The relation between recitation styles and the different Qur'an scriptures

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Abstract:

The mutawatir hadiths that explain that the Qur'an was revealed on the basis of "seven letters" are regarded as the origin of the discipline of recitation. The styles whose methodology and principles were determined were named after a famous person over the course of time. Examples are the recitation style of Asim, the tradition of Hafs, and the method of Zeran.

Together with this expansion and need, other problems appeared in the Othman period. The conversions of new tribes and Arabic communities to Islam led to an increase in different accents and language differences that in turn played a role in causing problems in Qur'anic education. Othman immediately asked Hafsa for the scripture she had gotten from Omar and assembled a committee. There is an agreement on six copies among the different narrations ranging from four to seven.

Dots, vocalization, and other marks were also not used in the scriptures that Othman ordered transcribed. This was the result of a conscious decision. In this way each confirmed recitation style could be formed by this template. Therefore, his effort should be considered as not only compiling the pages of the Qur'an but also as an attempt to produce a scripture for collecting and detecting different recitation styles.

The work of Caliph Othman is invaluable. He considered the different recitation styles in the context of "the seven letters" as real and, to protect the Qur'an from change or loss, since all represented a genuine text of the Qur'an, he retained the differences in the copies of the scriptures.

Therefore, Othman's scripture was prepared with a very limited number of spelling differences, which are reflected in the different scriptures as a necessity that has been transcribed with a specific way of reading and spelling Quraysh, whereby it was possible to acquire all permitted recitation styles and to read it.

In addition to the fact that recitation styles make reading easier, exegetes observe that they also serve to enrich the message of the text. In other words, the styles provide flexibility to the texts so that they bear the intended meaning and messages. In this regard the recitation styles represent one aspect of the inimitability of the Qur'an.

Key Words: Recitation, Way of oral education, View of performing the recitation, Styles, Seven letters, *Mutawatir*, Arabic script, Scribes of the Revelation, Revelation, Accent, Narration, Commission, Compiling the ages of the Qur'an, The scripture of Othman, Style of Kufa, Dots Vocalization marks, Easiness, The reasons for the revelations, Inimitability of the Qur'an.

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Recitation concerns the different ways of pronunciation that occur with respect to some words in the Qur'an. This difference in recitation was taught by the Prophet himself (p.b.u.h.) to his companions by way of oral education and written down by the scribes of the revelation. When the companions listened to the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) recitations of the Qur'an, they learned different ways of pronunciation and recitation; at the same time they learned the verses by heart. It has been reported that a group of companions comprising more than one hundred individuals learned the whole Qur'an by heart.[2]

Over time, recitation developed into a scientific discipline that studied the Qur'anic words from the point of view of performing the recitation and agreement/disagreement in the tradition, thereby respecting the chain of reporters.[3] As a result, it fulfilled the role of protecting the Qur'anic words, preventing them from being changed or lost.

The Qur'anic words that entail different recitation styles provide first, like a crystal reflecting light, exegetes with the diverse colors and meanings that it has contained since the beginning of the revelation. Neglect of this discipline and the non-existence of experts will lead to serious problems regarding religious judgments and roots of some *fiqh* issues related to recitation styles.[4] The *mutawatir hadiths* that explain that the Qur'an has been revealed on the basis of "seven letters" are regarded as the origin of the discipline of recitation. [5]

Scholars have amply studied the issue of "seven letters," but we cannot say that work in this area has been completed. The point that is agreed upon is the following: a Qur'anic word entailing different recitation styles, all which are approved by a *mutawatir* tradition, falls within the realm of the "seven letters" phenomenon. These styles whose methodology and principles were determined were named after a famous person over time, such as the recitation style of Asim, the tradition of Hafs, and the method of Zeran.

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[2] Muḥammad Salīm Muḥaysin, *Fī Rihāb al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, vol. I (Cairo: Maktaba al-Kulliyya al-Azhariyya, 1980), p. 267.

[3] Abū al-Ḵayr Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī, *Munjid al-Muqri'īn wa Murshid at-Ṭālibīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1980), p. 3; Abd al-Fattāḥ bin Abd al-Ġaniyy al-Qāḍī, *al-Budūr al-Zāhira fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashi al-Mutawātira min Ṭarīqay al-Shāṭibiyya wa al-Durra* (Egypt: Muṣṭafa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1955), p. 5.

