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I begin by Praising Allāh ﷻ, Lord of the Worlds and sending Peace & Salutations to our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The Qur’ān, without a doubt is a miracle. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was given many miracles by Allāh ﷻ. The Qur’ān is one miracle which is still with us today. The Qur’ān has not been altered in any way since it was revealed by Allāh ﷻ to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Millions of Muslims, young and old, male and female, even those whose first language is not Arabic have committed the entire Qur’ān to memory. Every Ramaḍān, thousands complete the Qur’ān in the Tarāwīh Ṣalāt. There are those Ḥuffāẓ who are able to recite the entire Qur’ān verbatim in a single sitting without a single mistake.

Recent scientific studies have also discovered that listening to the Qur’ān has a positive effect on the heart and the Qur’ān is the most recited and memorised book in the world. It is the only book which is memorised without understanding the language first. The basis of our religion is also the Qur’ān and the Aḥādīth. The Qur’ān along with the Aḥādīth are the foundation of our faith.

It is the responsibility of every believer to establish a connection and relationship with the Qur’ān. In the very least, each person should have the ability to recite the Qur’ān correctly with Tajwīd, and commit to memory enough Sūrahs/verses to recite in Ṣalah. There are also certain Sūrahs which should be committed to memory e.g. Sūrah Yāsīn. Other ways of establishing and maintaining a relationship with the Qur’ān is to learn, teach and memorise the Qur’ān. How many of us read the Qur’ān regularly yet do now know the significance of the various signs and numbers which are to be found on the page headings and the margins?

This short booklet has been prepared to give readers an introduction to the Qur’ān explaining some of the points above. It will elaborate on how the Qur’ān originated in the heavens and how Allāh ﷻ revealed it to our beloved Rasūlullāh ﷺ all the way to the written form which we find it in nowadays. The booklet will also explain how we can navigate around the Qur’ān and make it easier for us to find various chapters and verses.

It is recommended that this book is taught to both Students of Qur’ān/Tafsīr and believers in general, to enable them all to familiarize themselves with our Holy Book and learn essential information about its compilation. A Workshop has also been developed on this booklet, further information about this can be obtained from the Academy. I pray that Allāh ﷻ accepts this work and makes it a means for us to understand the Qur’ān, develop a closer relationship with the Qur’ān, and ultimately bring the Qur’ān into our lives.

May Allāh ﷻ reward all those people who have assisted in this publication, especially Maulānā Ebrahim Noor who dedicated much of his precious time and effort.

Amin.

Anwar Shaikh 25th Ḍul Ḥijjah 1438 AH (17th September 2017)  
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The Books of Allah

Allāh revealed many books and scriptures to previous Prophets. For example, Mūsā was given the Torāh, Isā was given the Injīl, and Dāwūd was given the Zabūr etc. However, the preservation of these books was left to the creation. In time, the books were changed and modified to the whims and desires of a few.

Allāh revealed his final book, the Qurān to Rasūlullāh. The word Qurān is used by Allāh himself and literally means that which is to be recited. With the Qurān, Allāh took on the responsibility to preserve it himself.

Allāh says in the Qurān:

"And Indeed We sent down the Qurān and We will be its guardian"

Therefore the Qurān is in its original form, free from any type of change, insertion or deletion. This is the only Heavenly Book which is still in the same form as it was revealed to its Prophet. No other Heavenly Book can make this claim. If you look at all the millions of copies of the Qurān around the world, they will be identical, down to each letter and each ṣaḥīfah. This is proof of Allāh’s promise of protecting his Holy Book.

Furthermore, Qurra (people who master the recitation of the Qurān), have learnt the Qurān through a chain of narration which reaches back to Rasūlullāh through Jibrīl to Allāh. These chains of narration are unique to the Muslim Ummah, no other examples like this can be found in any other religion.

The Descent of the Qurān

Allāh has preserved the Qurān in Al-Lowḥul Maḥfūẓ - The Protected Tablet which resides in the highest heaven.

Allāh says in the Qurān

"Nay, this is a Glorious Qurān, in the Guarded (Protected) Tablet"

The Qurān was sent down in 2 stages, from Al-Lowḥul Maḥfūẓ. Allāh has used 2 words for revelation.

اِتْرَاحَ (Inzāl) - to descend in one go
تَنْزِيلُ (Tanzīl) - to descend gradually

Stage 1 – From the Guarded tablet to the Baytul ῾Izzah (The House of Honour) - اِتْرَاحَ (Inzāl)
Stage 2 – From the Baytul ῾Izzah to Rasūlullāh - تَنْزِيلُ (Tanzīl) - to descend gradually
**First Stage of Revelation**

The first time the Qur’an descended, was in one instance (Inzāl).

