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## CONTENTS

Women's Right to Inheritance in Yoruba Tradition and Islam.....208  
*Hashir Abdulsalam*

The Glorious Qur'an: A Re-Examination of its History of  
Collection.....218  
*Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo*

# THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN: A RE-EXAMINATION OF ITS HISTORY OF COLLECTION

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## Introduction

The justification of the Islamization of knowledge undertaking is corroborated by the assertion of scholars that knowledge, though universal and timeless, could not be devoid of cultural influence, societal value and worldview of a particular civilization.<sup>1</sup> The overhauling of the Islamization of Knowledge exercise has revealed that the circumscription of the programme to social sciences and humanities alone is inadequate and inappropriate and so, natural as well as applied sciences need to be exposed to the light of Islamization too.<sup>2</sup> Recently, the interminable hand of Islamization is extended to Islamic Studies as a school discipline. This should not be a surprise, as the discipline too, could not claim to be free of some influences. Different aspects of the subject had been explored not only by Muslims but also by non-Muslim orientalists. Such scholars as Schacht, Guibert de Nogent, Coulson, Goldziher, Anderson, Renault, Francois Michel, Peel, Emil Dermenghem, William Muir, David Pearls, Irving, Sprenger, Weil, Lammens, Fyze and Hinchcliffe, to mention but a few, wrote on Islam, Muhammad and the Qur'an. Although elements of facts are contained in the works of these writers, they are religiously and culturally influenced that their works could not claim to be free of unislamic assertions. Many of these works have equally influenced the worldviews of some Muslim writers. Thus, there is the urgent need to have a critical historical study of the works of these writers in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah.<sup>3</sup>

With the calling of Muhammad into the office of prophethood, a new brand of thought based on Islamic epistemology was introduced. The prophet generally believed to be unlettered came up with a paradigm of knowledge based on revelation (*wahy*) properly documented and preserved for future generations.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, there are some scholars who doubt the completeness of the Qur'an. Such are snakes in the grass that propound theories consciously or unconsciously to raise doubt on the authenticity of the Book through various means.<sup>5</sup> Many *ahadith* were fabricated and sound ones distorted by them. The historical facts in support of the preservation of the scripture were equally distorted. The companions, especially those connected with the memorization of the Book, were blacklisted to carry out their academic heresy. The consequence of their perverse statements raises the question of the authenticity and completeness of the Qur'an and whether or not the Prophet participated in the collection of the Qur'an. Thus, there is the need to re-examine the history of the collection of the Qur'an along Islamic perspective. Our focus therefore is to critically examine the historical trend surrounding the revelation, compilation and collection of the Qur'an with a view to finding out who exactly collected it and when precisely the work of collection commenced.

### **Theories on the Collection of the Qur'an: A Critique**

There is the assertion that the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet in piecemeal, and that he used to call his scribes to write down the revelation for him, yet the collection of the Qur'an was not done by him because by then, revelation was still in progress and there was every probability that *naskh* would affect either some of its legal provisions or some of the wordings (Raji, 1984). Thus, the collection of the Qur'an was done after the death of the Prophet by his companions - 'Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman or 'Ali. As such, Thabit is reported to have said: "The Prophet died and the Qur'an had not been assembled into a single place"(As-Suyuti, 1951).

Another version of the history of the collection of the Qur'an is attributed to Zaid ibn Thabit who reports that:

Abu Bakr sent for me on the occasion of the deaths of those killed in the Yemama wars. I found 'Umar b al-Khattab with him. Abu Bakr said" 'Umar has just come to me and said, 'In the Yemama fighting, death has dealt most severely with the qurra' and I fear it will deal with equal severity with them in other theatres of war and as a result much of the Qur'an will perish (d h b). I am therefore of the opinion that you should command that the Qur'an be collected", Abu Bakr added, 'I said to 'Umar, 'How can we do what the Prophet never did?' 'Umar replied that it was nonetheless a good act. He did not cease replying to my scruples until God reconciled me to the undertaking. Abu Bakr continued, "Zaid, you are young and intelligent and we know nothing to your discredit. You used to record the revelations for the Prophet, so pursue the Qur'an and collect it all together "By God! had they asked me to remove a mountain, it could not have been more weighty than what they would now have me do in ordering me to collect the Qur'an. I therefore asked them how they could do what the Prophet had not done but Abu Bakr insisted that it was permissible. He did not cease replying to my scruples until God reconciled me to the undertaking as He had already reconciled Abu Bakr and 'Umar. I there upon pursued the Qur'an, collecting it all together from palm-branches, flat stones and the memories of men. I found the last verse *of surat al-Tawba* in the possession of Abu Khuzaiman al-Ansari, having found it with no one else, There has now come to you a messenger...'to the end of *surat baraat*. The sheets (*svhyf*) that Zaid prepared in this manner remained in the keeping of Abu Bakr. On his death they passed to 'Umar who then bequeathed them on his death to his daughter, Hafsa (Burton, 1977: 117).

This long report is very important to us because of certain salient points contained therein. Firstly, the battle-of Yamama where many Qur'an memorizers lost their lives is mentioned. This shall be discussed fully later in this paper. Another fact contained in the tradition is the consciousness of the companions to abstain from any act not embarked upon by the Prophet as well as the permissibility f

such action if it does not negate the principles of Islam,. The personality of Zaid as *hafiz* and a man of impeccable character is equally ascertained and this consequently shows that the work assigned to him must have been done accurately. The method adopted as well as the fact that Abu Bakr was the first to collect the texts is emphasized. That notwithstanding, Burton's (1977:119) remark to this tradition attracts special consideration. He writes thus:

The repetition of the motif that the Prophet had not collected the texts, together with the reference to the deaths of the *qurra'* or Qur'an memorisers, and 'Umar's consequent fear that much of the Qur'an would perish; the reference to the primitiveness of the materials on which the revelations had been recorded in the lifetime of the Prophet and upon which Zaid was partly dependent for the preparation of his recension - all these elements predispose one to an expectation that the edition prepared by Zaid might be incomplete..

The observation of Burton is that the originality and sacredness of the Qur'an remains uncertain with the exclusion of the Prophet from the collection exercise. This also gives the impression that the Qur'an had been interpolated should its collection be extended beyond the time of the Prophet.

The theory of *naskh wal-mansukh* was propounded to support their exclusion of the Prophet from the collection of the Qur'an. The theory of *naskh wal-mansukh* is a theory whereby a verse is said to have been abrogated and another one is revealed to substitute it. Thus, they have abrogating and abrogated verses. It is however amazing that Muslim scholars accept this theory without considering its implications on the Holy Qur'an itself. The implications of this obnoxious theory are: that the Qur'an contains verses that ought not to be included in the *mushaf*; that some verses had been withdrawn in respect of both their wording and ruling; and that some verses, though in the Qur'an, are meant for reading alone, yet could not be applied to daily life. Being carried away by the theory of abrogation, some scholars of Islamics still believe that the Prophet did not do the collection of the Qur'an

because the Qur'an was revealed bit by bit over a period of two decades during which certain verses were abrogated by subsequent revelations. This made Raji (1984) to contend that the Prophet was desirous of collecting the Qur'an into a book form before his death, yet, this could not be accomplished on the ground that the gap between the last revelation of the Qur'an and the death of the Prophet was so close that the alleged complete collection could not be possible. Burton (1977), however notices that the only factor or barrier that prevented the Muslims from conceiving the idea of a Qur'an text collected, edited and promulgated by the Prophet is the science of *naskh* and *mansukh*.<sup>6</sup> He believes that the theory had influenced the Muslim accounts of the history and collection of the Qur'an texts to the extent of consciously, deliberately and systematically excluding the Prophet from the work of the collection of the Qur'an. Whatever the case may be, the **theory of *naskh* and *mansukh*** as propounded by Muslim and European scholars needs to be subjected to a rigorous Islamization exercise by contemporary scholars.

