# 178209 - Response to some misunderstandings of the texts which make the questioner think that the Quran is not preserved

**the question**

I read a hadith in which ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I used to recite “Famdu ila dhikr Allah” instead of “Fas ‘aw ila dhikr Allah” (“come to the remembrance of Allah” [al-Jumu‘ah 62:9]) in Soorat al-Jumu‘ah.
(ad-Durr al-Manthoor, part 6, p. 219)
And I have read other hadiths which indicate that the Quran is not complete, such as the hadith of ‘Umar in as-Saqeefah [when the Sahaabah met after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to decide who would lead the ummah], when he said: The Quran was 102,700 letters.
(al-Itqaan by as-Suyooti, p. 88)
And his words: No one should claim that the Quran is complete, because most of it has been lost.
(Tafseer ad-Durr al-Manthoor by as-Suyooti, vol. 1, p. 104)
And Ubayy ibn Ka‘b said that in his Mus-haf there were two additional soorahs, al-Khal‘ and al-Hafd
(al-Itqaan by as-Suyooti, vol. 2, p. 66)
Sayyid Anwar Shah Kashmiri said: My analysis is based on what it says in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, that some words in the Quran have been distorted, deliberately or otherwise, according to the testimony of ‘Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him).
(Fayd al-Baari, vol. 3, p. 395, under the heading Shahaadaat (testimonies).
As-Suyooti narrated from ‘Uthmaan in his Itqaan (vol. 1, p. 174) that he said: There are some mistakes in the Mus-haf that we have today.
Hishaam ibn ‘Urwah said: I asked ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) about grammatical mistakes in [the original text of] the Quran, “Surely, those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah, in His Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and all that was revealed to him from Allah), those who are the Jews and the Sabians…” [al-Maa’idah 5:69], “and those who

perform AsSalat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat" [an-Nisa' 4:162] and "Verily! These are two magicians" [Ta-Ha 20:63]. She said: O son of my sister, this is the work of the scribes; they made a mistake in writing.
(al-Itqaan, vol. 1, p. 183, 184)
Jalaal ad-Deen as-Suyooti said concerning it that it is saheeh according to the conditions of the two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim).
Similarly, it was narrated in ad-Durr al-Manthoor (vol. 5, p. 180) and al-Itqaan (vol. 2, p. 25) that at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), Soorat al-Ahzaab was 200 verses, then it was reduced to its current length, after 'Uthmaan collected the Mus-haf.
And there is the hadith of 'Aa'ishah: Among the things that were revealed of the Quran was that ten definite breastfeedings make a person a mahram, then that was abrogated and replaced with five definite breastfeedings, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed away when this was among the things that were recited of the Quran.. Narrated by Muslim in Kitaab ar-Radaa'ah.
How can we say, after all this, that the Quran is preserved?

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

With regard to 'Umar's recitation of the verse in Soorat al-Jumu'ah as "Famdu ila dhikr Allah", this was narrated from him by Imam al-Bukhaari in his Saheeh in an affirmative mu'allaq report. It was also narrated by Imam Ibn Jareer at-Tabari with a saheeh isnaad. It is not in accordance with the format of the 'Uthmaani Mus-haf, and it is not one of the seven modes of recitation. Some of the scholars are of the view that it is to be regarded as another way of reciting the verse. Others are of the view that it is an explanatory recitation, and that what he meant was to explain the meaning of the word "Fas'aw" in the verse, and that it does not mean walking rapidly. Something similar to this was found in the Mus-hafs of some of the Sahaabah. They used to explain the meaning of

some of the words in the verse, and some of their students narrated it as if it were one way of reciting the verse. However, what appears more likely to be the case is that this was the recitation of ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), and is how he recited the verse, as the isnaad going back to him is sound. But that does not mean that it is an alternative to the verse that the Companions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) unanimously agreed to write in the Mus-haf of ‘Uthmaan, which was definitely narrated by means of tawaatur. Rather it is a mode of recitation according to which ‘Umar used to recite, whilst not rejecting the others. What is written in the Mus-haf is another mode of recitation for the verse, and both are acceptable, but what is written in the Mus-hafs is that which is definitely proven.

Secondly:

With regard to your mentioning hadith of ‘Umar in as-Saqeefah [when the Sahaabah met after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to decide who would lead the ummah], when he said: The Quran was 102,700 letters.