Allāh ﷺ also says:

> إنَّا أُنْزِلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرَ

“Surely, We have sent it down in a blessed night”[^3]

The descent was from Al-Lowḥul Mahfūz to the Baytul ῾Izzah. The Baytul ῾Izzah is also known as Al-Baytul Ma῾mūr. The Baytul Ma῾mūr is directly above the Kābah in the heavens. In the way that we perform the Ṭawāf - circumambulation of the Kābah, the Angels perform the circumambulation of the Baytul Ma῾mūr. Every day 70,000 Angels perform the Ṭawāf of this blessed house and never get the chance to perform the Ṭawāf again[^4]. This shows the sheer number of Angels that Allāh ﷺ has created. Scholars have suggested the reason why the Qur’an descended to the Baytul ῾Izzah first, was to emphasize the splendour of the Qur’an. It was also a way of informing the Angels that the final book of Allāh ﷺ is to be sent down to mankind.

**Second Stage of Revelation**

The second stage of descent was over a period of 23 years from the Baytul ῾Izzah to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This was done through various methods of Waḥī (revelation). This is known as Tanzīl. This stage began when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was 40 years old. The first revelation took place in the month of Ramadān on Laylatul Qadr according to many scholars.

Allāh ﷺ also says:

> إنَّا أُنْزِلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ

“Surely we have revealed it in a blessed night”[^5]

From the verses mentioned, we can deduce that Allāh ﷺ revealed the Qur’an in the month of Ramadān. Furthermore, it was revealed in a blessed night, the night of power, Laylatul-Qadr.

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[^3]: 3 Sūrah Al-Qadr, Verse 1
[^4]: 4 Šahīh Al- Bukhārī 2968
[^5]: 6 Sūrah Al-Baqarah, verse 185
The First Verses to be revealed

It is the unanimous view that the first verses to be revealed were the first 5 verses of Sūrah Al-‘Ālq. These were revealed when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was staying in seclusion in the Cave of Ḥirā.

So how did Allāh ﷻ send the Waḥī to the Prophets? This question is answered in the Qur'ān.

Allāh ﷻ says:

“And it is not for a mortal that Allāh ﷻ should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or that He sends a Messenger to reveal whatsoever He wills by His leave”7

There are 3 types of Waḥī as follows:

1. Waḥī at heart
2. Direct from Allāh ﷺ
3. Through the medium of an Angel

Waḥī at heart

This is where the Prophet is inspired in the heart by Allāh ﷺ. There is no Angel or discourse. The Prophet will know this has come from Allāh ﷺ. This type of Waḥī can occur during sleep or wakefulness. Dreams are also included within this type of Waḥī. This is how Allāh ﷺ commanded Ibrāhīm ﷺ to slaughter his son Ismā῾īl ﷺ.

Direct from Allāh ﷺ

This is where Allāh ﷺ speaks to a Prophet directly. There is no intermediary. The sound cannot be understood through intellect alone. This is the most honoured form of Waḥī as it involves direct communication with Allāh ﷺ. It is in this manner that Allāh ﷺ spoke to Mūsā ﷺ.

The 3rd Hadith in the first chapter of Sahih Al-Bukhārī gives a very detailed account of the incident when our Rasūlullāh ﷺ started to receive the Waḥī. Ā'ishah ﷺ narrates that the beginning of Revelation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ was pious dreams. Whichever dream he would see, it would become true like the morning light.

Then Rasūlullāh ﷺ developed a love for seclusion and withdrawing himself from other people. He used to seclude himself in the cave of Hira and he used to worship in there. The Cave of Ḥirā is located outside of Makkah on a mountain called Jabal Nūr.

The First Verses to be revealed

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The Cave of Ḥirā is located outside of Makkah on a mountain called Jabal Nūr.

Read in the name of your Lord who created

Created Mankind from a clot

Read and your Lord is Most Generous

Who taught by the pen

Taught Man that which he knew not

7 Sūrah As-Shūrā, verse 51
8 Sūrah As-Ṣāfāt, verse 102

Journey of the Qurān • 13

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Allāh  says in the Qur’ān

وَكَلَّمَ الَّلَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَحْكِيمًا

“And Allāh  spoke to Mūsā  directly”

Through the Medium of an Angel

This is where Allāh  sends His message through an Angel and the Angel conveys this message to the Prophet. At times the Prophet sees the Angel either in its original form, as a human figure or the Prophet only hears the Angel.

Allāh  used to send Jibrīl  the greatest of Angels, with his revelation to the Prophets.

Modes of Waḥī

There are various modes and methods of Waḥī which encompass the above three types of Waḥī. Scholars have numerated up to 46 different modes of Waḥī but these can be summarised in 6 categories

1. The Ringing of Bells
2. The Angel coming in the form of a person
3. The Angel coming in its original form
4. True dreams
5. Discourse with Allāh
6. Inspiration in the heart

The Ringing of Bells

In a Ḥadīth recorded by Imām Bukhāri  on the authority of Sayyidah ʿĀ'ishah   once Sayyidunā Ḥārith bin Ḥishām   asked Rasūlullāh   about the manner of Waḥī. Rasūlullāh   replied:

“Sometimes I hear the voice like that of ringing bells, and I find this Waḥī the hardest. When this state ends, all that the voice had said is retained in my memory, and sometimes the Angel comes to me in the form of a man”. Sayyidah ʿĀ'ishah   added: Verily I saw the Prophet   being inspired divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead.

