

PRESERVATION PROMISED

*An Overview of the Sciences that
Preserve the Qur'ānic Text*



by Saaima Yacoob

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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First Print 2026

Recite With Love

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Author: Saaima Yacoob

Proofreader: Basil Farooq

Cover Design: Huzaifa Saleh



صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

REVIEWS FOR THE BOOK

Preservation Promised addresses a genuine gap in English Qurʾānic education. A ḥāfiẓ or tajwīd student completing their studies frequently lacks awareness of the broader sciences their recitation sits within. This work bridges that disparity directly, introducing seven foundational sciences: *tajwīd*, *qirāʾāt*, *rasm*, *ḍabṭ*, *ʿilm ʿadd al-āy*, *waqf* and *ibtidāʿ* and the internal state of the reciter within a single volume, a feat rare in English literature. Each science receives the same rigorous structure: definition, ruling, subject, objective, and a curated blueprint of essential works in that field. This consistency trains the student to think in classical scholarly categories rather than in isolation. The reader emerges grounded in understanding how their accomplishments connect to a living tradition, how these sciences speak to one another, and precisely where to go next. Ustādḥah Saaima has produced not merely an introduction but an orientation, equipping every serious student of the Qurʾān with the framework they did not know they were missing. -**Qārī Ilyas Badr, Director, El Badr Institute**

Alḥamdulillāh, Allah bestowed upon me the opportunity to peruse this booklet. I have reviewed it thoroughly and benefitted from it. It is an essential work for all students of the science of *qirāʾah*, simultaneously presenting indispensable fundamentals of various sciences pertaining to *al-qirāʾah* in a concise, yet collated manner. A treatise that every student of this knowledge should review in his or her teacher's mentorship, or more precisely should reserve in their required reading. Examining such works creates proficiency in this science, while evolving into an authoritative resource for advanced students.

May Allah SWT accept this work from Ustādhah Saaima and make it beneficial. May Allah, the Almighty, accept her efforts, protect her, and continue to empower her with the ability to serve the Qurʾān and the *dīn*. – **Qārī Abdul Basit Kazi, Tajwīd and Qirāʾāt Teacher, Jamiah Qasimul Uloom, Canada**

This book is a refreshing piece of work which aims to build the love for the Qurʾān within the hearts and minds of the readers. In particular, I am very fond of the way in which the author provides a very detailed overview of the historical advancements of *qirāʾah*, *tajwīd* and the revelation of the Qurʾān. There is also an extensive list of books and resources relating to *qirāʾah*, *tajwīd* which students of knowledge can benefit greatly from. May Allah reward Ustadhah Saaima Yacoob for her sterling efforts in writing this book and may this book be a means of increasing our love for the Qurʾānic sciences and bringing many people closer to the Qurʾān. *Āmīn*. – **Qārī Ishaq Jasat, Imam, Teacher and Author**

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INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah who revealed His Book upon His beloved Messenger ﷺ and promised to preserve His book. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muḥammad ﷺ, his family and his companions.

Allah Ta‘ālā has preserved the Qur’ān in the hearts of people and through the sacred sciences that preserve the text of the Qur’ān. These are the sciences of *tajwīd*, *qirā’āt*, *rasm*, *fawāṣil*, and *ḍabṭ*. The science of *waqf* and *ibtidā’* is another important science studied by the *qurrā’*. This science deals with the preservation of the meaning of the Qur’an.

Our late teacher, Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail ؒ, was particular about introducing his students to almost all these topics. Because many students are unable to explore these sciences through a detailed study of a primer in each subject, I felt it would be beneficial to write a short work that would present the basic definitions, objectives, and major works in each of these sciences. This will allow readers to increase their understanding and appreciation for these subjects, as well as provide them with a starting point for further research.¹

¹ This work is inspired by similar works in Urdu and Arabic, most notably, Qārī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Rāsikh’s article *Naṣṣ-e Qur’ānī kay Muta‘alliq Chand ‘Ulūm*

When possible, I have relied heavily on the books that have already been published through Recite With Love and Qiraatsimplified. Therefore, I have not always included the original references. Rather, I refer the reader to the work from which the information was taken.

This work may be studied with a teacher or used as an independent reference for students of the Qurʾānic sciences. The intended audience for this book is students who are completing their *tajwīd* studies or beginning their *qirāʾāt* studies. Reading through this work will help them to understand how these sciences are interconnected as well as guide them in their future studies, *in shāʾ Allāh*.

While Allah has honored students and teachers of the Qurʾān by allowing them to be a part of the preservation of the Qurʾān, we are not guaranteed acceptance from Him. Rather, it is those servants of the Qurʾān that actively work on disciplining their lower desires and inculcating the internal and external *sunnahs* of the Prophet ﷺ who will *in shāʾ Allah* receive the great blessing of acceptance and reward from Allah. Therefore, this work also includes a chapter on the internal state of students and teachers of the Qurʾān.

ka Taʿāruf in al-Rushd, June 2009, 530-552, and Dr. ʿAbd al-Qayyūm al-Sindī’s work *Ṣafaḥāt fī ʿUlum al-Qirāʾāt*.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my student, Mohamed Noor Ahmad, for his help in compiling this work and to Mawlānā Huzaifa Saleh for designing a beautiful cover for this work. I am sincerely grateful to Qārī Abdul Basit Kazi and Mawlānā Arif Kamal for their valuable feedback and suggestions. Lastly, I thank my student, Qārī Basil Farooq, for the hours he spent meticulously proofreading this work. May Allah grant them all every *khair* in this world and the next. *Āmīn*.

I ask Allah to forgive me, accept my meager efforts, and to make this work of benefit to all those who come across it. *Āmīn*.

اللّهم هذا الدعاء وعليك الإجابة وهذا الجهد وعليك التكلان

Saaima Yacoob

January 31st, 2026/13th Sha^ḥbān 1447

TAJWĪD²

Linguistic definition: To better or to embellish.

Technical definition: To give each letter its right in terms of qualities (permanent qualities) and to give the letters what they deserve (temporary qualities), and to articulate every letter from its correct *makhraj*.³

Ruling: Its application is obligatory on every adult Muslim (*farḍ ‘ayn*), meaning that every Muslim is obligated to recite the Qur’ān without any major mistakes (*lahn jalī*). Gaining knowledge of the science is obligatory on the community (*farḍ kifāyah*), meaning that even if one person fulfills it, the obligation will be lifted from the rest.⁴

Subject: The subject of the science of *tajwīd* is the correct pronunciation and excellent articulation of the letters and words of the Qur’ān.⁵

² A more detailed discussion on the development of the science of *tajwīd* can be found in Qārī Muḥammad Salīm Gaibie’s *The History of Tajwīd*. May Allah reward the author for his amazing efforts. *Āmīn*.

³ Esmail, *Tashīl al-Jazariyyah*, 91; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah*, l. 30-31.

⁴ Al-Mar‘ashī, *Juhd al-Muqill*, 109-110; Muḥammad Ṭāhir Raḥīmī, *Tārīkh ‘Ilme Tajwīd*, 11.

⁵ Muḥammad Ṭāhir Raḥīmī, *Tārīkh ‘Ilme Tajwīd*, 9.

The science of *tajwid* can be divided into the following **four** topics:⁶

1. ***Makhārij al-Ḥurūf***: The *makhraj* of a letter is its point of articulation. According to the relied upon opinion, there are seventeen *makhārij* within five general regions.
 - a. ***Al-Jawf***: This is the oral cavity. The three letters of *madd* are articulated from this *makhraj*.
 - b. ***Al-Ḥalq***: This is the throat. It has three points of articulation from which six letters (*hamzah*, *hāʾ*, *ʿain*, *ḥāʾ*, *ghain* and *khāʾ*) are articulated.
 - c. ***Al-Lisān***: This is the tongue and it also has sub-regions.
 - i. **Back of the tongue**: This is the point of articulation of *qāf* and *kāf*. The back of the tongue touches the soft palate for *qāf* and the hard palate for *kāf*. These are two separate articulation points.
 - ii. **Middle of the tongue**: This is the point of articulation of *jīm*, *yāʾ*, and *shīn*.
 - iii. **Side of the tongue**: This is the point of articulation of the letter *ḍād*. The front

⁶ Muḥammad Ṭāhir Raḥīmī, *Tārīkh ʿIlme Tajwīd*, 14; Al-Ḥamad, *al-Madkhal ilā ʿUlūm al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf*, 255; Thānwī, *Tārīkh ʿIlme Tajwīd o Qirāʾāt*, 37.

part of the side of the tongue along with the tip is used for the letter *lām*.

iv. Tip of the tongue:

1. Behind the gums of the upper teeth: *nūn rāʾ*, and *lām*. The edge of the tongue is also used for *rāʾ*. Each of these letters is considered to be from a close but separate point of articulation.
2. Behind the roots of the upper front teeth: *ṭāʾ*, *tāʾ*, and *dāl*.
3. Behind the lower front teeth: *ṣād*, *sīn*, and *zāʾ*.
4. At the bottom edge of the upper front teeth: *thāʾ*, *dhāl*, and *zāʾ*.

d. ***Al-Shafatain*** These are the lips. This region has two points of articulation from which four letters are pronounced: *fāʾ*, *wāw*, *bāʾ*, and *mīm*.

e. ***Al-Khaishūm*** This is the nasal cavity and is the point of articulation for *ghunnah*.

2. ***Ṣifāt al-Ḥurūf***: The manner of articulation (*ṣifāt*) of a letter describe how the breath and vocal cords behave when a letter is said correctly. They also describe the nature of a letter's sound and if there are other parts of the tongue that are used to pronounce the letter correctly.

Essentially, they provide us with the extra information that we need to produce the correct sound of a letter. Some are performative, like *qalqalah*, and others are descriptive, like *hums*, which simply describes that the vocal cords will not vibrate when that set of letters is said correctly. *Şifāt* are divided into two categories:

- a. **Those with opposites:** These are a total of five pairs, and one pair has a third quality as well.
 - b. **Those without opposites:** There are a total of seven *şifāt* without opposites.
3. **The other rules of *tajwīd*:** These can be described as those rules that occur in specific scenarios, such as the rules of *nūn sākinah* and *tanwīn*, rules of *madd* etc. These are also referred to as temporary qualities. Essentially, all the other rules of *tajwīd* other than *makhārij* and permanent *şifāt* fall into this category.
 4. **Practicing its Recitation:** None of the concepts above can be mastered without reciting to a qualified teacher. Teachers guide students step by step by correcting their mistakes and helping them to apply the rules of *tajwīd* correctly and consistently.

Objective: The objective of *tajwīd* is to protect the tongue from the incorrect articulation of Arabic letters and to recite the Qurʾān in correct Arabic as it was revealed and as it has reached us from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.⁷ My teacher, Qārī Najm al-Ṣabīḥ Thānwī, also mentions that the spiritual objective of *tajwīd* is to seek the pleasure of Allah *Taʿālā*.

Scholars and Books

The development of the science of *tajwīd* may be divided into three stages:⁸

1. The first stage is that of **recitation and oral transmission**. This begins with the revelation of the Qurʾān to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ taught the *ṣaḥābah* to recite the Qurʾān with *tajwīd* and they taught it to others in the same manner. This stage begins during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and lasts until the second century *hijrī*.
2. The second stage is that of **codification of the rules within books of *qirāʾāt* and Arabic grammar and morphology**. Although these books were not dedicated solely to the science of *tajwīd*, they included topics such as *makhārij*, *ṣifāt*, *idghām* etc. This stage lasted about two *hijrī*

⁷ Muḥammad Ṭāhir Raḥīmī, *Tārīkh ʿIlme Tajwīd*, 9.

⁸ Al-Ḥamad, *al-Madkhal ilā ʿUlūm al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf*, 255-256.

centuries. The oral transmission of the Qurʾān also continued in this stage.

3. The third stage begins in the fourth century *hijrī* with Abū Muzāḥim Mūsā ibn ʿUбайдullāh al-Khāqānī (d. 325 AH) writing the first **didactic poem dedicated entirely to the science of *tajwīd***.⁹ This stage continues until today, with new works being authored on *tajwīd* alongside the continued oral transmission of the Qurʾān.

Below is a short list of some of the commonly referenced and widely taught books in the science of *tajwīd*.

1. *Al-Riʿāyah li-Tajwīd al-Qirāʾah wa Taḥqīq Lafẓ al-Tilāwah* This book is by Imam Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Qaisi (d. 437 AH).¹⁰
2. *Al-Taḥdīd fī al-Itqān wa al-Tajwīd*: This book is by ʿAllāmah Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 444 AH).
3. *Al-Tamhīd fī Maʿrifat al-Tajwīd*: This book is by al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAṭṭār al-Hamadhānī (d. 569 AH).
4. *Al-Tamhīd fī ʿIlm al-Tajwīd*: This book is by Imam Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833 AH).

⁹ For an English translation and commentary of this text see *Beyond Recitation: Tajwīd and Spirituality* by Saaima Yacoob.

¹⁰ For a detailed biography of Imam Makkī see Qārī Bāsil Farooq’s *Imam Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib: The Life and Works of a Fourth Century Scholar of the Qurʾānic and Arabic Sciences* published by Recite With Love.

5. ***Al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah***: This is a didactic poem on *tajwīd* by Imam Ibn al-Jazarī. It has numerous commentaries in many different languages.
6. ***Juhd al-Muqill* and *Bayān Juhd al-Muqill***: This book is by Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Mar‘ashī, known as Sājiqlizādah (d. 1150 AH). *Bayān Juhd al-Muqill* is the author’s own commentary on his book *Juhd al-Muqill*.
7. ***Tuhfat al-Aṭfāl***: This is a didactic poem on *tajwīd* by Imam Sulaimān al-Jamzūrī (d. 1204 AH).
8. ***Nihāyat al-Qawl al-Mufid***: This book is by Muḥammad Makkī Naṣr al-Juraisī. A comprehensive study of *tajwīd*, it discusses *tajwīd* rules across the various *qirā’āt* and does not limit itself to any one *qirā’ah* or *riwāyah*.
9. ***Hidāyat al-Qārī***: This book is by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Marṣafī. This book provides a detailed study of the rules of *tajwīd* and also includes a section on the biographies of classical and contemporary *qurrā’*.

These are a few books in Arabic that serve as great starting points for students and teachers of *tajwīd*. There are countless books written on *tajwīd* in many languages, such as Urdu, English, Malay, and many others. There are also *tajwīd* books that focus on the *riwāyah* of Qālūn or Warsh instead of Ḥafṣ.

