The Unanimously Accepted Belief of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah that the Written Mus-haf is Actually the Qurān in Opposition to the Laf-thiyyah Sect of the Jahmiyyah

Prepared by: Moosaa Richardson for free distribution

Version 1.0
All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds. May He raise the rank of His Prophet Muhammad and grant him peace...

From the basic beliefs of Islam is a very simple concept that Sunni Muslims throughout all stages of Islamic history agreed upon and considered unchallengeable. Muslims believe in the Quran, that it is the Speech of Almighty Allah, be it recited orally, memorized by heart, or written in their mus-hafs. After reading this concise article, you should understand clearly how essential this belief is, and how dangerous it is to oppose it, in sha’ Allah.

The Basic Muslim Belief that the Quran is Written in Mus-hafs

Let us examine what the correct Islamic belief about this issue is from the Quran and Sunnah, as understood by the Companions and righteous early scholars of Islam.

Allah has referred to the Quran as a Book, which by definition is something written, in many Quranic passages. One example would be:

\[
\text{By the Mountain, and by a written Book (the Quran), written in pages of a book spread out) }^{1}
\]

The great scholar of Tafseer (Quranic Exegesis) from the second generation of Muslims, Mujaahid ibn Jabr said:

\[
\text{Fee Raq-qin Manshoor } \text{means: in pages.}^{2}
\]

The earliest Quran scholars of the Companions and their students and others said it means: a written book.\(^3\)

---

1. Soorah at-Toor (52:1-3) and its meaning in English
2. The great scholar, al-Bukhaaree (d.256), mentioned this report in his Saheeh (13/522 of Fat-hul-Baaree), in his chapter explaining the closing Verses of Soorah al-Burooj where Allah describes His Quran as being preserved in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth (the Preserved Tablet), showing that the correct understanding is to believe that the Quran is preserved in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth while it is also written down in the mus-hafs. His more explicit words on the topic will be mentioned shortly.
The Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

(( لا تُسافِروا بالقرآن، فإنّي لا آمن أن يناله العدوَّ ))
(( Do not travel with the Quran, since I can not guarantee
that the enemies would not get a hold of it. ))

Quite obviously, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) was not referring to the Quran memorized in their hearts or the Quran in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth (the Preserved Tablet)! He was referring to the mus-haf, the written Quran, and he explicitly called it “the Quran”.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second Caliph of the Muslims (may Allah be pleased with him), had no problem with this expression either, as it is narrated that he wrote to the governors in the various lands under his rule, following the best example, saying:

لا تُسافِروا بالقرآن إلى أرض العدوَّ، فإنّي آخاف أن يناله أحد منهما

“Do not travel with the Quran to enemy lands, since I fear
that one of them might get a hold of it.”

Abboo Bakr As-Siddeeq, the first Caliph, placed Zayd ibn Thaabit (may Allah be pleased with them both) in charge of compiling the scattered writings of the Quran into one mus-haf, as the era of Divine Revelation had just ended, and the Quran could not have been compiled into one book while it was still coming down. Zayd said about the gravity of this task:

فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْ كُلَّفْوني نُقلَ جبلٌ من الجبال
ما كان أُنّفِقْ علَيّ مّالًا أعْمَنِي بِهِ مّن جِمْعِ القرآن

“I swear by Allah, had they placed me in charge of moving a mountain,
it would not have been more heavy than the task he ordered me with
of compiling the Quran (into one mus-haf)”

During that time and ever since, this event is referred to by the Muslim scholars as Jam’ al-Quran, or the compilation of the Quran (into one mus-haf).

