

Refutation to the article 'Separating the Qur'an from the Family'

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Introduction

This is a response to Answering-Ansar's article '*Separating the Qur'an from the Family.*'

It is an established fact that the Quran we have today was transmitted and compiled by the Sahabas. Therefore, whoever claims to have belief in the current Quran, will have to believe in the uprightness of the Companions. The notorious Shi'a website, Answering-Ansar.org, has responded to this issue in their article entitled '*Separating the Qur'an from the Family.*' Sadly, when the Answering-Ansar team could not find a reasonable answer to this fact, they cunningly declared that the Qur'an had already been compiled by Ali (ra) during the Prophet's time; and that the Sahabas compiled the Quran just to lessen the honours of Ali.

I shall insha Allah provide a detailed refutation to such Shi'a lies, and shall let the truth be revealed on its own.

THE COLLECTION OF QURAN

I. The Preservation of Quran during the Prophet's (saw) Lifetime

The Quran was not compiled into a book form during the Prophet's lifetime; rather it was preserved by memorization and writing. Hafidh Jalal al-din al-Syuti (d. 911) records in *al Itqan fi uloom al Quran*, volume 1, page 41 that the Qur'an had been written down in its entirety in the time of the Prophet but had not been brought together in one single place, and that therefore these written records or documents had not been arranged in order. Furthermore, as pointed by the Answering-Ansar team, Muhadith Shah Waliullah Dehlvi (d. 1183) writes in his book *Izalatul Khafa*:

"At the time of the death of the Prophet (saws) the Qur'an had not been compiled in to a book form. Surah's and Ayats were scattered amongst the people"

- *Izalatul Khafa'an Khilafatul Khulafa*, by Shah Waliullah (d. 1183), volume 4, page 252 [Karachi]

Why the Prophet did not leave any book?

The Prophet did not present to his Companions the revelation collected and arranged in a single written volume for the following reasons:

- Because the revelation did not come down in one piece, but at intervals and was received continuously until the end of the Prophet's life.
- Because some verses were abrogated in the course of revelation, and therefore flexibility needed to be maintained.

- The ayat and suras were not always revealed in their final order, but were arranged later.
- The Prophet lived only nine days after the last revelation and was severely ill. There was no dispute or friction about the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet, as developed afterwards when he, as the final authority, was no longer available.

II. The Collection of Quran during Abu Bakr's (ra) time

Tradition informs us that at the Battle of Yamama (11 H), in the time of Abu Bakr, a number of Muslims, who had memorized the Qur'an, were killed. Hence it was feared that unless a written copy of the Qur'an were prepared, a large part of the revelation might be lost. The following is the account in the Sahih Bukhari:

“Narrated Zaid bin Thabit Al-Ansari, one of the scribes of the Revelation: Abu Bakr sent for me after the casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Qurra were killed). 'Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said: "Umar has come to me and said, the People have suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be some casualties among the Qurra (those who know the Qur'an by heart) at other places, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost, unless you collect it. And I am of the opinion that you should collect the Qur'an.' Abu Bakr added, 'I said to 'Umar, "How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?" 'Umar said (to me) "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing". So 'Umar kept on pressing trying to persuade me to accept his proposal, till Allah opened my bosom for it and I had the same opinion as 'Umar'. (Zaid bin Thabit added:) 'Umar was sitting with him (Abu Bakr) and was not speaking. Abu Bakr said (to me), 'You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness); and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. Therefore, look for the Qur'an and collect it (in one manuscript)'. By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains (from its place) it would not have been harder for me than what he had ordered me concerning the collection of the Qur'an. I said to both of them, 'How dare you do a thing which the Prophet has not done?' Abu Bakr said, 'By Allah, it is (really) a good thing. So I kept on arguing with him about it till Allah opened my bosom for that which He had opened the bosoms of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So I started locating the Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leafstalks of date palms and from the memories of men (who knew it by heart). I found with Khuzaima two verses of Sura at-Tauba which I had not found with anybody else (and they were):'Verily there has come to you an Apostle (Muhammad) from among yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad) is ardently anxious over you (to be rightly guided)' (9:128).

The manuscript on which the Qur'an was collected, remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him, and then with 'Umar till Allah took him unto Him, and finally it remained with Hafsa, 'Umar's daughter.

- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, by Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 255), volume 2, page 745, published by Qadeemi Kutb Khana [Karachi]

Note: Zaid's statement that he found the two verses of Sura at-Tauba only with Khuzaima, does not mean that no one else knew about those two verses. Rather, it means that Zaid found those verses in written form only with Khuzaima. Otherwise, many people, including Zaid, had those verses in memory.

Here we can distinguish the following steps, which led to the preparation of the Suhuf:

- Zaid was instructed by Abu Bakr to collect the Qur'an.
- Zaid collected it from various written materials and the memories of people.
- The Suhuf (sheets) thus prepared were kept with Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then Hafsa.

III. The Compilation of Quran during 'Uthman's (ra) time

During the time of 'Uthman differences in reading the Qur'an became obvious, and after consultation with the Companions, 'Uthman had a standard copy prepared from the Suhuf of Abu Bakr that were kept with Hafsa at that time.

The following is the report transmitted in the Sahih Bukhari:

"Narrated Anas bin Malik: Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to 'Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, 'O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'an), as Jews and the Christians did before'. So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, 'Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you'. Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, 'Abdullah bin Az-Zubair, Sa'id bin Al-'As and 'AbdurRahman bin Hari-bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. 'Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, 'In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish as the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue'. They did so, and when they had written many copies, 'Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa. 'Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt. Zaid bin Thabit added, 'A verse from Sura al-

Ahzaab was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari'. (That verse was): 'Among the Believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allah' (33: 23)."

- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, by Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 265), volume 6, Hadith no. 510

The following events led to the preparation of the mushaf of 'Uthman:

- Disputes had arisen among the Muslims about the correct manner of reciting the Qur'an.
- 'Uthman borrowed the Suhuf, which were kept with Hafsa.
- 'Uthman ordered four Companions, among them Zaid bin Thabit, to rewrite the script in perfect copies.
- 'Uthman sent these copies to the main centres of the Muslims to replace other materials that were in circulation.

The Difference between Abu Bakr's and 'Uthman's Collection

The revelation, as left by the Prophet, was available both orally and written on various materials. Its internal order was known to the Muslims and strictly observed by them. Abu Bakr collected these loose materials and had their contents written on to sheets (Suhuf), but he did not compile those sheets between two covers into a book form. It was done later during Uthman's reign. The difference between the Quran collected by Abu Bakr and Uthman are:

- Abu Bakr had made one single copy from the various verbal and written materials. This copy was later kept by 'Umar and then by his daughter Hafsa.
- 'Uthman had many copies prepared from this copy and sent them to various places in the Muslim world, while the original Suhuf were returned to Hafsa and remained with her until her death. This version of the text, also known as 'Mushaf 'Uthman in fact constitutes the ijma'(consensus) of the sahaba, all of whom agreed that it contained what Muhammad had brought as revelation from Allah. The copy of Quran that we have today is the one compiled during Uthman's reign.

Answering the questions submitted by Answering-Ansar.org

Can anyone believe in the current Quran, while deeming its transmitters and compilers Kafir? The Answering-Ansar team has answered to this question by claiming that the Quran had already been compiled by Ali during the Prophet's lifetime, and that the Sahabas compiled it to lessen the honours of Ali. But, Alas! They could not provide any evidence for this claim. So they filled their entire article with mere conjecture and suppositions. However, even if we accept this fairy tale of Answering-Ansar i.e. Ali had compiled the Quran, yet the Shi'a cannot prove their belief in the current Quran. The Qur'an we have today was transmitted and compiled by the Sahabas—not by Ali. And the Quran allegedly compiled by Ali is not amongst us—it is with the 12th Imam of the Shi'a in the cave. How can the Shi'a believe in this Qur'an when they deem its transmitters and compilers—the Sahabas—Kafir? It is not possible. This fact becomes more evident when we see that all the classical Shi'a scholars believed that the Quran has been distorted by the Sahabas. Moreover, the authentic Shi'a texts confirms this when we find thousands of Sahih [authentic] and Mutawatir [mass transmitted] narrations in them that imply tahreef in the Qur'an, issued from the Shi'a imams. Therefore, the Shi'a can never believe in the current Quran.

Although, this entire article of Answering-Ansar is filled with mere conjecture and meaningless questions, but lest there remains any doubt in the mind of the readers, I shall answer all the questions submitted by the Answering-Ansar team, and shall also refute their claims.

Question 1 and 2

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

1. If the Qur'an had not been compiled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet then why did he during his farewell pilgrimage tell the companions the following:

"I am leaving amongst you two weighty things the Book of Allah (Kitabullah) and my Ahlulbayt"? (a mutawatir narration).

It is incorrect to call Qur'an al-kitab when it is merely in the people's memory. Furthermore, it is even inappropriate to apply the word al-kitab to the fragments written on palm branches, flat stones, and shoulder blades, except when such an application is figurative and from particulate attention. But a word may not be used metaphorically without something to indicate that. The word al-kitab obviously signifies a single and united entity. It is not applied to a text which is scattered and not collected, let alone one which is unwritten and preserved in memory only.

2. Hadhrath Umar said "The Book of Allah is sufficient for us", when the Prophet (saaws) asked for a pen and paper on his deathbed did? Why say 'Book' and not just say Qur'an?

Reply

Indeed, arguing that the Quran had been compiled into a book form during the Prophet's (saw) lifetime is pathetic, because it was not possible to compile the Quran at that time for many reasons. [See above on Why the Prophet did not leave any book?]

As far as referring to the Quran as Kitab, in the narration is concerned; first of all, the fact that Umar feared after the Prophet's death that the Quran might be lost, clarifies this point. Had the Quran been already compiled into a book form, Umar would not have feared like that. And in another narration, where Abu Bakr asks Umar: How can we do something which the Prophet did not, proves that the Quran had not been compiled into a book form during the Prophet's era. Furthermore, Kitab here means a writing, a scripture, a script—not necessarily compiled between two covers. We know that the entire Quran had been written and memorized during the Prophet's lifetime but not compiled into a book form. It does not matter if it was written on palm leaves, flat stones, etc. If something is written on some material other than the paper sheets, it is still called a piece of writing—its reality does not change. The fact is that had the Answering-Ansar team opened the Quran even once, they would not have made such a pathetic claim. The word Kitab has been used many times in the Quran, and in more than forty cases it refers to the Quran itself. We read in the Quran:

الله الذى انزل الكتب بالحق والميزان

“God it is Who has sent down the Book, with the truth and also the Balance.” [42:17]

We further read:

والكتب المبين انا جعلنه قرءاً عربياً لعلكم تعقلون

“By the clear Book, behold, We have made it an Arabic Quran; haply you will understand;” [43:2-3]

Allah says:

ذلك الكتب لا ريب فيه

“That is the Book, where in is no doubt,” [2:2]

In all the above verses, the word Kitab refers to the Qur'an. I ask the Answering-Ansar team, had the Quran been compiled into a book form when these verses were revealed? If not, then—as per according to Answering-Ansar logic—did Allah (swt) use the incorrect word? May be the Answering-Ansar team is now trying to teach Allah (swt) the correct usage of words.

