

# The Traditions about the Compilation of the Qur'an

## Report n. 1

1. Zaid b. Thabit says:

*"Abu Bakr sent for me after the battle of Yamamah, and I found Umar also present. Abu Bakr said: 'Umar has come to tell me that the day of Yamamah has been hard for the reciters of the Qur'an, and he fears that other such occasions may be harder still, resulting in the loss of greater part of the Qur'an. He says I must give orders for compilation of the Qur'an. I told Umar that how could he do a thing which the Messenger of Allah did not do? Umar said: "But this, by God, is desirable". And Umar has been referring this matter to me persistently, till at last Allah opened up my chest for that undertaking, and I began to hold the same view as Umar's.*

Zaid says:

*"Abu Bakr said: 'You are a young intelligent man, and we find no fault in you. You were also a scribe, writing down the revelations for the Messenger of Allah. So attend to the Qur'an, and compile it'. By God, if they had entrusted me with removing a mountain from among the mountains, the task would not have been heavier for me than that of collecting and compiling the Qur'an. I asked: 'Why do you undertake something the Prophet himself never did?' He answered: 'By God, this is desirable'. And then Abu Bakr never left me without reminders, till Allah opened up my chest, the way He did for Abu Bakr and Umar, and I attended to the work, compiling the Qur'an from palm-branches, pieces of cloth, and from the memory of the people, till I found the last part of Surah al-Tawbah with Abu Khuzaimah Al Ansari, which no one else had.*

لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم عزيز عليه ما عنتم حريص عليكم بالمؤمنين رؤوف رحيم. فان تولوا فقل حسبي الله لا اله الا هو عليه توكلت وهو رب العرش العظيم

till the end of Bara'ah. These compiled pages were with Abu Bakr till he died, then with Umar in his lifetime, and then with Hafsa, daughter of Umar".<sup>1</sup>

## Report n. 2

2. Ibn Shihab reports from Anas b. Malik:

*"When Huzaifah b. al-Yaman, with the Iraqis, was fighting the people of Syria, in the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan, he once came to Uthman and expressed his fears about variations in the recitations of Qur'an. Huzaifa told Uthman: `O master of the faithfuls! Come to the rescue of this ummah, before it is entangled into disagreements about the Book, the same way as Christians and Jews have been.*

*`Uthman sent a message to Hafsa asking her to submit the notes of Qur'an she held so that they could be copied into books, promising that they would be returned to her care and trust. Hafsa submitted the notes to Uthman who ordered Zaid b. Thabit, Abdullah b. az-Zubair, Saeed b. al-Aas, Abdur Rahman b. al-Harith b. Hisham, to transcribe. And Uthman told the group of three Qureishites: `If you differ with Zaid b. Thabit on any parts of the Qur'an, write down according to the dialect of Qureish, because it has come down in their dialect'.*

*`So they did the work, and when they had transcribed the notes into the books, Uthman returned the notes to Hafsa. Then he sent a copy to every place, ordering that all other versions of the Qur'an, found in pages or books must be set on fire'.*

Ibn Shihab says:

*"Kharijah b. Zaid b. Thabit informed me that he heard Zaid b. Thabit report the following: `When we were copying the notes, I found that an ayah from the Surah Al-Ahzab was missing. It was an ayah I had been hearing the Messenger of Allah himself recite. So we went in search of it, and found it with Khuzaimah b. Thabit al-Ansari:*

*من المؤمنين رجال صدقوا ما عاهدوا الله عليه...*

*and we added it to its Surah in the book.*<sup>2</sup>

## Report n. 3

3. Ibn Abi Shaybah, on his own chain , of authorities, reports from Ali:

*"Abu Bakr deserves the best reward for the copies of Qur'an, for he was the first one to compile what*

*exists between the two covers".*

## **Report n. 4**

4. Ibn Shihab reports from Salim b. Abdillah and Kharijah:

*"Abu Bakr had compiled the Qur'an in some papers, and then asked Zaid b. Thabit to go through them. Zaid refused, till Abu Bakr asked Umar to intervene. So Zaid agreed. These books were with Abu Bakr till he died, then with Umar till he died, and thereafter with Hafsa, the Prophet's wife. When Uthman sent for them, she refused to part with them, till he pledged that they would be returned to her. Then she gave them. Uthman transcribed them into the books, and returned the original to Hafsa with whom they remained."*