---

3 See: Tafseer at-Tabaree (24/601), and ad-Durr al-Manthoor (7/550) of as-Suyootee.
4 Collected by Muslim in his Saheeh (#1869)
5 Collected by Sa’eed ibn Mansoor in his Sunan (2/176 of Habeeb ar-Rahmaan al-A’thamee’s printing, Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1388 ed.)
6 Collected by al-Bukhaaree in his Saheeh, in the Chapter of Compiling the Quran (#4986)
7 For example, Ibn Abee Shaybah (d.235) collected narrations about the event, entitling the section, “The First One to Gather the Quran (into One Mus-haf)”. See his Musannaf (10/544). As mentioned previously, Al-
‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan, the third Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him), said:

"I do not like that a day and night pass except that I look at the Speech of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic." (meaning: reading the mus-haf)

‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib, the fourth Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him), said:

"May Allah have Mercy on Aboo Bakr, for he was the first one to gather the Quran between two book covers (i.e. in one mus-haf)."

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood (may Allah be pleased with him), was reported to have said:

"Verily, this Quran in front of you is about to be snatched away from you!"

His student asked, “How could it be snatched away from us while Allah has made it firm in our hearts and we have recorded it precisely in our mus-hafs?! He replied:

"It (the Quran) shall be taken up in one night, and everything in the hearts shall be snatched away, and everything in the mus-hafs shall go, and the people shall become needy from it (the event). Then he recited, (And if We wanted we could take away that which We revealed to you )."

Bukhaaree (d.256) entitled a chapter: Compiling the Quran (into One Mus-haf). An-Nasaa’ee (d.303) also has a chapter of the same name in his As-Sunan al-Kubraa, as does al-Bayhaqee, Al-Baghawee, and many others in their source books of hadeeth.

---

9 Collected by Ahmad in Fadhaa’il as-Sahaabah (no.514, 1/433) and Al-Aajurree in Ash-Sharee’ah (no.1241-1242, 4/1782-1783). In his checking of Fadhaa’il as-Sahaabah, Wasee Allah ‘Abbaas said its chain is hasan.
10 Collected by Al-Bukhaaree in Khalaq Af’aal al-‘Ebaad (no. 381), Ibn Abee Shaybah in his Musannaf (no.30697, 10/534), ‘Abdur-Razzaaq in his Musannaf (no. 5980-5981), al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (4/504), and others, with a weak chain due to a narrator, Shaddaad ibn Ma’qil, whose reliability as a narrator was not established. However, it has other chains that strengthen it, as discussed in detail in the footnotes of Sunan Sa’eed ibn Mansoor (2/335-342). This narration can be considered a hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant
‘Ikrimah ibn Abee Jahl, one of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with him), used to hold the mus-haf to his face, saying:

"The Book of My Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, the Speech of My Lord, the Mighty and Majestic!"\(^{11}\)

Ibraaheem an-Nakha’ee (d.96), a great early scholar and student of the Companions (may Allah have Mercy on him), said:

"It used to be said, ‘Stress the greatness of the Quran,’ meaning: Write it with large print in the mus-hafs."\(^{12}\)

Abboo Haneefah (d.150), the first of the four widely-followed imams (may Allah have Mercy on him), said:

"The Quran is written in the mus-hafs, memorized in the hearts, and recited on the tongues."\(^{13}\)

Another of the great imams, Ash-Shaafi’ee (d.204), also held the position that:

"What we recite from the Quran on our tongues, listen to with our ears, and write in our mus-hafs is all called the Speech of Allah."\(^{14}\)

Endnotes:

11 Collected by Ad-Daarimee (no. 3393, 4/2109), al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (3/243), and others, with a break in the chain, and thus considered mursal, as mentioned by ath-Thahabee in his notes on al-Mustadrak.
12 Collected by Ibn Abee Shaybah in his Musannaf (no.30730, 10/543)
13 Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, as quoted in Sharh at-Tahaawiyah (p.138), revised checking of Ahmad Shaakir, 1418.
14 One of the foremost Shaafi’ee scholars, al-Bayhaqee (d.458), attributed this position to the imaam in his book, al-‘Itiqaad wal-Hidaayah ila Sabeel ar-Rashaad (p.112 of the 1420 Daar al-Fadheelah printing).
erase the Quran from their boards. He detested that children do that, and requested that they use water instead.\textsuperscript{15}