Question 3 and 4

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

3. If the Qur'an was not compiled then why did this verse descend *"Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my bounty upon you, and I was satisfied that your religion be Islam" (Qur'an 5:3)*? This is especially true when the narration of Tirmidhi states of the Prophet[saww] died without specifying the location of Surah al-Tawbah. Would this therefore not imply that Islam was incomplete because Muslims did not know the positions of the Surah's?
4. Why would the Holy Prophet leave the earth leaving this task unfulfilled - after all his prime purpose in the earthly sphere of existence was the deliverance of the Revelation to guide the billions who followed till the Day of Judgment. It would have been prudent to at the very least have one copy of the Qur'an preserved on indelible materials under his immaculate supervision, either compiled as the Revelation was issued from his tongue or at the end of his Mission.

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Reply

The Prophet's duty was never to compile the Quran between two covers, as Allah clearly states in the Quran:

"Move not your tongue with it [O Muhammad] to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an. Indeed upon Us is its collection and [to make possible] its recitation." [75:16-17]

We read:

"Surely We have revealed this reminder (i.e. the Qur'an), and surely We will protect it." [15:9]

Rather, the Prophet's only duty was to deliver the message, which he did perfectly. That is why the following verse descended:

"Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my bounty upon you, and I was satisfied that your religion be Islam" (5:3)

We read in Surah al-Maidah:

"The only duty of the messenger is to deliver Allah's message" [5:99]

Allah says:

“And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and beware. And if you turn away—then know that upon Our Messenger is only [responsibility for] clean notification.” [5:92]

The way the material of revelation was left by the Prophet at his death was the most suitable for the Companions in that:

- All parts of the revelation were available both in written form and memorized by the Companions.
- All pieces were available on loose writing material, making it easy to arrange them in the proper order.
- The order already fixed of the ayat within the suras, in the written form, as well as in the memory of the Companions, and of the suras in the memory of the Companions.

What arrangement could have been better than to have everything to hand in written form, as well as memorized by the Muslims, and to have the order and arrangement already determined, partially in the written form and completely in the memories of the people?

And the revelation in the Quran is arranged in four manners:

1. The arrangement of Surahs (chapters). For example, first Surah Fatiha, then Baqarah, then Ale Imran.....
2. The arrangement of Ayats (verses), which means the arrangements of ayats within the surahs. For example, in Sura Fatiha the first ayat is الحمدُ لله رب العالمين, then الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ
3. The arrangement of Kalimah (words); which means the arrangement of words within the ayats. For example, in Surah Fatiha it is الحمدُ لله it could also be لله الحمدُ
4. The arrangement of Huroof (letters); which means the arrangement of letters within the words. For example, in Sura Fatiha it is الحمد. It could also be المدح. The difference between حمد and مدح is only in the position of letters.

The Shi'a believes that the Quran has been distorted in all four manners of arrangement. For the first three kinds, the the Shaikh al-Isam of the Shi'a Ithna Ashria Mirza Hussain al Nuri al-Tabrasi (d. 1320) writes in his book *Fasl al Khitab*:

وهو مخالف لهذا القرآن الموجود من حيث التاليف و ترتيب السور والآيات بل الكلمات ايضاً

“The Quran compiled by Ali is against the current Quran also in regards to the compilation and the sequence of Suras, ayats and even wordings.”

- *Fasl al Khitab fi Tahrif Kitab Rabb al-Arbab*, by al- Nuri al-Tabrasi (d. 1320), page 97 [Tehran]

The fourth kind should also be accepted from this.

And the Answering-Answering team confirms this by citing the opinion of the Shi'a Ithna Ashria scholar Allamah Sayed Muhammad Hussein Tabatabai (d. 1412) in their article entitled '*Who believes the Quran has been a victim of Tahreef?*' (Revision: 1.0.0). They write (emphasis ours):

Quoting Answering-Ansar:
<p>Allamah Taba Tabayee stated:</p> <p>"The Quranic compilation by Ali (as) and his presenting it before the people does not prove that there were any differences in respect of Furu and Usool between the present Quran and the Quran compiled by Ali (as). <u>Yes there might be differences in the sequence of verses and Surahs.</u> But a difference in the true principle of the Deen does not appear.</p> <p>Had there been any difference in principles then he would have proved it with arguments at the time he offered his version and would have defended his stance. He would have not remained silent at this point over its rejection by the people. Moreover when he protested about the Wilayah and other matters and recited verses and Surahs, there was no such report recorded of there being any difference between his Quran and the present one. Additionally he didn't make reference to any verse or Surah being lost or distorted"</p> <p><i>Al Mizan, Volume 12 page 116</i></p>
<i>Who believes the Quran has been a victim of Tahreef?, page 49</i>

The Ahl al Sunnah believes that the Quran is clean from every kind of distortion. Even, its arrangement is not distorted. And whoever accuses the Quran of being distorted pollutes his own hands and mind with the filth of kufr.