QIRĀ'ĀT

Linguistic meaning: The word *qirā'āt* is the plural of *qirā'ah*. The linguistic definition is to gather.¹¹

Technical Definition: Ibn al-Jazarī defines it as:

علم بكيفية أداء الكلمات القرآنية واختلافها بعزو الناقل¹²

The science that studies how the words of the Qur'ān are recited, the differences among those recitations, and the attribution of each difference to its respective narrator.

Subject: Its subject is the differences within the *uṣūl* (principles) and *furūsh* (individual differences) of Qur'ānic words as they have been transmitted from the Imams of *qirā'āt* through their unbroken chains of transmission and the widespread recitation of their readings (*tawātur*). It incorporates both the academic study of these differences as well as their correct recitation and pronunciation.¹³

A person who is considered knowledgeable in *qirā'āt* is someone who has received *qirā'ah* orally from those before him/her with an unbroken chain of transmission. It is not enough to simply

¹¹ Al-Mas'ūl, *Muḥjam Muṣṭalahāt 'Ilm al-Qirā'āt al-Qurā'niyyah*, 270-271; Najm al-Ṣabīḥ Thānwī, *Tārīkh 'ilm-e tajwīd o qirā'āt*, 111.

¹² Ibn al-Jazarī, *Munjid al-Muqri'in*, 9.

¹³ Al-Sindī, *Ṣafahāt fi 'Ulūm al-Qirā'āt*, 16.

memorize its texts. This is because the details of this science can only be mastered through listening and reciting.¹⁴

Objective: Its objective is to safeguard the words of the Qurʾān from all forms of distortion, meaning, in its words and pronunciation and to learn the *qirāʾāt* of the Imams of *qirāʾah*.¹⁵

Ruling: To learn and teach the science of *qirāʾāt* is *farḍ kifāyah*.

Proofs from the Hadith: There are many narrations from the beloved Prophet ﷺ that verify the existence of the canonical recitations and show that the Prophet ﷺ taught different companions ﷺ different readings of specific words or verses.¹⁶ One of the main narrations that supports the existence of these canonical readings is the hadith where the Prophet ﷺ states that “The Qurʾān has been revealed in seven *aḥruf* (modes). So, recite it in a way that is easy for you out of these.”¹⁷ The Prophetic narration of the Qurʾān being revealed in seven *aḥruf* has been reported by a multitude of companions of the Prophet ﷺ, to the point that it is considered widely transmitted (*mutawātir*).

ʿUthmān ؓ, while addressing the believers from the pulpit, requested all the companions ؓ who had heard that the Qurʾān is revealed in seven *aḥruf* to stand. So many companions stood up

¹⁴ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Munjid al-Muqriʿin*, 9.

¹⁵ Najm al-Ṣabīḥ Thānwī, *Tārīkh ʿilm-e Tajwīd o Qirāʾāt*, 113.

¹⁶ Bukhārī 4992; Muslim 820.

¹⁷ Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, hadith nos. 2419, 4991, 4992.

that it was difficult to count them.¹⁸ While these details prove that the Qurʾān was revealed in seven *aḥruf*, scholars have differed as to what the meaning of the seven *aḥruf*, or modes, is.

Seven *Aḥruf*

While some scholars have interpreted the seven *aḥruf* to mean that the Qurʾān was revealed in the dialects of seven specific Arab tribes, other scholars have said that the number “seven” alludes to the idea that there are multiple modes of recitation, and this narration does not necessarily mean that there are exactly seven modes of recitation. Each of these interpretations has been refuted by other scholars for various reasons.¹⁹ However, the most prevalent understanding is that the term “seven *aḥruf*” represents seven categories of differences. In other words, all the differences among the various transmitted readings of the

¹⁸ This narration is found in Abū Yaʿlā's *al-Musnad al-kabīr*. See Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Būṣīrī, *Ithāf al-khiyarah al-maharah*, hadith nos. 7954-7955; Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī, *al-Maqṣad al-ʿalī fī zawāʿid Abī Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī*, hadith no. 1216; al-Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʿid*, hadith no. 11627; Usmani, *An Approach to the Qurʾānic Sciences*, 105-106; Muajul Chowdhury, *al-Rawḍah fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*, 1:104.

¹⁹ These varying interpretations and responses to them can be further explored in Usmani, *An Approach to the Qurʾānic Sciences*, 106-117 and *The Variant Readings of the Qurʾān* by Dr. Ahmad Ali al-Imam.

Qurʾān can be categorized into seven categories. Ibn al-Jazarī رحمته الله has explained them as follows:²⁰

1. A change in vowels that does not lead to a change in meaning or in the skeletal outline of the word, e.g.,

يَحْسِبُ | يَحْسِبُ

2. A change in vowels that leads to a change in meaning, but not in the skeletal outline of a word, e.g.,

أَخَذَ | أُخِذَ

3. A change in letters that leads to a change in meaning but not in the skeletal outline of a word, e.g.,

تَبَلَّوْا | تَتَلَّوْا

4. A change in letters that can lead to a change in the skeletal outline but not in its meaning, e.g.,

صِرَاطٌ | سِرَاطٌ

5. A change in the letters, meaning and skeletal outline of a word, e.g.,

أَشَدَّ | أَشَدَّ
مِنْكُمْ | مِنْهُمْ

6. A change in the order of words, e.g.,

وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا | وَقُتِلُوا
وَقَاتَلُوا

7. The addition or omission of a letter, e.g.,

سَارِعُوا | وَسَارِعُوا

²⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 1:33; Anīs Aḥmad Khan, *al-Fawā'id al-Mukammilah*, 25-26.

Other scholars such as Imam Mālik رحمته الله, Imam Abū al-Faḍl al-Rāzī رحمته الله and Ibn Qutaybah رحمته الله have also stated that the seven *aḥruf* refer to seven categories of differences, although their categorizations are somewhat different.²¹ When we observe the seven categories above, we can see that the differences between the canonical recitations fall into what the Prophet ﷺ referred to as the seven *aḥruf*. However, it is important to clarify that the seven recitations that are commonly studied are part of the seven *aḥruf* but are not a comprehensive study of the seven *aḥruf*, as there are ten canonical recitations of the Qurʾān known today.

Benefits and Wisdoms²²

Scholars have presented the following reasons among others for the existence of the *aḥruf*. Firstly, the Qurʾān was revealed in Arabic, and Arabic was a diverse language with many dialects that differed from tribe to tribe. Because each tribe was accustomed to their particular ways of pronouncing certain letters, such as bending an *alif* more towards a *yāʾ*, or reading a *hamzah* more lightly than other tribes, it was very difficult for them to alter their dialect when reciting the Qurʾān. For some, such as young children and the elderly, it may have been impossible to do so. Allah, Most High, allowed for the Qurʾān to

²¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 1:33-34; Usmani, *An Approach to the Qurʾānic Sciences*, 114-115.

²² Najm al-Ṣabiḥ Thānwī, *Tārīkh ʿilm-e tajwīd o qirāʾāt*, 131-134.

be recited in different modes of recitation to create ease for all the Arab tribes, and this is reflected in a Prophetic narration in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imam Muslim reported by Ubayy b. Kaʿb رضي الله عنه in which the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم states that when he was commanded to recite the Qurʾān to his *ummah* in one mode (*ḥarf*), he asked Allah for pardon and forgiveness and stated that his people would be unable to do this. Allah, Most High increased the number to two, then three, and then eventually, seven.²³

Secondly, Allah, Most High, challenged the Arabs of the time to produce a linguistic miracle like the Qurʾān.²⁴ However, if the Qurʾān had only been revealed in one mode, according to one dialect of Arabic, the other tribes could have made the excuse that they were unable to produce something like the Qurʾān because it had not been revealed in their dialect. However, since the canonical recitations of the Qurʾān incorporate multiple Arabic dialects, this extends the challenge to all the Arab tribes and prevents them from making such an excuse.





Thirdly, the canonical recitations are a proof of the Qurʾān truly being the word of Allah. Through the canonical recitations, the Qurʾān incorporates layers of meaning, with one supporting or explaining the other, and expanding our understanding of Allah, Most High's message, without contradictions. No other text has


²³ Muslim, *al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, hadith no. 821.

²⁴ Sūrah Yūnus, *āyah* 38.

layers of meaning within one verse or sentence in such a manner. These layers of meaning add depth to the exegesis of various *āyāt* as well as strengthen the understanding of jurists when they derive rulings from Qurʾānic verses.

The Nature of Differences Between the Qirāʾāt

The existence of the various readings of the Qurʾān does not mean that every word in the Qurʾān can be recited in multiple ways. Rather, we can say that there are two types of words in the Qurʾān, those that are agreed upon and are always recited in one way, and those which may be recited in multiple ways. The first type of words have been recited in only one way by the *ṣaḥābah* . The second type of words are those which the *ṣaḥābah*  read in various ways. Both these types of words were revealed by Allah, Most High, and taught to the *ṣaḥābah*  by the beloved Prophet .²⁵

One of the main types of differences that a person can hear between the canonical recitations are those that do not have any effect on the meaning of the Qurʾān. These are norms from various dialects of Arabic as it was spoken during the time of the Prophet , and the Qurʾān can also be recited in them. For example, one may hear that the sound of the long vowel “ā” sounds more like “ay” in certain readings, or one may notice that

²⁵ Anīs Aḥmad Khān, *al-Fawāʾid al-Mukammilah*, 22-23.

the “L” sound is thicker and more heavy sounding in one reading over another. Although these differences do not have any effect on the meaning of the Qurʾān, they are governed by documented rules and principles and can only be applied according to those rules. The reciter cannot apply them according to his/her own volition but rather must follow the way of reading that has been preserved through oral chains of transmission.

The second type of difference is in those words which were revealed in different ways and add a nuance to the meaning. It is important to note that although the meaning changes somewhat, one canonical recitation does not make something unlawful that another has made lawful. Rather, they add layers of meaning to a single detail or concept that Allah, Most High, has mentioned.

Development of the Science²⁶

The Qurʾān was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ with the different readings and was taught to him thus by the angel Jibrīl ؑ. The Prophet ﷺ then taught the Qurʾān to the *ṣaḥābah* ؓ and they learned it from him ﷺ in its various readings. This is why one companion learned a particular reading from the Prophet ﷺ while another companion learned a different reading from the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ also named specific *ṣaḥābah* from

²⁶ A excellent resource in English is Qārī Abdullah Motara’s article *A Basic History of the Qirāʾāt*.

whom the other *ṣaḥābah* should learn the Qurʾān.²⁷ The *ṣaḥābah* would teach each other the Qurʾān as well.²⁸

The *ṣaḥābah* settled in various parts of the Muslim world and taught the Qurʾān to people as they had learned it from the Prophet ﷺ. However, there were differences among these readings. Eventually, scholars from the *tābiʿīn* and *tabaʿ al-tābiʿīn* who had studied these readings with one or more of the *ṣaḥābah* or the senior *tābiʿīn* began to specialize in the recitation of the Qurʾān. These specialists organized what they transmitted from the *ṣaḥābah* and/or the *tābiʿīn* into distinct manners of recitation. If they had received multiple readings, they sometimes gave preference to one over the other. One reason for preference was that it had been transmitted by more than one teacher. These modes of recitation, or *qirāʾāt*, were assigned to the particular scholars who organized them, such as the *qirāʾah* of Nāfiʿ etc. as well as those that were famous for teaching them (*ruwāt*). Each region of the Muslim world (Madīnah, Makkah, Kūfah, Baṣrah, Shām) had certain readings that became more dominant.

Although early books in the science of *qirāʾāt* recorded up to twenty-five *qirāʾāt*, a scholar named Imam Ibn Mujāhid²⁹ (d. 324

²⁷ These were Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Sālim, and Muʿādh ibn Jabal. Bukhārī 4999; Muslim 2464.

²⁸ See al-Sindī, *al-Madkhal ilā ʿilm al-Qirāʾāt*, p. 58-65 for the supporting *āḥādīth*.

²⁹ He was born in 245 AH in Baghdad. Ibn Mujāhid was one of the most knowledgeable people in his time in the science of *qirāʾāt*, and he was also the

AH) chose seven *qirā'āt* in his book *Kitāb al-Sab'ah* and insisted that it was better that the *ummah* limit itself to these seven *qirā'āt*. He chose these *qirā'āt* not just for the strength of their transmission but also because they were the dominant and widely accepted readings of their areas. This did not mean that other *qirā'āt* were not taught or recorded in books, such as the *qirā'āt* of Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb and Khalaf. But, rather, the more well-known books were generally organized around these seven *qirā'āt* until Ibn al-Jazarī wrote books that made the *qirā'āt* of Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb and Khalaf more widely taught.

first to select the seven *qirā'āt* that are commonly taught and recited today. He recited the Qur'ān to 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdūs, making twenty *khatams* with him. He also recited to Imam Qunbul and 'Abdullah ibn Kathīr (not the second Imam of *qirā'āt*) who was a companion of Abū Ayyūb al-Khayyāṭ who was a companion of al-Yazīdī. Ibn Mujāhid transmitted the differences in *qirā'āt* (*ḥurūf*) by listening to them from about forty teachers. In addition to being extremely knowledgeable, he was also very pious. Ibn al-Jazarī writes that he did not know of any teacher of *qirā'āt* that had as many students as Ibn Mujāhid. About three hundred students were seen in his *ḥalaqah*, with eighty-four assistant teachers who would correct people's recitation before they could recite to Ibn Mujāhid. Among them were Šāliḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mubārak, Abū Aḥmad 'Abdullah ibn al-Ḥusain al-Sāmarī, 'Alī ibn Sa'īd al-Qazzāz, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shanabūdhī, and Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Murrah ibn Naqqāsh. He passed away on a Wednesday at *zuhr* time on the 20th of Sha'bān, 324 AH. Yacoob, *The Continuous Caravan*, 32.