[4] Ibrāhīm 'Uṭwah 'Awad, Review of *Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī min Hirzi al-Amānī fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'* by Abū Shāma Abd al-Raḥman bin Ismā'īl bin Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqī (Egypt: Muṣṭafa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1982), p. 12; Sha'bān Muḥammad Ismā'īl, Review of *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al-Bashar bi al-Qirā'āt al-Arba'ata 'Ashar* by Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Bannā, vol. I (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1987), p. 67; al-Qādī, *al-Budūr*, p. 5; Ismail Karaçam, *Qur'ān-i Karim'in Nuzulu wa Kiraati* (Istanbul: M.U. Faculty of Theology, 1995), p. 236.

[5] See *ḥadīṯs* in: Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad bin Ismā 'īl bin Ibrāhīm al-Buḵārī, *Al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ, Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Istanbul: Çagrı Yayınları, 1982), Ḥadīṯ 5; Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim bin Ḥajjāj al-Kushayrī al-Nīsābūrī, *Al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ, ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa Kaṣriha* (Istanbul: Çagrı Yayınları, 1981), Ḥadīṯ 48; Abd al-Raḥmān bin Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan, bi Sharḥ al-Ḥafiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī wa Ḥashiyat al-Imam al-Sindī, Iftitāh* (Istanbul: Çagrı Yayınları, 1981), Ḥadīṯ 37.

The Issue of Recitation Differences in the Qur'an

In the pre-Islamic period the Arabic script was rather simple and primitive. The script entered a new and enlightened era with Islam, which brought with it factors requiring a script and writing while enlarging their applicable area. The script was used and developed as the most important means for establishing, documenting, and distributing the new social order that was constituted by Islam with all its material and immaterial aspects. It progressed more in the half-century after the *Hijrah* than it did in the previous three centuries.[6] Furthermore, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) required that knowledge should be secured and protected by being written down and kept saying that the preeminent duty of the fathers was to teach their children to read and write.[7]

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) attached a great deal of importance to writing in the Madinah period: not only did he encourage people to learn to read and to write but also personally appointed Abdullah b. Said b. al- As and Ubadah b. Samit (who died as martyrs in the battle of Badr) to teach writing. It is reported that he appointed Hafsa to teach the women.[8] The nine mosques in Madinah were used as schools to teach writing and to secure knowledge by writing it down.[9]

As we mentioned above, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) taught the Qur'an to his Companions orally and dictated the verses of the revelation to the scribes. He told them which verse belonged to which surah and where in the surah they should write it down. It was after this that the study and memorization of these verses began.

According to the narrations, the total number of the scribes of the revelation was 43, of whom the first one to transcribe the revelation in Mecca was Abdullah b. Abi Sarh, then the four caliphs, Zubayr b. Awwam, the two sons of Said b. al-As, i.e. Khalid and Aban. In Madinah among the first ones to write were Ubayy b. Ka'b and Zayd b. Sabit who performed this duty for a very long time and also witnessed the last presentation (*arza al-ahirah*).[10] Zayd relates the following: "When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had dictated the revealed verses, he said to me 'Read what you have written down to me.' And I read it. If there were any errors in the writing he corrected those and then he announced these verses to the people."[11]

According to general opinion, we know that points and vocalization marks (diacritics) were not used in the script at that time. Therefore, it was not difficult to specify different recitations in the Qur'an that did not reveal any differences in

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[6] M. Nihad Çetin, "Arap Yazisi," DIA, vol. 3 (Istanbul: Media Print, 1992), p. 276.

[7] Çetin, "Arap Yazisi," DIA, vol. 3, p. 278.

[8] Muhsin Demirci *Vahiy Gerçeği*, (Istanbul: M.U. Faculty of Theology, 1996), p. 209.

[9] Çetin, "Arap Yazisi," DIA, vol. 3, p. 277.

[10] Ismā'īl Aḥmad al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Min Qaḍāyā al-Qur'ān al-Aḥruf al-Sab'a wa al-Rasm wa al-Qirā'āt* (Qatar: Maktaba al-Aqṣā, 1994), p. 69.