9 Sūrah An-Nisā, Verse 164
10 Ṣaḥīh Al- Bukhāri 2
In this Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ compares Waḥī to the ringing of bells. Scholars have given various interpretations. However, Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīri quotes Ibnul ῾Arabī with a very good explanation. He says the comparison is in 2 respects.

1. Just like the ringing sound of a bell is constant, so is the continuity of the revelation, which is implied here.
2. Just as it is difficult to ascertain the direction of where the sound of a ringing bell is coming from, similarly as Allāh ﷺ is independent of place or direction, His words are heard from all directions.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ used this comparison of ringing bells so people could comprehend the sensation of it as close as possible. As mentioned in the Ḥadīth, this form of Waḥī was also the most difficult.

The Angel coming in the form of a person

The second mode of Waḥī is that the Angel used to come in the form of a human being. Generally, Jibrīl ﷺ used to come in the form of Sayyidunā Diḥya Kalbi ﷺ. Sometimes Jibrīl ﷺ also came in the form of a stranger as we learn from the famous Ḥadīth of Jibrīl ﷺ.”

As mentioned earlier, it is unanimously agreed that the Angel that used to bring the Waḥī was Jibrīl ﷺ.

Allāh ﷺ says in the Qurān:

“My servant who has revealed it to your heart”

“Say, whoever is an enemy of Jibrīl ﷺ (he is an enemy of Allāh ﷺ) for surely he is the one who has revealed it to your heart”

The Angel coming in original form

The third mode is when Jibrīl ﷺ used to come in his original form. This happened twice during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

1. When it was the wish of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to see Jibrīl ﷺ in his original form.
2. At the time of Me῾rāj (Ascension)

There is a third time mentioned too but the narrations are not authentic as mentioned in Fatḥul Bāri

True dreams

The fourth mode of Waḥī is that Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to have dreams. Initially, the dreams started even before the revelation of the Qurān but the dreams became reality after he had seen them in the exact manner.

Sayyidah ʿĀ'ishah ﷺ narrates that the beginning of Revelation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ was pious dreams. Whichever dream he would see it would become true like the morning light.

Once when a hypocrite had put a spell on Rasūlullāh ﷺ, it was in a dream that he was informed of the spell and how to break it.

11 Sūrah Al-Baqarah, verse 97 12 Ṣaḥīh Al-Bukhārī 3
Discourse with Allāh

The fifth mode of Waḥī is through direct conversation with Allāh. Rasūlullāh was honoured to have had the opportunity to converse with Allāh at the time of Me’raj. This was in a state of wakefulness. Rasūlullāh also conversed with Allāh during a dream. Musa also conversed with Allāh.

Inspiration in the heart

The sixth mode of Waḥī is that Rasūlullāh would be inspired by Jibrīl without him actually appearing. Rasūlullāh says,

إنَّ الرُّوحَ الأَمِينَ نَقْتَ في رُؤُعي

“Indeed the Holy spirit (i.e. Jibrīl) inspired this in my heart.”

Qur’ānic and Non Qur’ānic Waḥī

The Waḥī which was revealed to Rasūlullāh comprised of those revelations which formed part of the Qur’ān and those revelations that did not.

Qur’ānic Waḥī comprised of verses of the Qur’ān in which the words and meanings were both from Allāh. Qur’ānic Waḥī is preserved by Allāh in the Qur’ān so that even a letter or dot will not be changed forever. Qur’ānic Waḥī is known as Waḥī Matluw.

Non Qur’ānic Waḥī does not form part of the Qur’ān but many commands are sent through it. Non Qur’ānic Waḥī is known as Waḥī Ghayr Matluw.

Seven Readings of the Qur’ān

In a Hadith recorded by Imām Bukhāri on the authority of Sayyidūn Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb as part of a longer narration, it mentions:

إنَّ الْقُرْآنَ أُنْزِلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرُفٍ فَاقْرِهِمْ فَآتِرُوْا مَنْهَا مَا تَيَسَّرَ

“Indeed, this Qur’ān has been revealed covering seven versions.
So recite it in a way that is easy for you from out of these”

The subject of the various readings and recitals of the Qur’ān is a lengthy one and we will suffice with a summary.

A few points to note on this are as follows:

• The seven versions do not relate to the seven dialects
• The seven versions do not relate to the seven types of Qirāṭs
• The seven versions relate to the seven forms of the variations in recital

The most well-known, well arranged and established variations in recital is based on the list compiled by Imam Abul Faḍl Rāzī.

1. Variation in Nouns - differences in number and gender e.g.

2. Variation in Verbs - verb is read in past, present or future tense e.g.
3. Variation in the position of the diacritical marks i.e. variance in fatḥā, qasrā, ḍammā e.g.


dand لَا يُضْمَّر لا يُضْمَّر

4. Variation caused by omissions and additions - an extra word in one reading which is not found in another e.g.


5. Variation in the placement of words - one word precedes another while it comes after in another e.g.


6. Variation caused by replacement of words - One word in a reading and another word in its place in another e.g.


7. Variation caused by manners of reading - this includes variations in tafkhī (making a heavy sound), tarqī (making a letter sound soft), madd (prolonging the sound) & qasr (to shorten sound).

A detailed analysis is available in the book ‘Approach to Qur’ānic Sciences’ (page 105).

