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An Introduction to the Science of the Qira'at

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Objectives

By the end of the seminar, you will:

- Know the proofs for the Qira'at
- Have a sense of the history of how the science developed
- Understand how the differences are extracted from the poem known as Ash Shatibiyyah.
- Recited Surah Al Fatiha in the seven qira'at.

Where do they come from?

The Quran was revealed in many dialects, and we know that the Prophet (SAW) taught it to the sahaba in multiple ways.

The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“Verily this Quran has been revealed to be recited in seven *ahruf*. In every harf you recite, you have done so correctly. So do not argue, since this may lead to unbelief (*kufr*).”**

Related by Ahmad, *Musnad*, vol. 4, pp.169-70

Where do they come from?

- **Narrated `Abdullah bin `Abbas:**
- Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Gabriel recited the Qur'an to me in one way. Then I requested him (to read it in another way), and continued asking him to recite it in other ways, and he recited it in several ways till he ultimately recited it in seven different ways."
- **Narrated `Umar bin Al-Khattab:**
- I heard Hisham bin Hakim reciting Surat Al-Furqan during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and I listened to his recitation and noticed that he recited in several different ways which Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had not taught me. I was about to jump over him during his prayer, but I controlled my temper, and when he had completed his prayer, I put his upper garment around his neck and seized him by it and said, "Who taught you this Sura which I heard you reciting?" He replied, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) taught it to me." I said, "You have told a lie, for Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has taught it to me in a different way from yours." So I dragged him to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said (to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)), "I heard this person reciting Surat Al-Furqan in a way which you haven't taught me!" On that Allah's Apostle said, "Release him, (O `Umar!) Recite, O Hisham!" Then he recited in the same way as I heard him reciting. Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "It was revealed in this way," and added, "Recite, O `Umar!" I recited it as he had taught me. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) then said, "It was revealed in this way. This Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven different ways, so recite of it whichever (way) is easier for you (or read as much of it as may be easy for you)."
- Both from Bukhari

WHAT DOES 7 AHRUF MEAN?

- There are multiple interpretations of this hadith.
- Some scholars say that the number 7 refers to seven major Arab tribes.
- The opinion of Ibn Qutayba and Ibn Al Jazari is that the number 7 refers to seven categories of differences between the recitations.
- It is important to note that the different recitations **do not change anything in matters of halal and haram**, but rather cause no change in meaning, or **add a nuance**. These differences are taken into account in the science of Tafseer and Fiqh. They are considered one of the miracles of the Quran.

Seven Categories of Differences

- ▶ Differences in Singularity and Plurality (Ex: Jannatin, Jannaatin)
- ▶ Differences in gender
- ▶ Differences in grammatical cases
- ▶ Sarf (Ex: Verb conjugation)
- ▶ Different particles (Ex: Lakin, Lakinna)
- ▶ Difference in letters (Ex: Katheer/Kabeer)
- ▶ Difference in accents (Ex: Imalah)

Mutawatir and Mashoor

- ▶ The Qira'at are considered Mutawatir if they were so prevalent in the first three generations (Sahaba, Tabi'een, Tab' Tabi'een) that someone lying about them would be impossible.
- ▶ The Qira'at are considered Mashur if they were prevalent in the generation of the Tabi'een and Tab' Tabi'een not the generation of the Sahaba.

Development of the Science

- Ibn Mujahid (254 – 324 Hijri)
- He was the first scholar to collect seven of the major recitations, and to record their chains of transmission back to Ar Rasul (SAW). His book was titled *As-Sab'a fil-Qiraat*
- Allamah Dani Abu 'Amr ad-Daani (371 – 444 Hijri)
- In his famous book, *At Tayseer*, Allamah Dani expanded on Ibn Mujahid's work and wrote down the rules for each of the seven major recitations.
- Imam Ash Shaatibi (538 – 590 Hijri)
- Imam Ash Shaatibi took Allamah Dani's work, and created an amazing coding systems and wrote all the rules of the Qiraat in verse form. His poem titled *Hirz ul Amani Wa Wajh At Tahani*, is commonly known as the *Shatibiyyah*.

Development of the Science

- Ibn Al Jazari (d. 835 Hijri)
- He was a scholar of the Qur'an, and it is said that no one after him ever reached his level. He recorded the rules and chains of transmission of the three mashhoor Qir'aat of Abu J'afar, Y'aqub, and Khalaf.
- He first completed Imam Ash Shatibi's work by writing *Ad-Durra al-Mudiyya fil-Qiraa'aat ath-Thalaath* which follows the same coding style and rhyme scheme as Imam Ash Shatibi's poem, *Hirz ul Amani wa Wajh At Tahahi*.
- He wrote a poem (*Tayyiba al-Nashr fil-Qiraa'aat al-Ashr*), as well as a book (*al-Nashr fil-Qiraa'aat al-Ashr*) about the 10 qir'aat and included many more chains of transmission in his work than are mentioned in the Shatibiyyah.

Terminology

Al Ashara As Sughra: The ten qiraat according to Ash Shatibiyyah wa Durrah

Al Ashara Al Kubra: The ten qira'at with all their turuq as mentioned in Nashr.

Qira'a: A recitation with a chain of transmission back to Ar Rasul (SAW).

Riwayah: The recitation of one of the two major students through whom a particular recitation is narrated.

Tareeq/Turuq: The various chains of transmissions of a particular reciter.

Usool: Differences between the recitations that are consistent and act as a principle.

Furoosh: Individual words that are different between the riwayat.

NAMES OF THE QURRA AND THEIR RUWAT

Al Madinah Al Munawwara	Imam Abu Jafar Al-Madani Yazid bin Al Qaqa'a
	Imam Nafi' bin Abdur Rahman Al Madani
Makkah Al-Mukarramah	Imam Abdullah bin Kathir
Basrah	Imam Abu Amr bin Al'Ala
	Imam Yaqub bin Ishaq Al Hadhrami Al-Basri
Shaam	Imam Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Yazid bin Tamim Al Yahsabi Ad-Damashqi
Kufa	Imam 'Asim bin Abi Nujood Al Kufi
	Imam Hamza bin Habib bin Amara Az Zayyat Al Kufi
	Imam Ali bin Hamza bin Abdullah bin Uthman Al Kisai
	Imam Khalaf bin Hisham Al Bazar

Studying the Qira'at

Step by step process of learning the Qira'at:

Tajweed

Hafs 'An Asim

Ash Shatibiyyah Wa Durrah

Tayyibat An Nashr

You can also study each riwayat separately after completing Hafs.

How do we know what the differences are?

We will read Surah Al Fatiha in Jam' together.

First we will look at the chapter titled Ummul Kitab in the Shatibiyyah.

We will decode the lines together, and mark those differences in our mushafs.

Methods of Jam'

- **Jam' Waqfi:** Read each ayah completely for each Qari.
- **Jam' Harfi:** Cycle on the word that has a difference until all the differences are complete.
- **The method of Imam Safaqsu:**
 - Read till a Waqf Taam, Kafi, or Hasan, and then read the difference closest to the Waqf until all the differences have been read.
 - The teacher will demonstrate each of these methods by reciting Surah Al Fatiha. Students will recite in the method of Imam Safaqsu.

Suggested Readings

- ▶ An Approach to the Qur'anic Sciences by Mufti Taqiuddin Usmani (db).
- ▶ Variant Readings of the Quran: A Critical Study of Their Historical and Linguistic Origins by Dr. Ahmad Ali El Iman
- ▶ Ajmal Al Akhbar 'Ala Al Qurra' As Sab'ati Al Kibaar by Sheikh Muhammad Saleem Gaibee

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