## **Report n. 5**

5. Hisham b. Urwah reports from his father, who said:

*"When the participants of Yamamah were killed, Abu Bakr ordered Umar b. al-Khattab and Zaid b. Thabit: 'Sit at the door of the Mosque, and when anyone brings something from the Qur'an which you suspect, write it down if it is witnessed by two men'. This is because those companions of the Prophet ('s) who had compiled the Qur'an had been killed at Yamamah".*

## **Report n. 6**

6. Muhammad b. Sheen says:

*"Umar got killed, without having compiled the Qur'an".*

## **Report n. 7**

7. Al-Hasan says:

*"Once Umar b. al-Khattab inquired about a verse in the Qur'an. Someone said: 'It was with so and so, but he was killed on the day of Yamamah".*

*Umar replied: "To Allah we belong!" Then he ordered the compilation of the Qur'an. So he was the first to compile it into a book form".*

## **Report n. 8**

8. Yahya b. Abdir Rehman b. Hatib says:

*"Umar wished to compile the Qur'an, so he stood among the people and said: Anyone from you who had heard part of the Qur'an from the Messenger of Allah, should come to us with it'. They had written down parts of the Qur'an on pages, boards and palm-branches. Umar did not accept anything unless it was supported by two witnesses. He was killed while the compilation continued.*

*Then Uthman took over. He said: 'Anyone who has something of the Qur'an with him should bring to us'. And he never accepted anything without having two witnesses. Then Khuzaimah b. Thabit came to him and said: "I find that you have left out two verses which you have not recorded". They asked: "Which are they"? He said: "I have received from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny):*

*لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم عزيز عليهما عنتم..*

*till the end of the Surah. So Uthman said: "And I bear witness that these two verses are from Allah. Now, tell us where do you want us to place them?" Khuzaimah said: "Place them at the end of what was last revealed of the Qur'an". So Baraah was ended with them".*

## **Report n. 9**

9. Ubaid b. Umair said:

*"Umar never recorded any verse in the compilation till it was witnessed by two men. Then a man from Ansar brought to him these two verses:*

*لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم عزيز عليه ما عنتم*

*till its end. Umar said: I shall never ask you to substantiate these. The Messenger of Allah was indeed like that'. 3*

## **Report n. 10**

10. Sulaiman b. Arqam reports from Al-Hasan and Ibn Sirin and Ibn Shihab Az-Zuhri. They said:

*"In the battle of Yamamah, massacre spread among reciters of the Qur'an, killing four hundred men. Then Zaid b. Thabit met Umar b. al-Khattab and told him: 'This Qur'an binds us to our faith. If Qur'an vanishes, our faith vanishes also. I have decided to compile the Qur'an in a book form'. Umar asked him to withhold till he had consulted Abu Bakr. They went to Abu Bakr and informed him about the intention. He said: 'Do not make haste. Wait till I have consulted the Muslims'. Then he stood to address the*

people and informed them about the intention. They said: "You have made the right decision". So they compiled the Qur'an. Then Abu Bakr ordered a herald to announce among people: "Whoever has any part of the Qur'an with him should come up with it".

## Report n. 11

11. Khuzaimah b. Thabit reports:

"I brought the following ayah to Umar b. al-Khattab and Zaid b. Thabit:

لقد جاءكم رسول من أنفسكم...

Zaid asked: "Who bears witness with you?" I said: "No. I do not know anyone". So Umar said: "I bear witness with him for the ayah".

## Report n. 12

12. Abu Ishaq reports from some of his friends. They said:

"When Umar had completed the collection of the Qur'an, he inquired: "Who is most well versed in Arabic?" They said: "Saeed b. al-Aas". Then he asked: "Who is most proficient writer?" They said: "Zaid b. Thabit". He said: "Then Saeed should dictate and Zaid should write down". So they transcribed four copies of the Qur'an. A copy each was sent to Kufah, Basrah, Syria and Hijaz".

## Report n. 13

13. Abdullah b. Fadhalah says:

"When Umar decided to write down the master copy of the Qur'an, he appointed a group of his companions for it and they said: "When you have any disagreement over the language. write it down in the dialect of Mudhar. Because Qur'an came down to a man from the family of Mudhar".

## Report n. 14

14. And Abu Qalabah said:

"In the days of Uthman's caliphate, a tutor would teach recitation according to a particular person, while another would teach recitation according to another person; so when the boys (students) met, they disagreed about each other's recitations. This finally came to the attention of the tutors who labelled each other's recitations as profane.