Types of Verses

There are different types of verses in the Qur’ān and many have been categorised into different groups. Allāmah Suyūtī has compiled a list of different groups of verses, some of which are as follows:

1. Verses revealed when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was travelling or not
2. Verses revealed during the day and night
3. Verses revealed in summer and winter seasons
4. Verses revealed when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was in the heavens and on the earth
5. Verses revealed when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was lying in his bed
6. Makki and Madani verses

Makki and Madani verses

One may notice in the Qur’ān, there is a header preceding each Sūrah. In this header, the middle section denotes whether this Sūrah is Makki or Madani. From the example below taken from Sūrah At-Tīn, we can see that it is a Makki Sūrah.

A common misconception is that Makki implies the Sūrah/verses were revealed in Makkah while Madani verses were revealed in Madīnah.

The majority of Mufassirūn (commentators of Qur’ān) are of the opinion that Makki verses are those revealed prior to Ḥijrah (migration) and Madani verses are those revealed after Ḥijrah.
In summary the classification of Makki (Makkan) and Madani (Madinan) verses is based on the timing rather than the place.

The identification of Makki and Madani verses was not done by Rasūlullāh ﷺ but by his companions who devoted their lives to the service of the Qur‘ān.

Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh Ibn Masʿūd says,

“I swear by Him whom there is none worthy of worship except Him, that I know about every verse of the Qur‘ān about whom it was revealed and where it was revealed.”

Similarly Sayyidunā ‘Ali رضؤ اللہ عنہ says,

“By Allāh ﷻ, I know about every verse whether it was revealed during the night or day, in the plains or over the mountains.”

**Makki and Madani Sūrahs**

There are some Sūrahs which are wholly Makki or Madani i.e. all the verses in that Sūrah are either Makki or Madani e.g. Sūrah Muddathir (Makki) and Sūrah Āl-ʿImrān (Madani).

There are some Sūrahs which consist of mainly Makki verses but also contain a few Madani verses and vice versa.

Sūrahs which contain both Makki and Madani verses are classified based on one of the following reasons:

1. The majority of verses
2. The opening verses
3. The closing verses

**Characteristics of Makki and Madani verses**

The Mufassirūn have analysed the Qur‘ān and have summarised certain characteristics of Makki and Madani verses. Some characteristics are firm while some are not.

**Some firm characteristics are as follows:**

1. Any Sūrah which contains the word “الْذِيْنَ” (certainly not) is a Makkan Sūrah. This word has been used 33 times in 15 Sūrahs.
2. Any Sūrah which contains verses of Sajdah is Makkan. (This is based on the Hanafi school of thought as there is a verse of Sajdah in Sūrah Hājı, a Madani Sūrah)
3. Every Sūrah (apart from Sūrah Al-Baqarah) which relates the story of ʿĀdam and Iblīs is Makkan.
4. Every Sūrah which contains laws and regulations regarding battle (jihād) is Madani.
5. Every Sūrah which mentions the hypocrites (Munāfiqūn) is Madani although Surah Ānabīt is an exception.

**Some general characteristics are as follows:**

1. In Makki Sūrahs people are generally addressed with the words ‘O Mankind’ (يَااَيُّهَا الْذِّينَ) and in Madani Sūrahs they are addressed with ‘O You who believe’ (يَامَنِسِّئَةَ). (بِالْيَامِنِيَّةِ،َّنَّسِئَتِهِ).
2. Makki Sūrahs are short and Madani Sūrahs are longer and detailed.
3. Makki Sūrahs usually covers topics on Tawḥīd (oneness of Allāh ﷻ), Prophethood, the Hereafter, the Day of Judgement and also the accounts of previous nations. Madani Sūrahs cover topics on social and family laws, laws pertaining to battle (Jihād) and other laws.
4. Makki Sūrahs talk more about the kuffār and idol worshippers whereas Madani Sūrahs talk about the Ahlul Kitāb (people of the book) and the Munafiqūn (hypocrites).
5. Makki Sūrahs contain more metaphors, parables and similes than Madani Sūrahs.
Gradual Descent of the Qur’ān

Previous books and scriptures revealed by Allāh ﷺ were revealed in one instance. However, the Qur’ān was revealed gradually over a period of 23 years. At times only a single verse was revealed and at times a whole collection of verses were revealed.

Question: Why was the Qur’ān revealed gradually and not in one go?

This question was asked by the disbelievers, as even they were aware that previous books were revealed in one go.

Allāh ﷺ answers in the Qur’ān:

وَقَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نَزَّلْ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرآنَ جَمِيلًا وَهِدِيًا

وَكَذَلَكَ لَتَفْتَنُكُمُ الْحَقَّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَّارَةً ۖ رَبَّكُمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

And those who disbelieve say, ‘Why has not the Qur’ān been sent down on him all at once?’ Thus, (We send down) that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to you in a well arranged gradual rehearsal.”18

Imam Rāzī mentions a number of reasons on why the Qur’ān was not revealed in one go but gradually.

1. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was unlettered. He did not know how to read and write so if the Qur’ān was revealed in one instance, it would be have been difficult to memorize.