### **Hints on Traditions on the Collection of the Qur'an**

There are thousands of *ahadith* on the contributions of the companions towards the collection of the Qur'an. In fact one could not manage but to burst into laughter while reading numerous hotch-potch traditions on the first collection whereby the 'first' collection was attributed to 'Abu **Bakr**, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Salim or 'AIL 'All, for instance is reported to have said; "God bless Abu Bakr! He was the first to collect the Qur'an between two covers" (As-Suyuti, 1951). He, (As-Suyuti) equally postulates some meretricious *ahadith* on the collection of the Qur'an. He writes:

'Umar b. al - Khattab enquired about a verse of the Book of God. On being informed that it had been in the possession of so and so who had been killed in the Yemama wars, Umar exclaimed (the formula expressing loss) 'We are God's and unto Him is our return'. Umar gave the command and the Qur'an was collected. He was me first to collect the Qur'an

At another instance, Sufyan was reported to have attributed the first collection to Salim and tM he was the one who gave the name *mushaf* to the Qur'an - a word he heard in Ethiopia. Not this alone, Ali was equally alluded to, as the first to collect the Qur'an, considering his vow not to don outdoor clothes until he had collected the Qur'an into a single volume (Shahin, undated: 139).

One of the reasons f<sup>or</sup> fabrication of *hadith* was political rivalry among people. Certain religious sects deliberately came up with *ahadith* fabricated to support their personal interest or insinuate a virtue or practice to whtfh (hey exhorted the Muslims and which they thought would have mo<sup>fe</sup> weight if vested with prophetic authority. Their prejudice for a race or a country could also be a motivating factor for them to fabricate some *ahadith* against such a tribe, race or culture. Khalili confirms that about three hundred thousand *ahadith* were fabricated by the RflfTdites to establish the superiority of 'Ali and *ahl-al-bayt* over all othef caliphs (As-Siba'i, 1949:80). The Shites, out of their love for 'Ali and hatred for other caliphs, accused his predecessors of expunging fr<sup>om</sup> the mwsAo/about five hundred verses especially verses that n«>st unambiguously marked out 'AM as the appointed successor to the Prophet (Ihsan, 1983:51). This claim is however faulted by Burton (1977) who contends that if 'Ali had had any preservation about the Qur'an text, he could have easily reinstated what he regarded as the authentic revelation during his tenure by virtue of being the successor to 'Uthman and the last caliph amwg the first four. In order to bring the revelation and the collection of the Qur'an closer to their mentor, the Shites formulated some *ahadith* which contravened the natural laws. For example, Asma' bint 'Umays was said to have reported th^t the Prophet would **receive** revelation while his head was in 'Ali's lap- Once, the revelation took so long..that 'Ali was unable to perform the '**Asr** prayer until the sun had set. The Prophet thus prayed to Allah to return the sun for 'AM to perform his *Asr* prayer at the prescribed time. She concluded: "I saw the sun go down and then I saw it *corns* back above the horizon after it had set" (AI-Alwani, 1996:185). There is no doubt that *ahadith* of such nature were fabricated with the aim of winning popularity for 'Ali, not minding the natural laws set by Allah.

Furthermore, to palliate the hatred of the caliphs by the Shites, some *Ahl-sunnah* too formulated outlandish *ahadith* with a view to pampering the caliphs that were condemned by them (the Shites). Haykal (1976), cites an occasion where 'Abu Sa'd Isma'il ibn al-Muthanna al-Istrabadhi while delivering a sermon in Damascus, was asked concerning the *hadith* of the Prophet (S.A. W) which says: "I am the city of knowledge and \*Ali is its gate.""While responding to this question, he said: "Indeed! .No one knows this *hadith* of the Prophet **except** those who lived in the first century of Islam. What the Prophet had said was rather, "I am the city of knowledge, Abu Bakr is its foundation, 'Umar, its walls, 'Uthman its ceiling and 'AM its gate." The audience was quite pleased with this reply, and so, they asked him to furnish them with the chain of narrators of the *hadith*. 'Abu Sa'd could not supply them any satisfactory answer on this. Thus, he was terribly embarrassed and was booed off the platform, If not for the bravery of the audience, he could have succeeded in adding an unProphetic statement to the traditions of the Prophet out of his regard and consideration for the caliphs.