The names, dates of death, and famous students of these ten *qārīs* are listed below:³⁰

Qārī	Rāwī
Imam Nāfiʿ: Nāfiʿ ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Nuʿaim al-Laythī (d. 169 AH)	Qālūn: ʿĪsā ibn Mīnā al-Madani (d. 220 AH)
	Warsh: ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Miṣrī (d. 197 AH)
Imam Ibn Kathīr: ʿAbd Allah ibn Kathīr al-Makkī (d. 120 AH). Imam Bazzī transmits the <i>qirāʾah</i> of Imam Ibn Kathīr with two narrators in between him and Imam Ibn Kathīr. Imam Qunbul transmits the <i>qirāʾah</i> of Imam Ibn Kathīr with three narrators between him and Imam Ibn Kathīr.	Bazzī: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Abī Bazzah (d. 250 AH)
	Qunbul: Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd ibn Saʿīd al-Makkī al-Makhzūmī (d. 291 AH)
Imam Abū ʿAmr: Zabbān ibn al-ʿAlāʾ ibn ʿAmmār al-Māzinī al-Baṣrī (d. 154 AH). His two <i>rāwīs</i> transmit from him through Yaḥyā ibn al-Mubarak al-ʿAdawī who was known as al-Yazīdī.	Al-Dūrī: Abū ʿUmar Hafṣ ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī al-Naḥwī (d. 246 AH)
	Sūsī: Abū Shuʿaib Ṣāliḥ ibn Ziyād ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Sūsī (d. 261 AH)
Imam Ibn ʿAmir: ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿĀmir al-Shāmī al-Yaḥṣabī (d. 118 AH). His <i>kunyah</i> was Abū ʿImrān. His two <i>rāwīs</i> transmit his <i>qirāʾah</i> from him with two narrators in between.	Hishām: Hishām ibn ʿAmmār ibn Nuṣayr al-Qāḍī al-Dimashqī (d. 245 AH). His <i>kunyah</i> was Abū al-Walīd.
	Ibn Dhakwān: ʿAbd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr ibn Dhakwān al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī (d. 242 AH). His <i>kunyah</i> was Abū ʿAmr.

³⁰ Biographies of these Imams can be found in Qārī Salīm Gaibie’s *Narratives on the Seven Great Readers*, Qārīʾah Sabah Shaikh’s *The Three Qurrāʾ and Their Ruwāt*, and Shaykh Munowar Harneker’s *The Qurrāʾ Couplets*.

<p>Imam ʿĀṣim: ʿĀṣim ibn Abī Najūd (d. 127 AH). He was called ibn Bahdalah, after his mother. His <i>kunya</i> was Abū Bakr.</p>	<p>Shuʿbah: Abū Bakr ibn Shuʿbah ibn ʿAyyash ibn Sālim al-Kūfī (d. 193 AH).</p> <p>Hafṣ: Hafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah al-Bazzāz al-Kūfī (d. 180 AH). His <i>kunya</i> was Abū ʿUmar.</p>
<p>Imam Ḥamzah: Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb ibn ʿUmārah al-Zayyāt al-Faraḍī al-Taymī (d. 156 AH). His <i>kunya</i> was Abū ʿUmārah. His two <i>rāwīs</i> transmit from him through Imam Sulaym ibn ʿĪsā al-Hanafī al-Kūfī.</p>	<p>Khalaf: Khalaf ibn Hishām ibn Thaʿlab al-Bazzār al-Baghdādī (d. 229 AH). His <i>kunya</i> was Abū Muḥammad.</p> <p>Khallād: Khallād ibn Khālīd, or ibn Khulayd al-Ṣayrafī al-Kūfī. His <i>kunya</i> was Abū ʿĪsā (d. 220 AH).</p>
<p>Imam al-Kisāʿī: ʿAlī ibn Ḥamzah al-Naḥwī. His <i>kunya</i> was Abū al-Ḥasan (d. 189 AH).</p>	<p>Abū al-Ḥārith: Al-Layth ibn Khālīd al-Baghdādī (d. 240 AH)</p> <p>al-Dūrī: Abū ʿUmar Hafṣ ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī al-Naḥwī (d. 246 AH)</p>
<p>Imam Abū Jaʿfar: Yazīd ibn al-Qaʿqāʿ (d. 130 AH)</p>	<p>Ibn Wardān: Abū al-Ḥārith ʿĪsā ibn Wardān al-Madanī (d. around 160 AH).</p> <p>Ibn Jammāz: Abū al-Rabīʿ Sulaymān ibn Muslim ibn Jammāz al-Madanī (d. shortly after 170 AH).</p>
<p>Imam Yaʿqūb: Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq ibn Zayd al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 205 AH). His <i>kunya</i> was Abū Muḥammad.</p>	<p>Ruwais: Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad ibn al-Mutawakkil al-Luʿluʿī al-Baṣrī (d. 238 AH).</p> <p>Rawḥ: Abū al-Ḥasan Rawḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿmin al-Baṣrī al-Naḥwī (d. 235 AH).</p>
<p>Imam Khalaf: Khalaf ibn Hishām ibn Thaʿlab al-Bazzār al-Baghdādī (d. 229 AH). His <i>kunya</i> was Abū Muḥammad.</p>	<p>Ishāq: Abū Yaʿqūb Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUthmān al-Warrāq al-Marwazī (d. 286 AH).</p>

Scholars and Books

Below is a list of some of the more commonly taught and referenced books in the science of *qirāʾāt*.³¹

1. *Kitāb al-Sabʿah*. This book is by Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 AH). It holds an important place in the science of *qirāʾāt*. Many authors followed Imam Ibn Mujāhid's example and wrote books on the seven *qirāʾāt* he had recorded in his book.
2. *Al-Mabsūṭ fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*. This book is by Abū Bakr ibn Mihrān al-Aṣbahānī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 381 AH). He is also the author of *al-Ghāyah fī al-Qirāʾāt*, one of the books Ibn al-Jazarī relied on to write *al-Nashr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*.
3. *Al-Taysīr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ*. This book is by Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Dānī (d. 444 AH) and it includes the same seven *qirāʾāt* that Imam Ibn Mujāhid had recorded. The famous poem, *al-Shāṭibiyyah*, is based on this book.
4. *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ*. This book is also by ʿAllāmah al-Dānī.

³¹ Al-Sindī, *Ṣafahāt fī ʿUlūm al-Qirāʾāt*, 62-64.

5. ***Al-Tabṣīrah fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'***: This book is by Imam Makkī ibn Abī Ṭalīb al-Qayrawānī (d. 437 AH) and is one of the books that Ibn al-Jazarī relied on when writing *al-Nashr*.
6. ***Hīrz al-Arnānī wa Wajh al-Tahānī***. More commonly known as *al-Shāṭibiyyah*, it is Imam al-Qāsim ibn Firruḥ al-Shāṭibī's (d. 590 AH) versification of 'Allāmah al-Dānī's *al-Taysīr*. It is perhaps the most widely taught text on *qirā'āt* in the world today. It has numerous commentaries. Some of the more well-known ones are listed below:
 - a. ***Faṭḥ al-Waṣīd***. This is the first commentary to be written on *al-Shāṭibiyyah* and was authored by Imam al-Sakhāwī (d. 634 AH), a direct student of Imam al-Shāṭibī.
 - b. ***Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī***. This commentary is by Abū Shāmmah al-Maqdisī, who was a student of Imam al-Sakhāwī (d. 665 AH).
 - c. ***Kanz al-Ma'ānī***. This commentary is by Imam Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mawṣilī, known as *Shu'lah* (d. 656 AH).
 - d. ***Kanz al-Ma'ānī***. This commentary on *al-Shāṭibiyyah* is by Imam al-Ja'barī (d. 732 AH).
 - e. ***Sirāj al-Qārī al-Mubtadī'***. This commentary is by Abū Qāsim 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān, known as Ibn al-Qāṣiḥ (d. 801 AH).

- f. *Al-Wāfi fi Sharḥ al-Shāṭibiyyah*. This commentary is by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī (d. 1403 AH) a contemporary scholar. It is an extremely accessible and widely taught commentary.
7. *Tahbīr al-Taysīr*. This book is by Imam Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833 AH). It is a prose work on the *qirā’āt* of Imam Abū Ja‘far, Ya‘qūb and Khalaf al-‘Āshir. The author also versified it in his text *al-Durrah al-Muḍḥah*. *Al-Durrah* is written in a manner similar to the *Shāṭibiyyah* as it uses codes. Because Ibn al-Jazarī has created a root and branch relationship between the three *qurrā’* in *al-Durrah* and those recorded in *al-Shāṭibiyyah*, *al-Durrah* cannot be studied without studying the *Shāṭibiyyah* first.
8. *Al-Nashr fi al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr*. This is Ibn al-Jazarī’s *magnum opus*. In it, he records about one thousand chains of transmission for the ten *qirā’āt* and relies on about thirty-five books to do so.³² This is a widely referenced book in the science of *qirā’āt*. Ibn al-Jazarī wrote a summary of it as well, known as *Taqrīb al-Nashr fi al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr* and he versified *al-Nashr* in his poem *Ṭayyibat al-Nashr*. *Tayyibat al-Nashr* is a widely taught text.

³² Gaibie, *Anīs al-‘Ashr*, 57.

9. *Ithāf Fuḍalā' al-Bashar fī al-Qirā'āt al-Arba'ah 'Ashar*: This book is by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Dimyātī (d. 1117 AH).
10. *Ghayth al-Naf'*: This book is by Sidi 'Alī al-Nūrī al-Safāqusī. It is not a commentary of any particular text, nor is it organized by *uṣūl* and *furūsh*. Rather, it goes through the whole Qur'ān in the order in which it is recited and guides the reader to recite the Qur'ān in all seven *qirā'āt* as they are mentioned in *al-Shāṭibiyyah*.
11. *Al-Budūr al-Zāhirah fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*: This book is by Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī and is organized in a manner similar to *Ghayth al-Naf'*. The main difference is that instead of seven *qirā'āt*, it guides the reader in the recitation of all ten *qirā'āt* according to the *ṭarīq* of *al-Shāṭibiyyah wa al-Durrah*.
12. *Individual Riwāyahs*: There are many books written on the *uṣūl* and *furūsh* of individual *qirā'āt/riwāyahs*. I will list the name of some authors who have written individual books for each *qirā'ah/riwāyah*. Reciting one *qirā'ah* or *riwāyah* at a time is one of the easiest ways to study the *qirā'āt*. May Allah reward the authors immensely. *Āmīn*.
 - a. *Shaykh Tawfiq Ibrāhīm Ḍamrah*: He is a Jordanian scholar who has published both individual works for each *qirā'ah/riwāyah* as well as *maṣāḥif*.
 - b. *Shaykh Maḥmūd Khalīl al-Huṣarī*

- c. *Qārī Muajul Islam Chowdhury*. He has a three-volume work in English titled *al-Rawḍah*. In addition to guiding the reader on the *uṣūl* and *furūsh* of each *riwāyah*, it also includes an excellent introduction to the science of *qirāʾāt*.
- d. *Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī and Qārī Najm al-Ṣabīḥ Thānwī*. These two authors have written books on the individual *qirāʾāt/riwāyāt* in Urdu.
13. *Qirāʾāt Maṣāḥif*: This is another category of *qirāʾāt* books. Many scholars have published *maṣāḥif* that include notes in the margins on the *uṣūl* and the *furūsh* of the *qirāʾāt*. *Maṣāḥif* such as these are available in the *ṭuruq* of *al-Shāṭibiyyah*, *al-Durrah*, and *Ṭayyibah*. They are incredibly useful resources and really simplify studying and teaching the *qirāʾāt*. May Allah reward the authors immensely. *Āmīn*.

I would also like to mention three subspecies of the science of *qirāʾāt*.

1. The study and analysis of the chains of transmission of the *qurrāʾ* (*asānīd*). This involves reading and referencing books on the biographies of the *qurrāʾ*. Some famous works include:
 - a. *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrāʾ* by Imam al-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH)
 - b. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah* by Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833 AH)

- c. *Imtā‘ al-Fudalā’ bi-Tarājim al-Qurrā’* by Shaykh Ilyās ibn Aḥmad al-Barmāwī. This book lists the biographies of the *qurrā’* starting from the eighth century *hijrī*. Its fifth volume is dedicated to female *qurrā’*.
- d. *Tārīkh al-Qurrā’ al-‘Asharah* This book is by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī and is an accessible book on the biographies of the ten *qurrā’* and their *ruwāt*. It also includes the *uṣūl* or principles for each *riwāyah*.
- e. *Mu‘jam Ḥuffāz al-Qur’ān ‘Abr al-Tārīkh* by Shaykh Muḥammad Sālim Muḥaysin.
- f. *Al-Salāsīl al-Dhahabiyyah bil-Asānīd al-Nashriyyah* This book is by Shaykh Aiman Suwaid and draws out the chains of transmissions of each *qirā’ah*. It mentions the chain of transmission of each *qārī* to the Prophet ﷺ, and then the *sanad* of each *rāwī* to his *qārī*, and then the narrators of each *rāwī*. It also includes Ibn al-Jazarī’s *isnād* to the authors of the books on *qirā’āt* and mentions the *isnād* of these authors to the ten Imams of *qirā’āt*.
- g. *Books in Urdu:*
- i. *Shajarat al-Asātidhah* This book is by Qārī Izhār Thānwī.

- ii. ***Tadhkirat al-Qurrā'***: This book is by Dr. Muḥammad Ilyās al-A'zamī. It includes detailed biographies of the ten *qurrā'* and their *ruwāt*.
 - iii. ***Books on the biographies of individual qurrā'***: These are a set of books by Qārī 'Uwaimir Ibrāhīm Mīr Muḥammadi on the lives of each of the *ruwāt*. They are comprehensive and the information is presented in an accessible manner. They also include short biographies of the primary *ruwāt* for each main *rāwī*.
- h. ***Books in English:***
- i. ***Asānīd 101:*** This book is by Qārī Muḥammad Salīm Gaibie. It teaches the reader how to analyze contemporary *isnād* of the Qur'ān and shares the biographies of the senior *qurrā'* of the Muslim world.
 - ii. ***The Qurrā' of Desouk:*** This book is by Qārī Muḥammad Riyādh Obaray. It shares the biographies of the *qurrā'* of Desouk, Egypt and also includes helpful information about *ijāzahs*.
 - iii. ***Ten Amazing Shaikhas:*** This book is by Qārī'ah Gadīja Bester. It explores the lives

of ten contemporary women and their learning and teaching of the Qurʾān.

iv. *The Continuous Caravan* This book is by Saaima Yacoob and contains the biographies of the one hundred ten primary narrators for the ten *qurrāʾ* that are mentioned in *al-Nashr*.