2. If the whole Qur’ān was revealed in one instance then all the laws and regulations would have to be implemented instantly.

3. Rasūlullāh ﷺ went through many difficulties while preaching the message of Islām. The frequent revelations made the difficulties easier to face and bear.

4. Many verses are responses to questions posed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ by different people and different situations

Preservation of the Qur’ān

As we know, the Qur’ān was not revealed in one instance but bit by bit. Therefore, it wasn’t preserved in book form during the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The preservation of the Qur’ān was mainly done through memory. Allāh ﷺ has undertaken the responsibility of preserving the Qur’ān upon himself.

Allāh ﷺ says in the Qur’ān:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الْذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَحَفِيظُونَ

“And Indeed We sent down the Qur’ān and We will be its guardian”19

In a Ḥadīth, Allāh ﷺ addressed Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying

وَأَنْزَلْتُ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا لَا يُغْسِلُهُ الْمَاءُ

“I have revealed a Book to you which water will not wash”20

This means this book will not perish as normal books do due to worldly calamities. The previous scriptures and books were written down in order to preserve them. However, the Qur’ān was memorised to preserve it.

Mufti Taqi Uthmani writes, “The Qur’ān will be preserved in the hearts of believers. Whoever wishes to erase it from the books cannot totally eradicate it due to preservation in the hearts of the Huffāẓ, & this is one of the miracles of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.”21
When Jibrīl  used to come down with the revelation, Rasūlullāh  used to repeat the words at the same time to memorise them.

Allāh  addressed Rasūlullāh  with the following verses.

لا تَحَرِّكْ بِهِ يِدَتَكَ لِتَعْجَلْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جُمُعَةٌ وَفَرْقَانُ ﷺ

“Do not move your tongue, therewith to make haste with it, surely the collection and recitation is upon us.”

This was an assurance to Rasūlullāh  that he need not hurry in memorising the Qur’ān as Allāh  would enable him to memorise the Qur’ān upon hearing it. Therefore, each verse that was revealed was also committed to the memory of Rasūlullāh  instantly.

عَنْ أَبِِ هُرَي ْرَةَ قَالَ ﻋَنْ أَبِِ هُرَي ْرَةَ قَالَ

Sayyidunā Abu Hurayrah  narrates

Jibrīl  used to repeat the recitation of the Qur’ān with the Prophet  once a year, but he repeated it twice with him in the year he died. The Prophet  used to stay in ‘tikāf for ten days every year (in the month of Ramadān), but he stayed for 20 days in the year he died.

Memorising the Qur’ān in Rasūlullāh  time

The Śaḥābah ﷺ also had a great desire to memorise the Qur’ān and many devoted their time to learning, memorising and teaching the Qur’ān.

Śaḥābah who are recorded to have memorised the entire Qur’ān include:

From the Muhājirūn:

Sayyidunā Abu Bakr  Sayyidunā ’Umar 
Sayyidunā ’Uthmān  Sayyidunā ’Ali 
Sayyidunā Abu Hurayrah  Sayyidunā Sa’ad 
Sayyidunā ’Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd  Sayyidunā Huzaifah bin Yamān 
Sayyidunā Sālim  Sayyidunā ’Abdullāh ibn ’Abbas 
Sayyidunā ’Abdullāh bin Zubayr  Sayyidunā Ta’sah 
Sayyidunā ’Amr bin Al ‘ās  Sayyidunā ’Abdullah bin ’Amr 
Sayyidunā Mu’āwiyah  Sayyidunā ’Abdullah bin Sa’ib 
Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah  Sayyidah Ḥafsa 
Sayyidah Umm Salamāh 

From the Ansār:

Sayyidunā Ubay bin Ka’b  Sayyidunā Mu’āḍ bin Jabal 
Sayyidunā Abu Dardā  Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit 
Sayyidunā Abu Zayd  Sayyidunā Anas bin Mālik 

22 Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, Verse 16-17
23 Ṣaḥīh Al-Bukhāri 4614
Writing of the Qur’ān in Rasūlullāh ﷺ time

As well as memorising the Qur’ān, Rasūlullāh ﷺ did arrange to have the Qur’ān written. One of those companions who was instructed to write the Qur’ān was Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ.

He says,

“I used to write the Waḥī for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When the revelation came to him he felt intense heat and drops of perspiration used to roll down on his body like pearls. When this was over I used to fetch a shoulder bone or a piece of something else. He used to go on dictating and I used to write it down. When I finished writing, the sheer weight of transcription gave the feeling that my leg would break and I would not be able to walk anymore. Anyhow, when I had finished writing,

He would say, “Read” and I would read it back to him. If there was an omission or error he used to correct it and then let it be brought before the people.”

There were many Ṣaḥābah ﷺ who transcribed the Waḥī for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Up to 40 different scribes have been recorded to have transcribed. Some of the better known Ṣaḥābah ﷺ are as follows:

- Sayyidunā Abu Bakr ﷺ
- Sayyidunā ῾Umar ﷺ
- Sayyidunā ῾Uthmān ﷺ
- Sayyidunā ῾Ali ﷺ
- Sayyidunā Ubay bin Ka῾b ﷺ
- Sayyidunā Zubayr bin Awwām ﷺ
- Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ
- Sayyidunā Khālid bin Walīd ﷺ
- Sayyidunā Mughirah bin Shu῾bah ﷺ

Materials used for transcribing

Paper was not widely available so the Waḥī was either written on stone tablets, parchments of leather, and leaves of trees or bones of animals. There were instances where paper was used.