The henchmen of Muawiyyah and Umawiyyah as well as the Abbasid dynasties were not left out in the fabrication exercise. They all wanted their mentors to have the largest share of credit on the exercise they felt was tremendous in the sight of Allah at least for preserving the Book of Allah. Little wonder then that the issue of who first collected the Qur'an became a matter of competition among the caliphs just to add to the credit of their mentors. This explains why the traditions on the collection of the Qur'an did consist of incompatible attributions of the first collection to Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and or 'AH. One serious effect of these baseless *ahadith* is that the Holy Prophet was deliberately or otherwise excluded from the collection of the Qur'an. Also, Muslims were seen as inconsistent and wobblers who zigzagged here and there on the issue that is vital to their religion.

### **The Prophet and the Collection of the Qur'an: The Historical Antecedent**

Scholars did not doubt the fact that the Prophet had scribes who used to write the *wahy* for him. Popular among such scribes were the

first four caliphs, Abu Sufyan and his sons Muawiyah and Yazid, Sa'id b.al-'As and his sons Aban and Khalid, Zaid b. Thabit, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam, Talhah ibn'Ubayd-llah, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Amir ibn Fuhayrah and many others (Az-ZanjaTii, 1408: 23),

The circumstance that led to the conversion of 'Umar b. al-Khattab to Islam is also an evidence that apart from the copy written for the Prophet, the companions too had their personal copies which they, themselves used to read at home (AI-Abrashi, 1980). Among those who had their personal copies of the Qur'an **were** Muhammad b. Ishaq, 'Ali b.Abi Talib, Sa'd b. IJbayd b.al- Nu'man, Abu Darda' Uwaymir b.Zayd, Mu'adh b. Jabal b. Aws and many others (Az-Zanjani, 1408:23).

Apart from writing down the Holy Message for record purpose, the Prophet also committed into memory all that was revealed to him. Allah specifically mentioned it that the Prophet shall be made to read and comprehend that he would not forget, (*Qur'an*, 87:6) and when the Prophet was restless concerning its memorization, he was told "Move not thy tongue concerning the Qur'an to make haste therewith. It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it. And when we have promulgated it. follow thou its recital as promulgated" (75:16-18). While expatiating on these verses, 'Ali (1978:1651) writes

The immediate meaning was that the Holy Prophet was to allow the revelation conveyed to him to sink into his mind and heart and not to be impatient about it, God would certainly complete it according to His plan and see that it was collected and preserved for men, and not lost.

In addition to the above, many of the companions were noted for their memorization of the Holy Qur'an. Thus az-Zanjani (1408: 21) writes:

It is for this reason that within one or two days after every revelation whatever part of the Qur'an came down was recorded and preserved in the hearts and memories of most of *the sahabah*. *The huffaz and qurra'* (*qaris. reciters of the Qur'an*) would recite in the presence of the Prophet (S) whatever they had memorized of the Qur'an

and sometimes they would recite a part of it on his command.

Furthermore, it is related that Angel Jibril used to visit the Prophet every night of Ramadan for the purpose of reciting the Qur'an with him (Al-Qitan, 1976: 123). This shows the active involvement of the Prophet in the collection exercise of the Qur'an. The idea that the collection of the Qur'an was not done by the Prophet because of the gap between the last revelation and the death of the Prophet is not tenable to us. The task of collection should not be given any specific time different from the preservation of the scripture, Whenever any revelation came to the Prophet, he called on his scribes to write such in its appropriate place. Such scrolls were kept with the Prophet well stored that whenever there was any other revelation, he took them out and asked his scribes to write the new revelation in its appropriate place. This made the Prophet to be courageous of referring to the Holy Qur'an and his customs as the only legacies left by him for the Muslims.