*When Uthman learnt about this, he stood up to address the people and said:*

*"If you who are near me have so much of disagreements and confusion, then those who are farther away must have worse differences and errors. So, O Companions of Muhammad, join hands to write down a master copy of the Qur'an".*

Abu Qalabah says:

*Malik b. Anas told me: (According to Abu Bakr b. abi Dawud this Malik b. Anas is the grandfather of the known Malik b. Anas) "I was among those to whom the copy was dictated. So whenever there was any disagreement about an ayah, they would try to remember somebody who had heard it from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny). And if he was away, or lived in the deserts, they would write the preceding and the following words, leaving the disputed part till the person they wanted to refer to appeared, or was sent for. When the copy was finally ready, Uthman wrote to all the towns saying: "I have done this way, and have struck off what I had, so you strike off what you have"*

## **Report n. 15**

15. Masa'b b. Sa'ad reported:

*"Uthman stood to address the people and said: 'O people, you are only thirteen years away from the era of the Prophet (ﷺ) and have already begun to dispute about the Qur'an. Some of you talk of the recitation by Ubayy, while others quote the recitation by Abdullah. And one tells the other that his recitation has no value. So I command everyone who has any part of the Qur'an with him to come up with it'. Then people started coming with the Qur'an written on pieces of papers and patches of skin, till most of it was compiled. Then Uthman called them individually, imploring each of them to confirm that he had heard the Prophet (ﷺ) recite for him, and each confirmed. When it was over, Uthman said: "Who is the best scribe?" They said: "The scribe of the Prophet (ﷺ), Zaid b. Thabit". He said: "Who is most proficient in Arabic?" They said; "Saeed b. al-Aas". Uthman said: "Then Saeed should dictate and Zaid should write". So Zaid started writing and made out several copies which were distributed among men. Then I heard a companion of Muhammad say: "He has done well".*

## **Report n. 16**

16. Abul Malih says:

*"When Uthman decided to have the Qur'an copied, he said: "People of Huzail would dictate and people of Thaqif would write".*

## Report n. 17

17. Abdul A'la b. Abdillah b. Abdillah b. Amir al Qarshi says:

*"When he had completed the work of compilation, Uthman came up with it, and looking in it said: 'I see some minor errors which Arabs will mend on their tongues'".*

## Report n. 18

18. Ikramah said:

*"When the transcribed Qur'an was brought before Uthman, he saw some minor error. So he said: "Had it been dictated by someone from Huzail and written by one from Thaqif, this error would not have occurred."*

## Report n. 19

19. Ata says:

*"When Uthman compiled the Qur'an, he sent for Ubayy b. Ka'ab who dictated it to Zaid b. Thabit, Saeed b. al-Aas gave grammatical inflections. So this copy is according to the recitation by Ubayy and Zaid".*

## Report n. 20

20. Mujahid reported:

*Uthman ordered Ubayy b. Ka'ab to dictate, Zaid b. Thabit to write down and Saeed b. al-Aas and Abdur-Rahman b. al-Harth to give grammatical inflections".*

## Report n. 21

21. Zaid b. Thabit said:

*"When we transcribed the Qur'an, I found that an ayah which I had been hearing from the Prophet (ﷺ) was missing, I found it with Khuzaima b. Thabit*

من المؤمنين رجال صدقوا

up to

## تبدیلا

*And two witnesses. Khuzaima was known as one equal to Prophet (‘s) had accepted his testimony as equal to two".*

### Report n. 22

22. Laith b. Sa'd said:

*"The first person who collected Qur'an was Abu Bakr, and Zaid wrote it down. And people came to Zaid b. Thabit, but he would not write down any ayah except when supported by two witnesses. The ending part of Bara'ah was not found except with Abu Khuzaimah b. Thabit. He said: "Write it down, because the Messenger of Allah (‘s) had accepted his witness as equal to two witnesses". So it was written. And when Umar came up with the ayah of Rajm (i.e. stoning the adulterer or adulteress to death) it was not recorded because he was alone".<sup>4</sup>*

These are the important traditions reported on the subject of compilation of the Qur'an. Apart from being isolated reports which give no benefit of certitude, they have various deficiencies.

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1. Sahih, Bukhari, bab jamul Qur'an, v6, p.98

2. Sahih, Bukhari, bab jamul Qur'an, v6, p.99, note, these two reports, and the following ones till No. 11 are mentioned in Muntakhab of Kanz al Ummal, on the margin of Ahmad Hanbal's Musnad, v2, p. 43-52.

3. This tradition in Muntakhab of Kanzul Ummal has been reported by Yahya b. Ju'dah.

4. al Itqan, v1, p.101