There were some Ṣaḥābah ﷺ who wrote the Qur’ān for their own personal record. For example, in the famous incident when Sayyidunā ῾Umar ﷺ accepted Islam and caught his sister Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and her husband Sayyidunā Sa῾īd bin Zayd ﷺ learning the Qur’ān from Sayyidunā Khabbāb bin Arat ﷺ. This Qur’ān was written on a parchment. Those verses were from Sūrah Ṭāhā. There are other Aḥādīth which also indicate that the Qur’ān was transcribed in the Prophets time.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

“The recitation of the Qur’ān without looking at the transcription, the reward is one thousand times and the recitation of the Qur’ān looking at the transcription is two thousand times.”

24 Majmauz Zawāid, p684

25 Majmauz Zawaid v7, p167
The collection and collation of the Qur’ān during the time of Sayyidunā Abu Bakr and Sayyidunā ʿUmar

Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit 叙事 says that after the battle of Yamāmah, Sayyidunā Abu Bakr 叙事 sent for him. When he arrived he found him with Sayyidunā ʿUmar 叙事. Sayyidunā Abu Bakr 叙事 said to me that Sayyidunā ʿUmar 叙事 has informed me that a large number of Huffāẓ have been martyred in the battle of Yamāmah and there is a fear a large portion of the Qur’ān may become extinct if this happens in further battles. Hence, I propose that the portions of the Qur’ān are collected from all the different places.

I initially objected to Sayyidunā ʿUmar 叙事 that how can I undertake something which wasn’t done by Rasūlullāh 叙事 but when he repeated and said there is only goodness in undertaking this, then the truth of the matter dawned upon me and this is my view also.

Thereafter Sayyidunā Abu Bakr 叙事 said to me you are young and sensible, we trust you and you were also a regular scribe of Rasūlullāh 叙事 for Waḥī, therefore we request you to search for the verses and collect them together.

After some more persistence, he says I then started searching for the verses and it was from the branches of date palms, stone slabs and the memory of people that I finally collected the Qur’ān.

(For the full narration and discussion see Ṣaḥīh Al-Bukhāri and Fatḥul Bāri v9 p8-11)

The collection and collation during the time of Sayyidunā ʿUthmān

During the time of Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事, Islām had spread far and wide. People coming into the fold of Islam were taught the Qur’ān by the soldiers or from traders. As we have covered before regarding the 7 readings, the ʿṢaḥābah 叙事 taught according to the reading they had learnt from Rasūlullāh 叙事. As a consequence, the different readings spread to different countries. Initially this wasn’t a problem as there was a general awareness of the seven readings, but slowly this awareness was decreasing till such time that disputes among people started to occur. This posed a danger that people may commit a grave error by declaring readings of the Qur’ān as incorrect which in reality were correct.

On the one hand, the only copy which included all the readings, was the copy written by Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit 叙事, and this was in Madīnah. There were other written copies, but not one that incorporated all seven readings.

The only reliable method to stop these disputes was to ensure that a copy which incorporated all seven readings should be spread throughout the Muslim world. This remarkable task was accomplished during the caliphate of Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事.

The approach adopted by Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事 to eradicate this danger was as follows:

He met with senior ʿṢaḥābah 叙事 and narrated some incidents which had taken place in Madīnah itself regarding disputes of readings of the Qur’ān. Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事 suggested that they need to come together and come up with a copy of the Qur’ān, whose following will become obligatory on all. The ʿṢaḥābah 叙事 supported this opinion and approved of it.

Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事 sent a message to Sayyidah Ḥafṣah 叙事 requesting the folios of the Qur’ān made under the orders of Sayyidunā Abu Bakr 叙事 as they were in her safekeeping. He promised that they would be returned to her. Once Sayyidunā ʿUthmān 叙事 had these folios he formed a group of 4 ʿṢaḥābah 叙事:

1. Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit 叙事
2. Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh bin Zubayr 叙事
3. Sayyidunā Saʿīd bin Al-ʿās 叙事
4. Sayyidunā ῾Abdur-Rahmān bin Ḥārith bin Hishām 叙事

Abu Shāmah 叙事 says “the purpose of this approach was to ensure that utmost care was taken in the collation of the verses of the Qur’ān, instead of just relying on the memory”.