[11] Al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Min Qaḍāyā al-Qur'ān*, p. 70.

words. For example, it was possible to read the 219th verse of surah al-Baqara as إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ but another possibility was to read it as إِثْمٌ كَثِيرٌ according to the second recitation style represented by Hamza and Kisai in which *ba* is read as *sa*.[12]

Reading مِنْ تَحْتِهَا in Tawbah/100 as تَحْتِهَا without the preposition (مِنْ) and فَإِنَّ اللهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ in Hadid/24 without (هُوَ)as (فَإِنَّ اللهَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ), all of which belong to *mutawatir* recitations is explained as follows: each one of these are different revelations. Either the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) dictated the two recitations to two different scribes of the revelation, or they were revealed in two different locations, or else he told the writer to write it down as it was revealed i.e. in two forms.[13]

In the period of Abu Bakr, it was found necessary to put the different verses together and Zayd b. Sabit was assigned to this task, since he was seen as the right person for the job. Abu Bakr kept the scripture with him, which was compiled with utmost care. Towards the end of his rule, he gave it to Omar who would succeed him as caliph. In Omar's period, the process of learning and memorizing the Qur'an continued with even more effort. In the meantime, it was attempted to spread these activities across the expanding Islamic area.

Primary Properties of the Scriptures of Othman.

Together with this expansion and need, other problems arose during the period of Othman. The conversion of new tribes and Arabic communities to Islam led to an increase in different accents and linguistic differences that in turn played a role in causing problems in Qur'an education.

Meanwhile, people who were acquainted with a particular recitation style were hesitatant to accept a different one. Rumors that people were starting to accuse one another of being infidels reached Othman. One of those who understood the seriousness of the issue was Huzayfatu'bni'l-Yeman. Upon returning from Azerbaijan he paid a visit to Kufe, where he corrected someone's recitation, upon which the latter answered: "I follow the recitation of ibn Masud." Realizing that the problem reached a level beyond that of the tradition of narration and was becoming dangerous, he told Othman what he saw and other similar events and said: "We have to do something before the Ummah disagrees about the Qur'an like the Jews and the Christians did about their books."

Since Othman was thinking along similar lines, he immediately asked Hafsa for the scripture she had gotten from Omar and appointed a committee. The number of members of the committee of which Zayd b. Thabit was the chairman varied from two to twelve. It is possible to reconcile the different narrations on this matter as follows:

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[12] Ġānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf Dirāsa Luġawiyya Tārīḳiyya* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Matbū'āt al-'Arabiyya, 1982), p. 678.

[13] Abū Shāma Shihāb al-Dīn Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ismā'īl bin Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqī, *al-Murshid al- Wajīz ilā 'Ulum Tata'allaq bi al-Kitāb al-'Azīz* (Ankara: DIB Publishing, 1986), p. 138.

The four-member counting committee, consisting of Zayd b. Thabit, the chairman, Abdullah b. Zubayr, Said b. al-As, and Abdurrahman b. al-Haris, was responsible for managerial tasks. The two-member committee, consisting of Zayd b. Thabit and Said b. al-As, was charged with writing the first scripture. We know this from the following narration by Bayhaqi: "Othman asked, 'Whose language and pronunciation is the best?' [They] said b. el-As because he spoke the most like the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). He asked again, 'Who writes the best?' They replied, 'Zayd b. Thabit, the scribe of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).' He then said: 'Let Said then dictate and Zayd write down'."[14] These four brought the number of members of the committee to twelve. Together with Malik b. Amir, Kasir b. Aflah, Anas b. Malik, Abdullah b. Abbas, Abdullah b. Omar, and Abdullah b. Amru'bnu'l-As, they had the task of transcribing the second scripture.[15]

When the committee finished its work, it gave the pages back to Hafsa. There are different narrations in the literature on when it finished its task and on how many scriptures the members copied. There is an agreement on six copies among the different narrations, which range from four to seven.

Othman kept one of the copies with him and sent the others along with a Companion who would teach the specific accompanying recitation style and educate people. Zayd b. Thabit was appointed to Madinah, Abdullah b. as-Salib to Mecca, Mugirah b. Shihab to Damascus, Abu Abdurrahman as-Sulami to Kufa, and Amir b. Abdi'l-Qays to Basra.[16] Keeping in mind that these activities occurred after the battle of Azerbaijan and Armenia, we can say that it took place after 650 and lasted for several years.[17]

Caliph Othman asked the committee members to follow the Quraysh dialect whenever there was a dispute in writing evolving from a dispute in dialect, since the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was from Quraysh.[18] There is only one word that was disputed in its writing in the preparation phase of the scriptures as it is narrated. It concerns the question if the last letter in the word *at-tabut* should be written with an open *te* or a closed *te*. The word was written with an open *te* at the command of the caliph, giving preference to the Qurayshi dialect.[19] This indicates that the process of transcribing the Qur'an was scrutinized by the companions first, who then discussed among themselves, after which it was checked by the committee and finally by the caliph.