Another fact to support the active involvement of the Prophet in the collection of the Qur'an is seen in the arrangement of the texts of the Qur'an as we have it today. If the revelations had not been collected by the Prophet, it would have been difficult to have them arranged, since it is what is collected that could be easily arranged. One cannot arrange what is scattered until one is able to firstly collect it, or unless we want to prove that the Prophet did the collection and the companions did the arrangement. Since, there has been no document to prove this, both the collection and the arrangement were done under the direct supervision of the Prophet.

Furthermore, if Raji (1984: 141) can convincingly argue that 'Ali's lateness to congratulate Abu Bakr as the successor to the Prophet was his vow not to put on any garment until he had collected the Qur'an 'between two covers' to mean his determination to recite the whole of the Qur'an in honour of the Prophet, then the Qur'an must have been collected before the Prophet's death both in human memory and on different available writing materials of the period. The view that both the collection and organization of the Qur'anic text were done by the Prophet is equally shared by a scholar who says:

The single vigorous Qur'an text that throughout the ages had successfully withstood the assaults of both the exegetes and the *usulis*, stoutly retaining its textual identity in the face of countless attempts to insinuate interpolations through exploitation of the alleged codex of this or that companion, is none other than the unique text of the revelations whose existence all their tricks betoken, the text which has come down to us in the form in which it was organized and approved by the Prophet (Burton, 1977:239)

So far, it has been revealed that the belief of many scholars that the work of collection of the Qur'an started after the death of the Prophet was a misconception, and that various theories on it were not tenable as they gave the impression that the Qur'an had been interpolated. We thus reinstated Prophet Muhammad who had been excluded from the collection processes by various scholars when considering his relentless efforts in preserving and compiling the Holy Book to ensure and maintain its originality and sacredness during his lifetime. That notwithstanding, it would be shortsighted of us to throw overboard the activities of the caliphs on the preservation of the Qur'an. As we do not agree that they had collected the Qur'an as generally believed, their own 'collections' need to be revealed too.

### **Abu Bakr cum 'Umar and the 'Collection' of the Qur'an**

Despite the various steps taken by the Prophet to preserve the holy revelation, there were certain unforeseen circumstances that attempted to disrupt the work of preservation at the latter end of the Prophet's life and up to the hegemonial suzerainty of Abu Bakr his first successor. One of such problems was the emergence of fake prophets who through dubious means attempted to interpolate the revelation of the Prophet claiming that they too were prophets in their domams. Popular among such fake prophets was Musaylimah ibn Habib (*al-Kadhdhab*) from Banu Hanifah tribe of Yamamah. He, with his false propaganda, went to the extent of claiming that angel Rahman brought him his own revelation. He thus composed rhymes and verses in

imitation of the Qur'an. There is no doubt that this man had misled many people and that such people had written down such mean and spurious 'revelations' from him. Some had memorized them as well thereby mistakenly or deliberately mixing them up with what they had hitherto had of the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet himself was about to put this act of apostasy into control, but was overtaken by death. It thus became the first important task of the first caliph to check and control this anomaly so that these pseudo-prophets would not interpolate the source of Islamic thought. This consequently led to the battle of Yamamah where many Muslims lost their lives. About seven hundred companions fell in this battle and this shows the extent to which Musaylimah had influenced his people against Islam through his mumbo-jumbo, shallow and demi revelation.

It might be rightly said that this was what spurred 'Umar to urge Abu Bakr to take a bold step to check what people had as their personal copies and what they had memorized in the Qur'an to guide against Musaylimah's influence on the Qur'an. Scholars are not unanimous on the number of those who fell in the Yamamah war, neither was the actual number of the *huffaz* who died in the bank known. Raji, (1984:143) did not support al-Tabari who put the number as four hundred and fifty, while As-Sa'id believed that majority of those who fell in the battle were new converts. Thus, the belief that the number of those memorizers was significant enough to warrant 'Umar's suggestion to make an immediate collection of Qur'an is rejected. What could have warranted that kind of urgency was Umar's awareness of the havoc constituted by Musaylimah to the Qur'an, which if care was not taken, could have been difficult to check.