(al-Itqaan by as-Suyooti, p. 88), this involves a mistake and deceit. As for the mistake, it is in the writing of the number of letters, because what is narrated concerning the number thereof is one million and twenty-seven thousand letters. As for the deceit, it is your mentioning the text by adding the word “was” to give the impression that there is something lacking in the Quran, and by mentioning the hadith in such a way as to give the impression that as-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated this and supported it or classed it as saheeh, which is contrary to the facts. Rather the report from ‘Umar is fabricated, and as-Suyooti himself criticised its isnaad, quoting adh-Dhahabi’s criticism of it. Adh-Dhahabi said concerning the hadith in Mizaan al-I‘tidaal (3/639): It is a false report. And Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani agreed with him in Lisaan al-Mizaan (5/276). There was no need to explain the hadith if this was the case. As for its text, it is extremely munkar (odd), because the number of letters in the Quran has not been mentioned in any proven hadith, and that was not the practice of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them).

As-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: at-Tabaraani narrated from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab in a marfoo‘ report: “The Quran is one million and twenty-seven thousand letters. Whoever reads it

with patience and seeking reward with Allah will have for every letter a wife from among al-hoor al-‘iyn.” The men of its isnaad are thiqaat (trustworthy) apart from the shaykh of at-Tabaraani, Muhammad ibn ‘Ubayd ibn Adam ibn Abi Iyaas, whom adh-Dhahabi criticised because of this hadith.

End quote from al-Itqaan fi ‘Uloom al-Quran (1/242, 243)

Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The signs of fabrication in his hadith are clear. In the case of such a report, there is no need to quote anything about the criticism thereof more than what al-Haafiz adh-Dhahabi, followed by al-‘Asqallaani, indicated, that among his reports are hadiths such as this one, of which he was the only narrator!

End quote from Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth ad-Da‘eefah wa’l-Mawdoo‘ah (9/71)

Concerning the issue of counting the letters of the Quran, as-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: as-Sakhkhaawi said: I do not know of any benefit in counting the number of words and letters, because if that were of any benefit, the benefit would only be in a book in which it is possible to add and subtract, and it is not possible to do that in the case of the Quran.

End quote from al-Itqaan fi ‘Uloom al-Quran (1/242).

Thirdly:

With regard to your saying:

And his words: No one should claim that the Quran is complete, because most of it has been lost.

(Tafseer ad-Durr al-Manthoor by as-Suyooti, vol. 1, p. 104),

The response to that is as follows:

There is no source for this sentence in this wording in as-Suyooti’s book al-Itqaan or in any other book of the Muslims. The source for this sentence was narrated by Sa‘eed ibn Mansoor in his Tafseer, where he said: Ismaa‘eel ibn Ibraaheem told us, from Ayyoob, from Naafi‘, from Ibn ‘Umar

who said: No one of you should say: I have learned all of the Quran, for how does he know what all of it is? He may have missed many verses of the Quran. Rather let him say: We learned what is apparent to us of it. End quote.

What is meant by the words of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is that no one can be certain that he has memorised everything that was revealed of the Quran, because there are some verses that were revealed and then taken away, which is what is called abrogation of verses. Ibn ‘Umar himself stated that clearly when he said: It was disliked for a man to say, I have read all of the Quran, for there is some Quran that has been taken away. This is seen in the report of Ibn ad-Darrees from him. Hence this report was narrated by Imam Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qaasim ibn Sallaam, who included it in a chapter entitled: Chapter of what was taken away of the Quran after its revelation, and was not written in the Mus-hafs. As-Suyooti also mentioned it in his book al-Itqaan, in the chapter entitled: Chapter on the Abrogation of Verses.

For further clarification, please see the answers to questions no. 105746

Fourthly:

With regard to your saying: And Ubayy ibn Ka‘b said that in his Mus-haf there were two additional soorahs, al-Khal‘ and al-Hafd

(al-Itqaan by as-Suyooti, vol. 2, p. 66),

What is referred to by the name Soorat al-Khala‘ is the words: “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. O Allah, verily we seek Your help and Your forgiveness, and we praise You and we are not ungrateful to You. And we disavow and disown anyone who opposes You.” And what is referred to by the name Soorat al-Hafd is the words: “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. O Allah, You alone we worship, to You we pray and prostrate, and for Your sake we work and strive. We hope for Your mercy and fear Your punishment, for Your punishment will inevitably befall the disbelievers.”

What is meant by the phrase “and for Your sake we work and strive” is: we strive to obey You.