The point is that he was asked about the Quran written on boards, and he had no problem with this expression.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.246), the fourth of the widely-followed imams (may Allah have mercy on him), was reported to have said:


He went on to explain this patiently and methodically, saying:

\textit{A heart is something created, yet what is memorized by it (the Quran) is not created. A tongue is something created, yet what is recited with it (the Quran) is not created. An ear is something created, yet what is heard with it (the Quran) is not created. An eye is something created, yet what is viewed with it (the Quran) is not created.}\textsuperscript{16}

Aside from entitling one of his chapters, “The Compilation of the Quran (into one Mus-haf), Al-Bukhaaree (d.256), the famous author of the authentic Hadeeth compilation (may Allah have Mercy on him), said:

\textsuperscript{15} Collected by Ibn Battah in his \textit{al-Ebaanah al-Kubraa} (3/337, no. 2149 of the \textit{al-Faarooq al-Hadeethah} printing)

\textsuperscript{16} Collected by Ibn Battah in his \textit{al-Ebaanah al-Kubraa} (3/344, no. 2167 of the \textit{al-Faarooq al-Hadeethah} printing)
As for the Quran that is recited, written in the mus-hafs, written down and recorded (therein), understood in the hearts, then it is the Speech of Allah the Most High, not something created.\(^\text{17}\)

Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree (d.310), the great early scholar and author of the famous Tafseer (Quranic Explanation) – may Allah have Mercy on him –, said:

Kalam Allah – Glorified and Exalted – is not created, whether is is written, whether is it recited, whether where it is recited, whether it is found in the heavens or on earth, wherever it is memorized, whether it is written in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth (Preserved Tablet) or drawn on the boards in children’s classrooms, whether it is engraved on a stone, written on a paper, memorized by heart, or recited verbally. Whoever says otherwise, or claims that a Quran on earth or in the heavens is not the same Quran we recite with our tongues and write in our mus-hafs, or believes otherwise, whether he hides it or speaks openly with it as his Religion, such a person is a disbeliever in Allah, subject to capital punishment. He is free from Allah, and Allah is free from him...\(^\text{18}\)

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn Al-Aajurree (d.360), an early scholar and author of one of the most important source books of Muslim creed (may Allah have Mercy on him), stated:

...The Speech of Allah, the Mighty and Honored, is not created, no matter how it is written, no matter how it is recited, no matter where it is recited, whether it is found in the heavens or on earth, wherever it is memorized, whether it is written in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth (Preserved Tablet) or drawn on the boards in children's classrooms, whether it is engraved on a stone, written on a paper, memorized by heart, or recited verbally. Whoever says otherwise, or claims that a Quran on earth or in the heavens is not the same Quran we recite with our tongues and write in our mus-hafs, or believes otherwise, whether he hides it or speaks openly with it as his Religion, such a person is a disbeliever in Allah, subject to capital punishment. He is free from Allah, and Allah is free from him...\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Khalq Af'aal al-'Ebaad, see also: Al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat of al-Bayhaqee (2/7 of the 1422 Sawadee printing).

\(^{18}\) Sareeh as-Sunnah (p.18), published by Daar al-Khulafaa’, 1st ed., 1405, see also: Sharh Usool l'I'tiqad Ahlis-Sunnah (1/206)
And those who claim that this Quran is only a narration of the Quran which is in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth have lied.”

He also stated:

For someone to say: ‘This Quran that the people read, which is in the mus-hafs, is (only) a narration of what is in al-Lowh al-Mahfooth’ is an evil statement, one that the scholars hate. It should be said to someone who says this: The Quran declares you a liar and rejects your statements, and the Sunnah declares you a liar and rejects your statements!”