Although, Abu Bakr was able to put a stop to the penetration of Musaylimah into Islam, but the extent of the spread of his false revelation needed to be checked as well. This was the reason why Abu Bakr embarked on the task of verifying what was in the memory of people-as well as what they had as their personal copy of the Qur'an. Thus, during the process, the case of two witnesses emanated. Abu Bakr ordered 'Umar and Zaid bin Thabit, the chief amanuensis of the Prophet to sit in the gate of the mosque and include in the *mushaf* only what was vouched for by the testimony of two men (As-Sa'id, undated:

22). Shakhawi opined that 'Umar and Zaid were the two men to bear testimony to see that what people brought was the true picture of what was revealed to the Prophet (As-Suyuti, 1951: 58), Abu Shamat equally confirmed that what was intended by two witnesses was that they would not write down anything except it was an exact of what was written in the presence of the Prophet and not only what was committed into memory (As-Suyuti, 1951:58). Thus, it could be asserted that there was a master copy of the Qur'an with \*Umar and Zaid from where they verified what was brought to them in memory as well as of private copies. With this, a statement attributed 16 'AH that the non-inclusion of the acclaimed stoning verse in the Qur'an was as a result of the death of those who memorized the verse in the Yamamah is fallacious and baseless. It should also be mentioned that the task before Abu Bakr was more than taking out the master copy of the Qur'an for producing more copies for the people. Rather he had to verify what people had in their memory as well.

#### **'Uthman and the 'Collection\* of the Qur'an**

The contribution of 'Uthman b. Affan, the third caliph to the preservation of the primary source of Islamic law cannot be underestimated. It has to be noted that the expansion policy of 'Umar, the second caliph exposed and extended Islam far beyond Arabian Peninsula. The Muslim empire was thus, segmented into districts for easy governance and this led to each district having its own copy of the Qur'an. It was however noticed that there were disparities in the mode of recitation of these districts to the extent that they began to boast among themselves: "Our reading is better than yours." This incident happened when there was a competition between the armies of Syria and Iraq. The Syrians were listening to their hero, Ubayy while the recitation of Ibn Mas'ud attracted the Iraqis from where he hailed. Hudhayfah b, Yaman who was not happy with this went to inform Caliph 'Uthman of this anomaly and the likely consequences of such action.

A critical study of the various recitations showed that their pronunciation of certain vowels and consonants affected such recitation and that the copy of 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud did not include the

last two *surahs* of the official Qur'an. Thus 'Uthman formed a committee of four copyists comprising Zaid b. Thabit, 'Abdullah b. Zubayr, Sa'id b. al\*As and 'Abdur-Rahman b. Harith b. Hisham. This committee was charged with the task of duplicating copies of the Qur'an from its original source. The copy in Hafsat's custody was taken out and copies of it were made and sent to each district as standard and authoritative copies. While sending these copies to various districts, 'Uthman instructed that the dialect of the Quraysh be given preference in case of difficulty in pronouncing certain words. He also ordered the destruction of unauthoritative ones used as personal copies before to avoid unnecessary clashes. Muir (1878:558) could not but appreciate the work done by 'Uthman on the preservation of the Qur'an, and so he writes:

We may then safely conclude that Othman's recension was, what it professed to be, namely, the reproduction of Abu Bakr's edition, with a more perfect conformity to the dialect of Mecca (sic), and possibly a more uniform arrangement of the component parts-but still a faithful.

He then confidently concludes:

The conclusion, which we may now with confidence draw is that the editions of Abu Bakr and of Othman were not only faithful, but, so far as the materials went complete...