As for the last three kinds of arrangement of revelation in Quran, there is a unanimous Ijma that not even a single narration of the Prophet is against it [See al Itqan]. For the first kind i.e. the arrangement of Suras, there is a difference of opinion. Some say that the Sahabas arranged it, while some assert that it was also arranged by the Prophet. But, even if this arrangement was not according to the Prophet's will, yet it does not bring any change to the Quran—the meaning does not change. Because every sura is independent. If Ale Imran was first, and now Sura Baqara is first, so what? If Qul a'auzu birab binnas was first, and now Sura Falaq is first, so does it introduce any change in the meaning? Clearly, not!

Question 5

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

5. Hadhrath Umar wanted to collate the Qur'an into book form because he was concerned that it would get lost. How can this be the case when Allah (swt) states categorically "Certainly We sent down the Dhikr (i.e., Qur'an), and certainly we shall protect it" (Qur'an 15:9), did Hadhrath Umar not have faith in this verse?

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Reply

The statement of Umar means that since the Quran was with different people; when those people would die, with their death there was a possibility that the written Quran might be lost; because in the absence of its owners, it would be difficult to find those writings. Hadhrat Umar did not mean that the existence of the Quran would be lost. Rather, he meant that the written form of the Quran might be lost; or he meant that the Tawatur (mass transmission) would fall in danger.

I ask the Answering-Ansar team, do you Shi'a check the Quran after its publication for any mistakes? Or you just distribute it without any bothering? If yes, then do you not have faith in the following verse?

"Surely, We have revealed this reminder (i.e. the Qur'an), and surely We will protect it."

Indeed, it is ridiculous to say that if someone cares for keeping the Quran clear from distortion, he does not believe in the above mentioned verse.

Question 6, 7, and 8

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

6. Why did Hadhrath Abu Bakr opt to choose Zaid bin Thabit as compiler when prominent Sahaba famed for their knowledge of the Qur'an such as Ubayy bin Ka'ab and Abdullah ibne Masud present. The latter were acknowledged as the foremost in their knowledge of the Qur'an excepting the Holy Prophet himself.
7. Hadhrath Uthman went even further and appointed, with the presence in Madina of some of the greats amongst the companions who were famed for their knowledge of the Qur'an, companions who were mere boys during the

lifetime of the Holy Prophet. If one analyses their ages we learn Abdullah bin Zubayr was born in 2 Hijri, Saeed bin Aas in 1 Hijri, Abdur Rahman bin Harith in 1 Hijri, the eldest Zaid bin Thabit was 11 years of age at the time of the Hijrath. The last verse of the Qur'an descended in 10 Hijri that means all four were very young - in fact children, three of whom were still not even Baligh (attained the age of adolescence). Why were these four preferred to prominent sahaba such as Abdullah ibne Masud and Ubayy bin Ka'ab?

8. The learning of Abdullah bin Masud and Ubai bin Ka'b is preserved in the Sahih Bukhari where we read this hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Amr:

"I heard the Holy Prophet saying, 'Take (Learn) the Qur'an from four: Abdullah bin Masud, Salim, Mu'adh, and Ubai bin Ka'b'."
Sahih Bukhari Arabic - English Vol 6 hadith number 521

If this is indeed the case then why did neither Hadhrath Abu Bakr nor Hadhrath Uthman select any of these men to collate and compile the Qur'an?

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Reply

The reason for choosing Zaid was his religious sophistication, his justice, the beauty of his character and his knowledge. We read in *Rushad Qira'at*:

Hafidh Abu Na'eem says, **"Zaid was the best among the Ummah in knowledge, jurisprudence and duties."**

Imam Shu'bi says, **"Zaid had stepped on the stirrup to get on his horse. Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (ra) held his horse's rein. Zaid said: O son of the Prophet's uncle, leave it and don't make me feel shame. Abdullah bin Abbas replied: We treat our scholars in this way. Zaid then held Ibn Abbas's hand and said while kissing it: The Prophet (sws) has taught us to treat our elders and loved ones in this way."**

Ibn Abbas (ra) says about Zaid, **"He was an expert in knowledge."**

Zaid was a quick learner and very intelligent. He (ra) himself narrates: **Allah's apostle said to me: I receive letters. I do not like everyone to be aware of them. Can you learn Saryani language? I replied: Yes! Thus, I learned that language in seventeen (17) nights.**

- *Rushad Qira'at*, part 2, page 86, published by Lahore Islamic University [Lahore]

Another reason, he was young and intelligent. As the narration quoted by the Answering-Ansar team—itsself—clarifies:

“Abu Bakr said (to me), 'You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness); and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. Therefore, look for the Qur'an and collect it (in one manuscript).”

Furthermore, Zaid bin Thabit was selected because he used to scribe the revelation in the supervision of the Prophet. He had memorized the complete Quran and had recited it before the Prophet in the last period. He had the Quran in the written form too.

During Uthman’s reign, the main reason for the compilation of the Quran was to eradicate the conflicts which had arisen due to difference in recitation. Since the Quran was revealed in Quraish’s tongue, Uthman (ra) made a committee of four persons. He (ra) selected Zaid bin Thabit from among the Ansars, and a group from among the Quraish which included Abdullah ibn Zubair, Saeed bin al-Aas, and Abdur Rehman bin Harith bin Hisham. Then he asked them: Who writes the best? He was replied: The scribe of Allah’s apostle, Zaid bin Thabit. He then asked: Who has the best accent? They said: Saeed bin al-Aas. Then, Hadhrat Uthman said: Saeed will dictate and Zaid will write. Then he ordered them to produce perfect copies from the Suhuf collected by Abu Bakr. We read in Sahih Bukhari:

“Narrated Anas bin Malik: Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to 'Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, 'O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'an), as Jews and the Christians did before'. So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, 'Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you'. Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, 'Abdullah bin Az-Zubair, Sa'id bin Al-'As and 'AbdurRahman bin Hari-bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. 'Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, 'In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish as the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue'. They did so, and when they had written many copies, 'Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, by Muhammad al-Bukhari (d.265), volume 6, Hadith No. 510

Moreover, these four persons did not have a bad past record. Zaid bin Thabit was made the head of the committee because of his virtues mentioned earlier. In addition, he had proved his eligibility when he compiled the Quran during Abu Bakr’s time. And the other three Quraishites were chosen because of their language. The Quran was revealed in their language. That’s why, Uthman selected them. The narration above makes it clear.