Abu Shāmah 叙事 says: “The purpose of this approach was to ensure that utmost care was taken in the collation of the verses of the Qur’ān, instead of just relying on the memory.”
It was the duty of this group to make several copies of Sayyidunā Abu Bakr ῾Abdullāh b. ῾Abdullāh bin ῾Abdur-Rahmān Ĥānim Sijistānī, to ensure that the Qur’ān was preserved in Madīnah. The following steps were incorporated into making these copies:

1. Sūrah’s were arranged in their correct order
2. The verses were written in a way to incorporate all seven readings. As a consequence, the dots and diacritical marks (fatḥa, ḍamma etc.) were not added. So for example, was written so it can be read in both and as both readings are correct.
3. As there was only one copy of the Qur’ān which was fully authenticated, this group prepared more than one copy of this newly organised Masḥaf (physical copy of Qur’ān). It was the duty of this group to make several copies of Sayyidunā Abu Bakr ῾Abdullāh b. ῾Abdullāh bin ῾Abdur-Rahmān Ĥānim Sijistānī during the time of Abu Bakr ῾Abdur-Rahmān Ĥānim Sijistānī says that 7 copies were prepared and were sent to the following places: Makkah, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Basrah, Kufa and one preserved in Madīnah.
4. The same method of authentication and verification adopted by Sayyidunā Zayd bin Thābit ῾Abdul-Qasim Ḥasan Baṣrī during the time of Abu Bakr ῾Abdur-Rahmān Ĥānim Sijistānī was used again at this point by this group.
5. Once the copies were prepared, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān ῾Abdul-Qasim Ḥasan Baṣrī had any personal copies kept by various Ṣaḥābah burnt so that all copies of the Qur’ān were uniform in terms of script. The copies incorporated all the readings and were also arranged in the correct order which would eradicate any disputes and differences.

Facilitating the recitation of the Qur’ān

Once this task and venture was successful, the Ummah reached a unanimous decision that only this copy which incorporated all variations of readings was to be used in any transcripts. Hence, all transcripts were according to this Masḥaf and the Ṣaḥābah prepared and circulated copies of this Masḥaf. However, as covered earlier in order to incorporate the readings, the dots and diacritical marks were excluded. This made reading the Qur’ān difficult for Non Arabs. To ease the recitation of the Qur’ān a number of steps were taken.

Inclusion of Dots

When Arabs used to write, generally blank letters without the dots were written. It was intended that the person reading would understand which letters they were by looking at the context of the letters. Some went as far as to say that to put dots was considered an insult as this was a form of being suspicious of the comprehension of the person reading. There are different reports as to who was responsible for organising to have the dots included. Some have also attributed them to the inventor of the dots.

Inclusion of Diacritical Marks (fatḥa, ḍamma, qasra)

There are different reports as to who was responsible for this. However, reports mention that the diacritical marks were invented by Abul Aswad Du’āli but they looked different. Abul Aswad Du’āli was a grammarian and a companion of Sayyidunā ῾Alī ῾Abdul-Qasim Ḥasan Baṣrī. So how did the diacritical marks look different?

Fatḥa looked like a dot over letter
Ḍamma looked like a dot in front of letter
Qasra looked like a dot under the letter
Similar was for Tanwin.

The signs for hamza and tashṭīd were invented by Khalīl b. ῾Abmad. ῾Hajjāj b. Yūsuf is reported to have requested 3 people, one of which was ῾Abu ῾Aswad Du’āli, to put both dots and diacritical marks on the letters. To avoid confusion, the present day diacritical marks were adopted.
Printing of the Qur'ān

Originally, the Qur'ān was transcribed and written by pen by calligraphers and this was a field that progressed as people dedicated a lot of time and effort to it. Calligraphers didn’t just write the Qur'ān, but they also adopted different styles which was a way of showing their love for the Qur'ān. Arabic calligraphy is a separate subject matter itself.

The first Qur'ān to be printed was in the year 1113 Hijri at Hamburg and the copy is currently preserved in Egypt. Thereafter, other Qur'āns were printed in different parts of the world. One was printed in St Petersburg in Russia in 1787. Another in 1828 in Tehran. This printing was done by lithography on stone slabs. Thereafter, printed Qur'āns were widespread and made available.

Categorization of the Qur'ān

Manzil (Ahzāb)

The common practice of many Sahabah and their companions was to complete the Qur'ān on a weekly basis. Therefore, they used to recite fixed portions per day whereby the Qur'ān was completed in a week. Aww bin Huzayfah says he once asked one of the Sahabah regarding the portions they used to recite. They replied

1st Ḥizb (Manzil) - 3 Sūrahs
2nd Ḥizb (Manzil) - 5 Sūrahs
3rd Ḥizb (Manzil) - 7 Sūrahs
4th Ḥizb (Manzil) - 9 Sūrahs
5th Ḥizb (Manzil) - 11 Sūrahs
6th Ḥizb (Manzil) - 13 Sūrahs
7th Ḥizb (Manzil) - Sūrah Qāf till Nās

(Al Burhān Fi ‘Ulumil Qur’ān v1 p250)

If we take a look at the bottom part of any page in the 13 line print Qur'ān, it tells us the number of the Manzil. So in the example below, we can see this is the 7th Manzil.

Paras (Ajza)

The Qur'ān is currently divided into 30 paras (Juz). There is no definite reason mentioned as to the reason why it has been divided in this manner, although some say that it was from the time of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān. However, it is thought it was for educational reasons and the Ajza were formed after the period of the companions to ease teaching the Qur'ān. (Allāh knows best)

In the 13 line print Qur'ān, the start of each Juz (para) is marked with a line at the top of the page with white text against a black background. The normal text of the Qur'ān is black text against a white background.