With regard to the notion that these two soorahs were in the Mus-haf of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, yes, that may have been the case, but not on the grounds that they were part of the Quran that took its final shape the last time Jibreel reviewed it with the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), because the Mus-hafs of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) contained commentary and explanations, and contained verses that had been abrogated. These two soorahs were part of what had been revealed of the Quran, then their verses were abrogated, but some of the Sahaabah continued to recite them in their Qunoot, because of what they contained of supplication and praise of Allah. Whoever wants to know the final shape that the Quran took should understand that what is in the Mus-haf that was compiled by Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, then by ‘Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with them) is what is preserved, written and precise, and it does not contain these two soorahs. Therefore no one recites them in prayer, and no commentary was mentioned concerning them, and there is no report of different modes of reciting them. The fact that they were two soorahs then were abrogated is the view of as-Suyooti himself.

As-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: al-Husayn ibn al-Munaadi said in his book an-Naasikh wa’l-Mansookh: Among the things that were abrogated from the Quran but were not taken away from people’s memories are the two soorahs of al-Qunoot in Witr, which are called Soorat al-Khal‘ and Soorat al-Hafd.

End quote from al-Itqaan fi ‘Uloom al-Quran (2/68).

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shinqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Examples of abrogation of the Quran by the Sunnah include: the abrogation of the verse which mentions ten breastfeedings and the connected ruling by the mutawaatir reports of the Sunnah; and the abrogation of Soorat al-Khal ‘ and Soorat al-Hafd, both verses and rulings, by the mutawaatir reports of the Sunnah. Soorat al-Khal ‘ and Soorat al-Hafd compose Qunoot in Fajr prayer according to the Maalikis. The author of ad-Durr al-Manthoor – namely as-Suyooti – and others were of the view that they were two soorahs of the Book of Allah, then they were abrogated.

End quote from Adwa’ al-Bayaan (2/451)

The recitation of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b was narrated from him by Naafi‘, Ibn Katheer, Abu ‘Amr and others, and it does not contain Soorat al-Hafd and al-Khal‘. Moreover, his Mus-haf was in harmony with the Mus-haf of the Muslims. Abu’l-Hasan al-Ash‘ari said: I saw the Mus-haf of Anas in Basrah, with some of his descendants, and I found it to be exactly like the Mus-haf of the Muslims. The descendants of Anas narrated that it was the handwriting of Anas and the dictation of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b. End quote.

All of this is assuming that the report from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, saying that he regarded these two supplications as being two soorahs, is sound. However, there is strong reason to doubt that, because that was not narrated from him with a saheeh isnaad.

To sum up the response to this claim: either it is not soundly narrated from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, and whoever claims that it is should produce his sound isnaad going back to him; or, assuming that it is sound, it is part of the Quran that was abrogated but the wording remains, and as it is words of praise and supplication, it is valid to recite it in Qunoot.

Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeem az-Zarqaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The author of al-Intisaar stated: With regard to the words of al-Qunoot which were reported to have been written in the Mus-haf of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, there is no proof that they are Quran that was revealed; rather it is a kind of supplication. If these words were Quran, they would have been transmitted to us as Quran and it would be known that they were soundly narrated. Then he said:

It may be that some of it is words that were Quran that was revealed, then it was abrogated, and it was permitted to recite these words in supplication and mix them with words that are not Quran. But that was not narrated soundly from him; rather it was narrated from him that he wrote it in his Mus-haf. He wrote in his Mus-haf words that were not Quran, such as supplication or explanation. End quote.

This supplication is the Qunoot that was adopted by the Hanafi scholars. Some of them stated that Ubayy (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote them in his Mus-haf and called it Soorat al-Khal‘ and al-Hafd, because these words appear in these passages, and they were known by these names.

Conclusion:

Some of the Sahaabah who wrote down the Quran for themselves in a book (mus-haf) that was for their own use may have written in it things that were not Quran, but were commentaries on some of the meanings of the Quran that were not clear to them, or supplications that were recited like the supplications of the Quran, in the sense that it is valid to recite them in prayer, for Qunoot and the like, and they knew that all of that was not Quran, but the scarcity of writing materials and the fact that they were writing down the Quran for themselves only, and not for others, led them to take this matter lightly, because they were confident that they would not become confused and mix the Quran with other words. Then some short-sighted people thought that everything they had written in these books had been written down on the basis that it was Quran, even though in fact that was not the case; rather it was what we have explained.

End quote from Manaahil al-'Irfaan fi 'Uloom al-Quran (1/271)

See the article entitled Fayd ar-Rabb fi'r-Radd 'ala Man idda'a anna hunaaka Sooratayn Zaa'idatayn fi Mus-haf Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

Fifthly:

With regard to your saying: Sayyid Anwar Shah Kashmiri said: My analysis is based on what it says in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, that some words in the Quran have been distorted, deliberately or otherwise, according to the testimony of 'Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him).