2. *ʿIlal al-Qirāʾāt* or *Tawjihāt al-Qirāʾāt* is the science that explains the differences in meaning between the *qirāʾāt* while also discussing their source within the Arabic language. In addition to the books mentioned below, *tawjihāt al-qirāʾāt* are also mentioned in books of *tafsīr*, including Imam Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* and Imam Abū Hayyān's *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*.³³ Some works in this science are:

- a. *Al-Kashf ʿan Wujūh al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ* by Imam Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Qaisī.
- b. *Al-Shifāʾ fī ʿIlal al-Qirāʾāt* by Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥarīrī al-Bukhārī.
- c. *Al-Ḥujjah fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ*: This book is by Imam Ibn Khālawayh.
- d. *Ṭalāḥ al-Bashar fī Tawjih al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshar*. This book is by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq Qamḥawī.

³³ Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Rāsikh, *Naṣṣ-e Qurʾānī kay Mutaʿalliq Chand ʿUlūm ka Taʿāruf* in *al-Rushd*, June 2009, 553.



- e. *al-Nafahāt al-Āṭirah fī Tawjīh al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr al-Mutawātirah*. This is an Urdu work by Qārī ʿUwaimir Ibrāhīm Mīr Muḥammadī. It has an excellent introduction to the science of *tawjihāt* and then explains the *furūsh* of the whole Qurʾān, one sūrah at a time.
- f. *Within Its Depths* by Qārī Bāsil Farooq gives the reader a taste of this aspect of *qirāʾāt* in English.
3. The subsistence of *taḥrīrāt al-ṭuruq* separates every transmitted difference and cites its source.³⁴ Some of its main works are:
- a. *Al-Masāʾil al-Tibrīziyyah* by Imam Ibn al-Jazarī.
- b. *Al-Rawḍ al-Naḍīr* by ʿAllāmah al-Mutawallī.
- c. *Taḥrīr al-Nashr* by Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Izmīrī.
- d. *Ḥall al-Mushkilāt wa Tawḍīḥ al-Taḥrīrāt fī al-Qirāʾāt* by Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khalījī.
- e. *Ithāf al-Bariyyah* by Shaykh Ḥasan Khalaf al-Ḥusainī.
- f. *Bulūgh al-Umniyyah Sharḥ Ithāf al-Bariyyah* by Shaykh ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ḍabbāʿ.
- g. *Anwār al-Qulūb* by Qārī Muḥammad Salīm Gaibie. This is the only work in English on this topic. It

³⁴ Abdullah Motara, *A Brief History of Qirāʾāt*, 1.

includes an excellent introduction to the *tah̄rīrāt*
of Ṭayyibah.

RASM

Linguistic definition of *khatt*: The definition of *khatt*, or Arabic writing, is to write words in their original shape, as they are pronounced, without adding or omitting letters, while considering how a word would be read when beginning from it, and how it would be read when stopping on it.³⁵ It is for this reason that *hamzat al-waṣl* is written, but the *nūn* in *tanwīn* is not. This can also be referred to as *rasm imlāʾī* or *rasm qiyāsī*. The majority of the words in the Qurʾān are written according to this convention.³⁶

Technical definition of *rasm al-khatt*: It is the writing of Qurʾānic words by adding or omitting letters (*ziyādah wa ḥadhf*) and by writing them as separated or joined (*maqṭūʿ wa mawṣūl*), according to how they were written and agreed upon by the *ṣaḥābah*  and how it has written in the presence of the Prophet . This is also referred to as *rasm ʿuthmānī* or *rasm iṣṭilāḥī*.³⁷

Subject: The subject of this science is the changes in Qurʾānic words related to deletion (*ḥadhf*), adding (*ziyādah/ithbāt*), writing one letter as another (*ibdāl*), writing the letter *hamzah*, and

³⁵ Al-Masʿūdī, *Muʿjam Muṣṭalahāt*, 219.

³⁶ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2:91.

³⁷ Al-Masʿūdī, *Muʿjam Muṣṭalahāt*, 219.

writing words as separated or adjoined (*maqṭūʿ wa mawṣūl*) according to the ʿUthmānī codices.

Objective: Its objective is to preserve the writing of the Qurʾān as it was during the time of the Prophet ﷺ and was preserved by the *ṣaḥābah* ﷺ after him.

Status: It is considered above all the other non-Qurʾānic sciences.

Ruling: It is a communal obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*) to study this science.³⁸

Sources of the Science: The details of this science are derived from the six ʿUthmānī *maṣāḥif* or codices, the two that remained in Madīnah, one of which was for ʿUthmān’s ﷺ personal use, and the codices sent to Makkah, Kūfah, Baṣrah, and Shām.

Books in the Science of Rasm

Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail ﷺ has listed the early books written in the science of *rasm* as follows:³⁹

1. *Ikhtilāf Maṣāḥif al-Shām wa al-Ḥijāz wa al-ʿIrāq* and *Kitāb fī Maqṭūʿ al-Qurʾān wa Mawṣūlīh* by Imam ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿĀmir al-Shāmī (d. 118 AH).

³⁸ Thānawī, *Īḍāḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 9-10; Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī, *al-Khaṭṭ al-ʿUthmānī fī al-Rasm al-Qurʾānī*, 6-9.

³⁹ Esmail, *Tashīl al-Rusūm*, 46-47.

2. *Kitāb fi Hijā' al-Maṣāḥif* by Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith al-Dhamārī (d. 145 AH): He is the student of Ibn 'Āmir al-Shāmī.
4. *Kitāb fi Maqtū' al-Qur'ān wa Mawṣūlih* by Imam Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt al-Kūfī (d. 156 AH).
5. *Ikhtilāf Maṣāḥif Ahl al-Madīnah wa Ahl al-Kūfa wa Ahl al-Baṣrah* and *Kitāb al-Hijā'* and *Kitāb Maqtū' al-Qur'ān wa Mawṣūlih* by Imam al-Kisā'ī al-Kūfī (d. 189 AH).
5. *Ikhtilāf Ahl al-Kūfa wa al-Baṣrah wa al-Shām fi al-Maṣāḥif* by al-Farrā' Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Manṣūr Abū Zakariyyā al-Aslamī al-Kūfī (d. 207 AH). He is the famous grammarian of Arabic.
6. *Kitāb fi Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif* by Khalaf ibn Hishām (d. 229 AH).
7. A book on *rasm* written by Imam Nāfi' ibn Abī Nu'aim al-Madanī (d. 169 AH). He is the most prominent and important source for the narration of *rasm al-khaṭṭ*, especially the *muṣḥaf* of Madīnah. He was born in Madīnah and taught *qirā'āt* for seventy years. The *muṣḥaf* prepared by 'Uthmān ﷺ for the people of Madinah was with Imam Nāfi' for a while. Many of his students wrote books on *rasm al-khaṭṭ* narrating from him. They include:
8. *Hijā' al-Sunnah* by Ghāzī ibn Qais al-Andalusī (d. 199 AH). He is one of the preeminent students of Imam Nāfi' and it was through him that the *qirā'ah* of Imam Nāfi' reached

Spain. He prepared a *muṣḥaf* after proofreading it 13 times with the *muṣḥaf* of Imam Nāfi^ᶜ and thereafter wrote his book.

9. A book on *rasm* written by Qālūn (d. 220 AH) the first *rāwī* of Imam Nāfi^ᶜ. He wrote his book directly relaying from Imam Nāfi^ᶜ.
10. *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān wa Maʿālimuh wa Ādābuh* by Abū ʿUбайд Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224 AH). There is one chapter in this book that deals specifically with *rasm al-khaṭṭ*.
11. *Rasm al-Maṣāḥif* by Abū al-Mundhir Nuṣayr ibn Yūsuf al-Naḥwī (d. 240 AH) was one of the students of Imam al-Kisāʾī. After Imam Nāfi^ᶜ and Abū ʿUбайд Qāsim ibn Sallām, he is considered an authority in the science of *rasm al-khaṭṭ*.

The following books on *rasm* are listed in *Sacred Spellings*:⁴⁰

1. *Hijāʾ al-Maṣāḥif*. This book is by Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Aṣbahānī رحمته الله (d. 253 AH). It is one of the main sources for *al-Muqni^ᶜ* of ʿAllāmah al-Dānī رحمته الله. Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā رحمته الله was considered an Imam of grammar and *qirāʾāt*. *Kitāb al-jāmi^ᶜ fī al-qirāʾāt* is one of his other works. He narrated *qirāʾāt* from many people, including Imam Khallād رحمته الله, the *rāwī* of Imam Ḥamzah رحمته الله, and Nuṣayr ibn Yūsuf رحمته الله, the well-known student of Imam al-Kisāʾī رحمته الله. Abū Nuʿaym al-

⁴⁰ Yacoob, *Sacred Spellings*, 15-18.

Aṣbahānī ؒ said that he did not know of anyone who had more knowledge than Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ؒ in his time about the science of *qirāʾāt*.⁴¹

2. ***Hijāʾ Maṣāḥif al-Amṣār***. This is a work on *rasm* written by Imam Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAmmār al-Mahdawī ؒ (d. after 430 AH). He was a contemporary of ʿAllāmah al-Dānī ؒ (d. 444 AH). His work on *qirāʾāt*, *al-Hidāyah fī al-qirāʾāt al-sabʿ*, is considered an important work in the science of *qirāʾāt* and was one of the works relied upon by Ibn al-Jazarī ؒ in his *al-Nashr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*.⁴²
3. ***Al-Muqniʿ fī Maʿrifat Marsūm Maṣāḥif Ahl al-Amṣār***. Written by Imam Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī ؒ (d. 444 AH), it is a widely quoted and used work in the science of *rasm*. It is this work on which ʿAqīlah Atrāb al-Qaṣāʾid fī Asnā al-Maqāṣid is based. ʿAllāmah al-Dānī ؒ relied on narrations that he received from his teachers regarding the *rasm* of the ʿUthmānī codices of the Qurʾān as well as his own observations and analysis of copies of the Qurʾān.
4. ***Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif***. This work was written by Imam ʿAbd Allah ibn Sulaymān Abū Bakr al-Sijistānī ؒ, also known as Ibn Abī Dāwūd. He is the son of the famous compiler of Ḥadīth, Imam Abū Dawūd ؒ. He passed away in 316 AH.⁴³
5. ***Mukhtaṣar al-Tabyīn li-Hijāʾ al-Tanzīl***. This is an important work in the science of *rasm* and is widely relied upon for the publishing of copies of the Qurʾān in various parts of the world. Its author is Sulaymān ibn Najāḥ Abū Dawūd

⁴¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:296-297.

⁴² Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:119.

⁴³ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:587.

ibn Abī al-Qāsim ؒ, an Andalusian scholar who was the foremost student of ‘Allāmah al-Dānī ؒ. He studied *qirā’āt* with ‘Allāmah al-Dānī ؒ, and narrated many of his books from him, including *al-Muqni’*, where his name appears in the very beginning of the book. His book, *Mukhtaṣar al-Tabyīn*, includes more matters concerning *rasm* than *al-Muqni’*, as in addition to *al-Muqni’*, he relied on other books of *rasm* as well that were available to him during his time.⁴⁴ The respected Imam passed away in Valencia, Spain on the 16th of Ramadan in 496 AH.⁴⁵

6. ***Mawrid al-Ḍam’ān* and *‘Umdah al-Bayān***. Both of these are didactic poems by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Umawī al-Sharīshī al-Fāsī al-Maghribī ؒ, known as al-Kharrāz. He was an expert in the science of *qirā’āt* and *rasm* in the city of Fez, Morocco. He wrote two didactic poems related to the science of *rasm*, *Mawrid al-Ḍam’ān fī Rasm al-Qur’ān* (610 lines) and *‘Umdat al-Bayān*. *Mawrid al-Ḍam’ān fī Rasm al-Qur’ān* is a poem on the *rasm* of the Qur’ān that draws from *al-Muqni’* of ‘Allāmah al-Dānī ؒ, *‘Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id fī Asnā al-Maqāṣid* by Imam al-Shāṭibī ؒ, and *Mukhtaṣar al-Tabyīn li-Hijā’ al-Tanzīl* by Imam Abū Dawūd ibn Najāh ؒ. He passed away in 718 AH.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ghānim Qaddūri al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ‘Ilm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭihī*, 83.

⁴⁵ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:439-440.

⁴⁶ Al-Marṣafī, *Hidāyat al-Qārī*, 2:719; Thānwī, *Īḍāḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 30-31.

7. ***‘Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id fī Asnā al-Maqāṣid*** Written by Imam al-Shāṭibī رحمته الله (d. 590 AH), this is a versification of ‘Allāmah al-Dānī’s رحمته الله *al-Muqni’*.
8. ***Al-Wasīlah ilā Kashf al-‘Aqīlah***: This is a commentary on ‘*Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id*’ written by Imam al-Shāṭibī’s رحمته الله student, Imam ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī رحمته الله. He was born in a town called Sakhā in Egypt in 558 AH and was the Shaykh of the teachers of *qirā’āt* in Damascus. A *walī* of Allah, he was a great exegete, *qārī*, and grammarian and was someone who had dedicated his life to gaining and transmitting knowledge. He wrote the first commentary on Imam al-Shāṭibī’s *Ḥirz al-Amānī wa Wajh al-Tahānī*, named *Fath al-Waṣīd*. He passed away on the 12th of Jumādā al-Ukhrā in 643 AH.⁴⁷ *Al-Wasīlah*, his commentary on ‘*Aqīlah*’, explains the text and also includes his own observations and analysis of the Shāmī codex and *muṣḥaf al-Imam* which he had seen.
9. ***Jamīlat Arbāb al-Marāṣid fī Sharḥ ‘Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id*** This is Imam Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Ja‘barī’s رحمته الله commentary on ‘*Aqīlat Atrāb*. He was the teacher of two of Imam Ibn al-Jazarī’s رحمته الله teachers. He also wrote another book on *rasm* named *Rawḍat al-Ṭarā’if*. He passed away in 732 AH.
10. ***Talkhīṣ al-Fawā’id wa Taqrīb al-Mutabā’id fī Sharḥ ‘Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id*** This work is authored by Abū al-Baqā’ ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāṣih رحمته الله. He is the

⁴⁷ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:789-792.

author of *Sirāj al-Qārī*, a well-known commentary on *al-Shāṭibiyah*. He passed away in 801 AH.

