

# Orientalists' Position on the Collection of the Holy Quran: An Analytical Study

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Among the most prominent issues of Islamic history is the issue of the collection of the "Holy Quran". Due to the multiplicity of opinions surrounding it, "Holy Quran has received considerable attention from historians, jurists and interpreters. This is what made Orientalists pay great attention to it in their studies, as this group is known for their tendency to focus on thorny issues in our historical and intellectual heritage. Very few of them have come up with proposals that achieve objectivity, which is one of the most important qualities of an historian.

**Key words:** *Orientalists, Holy Quran, Collection, Position*

## Introduction

Reading the heritage and doctrines of Islamic religion by others is very important for people in general and scientific researchers in particular, so they do not remain introverted and isolated in what they think and believe. This research dealt with the issue of the collection of the "Holy Quran" from the angle the Orientalist vision.

One of the most important factors in choosing the subject of this study was the access of "Orientalists" in the process of collecting the holy Qur'an. This access was needed in the creation of suspicion about the authenticity and completeness of the Qur'anic text and to question the integrity of the Quran. It was also necessary to keep it from distortion of those who are based on the narratives of "Sunni" Muslims' scholars in understanding Islamic realities.

This study consists of two sections and a conclusion. The first section is titled "The Historical Collection of The Holy Quran" and was a general introduction to the meaning of the collection of the Quran through what was reported by Muslims in their writings.

The second section, is entitled "Orientalists' position on the issue of the collection of the Quran". It tried to present the views of Orientalists who dealt with the topic of the collection of the Holy Quran and codified in their works, in addition to showing that how Orientalists dealt with the sources of Islamic heritage and extract their results. Then the most important findings were summarised and put in the conclusion at the end of our research.

The study relied on the specialised sources related to Orientalism and Qur'anic studies such as The History of the Quran "Tareekh al-Koran" by the Orientalist Sheikh "Noldkah". Also "Kitab Tadween al-Quran" by Canon Cil and the book of the life of Muhammad "Hayat Mohammed" by Moyer was used. We also relied on other writings in the Quran, including the statement in the interpretation of the Quran "Al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Koran" by Saed al-Khoei and the book accompanying "Al-Masaheb" by Ibin Abu Dawood and others.

Finally, the issues and cases related to the collection of the Holy Quran are of a capacity, depth and diversity that cannot be surrounded by dimensions and contents of such limited research. However we have tried to provide a simpler and more general view.

### **Historical Quran Collection**

#### ***The Meaning of the Collection of the Holy Quran***

The plural in the language is the collection of sporadic thing then it was gathered, so gathered the people is the gathering from here and there (The Holy Quran), Ragheb said (dead in: 502 AH-1108 AD) in his vocabulary "plural is referring to annexation of something rounded together" (Ibn Asaker, 1998). The terminology of collection of the Holy Quran has two meanings. One of them is to memorise the Quran by minds and takeover of all its verses, including the saying of the Quranic and the other meaning is to collect, written and recorded it in papers fully shape (Ibn Mansour).

Also, the collection of the Quran in other meanings in many narratives, including: collected means writing, writing derived from the Diwan (Divan) is a collection of newspapers, like Divans which was written or established, writing defines the meaning of what was added to it, then writing the Quran is not writing of the year and is not writing of other sciences (Isfahani).

#### ***The Collection of the Quran in the Era of the Prophet (PBUH)***

It was narrated in the interpretation of Ali ibn Ibrahim (Brockman, 1968) from "Imam Sadiq" (peace be upon him) from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He ordered Ali (peace be upon him) to collect the Quran and said: "O Ali Quran is behind my bed in the Quran and silk and