Al-Laalakaa’ee (d.418), another early scholar of Islamic Beliefs (may Allah have Mercy on him), defined the Quran in his widely recognized staple book of ‘Aqeedah as:

“It is recited in the mihrabs (by the leaders of congregational prayer), written in the mus-hafs, and memorized in the chests of men. It is not a narration or a representation of the Quran. It is one Quran, not a created thing, not something invented and developed. Rather, it is one of Allah’s Attributes, who continues to speak (with it). Whoever says otherwise is a stray disbelieving innovator who opposes the beliefs of the Sunnah and the Jama’ah.”

Al-Laalakaa’ee also stated:

---

19 Ash-Sharee’ah (1/534)
20 Ash-Sharee’ah (1/535)
21 Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahlis-Sunnah (2/364)
Anyone who says that the Quran is (only) the one in the heavens has opposed Allah and His Messenger, rejected miracles of His Prophet, and opposed the Salaf - the Companions, the Taabi’oon, and the scholars of the Religion who came after them.”

Aboo ‘Uthmaan Ismaa’eel ibn ‘Abdir-Rahmaan as-Saaboonee (d.449), early author of the great book, ‘Aqeedat as-Salaf wa As-haab al-Hadeeth, said:

“And the people of Hadeeth all testify and believe that the Quran is the Speech of Allah, His Book, His Directive, His Inspiration, and His Revelation, not a created thing... It is something the chests memorize and the tongues recite, and it is written in the mus-hafs. No matter how it is interacted with, whether the recitation of a qaari’ (recitor), the spoken phrase of a speaker, the memorization of a haafith, wherever it is recited and wherever it is read, written in the mus-hafs of the people of Islam and on the (chalk)boards of their children, and elsewhere. All of that is the Speech of Allah, His Honor be extolled, and it is the exact Quran itself that we say is not created. Anyone who believes it to be created is a disbeliever in Allah, the Great.”

‘Abdul-Ghanee ibn ‘Abdil-Waahid al-Maqdisee (d.600), the author of ‘Umdat al-Ahkaam and other widely respected works (may Allah have Mercy on him), said:

---

22 Sharh Usool Itqaad Ahlis-Sunnah (2/367)
23 ‘Aqeedat as-Salaf wa As-haab al-Hadeeth (pp.17-18)
And the Quran is the Speech of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, His Revelation that He sent down. What you hear from the reciter is the Speech of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. It is (also) what is memorized by heart, written in the mus-hafs, and viewed by the eyes.\(^{24}\)

Ibn Abil-'Izz al-Hanafee (d.792) – may Allah have Mercy on him – said:

Whoever says that what is written in the mus-hafs is a representation of Allah’s Speech, or a narration of Allah’s Speech, and that it is not actually the Speech of Allah, has surely opposed the Book, the Sunnah, and the Salaf of this nation, and that is sufficient as misguidance!\(^{25}\)

The Danger of Opposing \textit{iijma’} (Scholarly Consensus)

Anyone who claims that the Quran is not a written book or that the mus-haf is only a representation of the real Quran has clearly opposed the basic unanimously accepted beliefs of the Muslims. The scholars of \textit{Ahlus-Sunnah} have always been united on the strength of the proof of \textit{iijma’} (scholarly consensus), and they commonly quote the following Quranic verse to show the great danger that lies in opposing \textit{iijma’}:

\begin{verse}
(And whoever contradicts the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him, following a way other than the path of the believers, we shall turn him to what he has turned himself towards and put him in the Hellfire, what an evil abode!)
\end{verse}\(^{26}\)

The scholars say: Contradicting to the Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) is when a person opposes something established in the texts of the Book

\(^{25}\) \textit{Sharh al-`Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyyah}, (pp.143-144), revised checking of Ahmad Shaakir, 1418
\(^{26}\) \textit{Soorah an-Nisaa’} (4:115) and its meaning in English
and the Sunnah, and “The Path of the believers” referred to is the consensus of the Muslims. Thus, when a person opposes the united position of the Muslim scholars on an issue, he subjects himself to the punishment mentioned in the verse.