After seeing how they worked in such a delicate way that they even discussed

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[14] Abū Shāma, *al-Murshid*, p. 59

[15] Al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Min Qaḍāyā al-Qur'ān*, pp. 89-90.

[16] Muḥammad Abd al-'Aẓīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. I (Egypt: Matba'at 'Īsā al- Bābī al- Ḥalabī wa Sharīkah, n.d.), p. 403.

[17] DİB (The Committee), *Konulu Kur'an-i Kerim Tefsiri* (Ankara: DIB Publishing, 2001), p. 22.

[18] Al-Buḵārī, *Faḍā'i al-Qur'ān*, p. 2.

[19] Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Sawra al-Tirmiḏī, *Sunan al-Tirmiḏī al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ, Tafsīr*, vol. 9 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1980), Ḥadīṯ 19; Abū Bakr 'Abd Allah bin Abi Dāwūd Sulaymān bin Ash'aṯ al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣaḥif* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1985), p. 19.

the word *et-tabut*, it is clear that the claim of personalities like Goldziher (1921) and others influenced by him that the different writings in the scriptures were a result of scribal errors is not acceptable. We also note that, in order to indicate the "seven letters," the writings were not vigorously changed. The writing down or deletion of a letter, the substitution of one letter by another, and postponing it or advancing it as a result of *mutawatir* recitation have been indicated separately in the scriptures written according to a specific narration. The starting point is very important in this respect. The committee tried to establish a scripture preserving both the text of the Qur'an and the existing recitation styles. The reason for sending the Companions along with the scriptures was to teach the reading of the scriptures and to emphasize this aspect. The goal was to preserve the Qur'anic text from change and to get rid of the writings that could lead to change.

Indicating the Recitation Styles in the Scriptures of Othman Based on the Writing Styles

The necessary precautions were taken in this way in the course of transcribing the scriptures of Othman in order to preserve the different recitation styles in a medium that had certainly been heard from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Starting from the period of the Companions, the oral teaching of the recitation styles preserved its importance since the script in that period did not include marks to differentiate among the many consonants and between short and long vowels, which could lead to different readings. The Muslims attached special importance to distinguishing correct recitation styles from incorrect ones. The tradition that arose in this area still exists today, whereby Islamic scholars apply themselves to studying different styles according to scientific norms. For that reason, the science of recitation and the role it played are very important.[20]

Dots, vocalization, and other marks were also not used in the scripture that Othman ordered transcribed. This was the result of a conscious decision. In this way, each confirmed recitation style could be formed by this template. Therefore, his work should be viewed as not only compiling the pages of the Qur'an but also as an attempt to produce a scripture for collecting and detecting different recitation styles. Let us now study the relationship between this and the canonical writing of the scripture with respect to the characteristics of the differences between the recitation styles.

Examples of Recitation Styles Changing with dotted letters in the Same Word

Since it is important to show the operational principles of the differences that have been chosen from *mutawatir* recitation styles, we will not, for reasons of brevity, discuss the prominent scholars and narrators representing these styles.

Surah al-Baqarah verse 259: (نُنشِزُهَا) and نُنشِرُهَا Surah al-Nisa verse 94 and Hujurat

[20] DİB, *Konulu Kur'an Tefsiri*, p. 25.

verse 6: (فَتَبَيَّنُوا) and فَتَبَيَّنُوا

Surah Enam verse 57: (يَقُصُّ الْحَقَّ) and (يَقْضِ الْحَقَّ).

Examples of Recitation Styles Changing with Vocalization Marks

Al-i Imran verse 97: (حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ)(with kasrah of Ha), and (حَجُّ الْبَيْتِ(with Fetha)

Baqarah verse 9: (وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ), and وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ

Anbiya verse 4: (قُلْ رَبِّي)and (قَٰلَ رَبِّي)

There are three other places of disagreement of this type in which the word resembles قل without an *alif*. Why did the copiers of the scriptures write down قال hundreds of times without an *alif* and feel that they had to write it here as قل. To seek an answer to this question already shows that the origin of the recitation styles is divine. For both styles were narrated by *mutawatir* narrations, and the text has been transcribed in this way to show this.