### **'All and the 'Collection' of the Qur'an**

Scholars are not unanimous on the role of 'AM on the collection of the Qur'an. It is however related that upon the installation of Abu Bakr as the first caliph,\*Ali did not show up to congratulate him, and when he was asked about this, his response was that upon the death of the Prophet, he had vowed that he would not don outdoor clothes until he had collected (Jama'a) the Qur'an into a single volume. While explaining this, Ibn Hajar opined that *jama'a* in Ali's case means 'to memorize' and not 'to collect'. This view is not shared by Raji (1984: 141) who considers the personality of 'AM viz his brilliance and

intellectual ability, together with his closeness to the Prophet, being the first among the youths to accept Islam and later the son-in-law of the Prophet, all which presuppose that 'AM had memorized the Qur'an before the death of the Prophet. Morcso, the Prophet himself had commended his intellectual ability long before his death. He thus concludes thatyamo'a in Ali's case denotes his finding out where the scattered manuscript scrolls were stored away or his determination to recite the whole Qur'an in honour of his deceased father-in-law, Prophet Muhammad.

That 'Ali was busy finding out where the scattered manuscript scrolls were stored away could not be accepted with all sincerity, considering the recognition accorded the Holy Qur'an as well as the exemplary position it took among the then Muslim community, the manuscript scrolls could not be stored in a place where a person like 'AH could search for about a week before locating its whereabouts. The Prophet was said to have disclosed where the Qur'an was kept to 'AM saying, "O 'Ali, the Qur'an is kept at the back of my bed in sheets of silk and paper. Take them and collect them, do not let the Qur'an be lost as the Jews had lost the Torah" (Az-Zanjani, 1408: 24). One can then conclude that the collection of 'AH means his gathering together the materials upon which the Qur'an was written for the purpose of reciting the whole of it in honour of his deceased father-in-law. Prophet Muhammad. That apart, he himself participated actively in the preservation exercises embarked upon by his predecessors during their tenure, the task which had been accomplished before he became caliph.

From the discussion so far, the efforts of the caliphs as regards the preservation of the Qur'an are quite obvious. Abu Bakr could be credited for his effort of retaining the originality of the Qur'an by carefully verifying what were in the memories of people with what was actually revealed to the Prophet, while 'Umar could be commended for his ability to foresee the danger ahead the text of the Qur'an and his efforts to gear up 'Abu Bakr into action. 'Uthnaan on his own could not be forgotten for his efforts in ensuring uniformity of the Qur'an sent to different provinces of the Muslim empire by duplicating the original copy of the Qur'an.

At this juncture, one needs to debunk the derogatory remark of Burton (1977: 239) and his unwarranted innuendo against the caliphs that the motive underlying the 'Uthmanic collection and 'Abu Bakr cum 'Umar's collections of the Qur'an were attempts to smuggle into the Qur'an texts unwarranted interpolations designed to support local opinion, debated topics and calculated to swing the argument in their favour. Such injudicious remark is rejected based on the hesitation of 'Abu Bakr to embark on any programme not embarked upon by the Prophet and the awareness of the caliphs of the repercussion of any unnecessary *bid'ah* in Islam. Thus such a statement is a libel on the personality of the caliphs, as they themselves were guarding the originality and authenticity of the Qur'an against interpolation of any kind. Thus Coomer( 1931:4) contends:

So there had been no opportunity for any forgery or pious fraud in the Koran, which distinguishes it from almost all other important religious works of ancient time..

## **Conclusion**

Most multifarious *ahadith* on the-collection of the Qur'an by the companions of the Prophet are politically inclined and hence, doubtful. That the Prophet died and the Qur'an had not been collected is out of point. Under divine guidance, the Prophet received revelations, memorized them and realizing the fact that he was not only *Snabi* but also a *rasul*, he disseminated whatever was revealed to him to his companions who in turn memorized and wrote them down. Undoubtedly, the Prophet was the receiver, the preserver and the collector of the Qur'an. Although the Qur'an was written on different materials, it was properly arranged and collected into a place before his death. He was thus the first to have collected- the Qur'an.