11. ***Dalīl al-Ḥayrān ‘Alā Mawrid al-Zam’ān***. This is a relied upon commentary on *Mawrid al-Zam’ān* by Imam al-Kharrāz رحمته that was mentioned earlier. It is written by Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad Mārghanī Tūnisī, his *kunyā* is Abū al-Ishāq. He was the *Shaykh al-Qurrā’* at Zaytūna University in Tunisia and a Mufti in the Maliki school of jurisprudence. He wrote many other works in addition to *Dalīl al-Ḥayrān*. He passed away in 1349 AH.
12. ***Nathr al-Marjān fī Rasm Nazm al-Qur’ān***. This seven-volume work is by a Shāfi’ī Indian scholar, Muḥammad Ghawth ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Nā’iṭī al-Arkātī رحمته. He was born in 1166 AH and passed away in 1238 AH. He was a brilliant scholar and wrote books in both Arabic and Persian. *Nathr al-Marjān* was his first book. Spanning over seven volumes, it is an important work in the science of *rasm* and is relied upon for the publication of copies of the Qur’ān. He relied on the following books to write his work: *al-Muqni’* by ‘Allāmah al-Dānī, *‘Aqīlāt Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id* by Imam al-Shāṭibī, *al-Wasilah ilā Kashf al-‘Aqīlah* by Imam al-Sakhāwī, *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr* by Imam Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* among others.⁴⁸

There are many other books written by contemporary scholars in many languages on the science of *rasm*. While some are commentaries on the text of *‘Aqīlah* like the works of Shaykh

⁴⁸ Muḥammad Aḥmad Miṣbāḥī, *Rasm Qur’ānī aur Uṣūle Kitābat*, 6-8; al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ‘Ilm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭuh*, 85.

Muḥammad al-Dusūqī Amīn Kaḥilah, Qārī Faṭḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī ﷺ, and Qārī Iẓhār Thānwī ﷺ, others are books that simplify the discussions in the science and present them to the reader without being a commentary of a particular text. These include works like *Samīr al-Ṭālibīn fī Rasm wa Ḍabṭ al-Kitāb al-Mubīn* by Shaykh ‘Alī al-Ḍabbā’ ﷺ, *al-Khaṭṭ al-‘Uthmānī fī al-Rasm al-Qur’ānī* by Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī ﷺ, *Ma‘rifat al-Rusūm* by Qārī Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn Ḍiyā’ Aḥmad Ilāhabādī ﷺ, *Nafā’is al-Bayān fī Rasm al-Qur’ān* by Qārī Muḥammad Idrīs al-‘Āṣim ﷺ.

ḌABṬ

Linguistic definition: The linguistic meaning of the word *ḍabṭ* is to attain the highest level of integrity in the preservation of something.⁴⁹

Technical definition: It is a science through which those diacritical marks that are temporarily attached to letters i.e., *fathāh, ḍammah, kasrah, sukūn, shadd, madd*, etc. are learned.⁵⁰ This science can also be referred to *‘ilm al-naḡṭ wa al-shakl* (the science of dots and vowels).

Objective: The objective of the science of *ḍabṭ* is to protect the reader from confusing similar letters and to read each word with the correct vowels, depending on the *riwāyah* a person is reciting in. It also provides the reader with visual cues that aid the application of rules such as *idghām, ikhfāʿ, imālah*, etc.

Sources of the Science: This science is not a transmitted science like many of the sciences mentioned in this article. Rather, it is based on the *ijtihād* of scholars who wrote books on this topic, as well as regional norms that were developed by local scribes.

There are multiple conventions of *ḍabṭ*:

⁴⁹ Mohamed-Umer Esmail, *Tashīl al-Ḍabṭ*, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

1. **The Eastern Convention:** This is more commonly used in the Arab printed *maṣāḥif*.
2. **The Western (*Maghribi*) Convention:** This is more commonly used in North Africa and in *maṣāḥif* printed in Qālūn and Warsh, even if they are printed outside of North Africa.
3. **The Non-Arab convention:**⁵¹ This is the convention of *ḍabṭ* used in South Asian *maṣāḥif* and was classically used in Ottoman and Persian *maṣāḥif* as well.

The first two conventions are clearly described in classical books of *ḍabṭ*. The non-Arab convention is similar to the eastern convention and is also based on opinions found in the books of *ḍabṭ*. However, it also has some unique features to make it easier for non-Arabs to read the Qurʾān correctly. These conventions can be found in centuries old, handwritten manuscripts of the Qurʾān as well.⁵²

As I have not analyzed the *ḍabṭ* of all the *maṣāḥif* published in the Muslim world, it is possible that other conventions of *ḍabṭ* also exist. Either way, what is important to remember is that because this science is *ijtihādī*, any amount of variance is permissible if the

⁵¹ This is a phrase I have coined to describe this convention. It is not a universally used term.

⁵² For a more detailed discussion on this topic see Yacoob, *Differing Diacritics* published by Recite With Love.

convention allows the reader to recite the Qurʾān correctly, and for the sake of practicality, there is some level of standardization within a particular region.

Subject: The subject of this science can be divided into two major categories: *naqṭ al-iʿjām* and *naqṭ al-iʿrāb*.

Naqṭ al-iʿjām are the dots placed on letters to distinguish similarly shaped letters. These were added after the markings for essential vowels. It is important to note that while dots on letters were standardized and consistently added to *maṣāḥif* during the time of the *tābiʿīn*, the Arabs did have dots for letters in pre-Islamic times as well.⁵³ Two documents show that dots for letters were present even during the reign of ʿUmar رضي الله عنه and Muʿāwiyah رضي الله عنه.⁵⁴ This is significant, as it suggests that the *ṣaḥābah* intentionally omitted diacritics from the *ʿUthmānī* codices.

Naqṭ al-iʿrāb are the vowel markings placed on letters to facilitate their correct reading. These include *fathah*, *kasrah*, *ḍammah*, *shaddah*, *sukūn*, and even the head of ʿayn for the letter *hamzah*. *Naqṭ al-iʿrāb* can be further divided into three categories: Firstly, those that help a reader to read the unique *rasm* of the Qurʾān correctly. This refers to diacritics that point to letters that are additional or omitted in the *rasm*, etc. Secondly, those diacritics

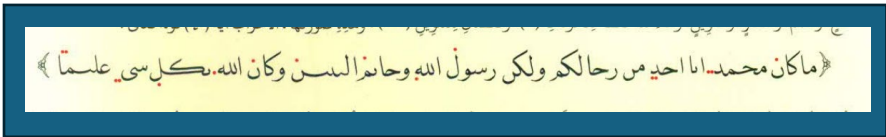
⁵³ Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī writes that Aslam ibn Khudrah (pre-Islamic period) was the first to add diacritics for letters (*iʿjām wa naqṭ*). Al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, 35.

⁵⁴ Aḥmad ʿAlī al-Imām, *Variant Readings of the Qurʾān*, 43-44.

that protect the words of the Qurʾān from incorrect inflection or alteration. This refers to the marks for *faṭḥah*, *kasrah*, *ḍammah*, *shaddah*, etc. Thirdly, those markings that aid the reader to apply the general rules of *tajwīd* correctly, such as the sign for *madd*, or a *shaddah* that indicates *idghām*, etc.⁵⁵

Development of the Science *Ḍabṭ*⁵⁶


The first person to add diacritical marks to represent vowels was Abū al-Aswad al-Duʿalī ؓ (d. 69 AH), a student of Imam ʿAlī ؓ. His system used dots to mark essential vowels, meaning those vowels that if read incorrectly, would cause a change in meaning. A dot on top marked *faṭḥah*, a dot on the bottom indicated *kasrah*, a dot in front of the letter indicated *ḍammah*. These dots were doubled to indicate *tanwīn*.⁵⁷




⁵⁵ ʿĀdil Abū Shaʿar, *al-Maqāṣid fī al-Mashhūr min ʿIlm Ḍabṭ al-Maṣāḥif*, 2.

⁵⁶ This section has been taken from Yacoob, *Differing Diacritics*, with some changes.

⁵⁷ Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Naḡṭ*, 202; Image taken from ʿĀdil Abū Shaʿar, *al-Maqāṣid fī al-Mashhūr min ʿIlm Ḍabṭ al-Maṣāḥif*.

This system was not followed in a rigid, standardized way. Rather, various Muslim city centers had their own variations. Some would use a square shape to mark the vowels, while some would use dots that were not filled in. In Makkah, they changed the position of the *ḍammah* and the *fathah*, placing the *ḍammah* on top of the letter, and the *fathah* to the right of the letter.⁵⁸ However, after dots were added to letters to distinguish between similarly shaped letters, this system presented two difficulties. The use of one color for the main script and a different colored ink for the dots that marked vowels was cumbersome for the scribes. ‘Allāmah al-Dānī  (d. 444 AH) describes the *maṣāḥif* of al-Andalus in his time being written with three additional colors of ink, red for the vowels, yellow for *hamzat al-qaṭ‘*, and green for *hamzat al-waṣl*.⁵⁹

While the use of different colored inks was cumbersome for the scribes, the reader could easily get confused by the two sets of dots, those for vowels, and those that distinguished similarly shaped letters from each other.⁶⁰ Khalīl al-Farāhīdī  (d. 170 AH) developed a system of diacritics that used lines and symbols that were taken from shortened versions of their original form, such as a small *alif* for *fathah*, a portion of *yā’* for *kasrah*, and a small

⁵⁸ Aḥmad Yār, *Qur’ān o Sunnat: Chand Mabāḥith*, 111; al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif*, 9.

⁵⁹ Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Naqt*, 204.

⁶⁰ Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ‘Ilm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭih*, 293.

wāw to represent *ḍammah*. He also added a symbol for *shaddah*, the teeth of *shīn* without dots, and *sukūn*, which is the small head of *khāʾ* (without a dot) from the word *khafīf*. He indicated *hamzat al-qatʿ* with the head of *ʿayn*.⁶¹

In the beginning, Imam Khalīl's ﷺ system was used to write poetry, and was therefore referred to as *shakl al-shiʿr*. The Qurʾān still continued to be written in the diacritical system of Abū al-Aswad ﷺ. ʿAllāmah al-Dānī ﷺ preferred the system of Abū al-Aswad ﷺ.⁶²

The convention of Imam Khalīl ﷺ was adopted earlier and more widely by the Muslims of the eastern lands, and the Muslims of North Africa and Spain maintained the system of Abū al-Aswad ﷺ for much longer. The system of dots for vowels was abandoned completely around the seventh century *hijrī*.⁶³ When we look at the science of *ḍabṭ* as a whole, we see that eventually there was a consensus regarding the adoption of Imam Khalīl al-Farāhīdī's ﷺ diacritical marks of lines and symbols, as opposed to the earlier diacritical marks of Abū al-Aswad al-Duʿalī ﷺ which were in the form of dots.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, 2:950-951; al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭih*, 293-294.

⁶² Al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭih*, 294.

⁶³ Al-Ḥamad, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa Ḍabṭih*, 294-296; Aḥmad Yār, *Qurʾān o Sunnat: Chand Mabāḥith*, 117-118.

⁶⁴ Muṣṭafā al-Hallūs, *ʿAlāmāt Ḍabṭ al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf*, 50.

Books

1. *Kitāb al-Shakl wa al-Naqṭ* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316 AH).
2. *Al-Muḥkam fī ʿIlm Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif* by Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Dānī.
3. *Uṣūl al-Ḍabṭ wa Kayfiyyatihī ʿalā Jihat al-Ikhtiṣār* by Abū Dāwūd ibn Najāḥ.
4. *Mawrid al-Zamʿān fī Rasm wa Ḍabṭ al-Qurʿān* by Imam Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Umawī al-Sharīshī al-Fāsī al-Maghribī, known as al-Kharrāz (718 AH). This is a didactic poem that covers both *rasm* and *ḍabṭ*.
5. *Al-Tirāz fī Sharḥ Ḍabṭ al-Kharrāz* by Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Tanasī (d. 899 AH). This is a commentary on the *ḍabṭ* part of *Mawrid al-Zamʿān*.
6. *Dalīl al-Ḥayrān Sharḥ Mawrid al-Zamʿān fī Rasm wa Ḍabṭ al-Qurʿān* by Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Mārghanī al-Tūnisī (d. 1325 AH). This is a commentary on Imam al-Kharrāz’s entire *matn*.
7. *Samīr al-Ṭālībīn fī Rasm wa Ḍabṭ al-Kitāb al-Mubīn* by Shaykh ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ḍabbāʿ. This is a prose work and is not a commentary on any particular text. It summarizes the details of the two conventions of *ḍabṭ* and presents these details in a very accessible manner.

8. *Safīr al-Ṭālibīn fī Ḍāḥ wa Ṭaḥrīr wa Ṭaḥbīr Samīr al-Ṭālibīn* by Muḥammad Fuʿād Ṭalʿat. This book provides helpful references and footnotes on the book by Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ḍabbāʿ mentioned above.

Like other sciences, there are books written in multiple languages on the science of *ḍabṭ* as well. Two primers in Urdu are Qārī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Rāsikh's *ʿIlm al-Ḍabṭ* and Qārī ʿAbd al-Malik's *Qawāʿid al-Ḍabṭ lil-Qurʿān al-Karīm*. In English, we have *Tashīl al-Ḍabṭ* by Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail.

‘ILM ‘ADD AL-ĀY

Definition and Subject of the Science:⁶⁵ The early books do not mention a distinct definition for the science of enumeration. Some may mention definitions of important words in the science such as *sūrah*, *āyah* and *fāṣilah*.⁶⁶ Later scholars, such as ‘Abdullāh Ṣāliḥ ibn Ismā‘īl and ‘Abd al-Razzāq ‘Alī Mūsā, have mentioned technical definitions for the whole science. A comprehensive definition of this science is: **It is the science that studies the *āyāt* of the Qur’ān and what is related to them with respect to the number of *āyat* in every *sūrah* and the beginning of an *āyah* and the end of it.**⁶⁷

The science of enumeration includes the following **subjects**:

1. The total number of verses in every *sūrah*
2. The verse-ends (last word) of each *āyah*
3. The differences between the various verse counts
4. The number of words and letters in each *sūrah*

Some books of this science also include a list of verses in each *sūrah* that may mistakenly be considered verse-ends but are not.

⁶⁵ Pānīpatī, *Kāshif al-‘Uṣr*, 43; Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *al-Madkhal ilā ‘Ulūm al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf*, 167.

⁶⁶ Al-Dānī, *al-Bayān*, 161-165.

⁶⁷ Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī, *Madkhal Tamhīdī fī ‘Ilm ‘Add al-Āy*, 10-13; Faṭḥ Pānīpatī, *Kāshif al-‘Uṣr*, 43.

Some of them also mention the four ways in which verse-ends are determined, such as similarity in the endings of words (*mushākalah*), similarity in the length of *āyāt* (*al-musāwāh*), completion of meaning (*tamām al-ma‘nā*), and a word being considered a verse-end in other places in the Qur’ān (*al-ittifāq*).⁶⁸

In addition to the topics above, books on *‘ilm al-‘adad* also include discussions on the classification of *sūrahs* as Makkī or Madanī.