Examples of Words Written Differently in the Scriptures of Othman as a Result of Recitation Styles

This issue has been studied thoroughly from the beginning and has been documented in separate works. The best-known work today is *Kitabu'l-Masahif*, written by Abi Dawud as-Sijistani. There are also separate chapters in the book *al-Muqni* by Abu Amr ad-Dani.[21]

We have already indicated that, together with the copies sent to Madinah, Mecca, Kufa, and Basra, and the master copy held by Othman, there were six copies. It is possible to divide these areas in three major parts, ignoring the minimal differences between them mentioned in this paper.

1. Hidjazi
2. Damascian
3. Iraqi

When the scriptures of these areas are compared, thirty-seven places can be pointed out that show the differences indicated.[22]

Abu Amr ad-Dani says the following:

> In order to have one scripture, Othman would have the words that he was sure came from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) transcribed twice, requiring different spelling. He disliked this since writing a word down twice could also be problematic. He saw the best solution was to write it down in different scriptures separately.[23]

It will be useful to give a few examples from prominent scholars of recitation

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[21] Ġānim Qaddūrī, *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf*, pp. 693-4.

[22] Al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Min Qaḍāyā al-Qur'ān*, pp. 138-39.

[23] Muḥammad Aḥmad Daḥmān, Review of *al-Muqni' fī Ma'rifat Marsūm Maṣāḥif Ahl al-Amṣār* by Abu 'Amr 'Uṯmān bin Sa'īd al-Dānī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), pp. 118-9.

to see the extent of the differences.

وَقَالُواالتَخَذَ in verse 116 of Baqara in the Hidjazi and Iraqi scriptures has been written as قَالُواالتَخَذَ without a *waw* in the Damascian scriptures.

خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا in verse 36 of Kahf in the Hidjazi and the Damascian scriptures has been written as خَيْرًا مِنْهَا without the dual form. Therefore, it is read as مِنْهُمَا in the recitation style of Abu Jafar and Nafi from Madinah and ibn Kathir from Mecca, all representing Hidjazi. On the other hand, it is read as مِنْهَا in the Iraqi representation by Asim, Hamza and Halef from Kufa and Abu Amr and Yaqub from Basra.

As shown in the examples, the widespread styles in these regions are the same as those found in the scriptures sent to these regions.

Following the examples from the prominent scholars representing the recitation styles, we now present examples of differences in the narrations from these scholars represented by narrators such as Hafs who is the narrator of the prominent scholar Asim from Kufa.

1. The spelling in Yasin 5 in the scriptures from Kufa is وَمَا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ, and prominent scholars of the area, such as Hamza, Kisai, Halef, and the second narrator of Asim i.e. Abu Bakr as-Shubah, read it as such. Hafs reads it as وَمَا عَمِلَهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ, in accordance with the style of the other regions.

2. The spelling in Zuhruf 71 in the scriptures from Kufa is تَشْتَهِي, and prominent scholars of the area, such as Hamza, Halef and the second narrator of Asim together with the prominent scholar ibn Kathir from Mecca read it in this way, whereas Hafs reads it like تَشْتَهِيهِ with the addition of the pronoun *ha* in accordance with Madinan and Damascian style.

As can be seen, Hafs reads the pronoun *ha* in these words as he learned it from his master Asim, and as a result he deviated from the recitation and writing style of Kufa. Since his narration with respect to reading and writing is at the same time in accordance with the scriptures in other regions, there is no doubt about its authenticity.

This shows us that the most important condition for the authenticity of the recitation styles is confirming that the narration can be linked to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) with a correct chain of narration. Therefore, three conditions that have to be fulfilled for a correct recitation style concerning the correctness and the existence of the narration are more important than its being in accordance with the scriptures of Othman.

Given this, it was not considered harmful in copies of the Qur'an recently printed to write it in accordance with the widespread recitation styles in a particular region, as long as its script is in agreement with the script of the scriptures of Othman. Therefore, we see in the Hafs-based script of the Qur'an that the aforementioned word is written with the addition of the pronoun *ha*.

Undoubtedly, we know that according to other narrations of Hafs that do not require a different spelling, he has recitation styles differing from that of Kufa or

other regions. The prominent scholar Asim said to his student Hafs: "I taught you the narration of my master Abu Abdurrahman as-Sulami which he learned from Ali." To Abu Bakr as-Shubah he said: "I taught you the narration of my master Zir b. Hubaysh from ibn Masud." This shows what role the different chain of narrations played in the existing differences.