As for the age of these four persons, Zaid bin Thabit was in his twenties (20s) at the time of Abu Bakr and in his thirties (30s) at the time of Uthman. And the other three were about between twenty five, to thirty (25-30). They were young and energetic, had a good past record and were eligible for this task in every manner. Zaid bin Thabit had many virtues as mentioned earlier; and the other three were also perfect for this task. They were from that Quraish that meant that they would be much useful in the case of recitation conflict. If the Answering-Ansar team wants to argue that because Zaid bin Thabit was not an adult during the Hijra, therefore he cannot have the knowledge of Quran; I say that Zaid had memorized the entire Quran and recited it before the Prophet in the last period. Furthermore, he used to scribe the Quran for the Prophet and had the Quran in the written form too.

And for the following narration:

"I heard the Holy Prophet saying, 'Take (Learn) the Qur'an from four: Abdullah bin Masud, Salim, Mu'adh, and Ubai bin Ka'b'."

First of all, in this narration, the prophet praises these four companions' knowledge about the Quran. He (sww) does not limit the affairs of the Quran just to these four individuals. This narration does not imply that no one can compile the Quran except these four; or that we should not take (learn) the Quran from anyone except from these four. Rather, it simply glorifies the knowledge and trustworthiness of these companions.

Moreover, the presence of knowledgeable companions—such as Ubai bin Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Masu'd—does not mean that Zaid bin Thabit and the other three Quraishis were ineligible for this task. We have already discussed the eligibility of these four individuals. The biggest proof is that the Quran we have today was compiled by this four men committee. Had they been incompetent for this task, something would go wrong. But, alhamdulillah, the Quran we have today is exactly the same as it was taught by the Prophet. In addition, during the collection of Quran in Abu Bakr's reign, it was announced publicly that whoever had any part of the Quran – written or memorized—should bring it to Zaid and Umar ibn al Khatab. Had the companions—which includes Ali, Ibn Masu'd and Ubai bin Ka'b—any problem with these individuals, they would have raised their voices and would not have co-operated. After all, Zaid collected the Quran very cautiously, by using many methods simultaneously. Even, in Uthman's reign, many companions assisted the four men committee of Uthman in the compilation of Quran. While the task of compilation was basically given to the four men committee of Uthman, but later more companions were added with them to assist in the task. Ibn Abi Dawood narrates that the number of those companions reaches up to twelve, which includes Ubai Bin Ka'b, Kathib bin Aflah, Malik bin Abi Amir, Anas bin Malik, and Abdullah ibn Abbas. No one objected on this selection of Abu Bakr and Uthman. All the companions co-operated humbly and praised this act of the Shaikain. Ali was completely satisfied with this selection. We read in *al Itqan*:

وقد قال علي لو لويت لعملت بالمصاحف التي عمل بها عثمان

“Undoubtedly, Ali said: If I were the ruler, I would do the same with the Mushaf (Quran) that Uthman did.”

- *al Itqan fi Uloom al Quran*, by Jalal al-Din al-Syuti (d. 911), volume 1, page 60, published by Sohail Academy [Lahore]

So why is the Answering-Ansar team so uncomfortable with this selection of Abu Bakr and Uthman? Had Abu Bakr and Uthman selected Ubai bin Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Masu'd in place of Zaid and the three others, would the Shi'a not claim that the Sahabas compiled the Quran to 'lessen the honours' of Ali (ra)? Obviously, they would! Because, the Shi'a hold that all the Muslims apostatized after the Prophet's death. The Shi'a scholar al Alim al Jalil al Muhadith al Saeed Ne'matullah al Mosvi al Jazairi (d. 1112) writes in his book *al Anwar al Nu'mania*:

“After the Prophet's death, all turned apostates—except four: Salman, Abu Dhar, Maqdad, and Ammar. And there is no doubt in it.”

- *al Anwar al Nu'mania*, by Ne'matullah al Jazairi (d. 1112), volume 1, page 81 [Iran]

Question 9

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

9. Za'id began to compile the Qur'an during Hadhrath Abu Bakr's life. The task stopped and did not start again until Hadhrath Uthman's khilafath. Why was there this pause, especially since the mighty Hadhrath Umar prevented any civil instability in and around Madina, which was not the case with the first and third khalifas whose rules were marred by civil war in and around Madina? What more tranquil, relatively speaking, an opportunity, especially since the compilation of this Qur'an was the suggestion of Hadhrath Umar himself - why this gap period of in excess of no less than 10 years? When Hadhrath Umar was so concerned that the Qur'an be collated why did he not ensure that the task was completed during his ten year reign? He said that he was worried that reciters were dying on the battlefield. Many more wars occurred during his own khilafath so why did he lose that concern?