papers you should take and collect it and do not lose it as the Jews when they lost the Torah. Imam Ali went on (peace be upon him) and collected it in a yellow dress, then sealed it (Blashir, 1974).” This narration shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Imam Ali to collect the Quran and (peace be upon him) by direct order from the Prophet in his life, (peace be upon him and his family). Accordingly, the majority of Shiite jurists agreed, in al-Bayan 's compound (Mujama al-Bayan) by Sayed al - Murtadha said "The Quran was collected in the era of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) in the form that it is today in our hands." Sayed Al-Murtada also mentioned that during the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), the Qur'an was a composite of what is now, evidently, that all of the Holy Quran was studied and memorised at that time, as well as he hired a group of his companions in memorising it like Abdulla Bin Masuad and Abi Kaab and others. They finished the Holy Qur'an in front of the Prophet (PBUH) several times, all of which, in the slightest hope, that it was an uncontrolled and uncluttered collection (Jeffrey). Afterwards Sheikh Tusi said: "From Zaid Bin Thabit said that we were collecting pieces of the verses of the Holy Quran, and making them by the order of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) each one in its right place, but nevertheless the verses were sporadic ordered, so the Messenger of Allah had collected them in one place and warned us not to wasting them.” (Hakim, 2010)

Qatada said that he asked Anas about the collection of The Holy Quran in the era of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and said fourteen of the supporters and gave their names. It was narrated by Anas who also said: the Prophet (PBUH) died, and the Qur'an was not collected except four, Abo al-Dardaa, Muaath Bin Jabal, Zaid Bin Thabit and Abo Zaid. Also Ali Bin Rabah asserted that Ali Bin Abi Talib (peace be upon him) had collected The Holy Quran with Ubi Bin Kaab in the era of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) (Al-Khoei, 1974).

### **The Collection of the Holy Quran after the Era of Messenger of Allah (PBUH)**

#### ***First: In the Era of Abu Bakar***

There are a number of discussions that the collection of The Holy Quran was not written by the Prophet himself but it was written by Abu Bakar. Zarkashi mentioned in his book that the proof (al-Burhan) was that "the collection of The Holy Quran in the era of Abu Bakar" (Al-Razi, 1981). Zaid ibn Thabit said, "The Prophet was captured and the Quran was not collected in anything" (Al-Roumi, 1992).

Al-Suyuti explains why the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not collect the Qur'an in his life by saying, al-Khotabi said: he did not collect The Holy Quran in one holy book because he was waiting for inspirations to receive a copy of some of its provisions or recitation, when his death passed, God inspired the caliphs, so it was fulfilled his sincere promise to ensure his preservation of this nation " (Al-Zarqashi, 1957).

After the death of the Prophet (PBUH) some Arab tribes bounced back and Abu Bakar sent armies to fight apostates. Most of the fighters of these armies were the memorisers of The Holy Quran companions, however, the wars of apostasy were severe, resulting in many killings of those who memorized the Quran. Some of the companions feared that the Qur'an would lose it. After that they wanted to collect the Qur'an in one book called (Mushaf) with the presentation of the companions. Al-Bukhari had asserted that in his book (Saheeh al-Bukhari) when he said "Zaid Bin Thabit said: Abou Bakar was sent to fight Ahel-al Yamama, when Omar ibn al-Khattab was with him and Abu Bakar said: Omar came to me, and said the killing has committed on the day of the (Ahel-al Yamama) all the readers of The Holy Quran, and I am afraid that it is committed to kill the readers and they will pass away, and I see that why didn't you give an order to collect The Holy Quran. I said to Omar: How to do something that did not do by the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him he said This God is good, Omar is still reviewing me until God explained my chest to it. I saw that Omar saw, Zaid said Abu Bakar said You are a wise young man does not interest you, you were writing the revelation of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him and you should seek and collect The Holy Quran, I swear to God if any one asked me to move a mountain from the mountains that would be was lesser than what he ordered me of collecting The Holy Quran. I said: How do you do something that did not do the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him? He said: He it is the best of God for you! Abu Bakr is still reviewing me until God had guided me, then I started to seek and collecting it from all of the quail, quilts and breasts of men until I found the last Surah al-Tawba with Abu Khuzayma al-Ansari, I did not find it with anyone else (Ali Jabbar et al., 2019). "Until the conclusion of innocence, the newspapers were at Abu Bakar until his death, his life was held, and then it was moved to Hafsa bint Omar (the daughter of Omar). (Sale) The history of this collection as stated in the "hadith" after the Battle of Yamamah in the twelfth year of migration (12<sup>th</sup> AH).