The work of Caliph Othman is invaluable. He considered the different recitation styles in the context of "the seven letters" as real, and in order to protect them from change or loss, since all represented a genuine text of the Qur'an, he retained the differences in the copies of the scriptures.

Although there were many social clashes during his reign as a caliph, which even led to his death as a martyr, he was never accused of deleting or adding parts of the Qur'an, in short of altering the Qur'an, aside from a few ideological and far-fetched, unscientific claims by Shia.

Therefore, the scriptures of Othman have been completed with a very small number of spelling differences that are reflected in the different scriptures as necessary, having been transcribed with a specific way of reading and the spelling of Quraysh whereby all permitted recitation styles and reading the text were possible. Contrary to what orientalists like Goldziher claim, the reason for different recitation styles is not the script. The necessity in the study of recitation styles to link the narration to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) with a correct chain and the tradition of oral teaching is enough to dismiss those claims.

If Othman did not believe in the authenticity of the different recitation styles he would not have compiled more than one scripture and would have left it as one scripture. All *mutawatir* styles stated in the scriptures he had transcribed were passed on for a certain period in a correct way with the appointment of teachers for reading and teaching it correctly.

Efforts were undertaken to use dots and vocalization marks to preserve all the different styles because of similar problems in the period of Hajjaj. These were done with good intentions and to preserve the script and reading of the scriptures.

From the first century after *Hijrah* on, as the number of non-Arab Muslims increased the incorrect readings of the Qur'an also increased.

One day Abu'l-Aswad ad-Dueli (69/688) heard that a man was reading the verse[24] إن الله بريئ من المشركين ورسولُه as ورسولِه and said "it is now the time to use vocalization marks," and he started immediately to work on the issue. The meaning of the verse "Allah is free from obligations with the pagans and so His Messenger" was changed to "Allah is free from obligations with the pagans and His Messenger" as a result of reading it with the wrong end-case and this troubled ad-Dueli. Therefore, first vocalization marks were used and then dots. The confirmed recitation styles were the basis for marking and using dots in the Qur'an and, in due time, scrip-

[24] Qur'ān 9:3.

tures were prepared reflecting the characteristics of each style.

For example, the Sudanese government printed a scripture according to ad-Duri's narration by the prominent scholar Abu Amr, and this one is read in Somali and some other regions there. In Libya, scriptures are used that have been prepared according to Kalun's narration by the prominent scholar Nafi and in Tunisia, Morocco, and in the regions around these countries we see scriptures prepared according to Warsh's narration by the same scholar.

If we return to our main point: claiming that in order to prevent wrong reading recitation styles were used in the period when no vocalization marks existed is similar to claiming that the meaning of the verses are concerned only with the event that was the cause of a certain revelation. The latter claim is not true: there are many verses for which the reason of revelation is connected with the period of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), whereas the messages hinting at different meanings are universal. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asked Jibril to be easy with regard to reading by stating that the Muslim community in general was illiterate. These and other *hadiths* can be considered to be the reason behind the revelation of different recitation styles. The events mentioned in the *hadiths* related to "the seven letters" are not the reasons for the revelations but show the reality of recitation styles.

The recitation styles can be grouped under certain definitions with respect to their characteristic properties of which examples are given with regard to changes in words. The difference in pronunciation, which is considered by some people to be a dialect, is an ease provided by recitation styles, such as *fetih taklil* and *imale* in the word موسى and others. Regarding the recitation styles as easy for only certain dialects means that non-Arabic people who read the Qur'an need not be confronted with this lenience.

In addition to the fact that recitation styles provide ease in reading, scholars of exegesis observe that they also function in enriching the message of the text. In other words, the styles provide flexibility to the texts so that they carry the intended meaning and messages. In this regard we can see the recitation styles as a point connected with the inimitability of the Qur'an. For example, the word للعالِمين in إن فى ذلك لآيات للعالِمين ("herein, indeed, are portents for men of knowledge")[25] can be read with a difference in vocalization mark in two ways. The first is with the *kasrah* of *lam*. Hafs, the narrator of the prominent scholar Asim, is the only who reads it like this. Today, including us, the majority of Muslims read the Qur'an according to this style. It then means: "In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the multitude of languages are certainly signs of wisdom for the men of knowledge." The second is with the vocalization mark of *fatha* as in العالَمين, which is the way all prominent scholars and narrators except Hafs read العالَمين, the plural of *alim*, now includes all other intelligent beings.[26]

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[25] Qur'ān 30:22.