The Danger of Speaking About Allah Without Knowledge

Many people who speak about Allah’s Religion without knowledge may simply parrot what they hear other people saying, and follow along. We are absolutely forbidden from this approach to speaking about Allah, as He tells us:

( Say: The things that My Lord have prohibited are: lewd behavior, whether done in public or secretly, sinning, transgression (against others) without right, setting up partners with Allah that He has sent down no authority for, and speaking about Allah with what you have no knowledge of. )

The scholars have understood the sins mentioned in this Verse to be ordered by their severity, leading up to the great crime of setting up partners with Allah, and then speaking about Allah without knowledge. Ibn Qayim al-Jowziyyah (d.751) explained:

…This (speaking about Allah without knowledge) is the greatest of sins and the worst crime of all, since it entails lying about Allah, attributing things to Him that do not befit Him, changing His Religion and substituting it with something else, negating what He has affirmed, and affirming what He has negated, confirming what He has rejected and rejecting what He has confirmed, having animosity for His Allies and patronizing those who hate him, loving what He hates and hating what He loves, and describing Him what unbefitting descriptions of Himself, His Attributes, His Statements and Actions.

Of all the different forbidden things, nothing is more severe a crime to Allah or more sinful. It is the foundation of every type of shirk and kufr, and all innovation and straying has been built upon it. Every blameworthy innovation in the Religion was founded by speaking about Allah without knowledge!

This is why the Salaf and the imams refuted them so sternly, raising their voices so loud all over the world, warning against their tribulations with the harshest of warnings. In doing this, they exceeded their contempt in warning

---

28 Soorah al-A’raaf (7:33) and its meaning in English
against lewdness and oppression, since the harms of innovation are more serious, in how they wreck the Religion and destroy it...29

The Jahmiyyah’s Stages of Deviation

To give some background and insight into the serious nature of the beliefs propagated today, we need to know something about the history of the Jahmiyyah Sect (الجهمية), or the Jahmites, as it relates to their beliefs about the Quran.

Stage One: The Original Jahmiyyah

The Jahmiyyah were the followers of al-Ja’d ibn Dirham30 and Jahm ibn Safwaan31 in the second century, and the followers of Bishr al-Mareese32 in the third century, who, through excessive philosophical thinking about Allah and matters of the Unseen, developed and propagated a new belief, that the Quran was a set of meanings that Allah had created and sent down to the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace). This was based on their assumption that the attribute of speech was not something befitting to Allah, which they arrived at after debating philosophers.

This is outright disbelief in Allah’s Book, since Allah Himself has said explicitly:

وَإِنَّ أَحَدَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجَارَهُ فَإِنَّ يُسِيمَكَ الْلَّهُ ﷺ

(And if any of the polytheists asks you for asylum, then protect him so he could hear the Speech of Allah (i.e. the Quran being recited))33

The scholars and imams of Ahlus-Sunnah took this deviance very seriously and waged war on these innovated beliefs, unanimously declaring those who held them and aided their propagators to be outside of Islam.34

29 Madaarij as-Saalikeen (1/645-646)
30 Al-Ja’d ibn Dirham al-Harraanee: Influenced by the philosophers of his time, he was the innovator of ta’teel, the negation of Allah’s Attributes, spread later and developed by his student, Jahm ibn Safwaan, as what became known as Jahmiyyah. He was killed in the year 118, or perhaps as late as 124.
31 Jahm ibn Safwaan as-Samarqandee: As a student of al-Ja’d ibn Dirham, he spread the heresy of his teacher and debated people regarding it, spreading it to different lands. He was a disgraceful heretic who was put to capital punishment for his blasphemy in the year 128.
32 Bishr al-Mareese: A former student of respected scholars who turned away from Islamic knowledge to philosophy, so much so that he became the head of the Jahmiyyah of his time, treacherously spreading their ancient heretical beliefs with a more academic approach. He died in the year 218.
33 Soorah at-Towbah (9:6) and its meaning in English. Some of the other Quranic verses that clearly prove that Allah is to be described with Speech are: 2:75, 4:164, 7:144, 7:158, and 22:109.
34 For classical refutations of the first phase of the Jahmite beliefs, refer to: ar-Radd ‘alal-Jahmiyyah of ‘Uthmaan ibn Sa’eed ad-Daarimee, as-Sunnah of ‘Abdullaah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal (1/101-163), ash-Sharnee’ah (1/489-
Stage Two: The Waaqifah