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Reply

The task of collecting the Quran in Abu Bakr’s reign was **completed**—not ‘stopped’. So Umar did not need to collect it again. And Uthman compiled the Quran to eradicate the conflicts which had arisen from the differences in recitation—not because the task of compilation was left incomplete by Abu Bakr. We read in Sahih Bukhari:

“Narrated Anas bin Malik: Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to 'Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, 'O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'an), as Jews and the Christians did before'. So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, 'Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you'.”

Question 10

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

10. Rather than go to the extraordinary length of appointing a four man committee to collate the Qur'an in to book fashion, a pain staking process would it not have been easier to use the Qur'an that had been compiled by Hadhrath Ali (as)?

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Reply

First of all, Ali had not compiled the Quran; because it was not possible to compile the Quran into a book form during the Prophet’s life. [\[See above on Why the Prophet did not leave any book?\]](#) Ali had only a written copy of the Quran—just like many other companions did. For example, Ibn Masu’d, Ubai bin Ka’b, and Ibn Abbas; all these individuals had a written copy (mushaf) of the Quran—and so is the case with Ali. So the problem during the compilation of Quran in Uthman’s reign was not the lack of copies of the Quran. Rather, Uthman wanted to compile the Quran to eradicate the conflicts which had arisen because of the difference in recitation. Even if Ali’s mushaf (copy) were accepted, yet a workforce would be required to produce a copy which would compensate all the seven modes of recitation it. Furthermore, the copy compiled during Abu bakr’s reign was accepted for this task; because, that copy was dependent on Twatur (mass transmission) and on those writings of the Quran, which had been written in the supervision of the Prophet.

Question 11 and 12

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

11. Did the Sahaba not commit bidah by compiling the Qur'an when the Prophet (S) did not?
12. Are you not committing bidah by keeping the Qur'an at home when according to Sahih al Bukhari did NOT compile the Word of Allah (swt) in Book form? If all bidah's are in the fire then is this bidah not also in the fire?

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Reply

The compilation of Quran is not a bid'ah. Bid'ah is something which does not have any precedence in the Shar'iah. While for the compilation of Quran, there are many proofs. The fact that the Sahabas would compile the differently revealed verses in the supervision of the Prophet proves that the act of compilation is not something new. Furthermore, we know from authentic narrations that some companions had collected the Qur'an during the Prophet's lifetime, which proves that the act of collecting different parts of the Qur'an in one place is not a Bid'ah. However, it should be noted that those collections of Qur'an by the companions were more for their personal use and did not contain all the parts of the Qur'an. While the one collected in Abu Bakr's reign contained the complete Qur'an.

As for the keeping the Quran at home in a book form, the prophet has ordered us to follow his (sws) Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs after him. And keeping the Quran in a book form is the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs. Imam Tirmidhi (d. 279) has narrated in *al Jami' al Tirmidhi*:

The Prophet said: "I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs after me."

- *al Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, by Abu 'Eesa al-Tirmidhi (d.279), Hadith no. 2676—narration is authentic [sahih].
- *al Mustadrak 'alaa al-Sahihain*, by al-Hakim al Nishaburi (d. 403), volume 1, page 177—narration graded as authentic [sahih] by the author.

After asking a bulk of meaningless questions, the Answering-Ansar team declares that Ali had compiled the Quran during Prophet's lifetime; and base their argument on a statement of the Sunni scholar Shah Waliullah (d. 1183).

They write:

Quoting Answering-Ansar:
<p>Clearly, this makes no sense. It is a gross slander to suggest that the Prophet[saww] would fail to collate the revelation in to a book form. We believe that he arranged for the compilation during his lifetime - this is simple rationality - and entrusted the Gate of Knowledge Imam Ali (as) with the task, as confirmed by Shah Waliyullah. To suggest that this did not happen because Allah (swt) did not want this compilation makes no sense. How could Imam Ali (as) be removed from this instrumental role when the Prophet[saww] had stated:</p> <p>"Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali, they will never separate until they reach me at the Fountain of Kauthar". <i>Al Mustadrak al Hakim, Volume 3 p 124</i></p>
<i>Separating the Qur'an from the Family, page 2</i>

The prophet did not fail in anything. And the task of compiling the Quran between two covers was not the Prophet's duty. As discussed earlier, his only duty was to deliver the message—which he did perfectly. We have already discussed many other reasons for which the Prophet did not compile the Quran into a book form. Furthermore, on what basis do you believe? Where is the evidence that Ali had compiled the Quran into a book form, during the Prophet's lifetime? As for the failure of the Prophet, the Shia believes that none of the prophets have ever succeeded in their missions—including Hadhrat Muhammad (saw). The man who received the title of *'champion of Islamic revival'* from the Shi'a, Grand Ayatullah Sayyed Ruhollah Mustafavi Moosavi Khomeini (d. 1410) writes in his pamphlet *'Ettehad wa Yakjahti'*:

"Every messenger came for the establishment of justice. But they did not succeed—to the extent that the Seal of the prophets who had come to reform the humankind, who had come to establish the justice, did not succeed in his time."

- *'Ettehad wa Yakjahti'*, by Imam Khomeini (d. 1410), page 14, published by the Iranian embassy [Pakistan]

Need I say anymore here?

Regarding the following statement of Shah Waliullah from his book *Izlatatul Khafa'*:

"Hadhrath Ali compiled the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet[saww] but Allah's taqdir prevented this from coming forward."