### ***Reasons for Choosing Zaid Bin Thabit for this Collection***

Zaid ibn Thabit was one of the memorisers of The Holy Quran and he also witnessed the last exposure of The Holy Quran, Al-Baghawi narrated from Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Selmi that he said: Zaid ibn Thabit had read to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) twice in front of the prophet in the year in which he died twice until he said that Zaid ibn Thabit he had seen the last incident and was reading it to the people until his death. Therefore, Abu Bakar and Omar relayed upon him to collect it, then Othman Bin Afaan hired him for writing The Holy Quran " (Al-Suyuti, 1967).

Zaid ibn Thabit was the writer of the inspiration to the Prophet (PBUH). He has the fertility of the mind, the intensity of piety, the perfection of creation, the integrity of religion and the greatness of honesty and praises. Therefore, Abu Bakar said: You are a wise young man

does not interest you, you were writing the revelation of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him and you should seek and collect The Holy Quran, I swear to God if any one asked me to move a mountain from the mountains that would be was lesser than what he ordered me of collecting The Holy Quran (Al-Shammari, 2014).

Zaid's approach to collect The Holy Quran during the era of Abu Bakar is based on the four minds: first: What was written between the hands of the Messenger of Allah – (peace be upon him), second: What was memorised in the breasts of men. Third: There is no acceptance of anything written until two witnesses testify that it was written between the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sakhawi said: who came from you with two witnesses to something from the book of God, which was written in the hands of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him. Fourth: It is not acceptable from the men's chest except what they received from the mouth of the Prophet - peace be upon him, then Omar called "Whoever received from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) something from The Holy Quran he must bring it us, and did not say to memorize anything from The Holy Quran" (Saleh).

### ***Secondly: In the Era of Omar Bin al-Khattab***

There are some Islamic sources that included the collection of The Holy Quran, dividing the stages of the collection into three attributes of the collection to the era of the Prophet (PBUH) or the era of Abu Bakr or the era of Othman. We did not find sources mentioned that Omar had collect the Quran or make his effort in one of the collection stages which was seen by al-Hakim al-Mustadrik as he said: The collection of The Holy Quran was not once, some was gathered in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH) after that was gathered in the presence of Abu Bakar and the third collection was in the order of the verses which was in the sera of Othman " (Abdullah, 2015).

As for Ibin Dawood, that Omar reported a special collection entitled "Jama Omar Bin al-Khattab al-Koran fi al-Mushaf." Ibin Dawood had attributed the collection to Omar because he asked about any verse in the Quran, so he was the first for collecting The Holy Quran (Guardia, 1992).

It is also found some refer partially to collections that were attributed to Omar, in a; that he was killed and did not complete the collection of The Holy Quran and this is what came from;"About Yahya bin Abdul Rahman said: Omar bin al-Khattab wanted to collect the Quran, he rose to the people and said: Whoever received from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) something from The Holy Quran, let him bring it us, also they were written in the papers which was not accepted until any one brings two witnesses to be accepted, when Omar was killed Othman did so. " (Fayrouz, 2005)

Based on this, the Orientalist Bruckleman questioned the collection of Abu Bakar, also in the battle of Al-Yamamah, which was the reason for the collection of The Holy Quran by Abu Bakar, saying "it is highly doubtful, that the talk stated that the decisive battle of al-Yamamah with Musailima in (12 AH / 633 AD), in which a large number of readers of the companions (Sahaabah) were killed and that called for the gathering.... that Omar is the one who ordered Wade bin Thabit to collect the Quran and remained this total in the possession of Omar and then inherited his daughter Hafsa, perhaps this first collection was scattered papers" (Constance, 1966).

### ***Thirdly: The Collection of the Holy Quran in the era of Othman Bin Afan***

When the Islamic conquests had spread, the companions also spread in the open countries, teaching their people The Holy Quran, and the matters of religion, eventually every companion knew a copy that it received by the seven letters. The people of Shaam were reading by the reading of Abi bin Kaab and had come what did not hear the people of Iraq, and if the people of Iraq read the reading of Abdullah bin Masood, they would come to what the people of Shaam did not hear, so they would disbelieve each other (The Council).