The **sources** of the science are **four**.⁶⁹

1. **Books on *‘ilm al-‘adad*** These are books that are dedicated entirely to this science.
2. **Books of *qirā’āt*** Some of the classical books on *qirā’āt* include discussions or entire chapters on the science of enumeration.
3. **Books of *‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*** Some of the classical *‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* books include chapters or sections on *‘ilm al-‘adad*.
4. **Books of *tafsīr*** Some books of *tafsīr* mention the differences in the total number of *āyāt* for each verse count in each *sūrah*, and some even mention the *āyāt* in which the verse counts differ.

⁶⁸ Al-Shāṭibī, *Nāzimat al-Zuhr*, 1.35-46; Pānīpatī, *Kāshif al-‘Ushr*, 82; Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fi ‘Ilm ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*, 69-79.

⁶⁹ Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī, *Madkhal Tamhīdī fi ‘Ilm ‘Add al-Āy*, 51-52.

The science of enumeration overlaps with other sciences. Following the example of Shaykh Aḥmad Shukrī, I have divided the **benefits** of studying this science into categories:

Fiqh⁷⁰

1. It is a requirement that at least one verse of the Qurʾān be recited in the *khuṭbah* of *jumuʿah* for it to be valid.
2. For the validity of prayer, one must recite one long *āyah* or at least three short *āyāt* in prayer after reciting Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.
3. If someone has not memorized Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, they may recite seven *āyāt* of any other sūrah.

Qirāʾāt

There are certain rules in the science of *qirāʾāt* that are dependent on whether the word is a verse-end or not. The clearest example of this is in the chapter of *imālah*. Imam Warsh and Imam Abū ʿAmr treat *taqlīl* and *imālah* at the ends of verses in eleven specific sūrahs differently than *taqlīl* in words in the middle of *āyāt*. In order to apply *taqlīl* and *imālah* for them correctly, the reciter would need to know the verse-ends in general and specifically according to the count of al-Madanī al-Thānī (the verse count

⁷⁰ Note that there are always differences in *fiqh* rulings between *madhāhib* and even within schools of thought. I have mentioned these as they are written in books of *fawāṣil*. Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fī ʿilm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 65; Thānwī, *al-Wijdān*, 11; Pānīpatī, *Kāshif al-ʿUṣr*, 44.

followed in the *riwāyah* of Imam Warsh) and Baṣrī (the verse count followed for the *riwāyah* of Imam Abū ‘Amr).⁷¹

Waqf and Ibtidā’

It is considered a *sunnah* to stop at the end of an *āyah*. By knowing the verse-ends, we are more easily able to follow this *sunnah*. Note that stopping at any of the verse-ends is *sunnah*, the ones that are agreed upon and those in which the *qurrā’* differ.⁷²

Earning Rewards⁷³

1. By knowing the verse-ends, a Muslim will be able to benefit from the reward associated with reciting a particular number of *āyāt* in prayer. It is narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ that the Prophet ﷺ said:

*If anyone prays at night reciting regularly ten verses, he will not be recorded among the negligent; if anyone prays at night and recites a hundred verses, he will be recorded among those who are obedient to Allah; and if anyone prays at night reciting one thousand verses, he will be recorded among those who receive huge rewards.*⁷⁴

⁷¹ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fi ‘Ilm ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*, 61; Thānwī, *al-Wijdān*, 12.

⁷² For a more detailed discussion on stopping at the ends of verses see Yacoob, *Maintaining the Meaning*, 32-34.

⁷³ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fi ‘Ilm ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*, 60-62; Thānwī, *al-Wijdān*, 11.

⁷⁴ Abū Dāwūd 1398. The English translation was taken from Sunnah.com.

2. By knowing the verse-ends, a Muslim will be able to benefit from the reward associated with relaying even one verse of the Qurʾān.⁷⁵
3. Similarly, a believer will be protected from Dajjāl by memorizing the first ten verses of Sūrah al-Kahf. Abū al-Dardāʾ reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying:⁷⁶

If anyone memorizes ten verses from the beginning of Sūrah al-Kahf, he will be protected from the trial of Dajjāl (the Antichrist).

4. More generally, knowing the verse-ends aids us in gaining the rewards and virtues associated with particular verses mentioned in *āḥādīth*, such as the last two *āyāt* of al-Baqarah, the last ten *āyāt* of Sūrah Āl ʿImrān etc.⁷⁷

Scholars and Books

In the list below, the reader will find the names of some of the books in this science. I have restricted myself to books that have been edited and published and have not included those that are no longer available to us or those that are still in manuscript form.

⁷⁵ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fi ʿIlm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 63-64; Thānwī, *al-Wjūdān*, 12.

⁷⁶ Abū Dāwūd 4223. The English translation was taken from Sunnah.com.

⁷⁷ Pānīpatī, *Kāshif al-ʿUshr*, 44.

1. *Suwar al-Qurʾān wa Āyātihī wa Hurūfihī wa Nuzūlihī*. This book is by Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān ibn ʿĪsā (d. around 290 AH). ʿAllāmah al-Dānī described him as incomparable in his knowledge, understanding, integrity, and the excellence of his insight in his time.⁷⁸ This book is one of the primary sources for later works written in this science, such as ʿAllāmah al-Dānī’s *al-Bayān* and Imam al-Shāṭibī’s *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr*.⁷⁹
2. *Kitāb ʿAdad Āy al-Qurʾān wa al-Ikhtilāf fih*. This book is by Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Ḥayyān ibn Ṣadaqah ibn Ziyād al-Ḍabbī al-Qāḍī, known as Wakīʿ (d. 306 AH). He was a great and reliable scholar and oversaw the judicature of al-Ahwāz. He transmitted the individual differences in the *qirāʾāt* from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Kisāʿī and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (al-Fīl).⁸⁰ He passed away in Baghdad.⁸¹
3. *ʿAdad Āy al-Qurʾān ʿalā Madhhab Ahl al-Baṣrah*. This book is by Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Muʿaddal (d. 320 AH). Al-Muʿaddal was a well-known and precise Imam in the science of *qirāʾāt* and was the undisputed Imam of

⁷⁸ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 3:21-22.

⁷⁹ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 108; al-Shāṭibī, *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr*, l. 29.

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:375.

⁸¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 3:337.

qirā'ah in Baṣrah in his time.⁸² This book mentions the total verse counts for each city as well as the differences among them. It also includes the number of words and letters in each sūrah.

4. ***Ikhtilāf al-‘Adad*** This book is by Abū al-Ḥusain Aḥmad ibn Ja‘far ibn al-Munādī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 336 AH). Although this book was not a primary source for later books that are widely relied upon in this science, such as *al-Bayān* and others, it includes unique information and interesting details that are often not found in other books. It was the main source for the chapter on verse-enumeration in Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī’s (d. 597 AH) *Funūn al-Afnān fī ‘Uyūn ‘Ulum al-Qur’ān*.
5. ***Al-Bayān fī ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*** This book is by Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dānī (d. 444 AH). ‘Allāmah al-Dānī is a widely relied upon scholar in the sciences of the Qur’ān. *Al-Bayān* contains many narrations and *ḥadiths* related to counting verses, the chains of transmission of the verse-counts, the total number of verses in the Qur’ān for each verse-count, and the total number of verses in each sūrah. It also includes the difference between the six verse-counts of al-Madanī al-Awwal, al-Madanī al-Akhīr, Makkī, Baṣrī, Kūfī and Shāmī.

⁸² Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 3:682-684; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr*, 1:463.

6. *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr fī ‘Add Āy al-Suwar*: This is Imam al-Shāṭibī’s (d. 590 AH) poem on the science of verse enumeration and is based on ‘Allāmah al-Dānī’s *al-Bayān*. It includes the six verse-counts of al-Madanī al-Awwal, al-Madanī al-Akhīr, Makkī, Baṣrī, Kūfī and Shāmī. Like *Ḥīrz al-Amānī wa Wajh al-Tahānī*, it is a coded poem. It includes the total number of verses for each verse count in each sūrah, the verse-ends that are differed upon, and also mentions those places that may be mistakenly considered verse-ends but are not. Commentaries on this text include *Lawāmi‘ al-Badr fī Bustān Nāẓimat al-Zuhr* by Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Turkī, *al-Qawl al-Wajīz* by Shaykh Riḍwān al-Mukhallilātī, and *Bashīr al-Yusr Sharḥ Nāẓimat al-Zuhr* by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī.
7. *Dhāt al-Rashad fī al-Khilāf Bayn Ahl al-‘Adad*: This is a poem on verse-enumeration written by Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mawṣilī known as Shu‘lah (d. 656 AH). He excelled in the sciences of *qirā’āt*, *fiqh*, Arabic language, and history, and was highly regarded in his time. His poem, *Dhāt al-Rashd*, is considered an important reference in the science of verse enumeration. The Imam only mentions those verse-ends that are widely agreed upon for each verse-count and does not include verse-ends that have not been widely transmitted (*shādh*). He has divided his poem into three main parts. First, he

mentions those *sūrahs* in which there are no differences among the verse-ends in their individual or total verse count. Then, he mentions those *sūrahs* in which there are differences in their individual verse-ends, but their total verse count is the same. Lastly, he mentions those *sūrahs* in which there are differences in both their individual and total verse counts. This poem has a total of 184 lines.⁸³ Shaykh Bashīr al-Ḥimyārī's commentary on this poem is entitled *Hidāyat al-Ṣamad ilā Ma'ānī Dhāt al-Rashad*.

8. ***Ḥusn al-Madad fī Ma'rifat Fann al-ʿAdad and ʿIqd al-Durar fī ʿAdd Āy al-Suwar***: Both of these texts are by Imam Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Jaʿbarī (d. 732 AH.) The first one is a prose text and the second is a poem, consisting of 169 lines. Imam al-Jaʿbarī was from among the great scholars of the sciences of the Qurʾān. His book, *Ḥusn al-Madad*, was a source text for most of the works that were written in the science of enumeration after him. This includes the works of al-Zarkashī, al-Suyūṭī, al-Qaṣṭallānī, al-Mutawallī, al-Dimyāṭī, al-Mukhallalātī, and al-Ḍabbāʿ.⁸⁴
9. ***Tahqīq al-Bayān fī ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān and Urjūzah fī ʿIlm al-Fawāsiḥ***: Both these texts are by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad

⁸³ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 115.

⁸⁴ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fī ʿIlm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 117. Please note that while some of these authors wrote books dedicated to the topic of verse enumeration, others included chapters or sections on this topic in their books on *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* and *qirāʾāt*.

ibn ʿAbdullāh, known as al-Mutawallī (d. 1313 AH). He was born in Cairo and passed away there as well. He was a great scholar and wrote around forty works on the *qirāʾāt* and other sciences of the Qurʾān. While *Tahqīq al-Bayān* is a prose work and includes more detail, the second is a poem and is briefer, consisting of 130 lines. In both these works, ʿAllāmah al-Mutawallī relied on *Laṭāʾif al-Ishārāt* of al-Qasṭallānī, who in turn relied on Imam al-Jaʿbarī’s *Ḥusn al-Madad*.⁸⁵

10. ***Contemporary Texts in Arabic:*** There are many works written by contemporary scholars on the science of verse-enumeration. Some of them are listed below.

a. ***Al-Farāʾid al-Ḥisān fī ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān.*** This poem is by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Qaḍī. It simplifies the study of this science by limiting itself to the differences between the verse counts. It does not include introductory discussions, nor does it employ codes. It is these qualities of this text as well as the depth of the knowledge of its author that make this a widely taught text around the world. Two of its famous commentaries are *Nafāʾis al-Bayān* by the author himself, and *Murshid al-Khillān ilā Maʿrifat Āy al-Qurʾān* by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rāziq Mūsā.

⁸⁵ Shukrī, *al-Muyassar fī ʿilm ʿAdd Āy al-Qurʾān*, 118.

- b. *Al-Tashīl bi ‘Add Āy al-Tanzīl*: This text is by Shaykh Iḥāb Fikrī. It is his commentary on his own poem that lists the differences among the verse-counts.
- c. *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt al-Qur’āniyyah*. This book is by Kamāluddīn ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Muqri’. It explores the connection between the verse-ends and the science of *balāghah*.
- d. *al-Muyassar fī ‘Ilm ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*. This book is by Shaykh Aḥmad Shukrī. It is an excellent and detailed introduction to the science of enumeration.
- e. *Madkhal Tamhīdī fī ‘Ilm ‘Add al-Āy*. This short work is by Shaykh Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī and is another primer on this science.
11. *Books in Urdu on the Science of Verse-Enumeration*.
- a. *Kāshif al-‘Uṣr Sharḥ Nāẓimat al-Zuhr*. This is Qārī Faṭḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī’s⁸⁶ commentary on Imam al-Shāṭibī’s poem that was mentioned earlier. It explains *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr* in detail and expands on other important discussions which are imperative to gaining a deeper understanding of this science.
- b. *Al-Wijḍān Sharḥ Nafā’is al-Bayān fī ‘Add Āy al-Qur’ān*. This is Qārī Iẓhār Aḥmad Thānawī’s translation and commentary of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī’s poem

⁸⁶ Please see Yacoob, *Qārī Faṭḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī: A Brief Biography* to read more about this great scholar’s life.

al-Farā'id al-Ḥisān. Qārī Iẓhār's commentary also includes the total number of verses for each *sūrah*, as well as some introductory material about the science of verse-enumeration. Following the norms of some of the early books in this science, *al-Wijdān* also includes lists of verse-ends that are unique (*infirādī*) for each verse-count.

- c. ***ʿIlm al-Fawāsiḥ***. This book is Qārī Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Rāsikh's Urdu translation of Qārī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Mīr-Muḥammadī's commentary on Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī's *al-Farā'id al-Ḥisān*. It is divided into two parts. The first part includes introductory discussions in the science of verse enumeration, and the second part is a translation and commentary of *al-Farā'id al-Ḥisān*.
- d. ***Hidāyāt al-Raḥīm fī Āyāt al-Kitāb al-Ḥakīm***. This book is by Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī. It is not a commentary on any particular text. It provides some introductory information about the science of verse-enumeration and then lists the total verse counts for each *sūrah* and the individual differences between the verse counts. Interestingly, this book also includes a list of places

where the ruling of *waqf* changes due to the differences in *qirāʾāt*.⁸⁷

- e. **Other Books:** Some other works are *Iḥām al-Fawāṣil* by Qārī Taqī al-Islām Dehlī and *Nujūm al-Furqān* by Qārī Muḥammad Idrīs al-ʿĀṣim.⁸⁸ Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Aʿẓamī has also authored two works on this subject.

