

### Fast 3: The Quran — its arrangement

- Though the Holy Quran was revealed in portions, it did not remain long in that fragmentary condition. As its name implies, it was a book from the first, and though it could not be complete until the last verse was revealed, it was never without some form of arrangement.
- There is the clearest testimony, internal to the Quran as well as external, that every single verse or part of a verse and every chapter that was revealed had its own definite place in the Book. The Quran is itself clear on this point:

“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 piecemeal so that, under the varying circumstances through which the Prophet passed, the Divine revelation might be a source of strength to his heart. The above verse then refutes any suggestion that the revelation might remain a disorderly collection of fragments revealed under different circumstances, by adding that the entire arrangement was also Divinely accomplished.

- The arrangement of the Quran was thus a part of the Divine scheme. Another verse showing that the collection of the Book was a part of the Divine scheme runs thus:

“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, in like manner, the *collecting* of its various parts was effected by the Prophet under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This verse is a very early revelation, which shows that the Quran was, from the start, intended to be arranged and collected into one whole.

- History also bears testimony to the truth of this statement, for not only are there numerous anecdotes showing that this or that portion of the Quran was put to writing under the orders of the Holy Prophet, but we are clearly told by Uthman, the third Caliph, that every portion of the Book was written, and given its specified place, at the bidding of the Holy Prophet. Uthman reported:

“It was customary 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.”

- In fact, if we bear in mind the use that was made of the Holy Quran, we cannot for an instant entertain the idea that the Book existed without any arrangement of its verses and chapters in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. It was not only recited in prayers but committed to memory and regularly recited to keep it fresh in the mind.
- Now if an arrangement of verses and chapters had not existed, it would have been impossible either to recite it in public prayers or to commit it to memory. The slightest change in the place of a verse by a person leading the prayers would at once call forth a correction from the audience, as it does at the present day. Since no one could take the liberty of changing 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; and so the committing of the Quran to memory by so many of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, and their constant recitation of it, would have been impossible unless a known order was followed. 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 thus existed in a complete and ordered form in the memories of people, but no complete written copy of it existed at the time, nor could such a copy 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.