The famous talk of knowing the collection by Othman to The Holy Quran is: "from Anas bin Malik said:" Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman presented to Othman, and he was conquering the people of Shaam in the opening of "Armenia" and "Azerbaijan" with the people of Iraq, Hudhayfah was scared because of his disagreement in reading, he said to Othman: O prince of the faithful people; you must realise this nation before they differed in the holy book like the different of Jews and Christians, then, Omar sent Othman to Hafsa and saying to her: send us to papers to copy them in The Holy Quran, then we would return it to you. Hafsa then sent them to Othman, he ordered Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Zubair, Saeed bin al-Aas and Abdul Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to copy them and they did in The Holy Quran, Othman said to Rahat three Quraysheen: if you and Zaid ibn Thabit disagreed on something about the Quran, you must write it in the tongue of Quraysh, because it came down with their tongue. So they did, even if they copied papers in The Holy Quran, Othman would returned the papers to Hafsa, it was sent to every horizon, which they copied and ordered, the rest of the Quran in each paper or Quran to be burned. " (Al-Musawi) This was in the late of the year (24 AH) and the beginning of (25 AH).

### **The Orientalists' Position on the Issue of the Collection of the Holy Quran**

#### ***Sources of the Orientalists in the Collection of the Quran***

It is important to know the sources that were used by the Orientalists in their writings on the collection of The Holy Quran. There is no doubt that their main material is from the texts and talks of the Islamic heritage. Orientalists were aware that Muslims had different divisions and

doctrines, so their judgments and religious knowledge were different, as Louis Garde said: "Islam, the religion of every religion, has witnessed a multiplicity of doctrines and divisions, Goldziher said." There are a lot of conversations that are common to both Sunnis and Shiites, but they divide the arguments they support." Therefore, we find that the Orientalists when they confront the discussions, they would separate, would not differentiate between the correct and puny and where we find that they were based on talks without scrutiny to find their purposes (Noldkeh, 2004).

The Orientalists and the opponents of Islam have used the slanderous talks against Allah and His Messenger and his holy book and his companions. They relied on the talks that had carried with it a distortion of the Quran or the likeness of the Quranic text in the books of other religions, in which they wrote that the Quran was written from different companions, so it is multiple and different, such as the Quran of Omar, Ali, Abi Ibin Masood, Ibin Abbas and the mothers of the faithful people like Aisha, Hafsa and Umm Salamah and others.

Orientalists were seeking for references that have signs which make changes in the Quranic text, such as Bergshter, who was extracted from the book of "Badie" by Khalawai the irregular Quran, also like Arthur Jeffrey, who printed the book accompanying (al-Musahib) by Ibin Abi Dawood al-Sijistani because of the different versions of the Quran and readings (Al-Razi, 1981).

In most of the Quranic studies, orientalist tried especially in the matter of collecting The Holy Quran, basing on sources from one side to another, with the arranging the results and hypotheses on this basis, with no paying any attention to the sources of Muslims and consider them on the one hand. Therefore, we can find the orientalist "Noldkah" when he comes to the talks which is related to the collection of the Quran by Imam Ali (peace be upon him), he rejects and does not accept it, because it was attributed to the "Shiites", he does not deal with these talks as he says: "All these accounts are attributed to Ali's descendants, thus they are more vulnerable to suspicion." (Al-Roumi, 1992) Orientalists have been keen to use the sources and talks that achieve to them and reached to the most important studied results of the questioning about the validity of the text.

### ***Orientalists' Opinions in the Collection of the Holy Quran***

There are many similar views, most of Orientalists who wrote about The Holy Quran from the of all different kinds, who worked about the issue of collecting of The Holy Quran had different views, but most of them tried to prove that the collection of The Holy Quran was never done during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his era.