12. **Books in Malay on the Science of Verse-Enumeration**⁸⁹

- a. ***Pengajian Tahfiz al-Quran Dan al-Qiraat (Siri 1)*:** This book is a compilation of journal articles and is published by Universiti Islam Selangor. It includes two articles on the science of enumeration. One is “*Ilmu al-Fawāṣil: Sanad Dan Periwiyatan Menurut Imam al-Syāṭibi Dalam Matn Nāẓimah al-Zuhr*” authored by Mujahid Ahmad Lutfi, Muhammad Ammar Farhan Ramlan and Uqbah Amer. The second article is “*Ilmu Fawasil: Pengenal Tokoh-Tokoh Imam Dalam Ilmu Fawasil*” by Uqbah Amer, Mujahid Ahmad Lutfi, Mohamad Redha Mohamad.

⁸⁷ These have been compiled and published along with Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh’s biography in *Before You Pause: How the Canonical Recitations of the Qurʾān Affect Where Waqf is Made* by Saaima Yacoob.

⁸⁸ The biographies of both these scholars can be found at the end of Yacoob, *Summarizing Ṭayyibah*.

⁸⁹ I am deeply grateful to Ustādhah Susilawati Samat for sending me resources in Malay to complete this list. May Allah reward her immensely for all the time she spent in finding these resources and for translating their synopses into English. *Āmīn*.

- b. *Fawāṣil al-Qurʾān al-Karīm and Waqaf Nabī ﷺ*. This book is by the late Mohd Rahim Jusoh Musa. It is a comprehensive discussion of this science without being a translation and commentary of any one text. It includes introductory information about the science of enumeration and lists the differences among the verse counts.
- c. *Fawāṣil Dalam Wacana al-Qurʾān*. This book is by Mohd Hisyam Abdul Rahim. Interestingly, the audience for this book is both students of knowledge and Muslims in general. It discusses the connection between the verse-ends and the contextual coherence of the Qurʾān.
- d. *Al-Madkhal fi al-Rasm wa al-Ḍabṭ wa al-Qirāʾāt*. This book is by Dr. Abd Rahman Abd Ghani. It is a primer for the textual sciences of the Qurʾān. In addition to *qirāʾāt*, *rasm*, and *ḍabṭ*, it includes discussions on *ʿilm al-ʿadad* as well.
13. **Chapters in other books.** While scholars have written many classical and contemporary books dedicated to this science, there are also individual chapters or sections in books that discuss the science of enumeration and/or its details. This includes classical texts on *qirāʾāt* and *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, such as *al-Kāmil* of Imam al-Hudhalī, *Ithāf Fuḍalāʾ al-Bashar* by Shaykh Dimyāṭī, *al-Itqān fi ʿUlum al-Qurʾān* by

Imam al-Suyūṭī, *Jamāl al-Qurrāʾ wa Kamāl al-Iqrāʾ* by Imam ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, and *Funūn al-Afnān* by Abū al-Faraj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī. Contemporary primers on the textual sciences of the Qurʾān such as Shaykh Ghānim Qaddūrī’s *al-Madkhal ilā ʿUlūm al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf* and Shaykh Musāʿid al-Ṭayyār’s *al-Muḥarrar fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* also contain chapters that summarize this science and its details.

Although this is not a complete list of the books on this science, I pray that Allah makes it a beautiful starting point for me and other students of the Qurʾān. *Āmīn*.

The Verse-counts and Their Chains of Transmission

There are seven scholars in the five major city centers that are relied upon in the science of enumeration of the Qurʾān. These scholars transmitted the verse counts from the *ṣaḥābah* and the senior *tābiʿīn* in their cities and the knowledge they transmitted spread to the corners of the world. The chains of transmission of each of these scholars are mentioned in the table below.⁹⁰ Please note that this book does not mention the Ḥimṣī verse count,

⁹⁰ Ibn al-Munādī, *Ikhtilāf al-ʿAdad*, 91-92; Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī, *Hidāyāt al-Raḥīm*, 12-14. Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh has mentioned a total of ten scholars from these five cities. However, I have chosen to mention the ones that he and Ibn al-Munādī had in common. His description of the *asānīd* of these scholars is the same.

following the example of *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr* and other books. Two other names have also been mentioned. They are Ayyūb ibn

Tamīm⁹¹ of Shām and Ḥumaid ibn al-A‘raj⁹² of Makkah. These verse counts were transmitted in two ways: the total verse count and verse-by-verse.

CITY	SCHOLAR(S)	TRANSMIT(S) FROM
Kūfah	Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullah ibn Ḥabīb al- Sulamī ⁹³	‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib <small>رضي الله عنه</small> ⁹⁴

⁹¹ He is (Abū Sulaimān) Ayyūb ibn Tamīm ibn Sulaimān ibn Ayyūb al-Tamīmī al-Dimashqī. He was a precise and famous *qārī*. A student of Yaḥyā al-Dhimārī, he took his teacher’s place as the *shaykh al-qurrā’* of Damascus after Imam Yaḥyā’s death. Hishām and Ibn Dhakwān were his students in *qirā’ah*. He passed away in 198 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:547.

⁹² He is (Abū Ṣafwān) Ḥumaid ibn Qais al-A‘raj al-Makkī al-Qārī. He learned *qirā’ah* from Mujāhid ibn Jabr and recited the Qur’ān to him three times. His students include Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah and Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ (the third *qārī*). He passed away in 130 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:817.

⁹³ He was from among the children of the *ṣaḥābah* and was blind. He was born in the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ but was very young when the Prophet ﷺ passed away. He recited the Qur’ān to ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, Zayd ibn Thābit, and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b رضي الله عنه and was the senior-most *qārī* of the city of Kūfah. He passed away in 74 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:411-413.

⁹⁴ Ibn Shādhān, *al-Mukhtār Min ‘Adad Āy al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 54-55.

Makkah	Mujāhid ibn Jabr ⁹⁵	‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās <small>رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ</small> from Ubayy ibn Ka‘ab <small>رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ</small> ⁹⁶
Madīnah	Abū Ja‘far Yazīd ibn Qa‘qā ⁹⁷ Shaybah ibn Niṣāḥ ⁹⁸ Nāfi‘ ibn Abī Ruwaym ⁹⁹	All three of these scholars transmit from the senior scholars of their city without any specific scholars being named. ¹⁰⁰
Shām	Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith ¹⁰¹	‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān <small>رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ</small>

⁹⁵ He was from among the senior *tābi‘īn* and scholars of *tafsīr*. He recited the Qur’ān to ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Sā‘ib and ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He recited more than twenty *khatams* of the Qur’ān to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He passed away in 103 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 3:103-104.

⁹⁶ Ibn Shādhān, *al-Mukhtār Min ‘Adad Āy al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 53.

⁹⁷ He is the eighth Imam of *qirā’āt*. His biography can be found in *The Three Qurrā’ and Their Ruwāt* by Sabah Shaikh, p. 3-5.

⁹⁸ He was a great Imam of *qirā’ah* in Madīnah along with Imam Abū Ja‘far. He was the freed slave of our mother Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها and she along with our mother ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها made *du‘ā* for him to be granted the knowledge of the Qur’ān. He was the son-in-law of Imam Abū Ja‘far and he led the *janāzah* prayer of the great-granddaughter of the Prophet ﷺ. He passed away in 130 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:188.

⁹⁹ He is the first Imam of *qirā’āt*. His biography can be found in *Beyond Recitation: Tajwīd and Spirituality* by Saaima Yacoob, p. 36-38.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Shādhān mentions that the people of Madīnah transmit ‘*adad* from ‘Aṭā’ ibn Yasār. Ibn Shādhān, *al-Mukhtār Min ‘Adad Āy al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 53.

¹⁰¹ He was Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Amr ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sulaimān ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ghassānī al-Dhimārī. He was the Imam of *Jāmi‘ al-Umawī* and the *shaykh al-qurrā’* of Damascus after his teacher, Imam Ibn ‘Āmir. He also recited the Qur’ān to Imam Nāfi‘ ibn Abī Ruwaym. Yaḥyā al-Dhimārī was a *tābi‘ī* and had met the companion Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa‘ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and transmitted both the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth from him. He passed away in 145 AH at the age of ninety. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 4:98-99.

Başrah	‘Āṣim al-Jaḥdarī ¹⁰²	‘Āṣim al-Jaḥdarī transmits from the statements of the senior scholars of his city without any specific scholars being named.
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¹⁰² He was (Abū al-Mujashshir) ‘Āṣim ibn Abī al-Ṣabbāḥ al-‘Ajjāj al-Jaḥdarī al-Baṣrī. He recited the Qur’ān to Sulaiman ibn Qattah who had recited to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه. He also recited the Qur’ān to Naṣr ibn ‘Āṣim and Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘mur. He passed away before 130 AH. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:245-246.

WAQF AND IBTIDĀ'¹⁰³

Linguistic definition of *waqf*: The word *waqf* is the gerund (*maṣḍar*) of the verb *waqafa*, *yaqifu*. The plural of *waqf* can be both *wuqūf* and *awqāf*. Its literal meaning is to come to a stop or a standstill.

Technical definition of *waqf*: It is the cutting off of the voice at the end of a word, that is not adjoined, for the normal duration of taking a breath with the intention of resuming recitation. *Waqf* cuts off a word from what comes after it. *Waqf* can be made at the end of an *āyah* or in the middle of it. However, it cannot be made in the middle of a word.

Linguistic definition of *ibtidā'*: Its literal meaning is to begin something.

Technical definition of *ibtidā'*: Technically it means beginning recitation after *waqf* or *qaṭ'*. It has its own rulings in terms of where one can start from after stopping, and how one should start after having stopped.

Objective: The science of *waqf* and *ibtidā'* is an important part of preserving the meaning of the Qur'^{ān}. It protects it against corruption, as stopping at an inappropriate place or beginning from an inappropriate place may cause the listener or the reader

¹⁰³ Please see Yacoob, *Maintaining the Meaning: An Introduction to Waqf and Ibtidā'* for more details and the relevant references.

to misunderstand or misinterpret the intended meaning of the Qurʾān. Another way to think about this is that stopping at the wrong intervals and separating words that are grammatically connected to each other would disrupt meaning in any language and at times, may even render it incomprehensible.

Subject: The science of *waqf* outlines **where** *waqf* should be made and **how** it should be made.

Where *waqf* is made depends on the completion of meaning and it is generally divided into four categories. *Waqf tāmm* is when the meaning and grammar of what follows the place of *waqf* is independent of what occurs before the place of *waqf*. This usually occurs at the ends of *āyāt*, ends of *rukuʿāt*, and ends of *sūrah*s. *Waqf kāfī* is when the sentence is grammatically complete, but the meaning is still connected. These occur at the ends of *āyāt* as well as in the middle of *āyāt*. *Waqf ḥasan* is when the meaning may be complete at the place of *waqf*, but what comes after it is strongly connected to it in both meaning and grammar. These may occur in the middle or at the end of *āyāt*. *Waqf qabīḥ* is when both the meaning and grammar are incomplete or inappropriate. Such *wuqūf* should be avoided.

Ibtidāʿ deals with where it is appropriate to start one's recitation such that the intended meaning is intact and words that are grammatically connected are not separated. The reciter will start from directly after a *waqf tāmm* and *waqf kāfī*. For *waqf ḥasan* and

waqf qabīh, the reciter will go back a few words to ensure that the meaning is complete. However, if the *waqf ḥasan* occurs at the end of a verse, the reciter may begin from directly after it.

How *waqf* is made at the end of word depends on both its orthography (*rasm*) as well as the final vowel on the word. How *ibtidā'* is made will depend on whether the word begins with a permanent or temporary vowel.

The chart below summarizes the divisions above:

Waqf		İbtidā'	
How	Where	How	Where
Depending on the last vowel or letter of a word, <i>waqf</i> can be made in the following ways: <i>Waqf bil-iskān</i> <i>Waqf bil-ibdāl</i> <i>Waqf bil-rawm</i> <i>Waqf bil-ishmām</i> Generally according to the <i>rasm</i> .	There are generally four categories of <i>waqf</i> : <i>tāmm</i> , <i>kāfi</i> , <i>ḥasan</i> and <i>qabīh</i> . These are based on the connection in meaning and grammar between what is before the place of <i>waqf</i> and what is after it.	If the word begins with a letter carrying a permanent vowel, the reciter will read that vowel when starting. If the word begins with a <i>hamzat al-waṣl</i> , the reciter will follow the relevant rules.	The reciter should start from a place where the meaning is complete, whether that is from a few words back or directly after the place of <i>waqf</i> .

Ruling: It is extremely important for the *qurrā'* to study and apply the science of *waqf* and *ibtidā'*. This allows them to recite in a way

in which the sound, words, and meaning of the Qurʾān are preserved. However, an inappropriate stop is not considered *ḥarām* or sinful unless a person intends the wrong meaning.

Sources of the science: This science is not a transmitted science like many of the sciences mentioned in this article. Rather, the recommended *wuqūf* in the Qurʾān are based on the *ijtihād* of scholars who wrote books on this topic.

Books on *waqf* and *ibtidāʿ*.¹⁰⁴

1. *Al-Wuqūf* This is by Shaybah ibn Niṣāḥ (d. 130 AH). According to Ibn al-Jazarī, this is the first book that was written on the topic of *waqf*.¹⁰⁵
2. *Al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʿ*: This is by Ḍirār ibn Ṣard al-Muqriʿ al-Kūfī (d. 229 AH).¹⁰⁶ Ḍirār ibn Ṣard narrated *qirāʿah* from Imam al-Kisāʿī and Yaḥyā ibn Ādam. He passed away in Kūfah in 229 AH.
3. *Al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʿ*: This is by Imam Abū ʿAmr al-Baṣrī (d. 154), the third Imam of the seven *qurrāʿ*.
4. *Al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʿ*: This is by Imam Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt (d. 154 AH), the sixth Imam of the seven *qurrāʿ*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Dr. ʿAbd al-Qayyūm ʿAbd al-Ghafūr al-Sindī, *Ṣafaḥāt fī ʿUlūm al-Qirāʿāt*, 173-179.