Once exposed, the Jahmites had to conceal their true beliefs, and thus, entered a new deceptive phase wherein they were referred to as the Waaqifah (الواقفة), or the Fence-Sitters, those who do not (officially) take a position on the issue of the Quran. They would say: *We do not know if the Quran is created or not.*

The scholars unanimously declared this new strain of the Jahmiyyah to be disbelievers, due to their doubt of what is evident in Allah’s Book, while some considered them many times more dangerous.\(^{35}\)

Stage Three: The Laf-thiyyah

Back to the drawing board for the Jahmites! A third stage of deviation was reached when they later tried to affirm that the Quran was the Speech of Allah, but as meanings, not as words and expressions. They meant that the Quran is only the divine meanings that Allah revealed, that were expressed with words by the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace). Their argument was that the actual Speech of Allah could not be made up of sounds, letters or words. Therefore, our recitation of the Quran, as well as our writing of it, is created, since our actions and sayings are created. What we recite and what we write are mere “representations” or “narrations” of the real Quran, but not the actual Quran itself. The Jahmites in this stage were referred to as the Laf-thiyyah (اللفظية), or the “Phrasal Jahmites.”

Once again, the scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah exposed their blasphemy and identified them as disbelievers. Some considered them even more dangerous and farther astray than the earlier Jahmites.\(^{36}\)

Stage Four: The Followers of Moosaa ibn ‘Uqbah

After trying to corrupt the beliefs of the Muslims with three different attempts, the Jahmites knew they would need to change their approach dramatically. They then tried to reject only one of the ways Muslims believe in the Quran being the Speech of Allah. A new stage emerged who said: *We believe that the Quran is the Speech of Allah, and what is recited and written is the Quran, but what is memorized in the chests*

---


\(^{35}\) For classical refutations of the Waaqifah, refer to: *ar-Radd ‘alal-Jahmiyyah* (pp.193-197) of Uthmaan ibn Sa’eed ad-Da’irimee, as-Sunnah (1/179) of Abdullaah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *ash-Sharea’ah* (1/526-531) of Al-Aajuree, *Al-Ebaanah al-Kubraa* (3/319-331) of Ibn Battah, and *Sharh Usool All’iqaad* (1/357-384) of al-Laalakaee.

cannot be the Quran, for how could there be an Attribute of Allah within our chests?!

Upon discovering this, Aboo Taalib Ahmad ibn Humayd came to his teacher, the great scholar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and announced:

قد جاءت جهيمة رابعة!

“The fourth (stage of) Jahmites have arrived!”

Ahmad ibn Hanbal then enquired about them, demanded to know their names, began warning against them, and requested the people to abandon them and anyone who would speak to them, saying:

هذا أكثر من الجهيمة!

“This is more (astray) than the (original) Jahmiyyah!”

Stage Five: A New Modern Strain of Jahmiyyah

Another attempt to revive the teachings of the Jahmiyyah has appeared in our time, those who say: I believe the Quran is the Speech of Allah, not created, and what is recited and memorized is the Quran, but what is written in the mus-haf cannot be the Quran, and they have a number of arguments they believe supports this claim, but as shown clearly they have opposed the unanimous beliefs of Ahlus-Sunnah.


38 To read a decisive refutation of this new appearance of Jahmiyyah and to find out who exactly is propagating it in the English language, read the free e-book, Statements of Disbelief and Opposition to Unanimously Held Muslim Beliefs, available as a PDF from Bakkah.net, or visit the website: http://www.YusufEstesQuran.com