

Chapter “2”

History of Tajweed and Recitations

History of Compiling This Field of Knowledge

The first to set **the rules of *Tajweed*** were the prominent figures among the scholars of recitation and linguistics at the beginning of the era of compilation in this field of knowledge. This followed the numerous Islamic conquests that resulted in many non-Arab nations embracing Islam and mixing with the Arabs leading to the spread of mistakes in pronunciation among the Arabs. Fearing that this may lead to the distortion of the Book of Allah, the Muslim rulers tried to avoid this by treating its causes, where they brought about such means that guarantee the protection of Allah's Book (swt) from any mistake. Thus they introduced the dotting system and the diacritical marks which were not used in `Uthman's *Mushaf*. Then they introduced the rules of *Tajweed* in order for every reciter to abide by them.

The scholars have differed upon who introduced these rules first. Some say it was **Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad Al-Farahidi**, while other scholars stated that it was **Abu Al-Aswad Al-Du'ali**.

As for **the different recitations (*Qira'at*)**, perhaps the first scholar to write about this branch of knowledge was **Abu `Ubayd Al-Qasim ibn Sallam**, in the 3rd century of the Hijrah when he authored a book entitled "*Al-Qira'at*" (the recitations). It is stated that the first scholar to compile this and write it down in a book was **Abu `Umar Hafs ibn `Umar Al-Duri**, and yet other scholars attribute such a contribution to others.

- **In the 4th century:** The scholar **Abu Bakr ibn Mujahid Al-Baghdadi** was the first scholar to compile the seven recitations in one book.
- **In the 5th century:** The great memorizer **Abu `Amr `Uthman ibn Sa'id Al-Dani**. He authored many books in this branch of knowledge, the most important of which is the book "*Al-Taysir*" (Facilitation).
- **In the 6th Century:** Imam Al-Qasim ibn Fayyurah ibn Khalaf Al-Shatibi, who authored "*Hirz al-Amani wa wajh al-Tahani*" better known as "*Al-Shatibbiyyah*" wherein he summarized the book "*Al-Taysir fi al-Qira'at al-Sab`*".
- **In the 7th Century:** There came after them many other prominent figures, till Allah (swt) granted success to the leader of the verifying scholars Imam Abu Al-Khayr Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Al-Jazri, who authored many of the books of recitation and wrote the poem entitled "*Al-Muqaddimah fi `Ilm Al-Tajweed*" better known as "*Matn al-Jazriyyah*".

Reasons for Variations in Recitation

The variety in the recitations does not spring from the existence of contradictions, since it is impossible for contradictions to happen in the Qur'an which falsehood cannot approach.

The variety of recitations complement, and do not contradict, each other. Such variety sprang from the narration that each companion heard directly from the Prophet (pbuh) and because Caliph `Uthman (raa) not only sent the *Masahif* to the different countries in order for their people to learn the Qur'an, but he also sent with them a number of the companions of the Prophet who were well-known reciters to teach people the recitation directly. Those companions recited different recitations according to what they had heard from the Prophet. A third reason for this variety is that the `Uthmanic Mushafs were not restricted to a certain recitation because they were void of dots and diacritical marks to reflect the different narrations of recitation that each companion of the Prophet tried to teach the people he was sent to. Thus, each companion recited the Qur'an according to the way he had heard it directly from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and thus the people of each region stuck to what they had heard directly from the companion, and abandoned any other manner of recitation.

Manner of Recitations Reported from the Prophet

- **Definition:** The different manners of recitation of the Qur'anic word that were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the attribution of such recitations to their scholars whose chains of narration go all the way back to Allah's Messenger (pbuh).
- **Important terms in the knowledge of the recitations:**
 - **Qira'ah:** It is the type of recitation of the Qur'an which is attributed to any of the ten Imams of recitation according to the way he heard it directly from his Sheikh, and whose chain of narration goes all the way back to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), such as the *Qira'ah* of `Asim or Nafi`
 - **Riwayah:** It is the mode of recitation of the Qur'an which is attributed to the narrator who narrated from one of the ten Imams. Each of the ten imams had many narrators but the scholars chose just two of them. Each of these two narrators had chosen a certain mode of narration which had been attributed to this Imam within the frame of his type of recitation. Such a mode of recitation was attributed to this narrator, who became well-known for it. It is said, for example, the recitation of Hafs narrated from `Asim, the recitation of Warsh narrated from Nafi`, and so on.
 - **Tariq:** This is the way attributed to the person who conveyed the mode of recitation from the narrator, no matter how long after the narrator this way was. For example, it is said the recitation of Warsh through the way of Al-Azraq. Other Example, it is said the recitation of Hafs through the way of Al-Shatibiyah.

Biography of Imam `Asim

His Name: `Asim ibn Abi Al-Nujud Al-Asadi Al-Kufi. He was given the *kunya* (nickname) of Abu Bakr. Some sources state his father's name as `Abdullah and his mother's name as Bahdalah.