The name of the Juz is based on the first word in the first line of the Juz. So the first Juz is called Alif Lām Mim, and the final Juz is called ‘Amma.
Rukūʿs

Another form of categorization which was also included is called a Rukūʿ. This sign was added later for ease and the placing of the Rukūʿ is generally linked to the meaning. Again there is no authentic evidence as to where this originated although it has been attributed to the time of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān.

However, the reason behind the signs is to signify an average number of verses which could be recited in one Rakʿāh in Ṣalāh. Hence, it is called Rukūʿ as at the point of finishing the Rukūʿ one would complete the Rakʿah and go into Rukūʿ.

It is documented in Fatāwa ʿAlamgirīyā (volume 1 page 94):

“The Śhuyūkh have divided the Qurʾān into 540 Rukūʿ (plural of Rukūʿ) and placed its signs on the transcriptions so that the Qurʾān may be completed on the 27th night (of Ramaḍān in Tarāwīḥ Šalāḥ)

Each night in the holy month of Ramaḍān, 20 Rakʿāh of Tarāwīḥ Šalāh are read. If one Rukūʿ was to be read in each Rakʿāh, then in 27 nights, 540 Rukūʿ would be recited which is the total number in the Qurʾān.

Explanation of the Sūrah Header

Number of Rukūʿs in Sūrah

The Sūrah heading also tells us the amount of Rukūʿs in the Sūrah. Look at the heading below:

The circle highlighting the left section shows us that in this Sūrah, there are a total of one Rukūʿs.
Rukū sign in detail explained

If we look at the Rukū’ sign in the margin, this also tells us a lot of information. The Rukū’ sign is placed at the end of the Rukū’, so the information is displayed for the Rukū’ which has just been read.

There are 3 numbers, one is within the Rukū’ sign, one on the top and one at the bottom.

The number on the top tells us the Rukū’ number in terms of the Sūrah, so from the example above, we can see that this is the end of the fourth Rukū’.

The number in the middle tells us the number of Ayahs, verses in this Rukū’, so we can see that this Rukū’ had 10 verses.

The number at the bottom, shows us the number of the Rukū’ in terms of the Juz, so from the example above, we can see that this is also the 4th Rukū’ in this Juz.

Surāhs (Chapters)

Makki & Madani

The Qur’ān is made up of a number of Surāhs or chapters. Sometimes a whole Sūrah would be revealed in one go, other times only a few verses would be revealed which made up part of a Sūrah. The Surāhs would then be classified as either Makki or Madani depending on the criteria mentioned earlier.

The middle part of the Sūrah header informs us of its classification. From the example above, we can see that Sūrah Tīn is classed as a Makki Sūrah.

Order of Revelation & Sūrah Number

The total number of Sūrah in the Qur’ān is 114. The Sūrah heading also tells us the number of the Sūrah in the order of revelation and also the number of the Sūrah in the Qur’ān itself. Look at the heading below:

The number in the red circle (right hand number in middle section) denotes the number of the Sūrah in the Qur’ān, so from the above we can see that Sūrah At-Tīn is Sūrah number 95.

The number in the green circle (left hand number in middle section) denotes the number of the Sūrah in the Qur’ān in terms of order of revelation, so from the above we can see that Sūrah At-Tīn is the 28th Sūrah to have been revealed.

Ayāt (Verses)

Number of verses in Sūrah

The Qur’ān is made up of a number of verses. The total number of verses in the Quran is 6,236.

The Sūrah headings also show us the amount of verses in that Sūrah. So if we look at the header below, we can see that in this Sūrah, there are a total of 8 verses.

Verse number

There is also a number in the middle of the circle which denotes the end of each verse. This shows us the number of the verse in that particular Sūrah. In the example below, we can see that this is the 4th Ayah:

26 Based on 13 Line print Qur’ān
### Stop signs (Rumūzul Awqāf)

Rumūzul Awqāf means signs for pause. These signs were added to indicate where to stop, to prevent changes in the meaning by stopping at the wrong place. Most of these signs were introduced by Allāmah Abu Muḥammad Tyfūr Sajāwandi.

There are 6 signs which were invented by Allāmah Abu Muḥammad, however, there are another 7 signs which we find and are well known but there is no conclusive evidences of their origin.

When reciting the Qur’ān, it is very important that we learn these signs so we can ensure our recitation is correct. A summary of these signs can be seen below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>م</td>
<td>Compulsory Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Necessary Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>قف</td>
<td>Recommended Pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س سكتة وقفه</td>
<td>Stop vocal sound for a moment, without breaking breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Necessary to continue, do not pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desirable to continue, do not pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional to pause or continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>معاقلة </td>
<td>Any two of the three verses can be read in continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denotes the similar rule as at the end of the preceding verse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

27 An Nashr Fil Qirātil Ashr Jazari volume 1 p225

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## Appendix 1 - Sūrah Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Revelation</th>
<th>Name of Sūrah</th>
<th>Sūrah Number</th>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Rukū’s</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Al-‘Alaq</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Makki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Al-Qalam</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Al-Muzammil</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Al-Mudathir</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>At-Takwir</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<td>As-Shams</td>
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