Here the word 'compile' does not refer to compiling the entire Qur'an into a book form, rather it means to **arrange** the different ayats in proper order within the Surahs. In the hadith, the second stage of preserving the Quran is referred to as 'compilation.' That is, first the verses were written down at the time of revelation. Then, when one chapter was completed, the whole chapter (often it took several revelations to complete one chapter) was written in compiled form, i.e. arranged in proper order on riq'a'a (leather). Such copies of the compiled Qur'an (complete or incomplete) were in the possession of a large number of people during the lifetime of the Prophet—not limited just to Ali. The following narration of Zaid bin Thabit clarifies this point:

عن زيد بن ثابت قال كنا عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مؤلف القرآن من الرقاع

Zaid bin Thabit said: 'We used to compile the Qur'an from small scraps in the presence of the Apostle.'

Syuti after narrating the above narration, records the statement of the prestigious Ahl al Sunnah scholar Abu Bakr Ahmad bin Hussain al-Baihaqi (d. 458):

وقال البيهقي شبه ان يكون المراد به تاليف ما نزل من الآيات المتفرقة في سورها وجمعها فيها بأشارة
النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

"Baihaqi said that it would be correct to understand (the meaning of) this narration as to arrange the differently revealed verses in proper order, and to collect them in their respective Surahs, according to the Prophet's (saw) will."

- *al Itqan fi Uloom al Quran*, by Jalal al-Din al Syuti (d. 911), volume 1, page 57 [Lahore]

The above narration makes it clear that the word 'compile' used in the Shah Waliullah's statement means 'to arrange the different ayats in proper order'—not to compile the Qur'an into a book form. Thus, the statement of Shah Waliullah means that though Hadhrat Ali was competent for the task of compiling the Qur'an as he used to compile (arrange) the ayats in the proper order within the Surahs during the Prophet's time, yet Allah prevented him from compiling the Qur'an into a book form. To argue that why did Allah do so, is pathetic; because Allah is the king of the worlds. He does whatever He wills, and no one has the right to ask Him why.

As for the following narration:

"Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali, they will never separate until they reach me at the Fountain of Kauthar".

This narration—if accepted authentic—only shows the righteousness and trustworthiness of Hadhrat Ali (ra). It does not mean that the Quran would necessarily be compiled by Ali.

The Answering-Ansar team then proceeds to declaring that the Sahabas compiled the Qur'an to lessen the honours of Ali.

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

The question now arises - why, after the death of the Holy Prophet, was this version not taken as the official version by Hadhrath Abu Bakr? There is left little room but to contemplate the fact that this was another step in the conspiracy against the family to separate the Qur'an from the Ahlulbayt so that no one turns to them for guidance.

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This claim that Ali compiled the Quran into a book form during the Prophet's time is entirely baseless. It is a Shi'a forgery and does not have any evidence. I challenge the Answering-Ansar team that they provide concrete evidence for this claim.

Furthermore, the companions did not compile the Quran to lessen the honours of the Prophet and Ali; rather they compiled the Quran because Allah had taken the responsibility of preserving the Quran. So Allah caused and enabled the companions to compile the Quran into a book form. In other words, Allah made the companions a means to fulfil His promise. However, this fact does not lessen the honours of the Prophet and Ali in any way. The Prophet and Ali both performed their duties perfectly, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them both.

Moreover, Hadhrat Ali's statements about the Abu Bakr's and Uthman's compilation of Quran, topples this entire argument of Answering-Ansar. Imam Jalal al-Din Syuti (d. 911) records in *al Itqan*:

واخرج ابن ابى داود فى المصاحف بسند حسن عن عبد خير قال سمعت علياً رضى الله عنه يقول اعظم الناس فى المصاحف اجراً ابو بكر رحمة الله على ابى بكر هو اول من جمع كتاب الله

"Ibn abi Dawood has narrated in al Masahif with a Fair chain from Abd that he heard Hadhrat Ali saying: Abu Bakr will get the most reward with regards to the Mushaf (Quran). May Allah's mercy be upon him; he is the first person to collect the Book of Allah."

- *al Itqan fi Uloom al Quran*, by Jalal al-Din al Syuti (d. 911), volume 1, page 57, published by Sohail Academy [Lahore]

Hadhrat Ali says about Uthman:

لا تقولوا في عثمان الا خيراً فوالله ما فعل الذي فعل في المصاحف الا عن ملامنا (اخرجه ابن ابي داود بسند صحيح)

“Do not say anything about Uthman, but good of him. Because, by Allah, whatever he did in regards to Mushaf [Quran], did it with our consultation (narrated Ibn abi Dawood with an authentic chain).”

- *al Itqan fi Uloom al Quran*, by Jalal al-Din al Syuti (d. 911), volume 1, page 59, published by Sohail Academy [Lahore]

And the question that arises here is not, why Ali’s copy was not taken as the official version. The question arises, why did Ali offer the Quran to Kafirs? Imagine, Imam Khamenaei offering the Qur’an to the President of Israel. Nonsense!

And in the next paragraph, the Answering-Ansar team claims that because Uthman compiled the Qur’an 20 years after the Prophet’s death; therefore, the majority Muslims did not have any Quran in their houses for 20 years.

They write:

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

It was a minority, the earliest Shi’i, who gathered with Imam Ali took him as the interpreter of the Holy Qur’an - seeking guidance from his copy. The majority was left without a Qur’an for 20 years after the death of the Holy Prophet. This is a staggering fact. The Shi’i have held to the Qur’an through the family exactly as instructed by the Holy Prophet, and without intermission. The majority had absolutely no Qur’an in any Muslim house for 20 years - a whole generation, the first Muslims born into a world from which the Seal of Messengers had departed - without a Qur’an amongst them.