His Status:

- He was the master of all Qur'an reciters in Kufah.
- One of the seven famous reciters of the Qur'an, and a respected Taba'i (from the second generation after the Prophet (peace be upon him)).
- He was known for his eloquence, precision, accuracy, and mastery of *Tajweed*.
- He excelled in linguistics, Arabic language, and fiqh (jurisprudence). Imam `Asim was endowed with the ability to recite the Qur'an with a sweet voice.
- After **Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami** died, Imam `Asim was appointed as head of the Qur'an reciters in Kufah

His Merits: He had many merits, of which are:

- `Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal related that he asked his father about `Asim ibn Bahdalah, so he replied, "**He is a good, righteous, and trustworthy man.**" Then he asked him, "Whose recitation do you like the most?" He answered, "That of the people of Madinah." He (`Abdullah ibn Hanbal) said, "(But) if it is not available?" He said, "The recitation of `Asim."
- Abu Bakr Shu`bah ibn `Ayyash related that he entered upon `Asim when he was dying and found him repeating this verse, "**Then they will all be returned to God, their true Lord. The Judgement truly belongs to Him, and He is the swiftest of reckoners.**" (Al-An`am 6:62) He was reciting it perfectly as if he was in prayer.

Those who Narrated from Him: Many people narrated from him, the most famous of whom are **Hafs ibn Sulayman and Abu Bakr Shu`bah ibn `Ayyash**.

His Death: It is reported that he died towards the end of 127 A.H. and was buried in the city of al-Sammawah, in the Levant. Other sources mention that he was buried in Kufah early in 128 A.H.

His Sanad: His chain of transmission of his recitation of the Qur'an is continuous and mutawatir (related by many narrators in each step of the narration).

- He read the Qur'an directly from **Abu `Abd al-Rahman Al-Sulami**, who had read from **`Ali ibn Abi Talib** (raa). He gave this to "Hafs"
- He also read the Qur'an directly from **Zirr ibn Hubaysh al-Asadi**, who had read from **`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud** (raa). He gave this to "Sho'abah"

Biography of Imam Hafs

His Name: Hafs ibn Sulayman ibn Al-Mughirah ibn Abu Dawud Al-Asadi Al-Kufi Al-Bazaz, better known as Hufays. His *kunya* (nickname) is Abu `Umar.

His Preciseness and Perfect Mastery (of Recitation): He was taught the recitation directly by `Asim, face to face, where he mastered it so well, that the manner of recitation he reported became widely known. He was the best reciter, for a long time after `Asim's death, that taught recitation.

His Status:

- He was Imam Asims friend and step son.
- Hisham Al-Rifa'i said: "**Hafs was the best among the companions of `Asim in mastering `Asim's recitation, where he excelled Shu`bah with regard to his mastery of producing the letters precisely.**"
- Imam Al-Dhahabi said: "**With regard to recitation, he is a trustworthy firm authority.**"

Those Who Narrated His Recitation: Many studied Hafs' recitation directly from him, face to face, including: Husayn ibn Muhammad Al-Marwazi, `Amr ibn Al-Sabbah, `Ubayd ibn Al-Sabbah, Al-Fadl ibn Yahya Al-Anbari, Abu Shu`ayb Al-Qawwas, and others.

His Birth and Death: He (raa) was born in 90 A.H. and died in 180 A.H., according to the preponderant reports.

His Sanad:

- Hafs studied the recitation of the Noble Qur'an at the hands of Imam `Asim, who directly recited to him the recitation he had learnt, face to face, from Abu `Abdul-Rahman Al-Sullami, which he, in turn, had learnt directly from `Ali ibn Abi Talib (raa).
- It is related from Hafs that he said: "I said to `Asim that Abu Bakr Shu`bah recites in a manner different from the one you taught me," whereupon `Asim replied: "I recited to you the very recitation that Abu `Abdul-Rahman Al-Sullami directly recited to me, face to face, which he, in turn, had learnt directly, face to face, from `Ali ibn Abi Talib (raa); yet, I recited to Shu`bah the very recitation that **Zirr ibn Hubaysh** directly recited to me, face to face, which he, in turn, had learnt directly, face to face, from **`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud** (raa)."

Review



- After the appearance of distortion and battle, the scholars have compiled the knowledge of tajweed and recitation.
- The variations in recitation are not contradictory or opposing to one another, rather they are due to changes and differences.
- Imam `Asim used to recite in AlKufa and he is the most famous one who recited from Imam Hafs and Shu`ba.
- Imam Hafs took the recitation from Imam `Asim from Abi `Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sulami from Ali bin Abi Talib.

Test Your Knowledge!

A- Fill in the blanks:

1. Imam Al-Shatibi's wrote his poem _____, where he summarizes the book _____.
2. Imam 'Asim recited the narration of Hafs which he recited from _____ from _____. Whereas he recited the narration of Sho'ba which he recited from _____ from _____.

B- True or False:

1. A riwayat is the mode of recitation of the Qur'an which is attributed to the narrator who narrated from one of the ten Imams ()
2. Asem gave Hafs the Rewaiah of Zir Ibn-Hubaish ()