The 'collection' of the caliphs was quite different from that of the Prophet. While 'Abu Bakr and 'Umar were used by Almighty Allah for the fulfilment of the Qur'anic verse which says "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it..." (41: 42) for mounting a strong barrier against attempted interpolation made by Musaylimah and his forces, 'Uthman received kudos for being used by Allah, to fulfil the

Qur'anic verse, " it is for us to collect it and its recital" (75: 17) by making available standard copy of the Qur'an to all provinces and ensuring uniform recitation throughout the Muslim world. Thus, the Qur'an remains as it was during the time of the Prophet fully guarded on all sides.

#### Notes

1. Among the proponents of the neutrality of knowledge in Nigeria are Waziri Junaidu, Salisu Shehu, Sa'idu Sulaiman and Bashir Galadanci. See J. Waziri, "The Relevance of University Education to Our Society", in G.N. Brown & M. Hiskett (Eds), *Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa*, 1979; B.S. Galadanci (Ed), *Islamization of Knowledge: A Research Guide*, Kano, HIT Nigeria Office; S. Shehu, *Islamization of Knowledge. Conceptual Background, Vision and Tasks*, Kano, HIT Nigeria Office, 1998 and S. Sulaiman, *Islamization of Knowledge: Background, Models and the Way Forward*, Kano, HIT Nigeria Office, 2000.
2. Even languages and linguistics are not left out in the Islamizatrori programme. See A.U. Gwong-Wad, "Islamization of the English Language and its Teaching in a Secular State", *Al-Ijtihad - The Journal of Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*. Vol. I, No. 2, 2000; M. Sayyid, "Islamizati'on of Linguistics", in *Towards Islamization of Disciplines*, IIPH & HIT, Herndon, 1995; and I.R. Al-Faruqi, *Towards Islamic English*, Herndon, HIT, 1988.
3. Some scholars have been writing to refute some of the negative claims and assertions of these orientalists. For more see M. Khalifa, *The Sublime Qur'an and Orientalism*, London, Longman, 1983; M.H. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (translated by I.R. Al-Faruqi) North American Trust Publications, 1976; A.R.I. Doi, "Teaching of Islamic Law Through 'Hostile' Textbooks", in S.K. Rashid (Ed), *Islamic Law in Nigeria (Application and Teaching)*, Lagos, IPB, 1986; 1 A. Bndawi, *Mithanmmd's Prophethood: An*

- Analytical View*, Riyadh WAMY, 1990, and H.M. Njozi, *The Sources of the Qur'an: A Critical Review of the Authorship Theories*, Riyadh, WAMY, 1991.
4. Many Qur'anic verses confirm that Allah is the author of the Qur'an and not the handiwork of anyone including Prophet Muhammad through whom it was revealed. See Qur.'an 69: 38-43; 10: 37-38 and 7: 203). The Qur'an, apart from denying human authorship of it, asserts that no human being or jinn could produce a like of it. (See Qur'an 17:88; 2:23;10:38; 11:13). The Qur'an equally asserts its divine documentation and preservation. (See Qur'an 75:17 and 41:42).
  5. Among such theories is'the one that attributes the authorship of the Qur'an to Muhammad (SAW) as propounded-by Charles Hamilton, Richard Bell, Kenneth Cragg and Arthur J. Arberry. The theory of unconscious fabrication and that of religious illusion theory were propounded by P.K. Hitti and R.A. Nicholson respectively. Other scholars who have the same opinion were Norman Daniel and Bryan Turner. P.K.Hitti equally propounded the epileptic theory. See his *Islam and the West: A Historical Survey*, New Jersey, D.Van Nostrand Company, 1962, p. 14; and Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. Edinburgh, the Edinburgh University Press, 1960, pp. 27-28.
  6. The words *naskh* and *mansukh* , active participle and passive respectively, are derived from the same root word *nasakha* which means 'to abolish, to withdraw, to replace or to abrogate.' Technically, they refer to certain verses of the Qur'an, which have been abrogated by others. Thus the abrogating verses are referred to as *naskh*, while the *mansukh* are the abrogated verses.

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