In his introduction, the German orientalist Atan Kulbarak of his investigation about the book (al-Tanzeel wal-Tahreef ) by al-Sayyari: Muslims do not possess a text from the Quran which was written by the Prophet's handwriting, regardless of whether there is a complete Qur'an written or endorsed by Muhammad. All that can be found that is verses and "Suras", which were collected by some of his companions and kept them out. Abu Bakar was asked by Omar's will to collect these clips, then they were remained at Omar did not publish and then inherited to his daughter Hafsa (Al-Zarqashi, 1957).

Jafri said, "The Quran, which was almost written in the form that we have during the generation of the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)" (Ali Jabbar et al., 2019); there was no paying attention to it by the Prophet (PBUH), that no one had ordered to collect it after his passing away, so as to be ample of pushing and pulling in suspicions of distortion of the Quran. As Noldke asserted in his famous book History of the Quran, that the Quran was never collected until after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), while the texts of revelation were scattered. That refers to the discrepancy between the talk that says; that The Holy Quran was not collected during the era of Abu Bakar and news that mentioned a copy had made by Abu Bakar (Sale).

Nodelkah had presented the differences in the talks of the collection and its criticism according to the available sources of Muslims, in a talk that he mentions it, that Omar is the mastermind of the collection; another talk he mentioned that Abu Bakar had no relation with the collection, a third talk he states that Omar first collected the Quran (Al-Suyuti, 1967).

This is a speech of some Orientalists and these are some of their suspicions. They wondered with many questions, including: How to rely on a book which was not written by the Messenger of God, furthermore was not proven that written by his companions during his era, or it was collected after more than two decades of the death of the Prophet; Before his companions in his era, how can we rely on a book of these circumstances and background? But how not, the greatest thing is that the distortion and forgery can occur? This is its history, this is what they have asked and put forward in their books against Islam and their discussions with the Muslims.

The most popular talks in the Islamic sources those, which the Orientalists rely on among each other most widely, circulated that Omar bin al-Khattab is the one who suggested to Abu Bakar to collect The Holy Quran because of the fear of losing it. While others believe that the collection of The Holy Quran is credited to the first and third caliph, Canon Sel says, "We owe the Quran as it is in our possession now to the first and third caliph Abu Bakar and Othman" (Al-Shammari, 2014).

Constance, in his book, a new look in the biography of the messenger of Allah (Nazrah Jadida fi sirat Rasool Allah), also said, "The Holy Quran was only gathered during the reign of the Caliphate of Othman." (Saleh) The orientalist "Reggie Bashir" had exposed to a study of the Quran in several books and had translated it into French language and he did many studies on The Holy Quran and how had collected and arranged.

This turmoil in the news of collection of Holy Quran; sometimes, was attributed to Abu Bakar, another opinion attributed to Omar, a third talk is to Othman, which made the Orientalist Shawali says: "the collection of The Holy Quran during the era of the caliphs has a political taste and smell. The two Sheikhs' version did not become the standard one in any of the Islamic provinces after the Islamic conquests. While we can see the versions of Ibn Massoud and Abi bin Kaab were popular at the time and this was success for them, although they did not enjoy this high-level care for them." (Abdullah, 2015)

Our believe is that saying that the collection of The Holy Quran had become late in the era of the two Sheikhs and Othman, which was more dangerous than the existence of perversion talks in both teams.

In his opinion "Blasher" believes the writing of The Holy Quran has become a necessity after the migration of the Prophet to the city, so it was written on the asbestos, patches and bones of the shoulders and ribs, so the Prophet agreed to this step without imposing it on Muslims. He believes that the collection of the Quran and its writing has created many problems, because this sort of writing is not completely correct, so we can see many verses fell from it, in addition to that the tools of writing and what was written on them was without control or a specific system, making some of them lost (Guardia, 1992).

Then he goes on to say that the decisive step has taken in this regard was a reference to the third caliph Othman when he collected The Holy Quran orderly and in a scientific way that it was more comprehensive and extensive. However, due to the absence of points and drawing tools, there is still a difference in its reading. Although the method of the seven-letter was invented, and the seven readings of the unity of the Quranic text, this method added and created new differences among Muslims, the unity of the Qur'anic text had become a problem and more complicated after the assassination of the fourth Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib. Where his Shiites claim that the caliph Abu Bakar and Omar distorted the Quran, and dropped many of his verses and Surah, and omitted all the verses that explicitly designate Imam Ali as Imam and Caliph for Muslims (Fayrouz, 2005).

