surahs.
- ☞ The verses were written by scribes selected by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) on any suitable object – leaves of trees, pieces of wood, parchment or leather, flat stones and shoulder blades.
- ☞ Hadhrat Umar (r.a.) conversion to Islam shows that large passages of the revelation had already been written down in the early days of Islam. (Ibn Hisham)
- ☞ Scribes included: Hadhrat Ali ibn Abi Talib RA, Hadhrat Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan RA, Hadhrat Ubayy ibn Ka'ab RA, Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thabit RA.
- ☞ Some of the Companions wrote the Qur'an for their own use.

- ∞ Many people were illiterate in those days, thus, several hundred Companions memorized the Holy Qur'an by heart.
- ∞ No Book was left by The Holy Prophet (SAW) because he only lived 9 days after the last revelation and was severely ill.

Did the Prophet (SAW) himself write?

The Holy Prophet (SAW) did not write down the revelation.

The Quran clearly says:

' And, (O Beloved), you never recited any book before this, nor did you write this with your own hand, for then the disbelievers would certainly have doubted.

The Quran also refers to the Holy Prophet (SAW) as the unlettered Prophet. The Prophet (SAW) did not have a teacher except of Almighty Allah.

During the Khalifate of Hadhrat Abu Bakr RA (632-634 CE)

- ☞ Hadhrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab urged Hadhrat Abu Bakr RA to preserve and compile the Holy Qur'an. This was prompted after the battle of Yamamah, where heavy casualties were suffered among the reciters (hafiz) who memorised the Holy Qur'an. It is reported that 700 Huffaaz were martyred in the battle of Yamamah.
- ☞ Hadhrat Abu Bakr RA entrusted Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thabit RA with the task of collecting the Holy Qur'an. Hadhrat Zaid ibn Thabit RA had been present during the last recitation of the Holy Qur'an by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to Hadhrat Jibra'il AS.
- ☞ Hadhrat Zaid RA, with the help of the Companions who had memorised and written the verses of the Holy Qur'an, accomplished the task and handed the first authenticated copy of the Holy Qur'an to Hadrat Abu Bakr RA. The Holy Qur'an was then available in the form of 30 booklets.
- ☞ The copy was kept in the residence of Hadhrat Hafsa RA, daughter of Hadhrat Umar RA and wife of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).