[26] Karaçam, Kıraat İlminin Kur'an Tefsirindeki Yeri ve Mutevatir Kiraatlerin Yorumu (Istanbul: M.U. Faculty of Theology, 1996), pp. 207-08.

Together with exegesis, all other Qur'anic sciences have to consult the discipline of recitation styles in the related fields. A variation of a word may give them different insights. The recitation styles also have the function of providing ease for the Ummah in addition to the commentary dimension. Furthermore, it fulfills the duty of controlling the Qur'anic words and protecting them against being lost. The recitation styles were taught directly by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). If this was not the case the different interpretations would play a role, and it would be difficult to preserve the word of the Qur'an.

After the recitation styles were divinely shaped, the systematics of different narration were determined by scholars of recitations, and incorrect incidental readings were disregarded. After the era of the Companions, in parallel with the expansion of Islamic territory, the number of people knowing the Qur'an by heart and the recitation styles increased. In due time, the recitation styles of scholars viewed as prominent were accepted in the regions where they lived. Therefore, the following scholars became prominent in recitations that are still taught and learned today:

in **Madinah**: Abu Jafar (130/747) and Nafi' (159/775).

in **Mecca**: Ibn Kathir (120/737).

in **Basra**: Abu 'Amr (154/770) and Ya'kub (205/820).

in **Damascus**: Ibn Amir (118/736).

in **Kufa**: Asim (127/744), Hamza (156/772), al-Kisai (189/804) and Halef (229/843).

The West and Andalusia did not have recitation styles until the end of the fourth century after Hijrah. The first one to introduce the recitation styles there was Abu Omar Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Abdillah at-Talemneki el-Qaysi (437/1045), author of the book *Kitabu'r-Rawda*. He was followed by Abu Muhammad Mekkī b. Abī Talib el-Qaysi (437/1045), author of *at-Tabsira* and *al-Kashf*. The tradition was continued by Abu Amir ad-Dani, the author of books such as *at-Taysir* and *Jamiu'l-Bayan*.[27] The widely accepted book by Abu Amr ad-Dani on the seven recitation styles with the title *at-Taysir* was summarized in a poetic form by Abu Muhammad al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Firruh es-Shatibi (590/1193) so people could learn it easily and memorize it. This poem is known as "as-Shatibiyyah" and is called *Hirzu'l-Amani wa Wajhu't-Tahani*.[28] This valuable work is still the most studied and memorized work today in the field of recitation styles in the Islamic world.

We can say that Abu'd-Derda, one of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) companions, introduced the recitation styles in Damascus. As a follower of the Companions, Al-Mughirah b. Shihab, a student of Othman b. Affan and the teacher of Ibn Amr, who was a prominent scholar in the Damascian region, played an important role in the

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[27] Al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*, vol. I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), pp. 34-35.

[28] Karaçam, Kıraat İlminin Qur'ān Tefsirindeki Yeri, p. 95.

spreading of recitation styles in this area.[29] With respect to the later period we can mention Abu Ali al-Hasen b. Ali b. Ibrahim al-Ahwazi (446/1054) in Damascus and Abu'l-Qasim Yusuf b. Ali b. Jubara al-Huzeli, author of *al-Kamil* who came from Maghrib and taught recitation styles in an area extending to Gaza.[30]

Today, Muslims recite the Qur'an as they inherited it from their ancestors in the Islamic world. There are also examples of people who changed their recitation style of the Qur'an due to emigration. The distribution of recitation narrations geographically is today as follows. The whole of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, and a major part of Niger, Mali, and Senegal recite according to the Warsh narration of the prominent scholar Nafi. The whole of Libya, Tunisia, and part of Chad follow the narration of Qalun from the prominent scholar Nafi, whereas the whole of Sudan and part of Somalia recite using the ad-Duri narration by the prominent scholar Abu Amr. In other regions, except for small minorities in Islamic countries or outside, the Hafs narration by the prominent scholar Asim is followed. Today, we have Qur'anic scriptures with points, vocalization marks, and other marks to make recitation easier, according to the style we follow, but the need for teaching these styles orally has not changed.

[29] Muḥaysin, *Fī Riḥāb al-Qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 293-94.

[30] Al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, vol. I, p. 35.

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