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This is one of the funniest things, I have ever read. I ask the Answering-Ansar team, where you discovered this ‘staggering fact’? On what basis have you made such a pathetic claim? Do you not know that thousands of companions had memorized the entire Qur’an and also had it in written form? These companions had thousands of students, who would learn the Quran from them. More than one hundred thousand copies of the Qur’an were in circulation during Umar’s reign [Ibn Hisham]. And, the reason why Uthman collected the Quran was not because there was no Quran in the majority houses—he compiled it because so much conflict had arisen due to difference in recitation. Had there been no Quran in majority houses, the conflicts in recitations would not have arisen. Indeed the entire Shi’a religion is baseless, just like this baseless claim of Answering-Ansar.

In the end of their article, the Answering team has made another baseless claim that 2 copies of the Quran were preserved, one compiled by Uthman and the other compiled by Ali. I ask the Answering-Ansar team, we have the Quran compiled by Uthman in our hands, where is the one compiled by Ali? Moreover, what guidance have you received? The guidance of receiving more than two thousand Sahih and Mutwatir narrations that imply tahreef in the Quran; Taqya; slandering the companions; Mut'a e Jaraia; Bada'? The Shi'a can never believe in the current Qur'an, because they deem its transmitters and compilers Kafir. Therefore, they have been coming up with different strategies to counter this fact. The Answering-Ansar team has also made an abortive attempt to counter this objection. They have claimed—without any evidence—that the Qur'an had already been compiled by Ali during the Prophet's time, which I refuted in this article. But even if we accept this fairy tale of Answering-Ansar team, yet the Shi'a cannot prove their belief in the Qur'an. The Quran we have today was transmitted and compiled by the Sahabas—not by Ali. So how can the Shi'a believe in the current Qur'an, when they deem its transmitters and compilers—the Sahabas—Kafir?

Calculated Dissimulation

In this article of theirs, the Answering-Ansar team has cited a work to support their claims. They write:

Quoting Answering-Ansar:

The issue so alarmed the Sunni scholar *Mahmud Abu Riyyah* that he wrote the following:

"The strangest thing and embarrassing point is that they have never even included the name of Ali within those encharged with collecting and writing down the Qur'an, neither during the reign of Abu Bakr nor that of Uthman! Mentioning instead the name of those lower than him in degrees of knowledge and fiqh! Was Ali unable to undertake such a task! Or was he among those untrustworthy men? Or among those who were incompetent to be consulted or committed to shoulder this responsibility?

While in fact reason and logic necessitate that Ali should be the foremost and most competent man entrusted with this job, due to possessing attributes and merits of which all other Companions were deprived. He was reared and grown up under the care of the Prophet [saww], living long under his protection, attending the Wahi from the first days of revelation up to the day of cessation, in a way that he did not miss even one of his verse?!

So if he was not to be called for such a critical task, what thing else would he be called for?!

And if they invented justifications for ignoring him (Imam Ali) in regard of the caliphate of Abu Bakr, never consulting him or seeking him or seeking his opinion about it, what excuse they can give for not inviting him to the task of writing the Qur'an? Is there any logical reason for this behavior? What judgement can be issued by any just judge? What a

surprising matter it is, and we have nothing to say but: May God help you O Ali! They have not treated you with equity in anything!"
Adwa' ala' al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah (lights on the Muhammadan Sunnah)
 page 300, by Mahmud Abu Riyyah - English edition published by Ansariyan
 publications 1999

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Now the question is; was Abu Rayya a Sunni scholar? Unfortunately, no! Abu Rayya was an Egyptian freethinker. He authored many books in which criticized the companions of the Prophet; one of such works is *The Lights on the Sunnah of Muhammad*. Neither has Abu Rayyah ever claimed that he was a Sunni, nor has the Ahl al Sunnah ever counted him a Sunni. The statement of the Shi'a apologist Dr. Tijani Samawi (b. 1363) clarifies the view of Ahl al Sunnah about Abu Rayyah. Tijani writes in his book *Ask Those who Know*:

"As discussed, the Ahl al Sunnah wa al Jama'a permits no criticism or condemnation of any of his companions and maintain the belief in their collective uprightness. If any freethinker writes about them and undertakes to criticize the deeds of some companions, they defame him; in fact, they deem him to be unbeliever even if he is amongst their own scholars. This is what has happened with some of the free thinking Egyptian and non-Egyptian scholars like Shaykh Mahmud Abu Rayya, the author of "The Lights on the Sunnah of Muhammad" and like Qadi Shaykh Muhammad Amin al-Antaki, the author of "Why I chose the school of ahl al Bayt" and like Syed Muhammad bin 'Aqil, who composed the book "The complete Advice for [he] who befriends Mu'awiya"."

- *Ask Those who Know* [English], by Muhammad al-Tijani (b. 1363), page 190 [Qum]

The Answering-Ansar team defines Taqya as expedient dissimulation. Now, was it expedient for the Answering-Ansar team here, to label a non-Sunni text as a Sunni text? Would the Sunnis have killed the Answering-Ansar team, if they had not done this? The answer is clear; when the Answering-Ansar team could not provide any evidence for their claims, they adopted their old day's methodology of dissimulating by practicing Taqya. Thus, the Answering-Ansar team has practically proved that Taqya is calculated dissimulation—not expedient.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

"There is a sickness in their hearts and Allah has increased their sickness. They will have a painful punishment on account of their lies."

- [al-Baqarah (2):10]