

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

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Study 2: The Quran — its arrangement

- Though the Holy Quran was revealed in portions during 23 years, it did not remain long as separate, disorganised fragments. Its name indicates that it was a book from the start. Although it could not be complete until the last verse was revealed, still it was never without some form of arrangement.

- There is the clearest testimony that every single verse or part of a verse and every chapter that was revealed had its own definite place in the Book assigned to it. This testimony is both in the Quran itself and also in reported events of the Holy Prophet's life. The Quran is itself clear on this point that although it was revealed piece by piece, but it still was arranged in an order:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا

“And those who disbelieve say: Why has not the Quran been revealed to him all at once? Thus (it is) that We may strengthen your heart by it, and We have arranged it well in arranging.” — 25:32

- The Quran was revealed in this way so that, as the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed through varying circumstances, fresh Divine revelation coming from time to time might be a source of strength to his heart on all occasions. The above verse then says at the end that the entire arrangement was also accomplished by God's command. This removes any idea that the Quran would remain a disorderly collection of fragments revealed under different circumstances.
- The arrangement of the Quran was thus a part of God's plan. Here is another short verse showing that the collection of the Book was a part of this plan:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ﴿٧٥﴾

“Surely on Us rests the *collecting* of it and the *reciting* of it.” — 75:17

- It appears from this that, just as the Quran was recited by Gabriel to the Holy Prophet ﷺ during revelation, in the same way the collecting of its various parts was carried out by the Prophet under the guidance of the same angel. This verse is a very early revelation. This shows that the Quran was, right from the start, intended to be arranged and collected into one whole book.

- The history of the time also shows this to be true. There are numerous anecdotes showing that some portion or other of the Quran was put to writing under the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.
- Speaking more generally, Uthman, the third Caliph, said that every portion of the Quran was written down and given its specified place, at the order of the Holy Prophet. Uthman said:

“It was usual with the Messenger of Allah (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) that when portions of different chapters were revealed to him, and when any verse was revealed, he called one of those persons who used to write the Quran and said to him: ‘Write this verse in the chapter where such and such verses occur’.”

(Books of Hadith: Abu Dawud, hadith 786, and Tirmidhi, hadith 3086)

- In fact, if we bear in mind the use that was made of the Holy Quran, we cannot for a moment think that the Book existed without any arrangement of its verses and chapters in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

- The Quran was not only recited in prayers but committed to memory and regularly recited to keep it fresh in the mind.
- If an arrangement of verses and chapters had not existed, it would have been impossible either to recite it in public prayers or to learn it by heart.
- Whenever the person leading the prayers made a mistake in his recitation by reciting a verse out of place, the people behind him would at once call out a correction, just as it happens at the present day.

- Just as no one was allowed to change a word or the place of a word in a verse, no one could change a verse or the place of a verse in a chapter. Unless a known order of chapters and verses was followed, it would have been impossible for so many of the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to commit the Quran to memory and to recite it constantly.
- The Holy Prophet could not teach the Quran to his Companions nor the Companions to each other, nor could he or anyone else lead the public prayers, in which long portions of the Book were recited, without following a known and accepted order.

- The Holy Quran therefore existed in a complete and ordered form in the *memories* of people during the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But no complete written copy of it existed at the time. In fact, such a copy could not be made while the Holy Prophet was alive, and still receiving revelations. But the whole of the Quran in one arrangement was safely preserved in the memories of reciters.

END OF STUDY 2