(Fayd al-Baari, vol. 3, p. 395, under the heading Shahaadaat (testimonies),

Unfortunately we have to say that this is a lie for which there is no basis, either from Sayyid Anwar or from anyone else among the Muslim scholars!

Sixthly:

With regard to your saying:

As-Suyooti narrated from 'Uthmaan in his Itqaan (vol. 1, p. 174) that he said: There are some

mistakes in the Mus-haf that we have today,

This is not what he said, and nothing to this effect has been narrated from ‘Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him) or anyone else among the Sahaabah. If it were soundly narrated, it would have a valid meaning. We have explained this in detail in the answer to question no. 135752, q.v.

Seventhly:

With regard to your saying: Hishaam ibn ‘Urwah said: I asked ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) about grammatical mistakes in [the original text of] the Quran, “Surely, those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah, in His Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and all that was revealed to him from Allah), those who are the Jews and the Sabians…” [al-Maa’idah 5:69], “and those who perform AsSalat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat” [an-Nisa’ 4:162] and “Verily! These are two magicians” [Ta-Ha 20:63]. She said: O son of my sister, this is the work of the scribes; they made a mistake in writing.

(al-Itqaan, vol. 1, p. 183, 184)

Jalaal ad-Deen as-Suyooti said concerning it that it is saheeh according to the conditions of the two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim),

This report is not correct and cannot be soundly narrated from her. This has been explained in the answer to question no. 135752.

Eighthly:

With regard to your saying: Similarly, it was narrated in ad-Durr al-Manthoor (vol. 5, p. 180) and al-Itqaan (vol. 2, p. 25) that at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), Soorat al-Ahzaab was 200 verses, then it was reduced to its current length, after ‘Uthmaan collected the Mus-haf, this wording may give the impression that there is distortion!  However the correct wording was narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (10/273) and al-Haakim in his Mustadrak (2/450), from Zirr from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, who said: Soorat al-Ahzaab was equivalent in length to Soorat al-Baqarah, and in it were the words, “If an old man and an old woman commit

zina, stone them both.” A similar report was narrated by an-Nasaa’i in al-Kubra (4/271, 272). This is among the verses that were abrogated , as we have already pointed out that and confirmed that this is a type of abrogation that occurred.

Ninthly:

With regard to your saying: And there is the hadith of ‘Aa’ishah: Among the things that were revealed of the Quran was that ten definite breastfeedings make a person a mahram, then that was abrogated and replaced with five definite breastfeedings, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed away when this was among the things that were recited of the Quran.. Narrated by Muslim in Kitaab ar-Radaa‘ah,

This is saheeh, and this report includes both types of abrogation, the first of which is abrogation of both verse and ruling. This was in the abrogated verse, which spoke of a person being made a mahram by means of ten breastfeedings. The second type is abrogation of the verse but not the ruling, which refers to the abrogated verse which spoke of a person being made a mahram by means of five breastfeedings. Although the verse was taken away and no longer exists, it contained the sound shar‘i ruling which is indicated by the Sunnah.

All that we may understand from the words of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), “and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed away when this was among the things that were recited of the Quran” is that the abrogation of this verse came so late that news of its abrogation did not reach some of them, but the fact that this verse is not found in any of the copies of the Mus-haf of ‘Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him) indicates that it is not part of the Quran in its final shape. Therefore no wording of the verse is known, let alone any mode of recitation or interpretation thereof.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: ‘Aa’ishah’s words, “and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed away when this was among the things that were recited of the Quran” mean that the abrogation and replacement with the ruling of five breastfeedings was revealed so late that when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon

him) died, some people were still reciting the verse that mentioned five breastfeedings and they still regarded it as Quran to be recited, as news of the abrogation had not reached them, because it had happened so recently. But when news of the abrogation reached them after that, they recanted it and were unanimously agreed that it is not to be recited.

Abrogation is of three types:

1. abrogation of the ruling and the verses, as in the case of the ten breastfeedings

2. abrogation of the verse but not the ruling, as in the case of the five breastfeedings, and the old man and old woman, who are to be stoned if they commit zina

3. abrogation of the ruling but not the verse, which is the most common kind, and includes the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And those of you who die and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives…” [al-Baqarah 2:240].

End quote from Sharh Muslim (10/29)

See also the answer to question no. 175355

Tenthly:

With regard to your saying: How can we say, after all this, that the Quran is preserved?

The response to that is: Yes, we do say that with all confidence. The Quran is indeed protected and preserved by Allah, may He be exalted, and whoever doubts that is one of the disbelievers in whose heart there is not even an atom’s worth of faith. See a detailed discussion of that in the answer to question no. 129170.

And Allah knows best.