Finally, Blasher goes on to say that the final stage of writing the Qur'anic text had taken place during the "Umayyad" era when the Muslims' capital was moved to Damascus. Iraq played a great role in the spiritual and cultural life of the Islamic nation, so that, it was necessary to

take the necessary measures towards the Qur'anic text, especially with regard to drawing the Quran and its points (Constance, 1966).

The French orientalist "Casanova" in his book *Muhammad and the end of the world "Muhammed wa Nihayat al-A'alam"* says: " After the death of the Prophet The Holy Quran has been entered to it many changes which had been made by his caliphs, these changes was to separate what can be separated between the prophet's mission and the world's end, which were linked directly. The evidence about this is the interpretation of the verse (Aya) in The Holy Quran: "And whether We show you part of what We promise them or take you in death, upon you is only the [duty of] notification, and upon Us is the account." (The Council)

Casanova claimed that the prophet's companions, when they saw that the end of the world had not risen yet, they put the doubt the form of certainty. It was not excluded that, this verse before the switch was as follows: "We will show you some of our promises," then Casanova asks "Does it make sense that God, the master of predestination, could not identify a simple matter, and that he is unaware whether his Prophet will die, or will live to the end of the world, meanwhile, he certainty knows the end of world, but did not want to tell people this knowledge?!" (Al-Musawi) Also Casanova stated in his book "There are two verses that doubt the authenticity of their attribution to the Prophet's revelation. It is more likely that Abu Bakar added them after the death of the Prophet". Muslims acknowledged that they are saying the Quran, the two verses are: "Muhammad is only a messenger had been left by the messengers" and his saying: "You are dead and they are dead, and then you are the Day of Resurrection when your Lord sealed." (Noldkeh, 2004)

Noldkah and Muir went on their suspicion in arranging The Holy Quran as it came to us, also they were trying to arrange verses objectively or stylistically, so that they classified The Holy Quran in to three ranks: The first one was related to the order of the verses according to the manner in which it was revealed, this arrangement resulted in the distinction between the Meccan and the civilian verses, their inference in manner that in which each period is characterised and distinguished separately. The second rank deals with the political and social conditions that Muhammad attempted to examine it through these verses. The third rank is dealing with the verses that related to judgments and worship and this arrangement resulted the ambiguity in many subjects (Fayrouz, 2005).

Orientalists are also suspicious in that there has been a decrease in The Holy Quran during the collection, their evidence about that is the denial of Ibin Masood to the sura "Almothatain" and "al-Fateha" from The Holy Quran,. The Holy Quran has no speech of Abi Bakar, Omar, Ibn Masood severe anger is for not participating in the Quartet that had chosen by Othman to collect The Holy Quran. As well as the denial of the transferring The Holy Quran with recurrence, the evidence of this when Zaid traced the Quran he did not find the



(Aya) "From the believers men agreed what they entrusted God" except in Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari, if the Quran was recurrence, this verse would also be found with others (Constance, 1966).

### **Conclusion**

It was found through our research that, most Orientalists look at Islam religion in Sunni picture only, considering Sunni as the official Islam religion, which they may dive into the sources of this section and draw conclusions consistent with their orientations. Also, it was improved that the Orientalists' sources based from one side to another, arranging results and hypotheses on this basis, they did not circumvent deliberately a large number of Muslims' sources considering them in one eye, and that the main source of orientalist's suspicion is subject of Islamic modern heritage in the collection of the Holy Quran. As well as the orientalist deliberately misunderstand the Quranic vocabulary, then their attempt to prove the existence of distortion in the Holy Quran, that some verses were developed in the collection. The results of this research is that Orientalists prove that the Holy Quran was not written and collected in full during the era of the Prophet (PBUH) and under his direct supervision, but by a will of Abu Bakar from a reference from Omar bin al - Khattab, however, it was not the official version of the Quran. Finally, in the era of Othman, it was prepared and completed as the official version.



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The Holy Quran