¹⁰⁵ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:298.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 55. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 1:306.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 55

5. *Waqf al-Tamām* This book is by Imam Nāfi^c al-Madanī (d. 169 AH), the first of the seven *qurrā'*.¹⁰⁸
6. *Waqf al-Tamām* This book is by Ya^cqūb al-Haḍramī, the ninth of the ten *qurrā'* (d. 205 AH).¹⁰⁹
7. *Al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'* This book is by Abū ^cUbaidah Ma^cmar ibn al-Muthannā (d. 209 AH).¹¹⁰
8. *Al-Īdāh fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'* This book is by Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328 AH). This is the earliest published book we have in the science of *waqf* and *ibtidā'*. We no longer have access to the early books mentioned before this one. We only have a record of the fact that they were written. And Allah knows best.
9. *Al-Qaṭ' wa al-Ṭināf*: This book is by Abū Ja^cfar al-Naḥḥās (d. 338 AH) and is one of the books that contemporary scholars relied on for the signs of *waqf* in the Madīnah-printed *muṣḥaf*.
10. *Al-Muktafā fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'* This book is by Imam Abū ^cAmr al-Dānī (d. 444 AH). It is one of the books that contemporary scholars relied on for the signs of *waqf* in the Madīnah printed *muṣḥaf*. Its explanations are not as detailed as those found in later books of *waqf*.
11. *Kitāb al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'* and *Ṭal al-Wuqūf* by Imam al-Sajāwandī (d. 590 AH): These two works explain the reasoning behind the signs of *waqf* in the South Asian and Turkish *maṣāḥif*.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 56; al-Ushmūnī, *Manār al-Hudā*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 56; al-Ushmūnī, *Manār al-Hudā*, 13-14.

¹¹⁰ al-Ushmūnī, *Manār al-Hudā*, 15.

12. *Al-Maqṣad li-Talkhīṣ mā fī al-Murshīd* Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926 AH).
13. *Manār al-Hudā fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ* by al-Ushmūnī (passed away in the 11th century hijrī): This is a widely referenced work in the science of *waqf*. It gives detailed explanations for places of stopping throughout the Qurʾān and also mentions how the *waqf* will change according to the *qirāʾāt*.
14. **Books in Urdu:** There are many excellent books on the science of *waqf* in Urdu. It is extremely impressive how the authors of these works have successfully explained concepts and details that are deeply rooted in the Arabic language, while writing in translation. A few of these works are listed below:
 - a. *Al-Madkhal ilā ʿIlm al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ*: This work is by Qārī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Mīr Muḥammadī. It is an excellent primer on the science of *waqf* in Urdu.
 - b. *Muʿallim al-Adāʾ fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ*: This book is by Qārī Taqī al-Islam Dehlvī and is a comprehensive study of the science of *waqf*.
 - c. *Tafhīm al-Wuqūf*: This book is by Qārī Muḥammad Ismāʿīl Amritsarī and is written in the format of questions and answers.
 - d. *Al-Ihtidāʾ fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ*: This book is by Qārī Muḥammad Idrīs al-ʿĀṣim and is a comprehensive study of the science of *waqf*.
 - e. *Kāmil al-Waqf Sharḥ Jāmiʿ al-Waqf*: This book is by Qārī Mufīd al-Islam Falāḥī. It is a commentary on *Jāmiʿ al-Waqf* by Qārī Ibn Diyāʾ Ilāhabādī, the first

book written in Urdu on the topic of *waqf*. It is an excellent commentary and presents complex issues in an accessible manner.

15. **Books in English:** Literature in English on the science of *waqf* is very limited. Below are a few works dedicated to various topics within the science of *waqf*. The first three are by Saaima Yacoob.

- a. ***Maintaining the Meaning.*** This work is a primer on the concepts of the science of *waqf* and *ibtidā'*.
- b. ***Before You Pause.*** This work is based on Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī's research on the changes in *waqf* due to the differences in *qirā'āt*.
- c. ***Considering the Meaning.*** This work is on the topic of *waqf* on *kallā*, *balā*, and *na'am* and the different scholarly opinions about them.
- d. ***Required to Stop.*** This work is by Ustādh Aḥmad Zayed and explores the topic of *waqf lāzim*. It provides the reader with accessible explanations for the instances of *waqf lāzim* marked in the Madīnah-printed *muṣḥaf*.

Signs of Waqf in Copies of the Qur'ān

Waqf signs are not related to the preservation of the **words** of the Qur'ān and were added much later than the generation of the *tābī'in*. Rather, they are related to the meaning of the Qur'ān. Therefore, just as scholars differ in the explanations (*tafsīr*) and grammatical analysis of various *āyāt*, so too do they differ in the

placement of symbols and signs of *waqf*. This difference can be noted throughout the *māṣāḥif* published in various parts of the world, and this difference is permissible.¹¹¹

To write this section, I have looked in the back of as many copies of the Qurʾān from as many countries as were available to me to ascertain the symbols of *waqf* they are using and which scholars' opinion they are following.¹¹² The reader should note that he/she may come across other conventions of signs of *waqf* in copies of the Qurʾān that will differ from the charts below, such as those used in North African *maṣāḥif*.¹¹³ He/she should remember that those differences are permissible, and the scholars and teachers of that area would need to be consulted in order to understand the meaning of each of those signs of *waqf*.

The South Asian and Turkish printed *maṣāḥif* use the *waqf* signs developed by Imam Muḥammad ibn Ṭayfūr al-Sajāwandī, a great *muqriʿ*, grammarian, and exegete who passed away in the middle of the sixth century *hijrī*.¹¹⁴ Many books assign the following five signs of *waqf* to the respected Imam: the *mīm* for *waqf lāzim*, and

¹¹¹ Rashīd Aḥmad Farīdī, *ʿUmdah al-Īqāf ʿalā Rumūz al-Awqāf*, 26-27.

¹¹² These countries are South Asia (India or Pakistan), Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan, and South Africa.

¹¹³ The North African *maṣāḥif* use the stops of Imam Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad al-Hibṭī (d. 930 AH). They use the symbol “صه” to represent *waqf tāmm*, *waqf kāfī*, and *waqf ḥasan*. Al-Masʿūl, *Muʿjam Muṣṭalahāt*, 346-347. These *maṣāḥif* are written according to the *riwāyah* of Imam Qalūn and Imam Warsh.

¹¹⁴ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:139.

ص, ز, ط, ج.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, I could not find the name and time frame of the scholar or scholars that added the other signs of *waqf* that are found in the South Asian-printed *maṣāḥif* today.

The *maṣāḥif* printed in the Arab world that I consulted either did not mention the name of the scholar whose opinion of *waqf* they were following, or the copies of the Qurʾān from various countries differed in the name of the scholar(s) whose opinion was being followed. Regardless of the places of *waqf*, the meaning of the symbols seems to be standard throughout the *maṣāḥif* printed in the Arab world.

¹¹⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1:287; Mīr Muḥammadi, *al-Madkhal ilā ʿIlm al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ maʿa Tas-hīl al-Ihtidāʾ fi al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ*, 75.

Symbol Chart 1

Sign of Waqf	What it Denotes
م	<i>Waqf Lāzim</i> : The reciter must stop, as continuing could cause an unintended meaning.
قلے	Better to stop, but the reciter may continue.
صلے	Better to continue, but the reciter may stop.
ج	The reciter may stop or continue.
لا	The reciter should not stop.
ش ش	The reciter may stop at the first of these markings or the second or may read through both. The reciter should not stop at both.
س	This symbol denotes that the reciter should make <i>sakt</i> , or a breathless stop, at that place.

Symbol Chart 2¹¹⁶

Sign of Waqf	What it Denotes
◌̣	<i>Waqf Lāzim</i> : The reciter must stop, as continuing could cause an unintended meaning.
ط	The reciter should stop here as the meaning is complete. Continuing from this place would suggest that two statements that are not connected are connected.
ح	Due to the meaning and the beautification of recitation, it is recommended to stop here.
ز	It is permissible to stop here if a stronger sign of <i>waqf</i> such as <i>jīm</i> is not in proximity. This is a weak sign of <i>waqf</i> . The reciter should not needlessly stop here.
ص	It is permissible to stop here if the reciter needs to, such as being compelled to due to losing one's breath or any other reason. This is a weak sign of <i>waqf</i> . The reciter should not needlessly stop here.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Ḍiyā³, *Jāmi' al-Waqf ma'ā Ma'rifah al-Wuqūf*, 18. The first eight signs in this chart are shared by the Turkish and South Asian *māṣāḥif*. The rest are only found in the South Asian *māṣāḥif*.

سكتة

This symbol denotes that the reciter should make *sakt*, or a breathless stop, at that given place.

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This marks a verse-end according to one of the non-Kufic counts.

THE INTERNAL STATE OF A QUR'ĀN RECITER

The main objective in the life of every believer is to attain Allah's pleasure. Students and teachers of the Qur'ān work tirelessly towards this goal. However, while being diligent students and dedicated teachers is an important part of this journey, there are some spiritual obstacles that can hinder us from reaching our goal. The main ones will be outlined in this section.

Intention

The Prophet ﷺ stated that actions are judged by their intentions.¹¹⁸ This is the first step of our journey as students and teachers of the Qur'ān. We must routinely renew our intention for learning and teaching the Qur'ān, seeking only the pleasure of Allah. If our intention is pure, then *in shā' Allāh*, our efforts in the service of the Qur'ān will be accepted and we will truly be counted among the people of the Qur'ān (*ahl al-Qur'ān*).

¹¹⁹ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ أَهْلِيْنَ مِنَ النَّاسِ، قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ هُمْ أَهْلُ الْقُرْآنِ أَهْلُ اللَّهِ وَخَاصَّتُهُ.

¹¹⁸ Al-Nasā'ī, 75; Ibn Mājah, 4227; Abū Dāwūd, 2201; Muslim, 1907.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Mājah, 215.

The Messenger of Allah said: "Allah has His own people among mankind." They said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He said: "The people of the Qur'ān, the people of Allah and those who are closest to Him."¹²⁰

There are two important things to remember about intention. The first is that if our intention is for anything other than Allah's pleasure, our service of the Qur'ān will not benefit us on the Day of Judgment. A *ḥadīth qudsī* describes the state of a scholar and reciter of the Qur'ān whose intention was impure:

وَرَجُلٌ تَعَلَّمَ الْعِلْمَ وَعَلَّمَهُ وَقَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ، فَأُتِيَ بِهِ، فَعَرَفَهُ نِعْمَةً فَعَرَفَهَا، قَالَ: فَمَا عَمِلْتَ فِيهَا؟ قَالَ: تَعَلَّمْتُ الْعِلْمَ وَعَلَّمْتُهُ، وَقَرَأْتُ فِيكَ الْقُرْآنَ، قَالَ: كَذَبْتَ، وَلَكِنَّكَ تَعَلَّمْتَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُقَالَ: عَالِمٌ، وَقَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ لِيُقَالَ: هُوَ قَارِئٌ، فَقَدْ قِيلَ، ثُمَّ أُمِرَ بِهِ، فَسُجِبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ حَتَّى أُتِيَ فِي النَّارِ.¹²¹

(Another) will be a man who has studied (religious) knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the Quran. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favors and he will recognize them. (The Almighty) will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I studied (religious) knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Qur'ān for Your sake. He will say: You have lied - you did but study (religious) knowledge that it might be said (of you): He is learned. And you recited the Qur'ān that it might be said (of you): He is a reciter. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire.¹²²

¹²⁰ Translation taken from sunnah.com.

¹²¹ Muslim, 1905.

¹²² Translation taken from sunnah.com.

Secondly, our intention will be tested. It will be in the moments in which others criticize us unfairly or students misbehave that we will be able to gauge whether we are truly serving the Qurʾān for the sake of Allah. If our intention is pure, we will continue to serve the Qurʾān in every situation, *in-shāʾ Allāh*. Ibn al-Jazarī, quoting Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, mentions three signs of sincerity of intention:

السيد ذو النون المصري: ثلاث من علامات الإخلاص: استواء المدح والذم من العامة،
ونسيان رؤية الأعمال في الأعمال، واقتضاء ثواب الأعمال في الآخرة¹²³.

Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī said: Sincerity has three signs: that praise and criticism from people feel the same to you; that you no longer focus on your own actions while doing them; and that you look for the reward of your deeds in the life to come.

May Allah make it easy for us to attain this level of sincerity. *Āmīn*.

Arrogance

As we perfect our recitation of the Qurʾān and increase in our knowledge of its sciences, arrogance may settle into our spiritual hearts. This is a dangerous ailment. Like impure intentions, arrogance can prevent us from attaining our goal.

Allah ﷻ tells us in the Qurʾān that He, most High, does not love those who are arrogant and who boast.

¹²³ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Munjid al-Muqriʿin*, 9.

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾

*Do not turn your nose up at people, nor walk about the place arrogantly, for God does not love arrogant or boastful people.*¹²⁴

The Prophet ﷺ warned us about the spiritual disease of arrogance in multiple *āḥadīth*. One of them is:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبْرٍ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ .¹²⁵

No one will enter Paradise who has even a mustard-seed's weight of arrogance in his heart, and no one will enter Hell who has even a mustard-seed's weight of faith in his heart.

Arrogance is defined as “to willingly and consciously regard oneself as superior to others in religious or worldly excellence in a way which creates contempt in the heart for others.”¹²⁶ It can be difficult at times to reflect internally on our own state but doing so is imperative if we hope to identify and rectify this quality. Arrogance in our spiritual heart manifests itself in some of the following ways: to generally regard others with contempt,

¹²⁴ 31:18, translation by Abdel Haleem.

¹²⁵ Ibn Mājah, 4173.

¹²⁶ Masīhullah Khan, *The Path to Perfection*, 67.

to take offence when one is not greeted first, or to be unable to acknowledge one's mistake even after having realized it.¹²⁷

Arrogance is not acknowledging or being aware of Allah's favors upon us, as this is the *sunnah* of Allah that He may give more of something to one person than another. Humility is to acknowledge that whatever we have is from Allah. Similarly, humility is not to speak of oneself in a debasing manner. Rather, humility is to assign all of the good Allah has granted us to Allah and not ourselves.

There are multiple remedies for arrogance. Firstly, asking Allah for protection from our *nafs*.

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ ، أَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَأْنِيْ كَلِّهْ ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ إِلَى
نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ¹²⁸

O Ever-Living One, O Eternal One, by Your mercy I call on You to set right all my affairs. Do not place me in charge of my soul even for the blinking of an eye (i.e., a moment).

By saying this *du'ā'*, we acknowledge in front of Allah ﷻ that our ego (*nafs*) is whispering to us, and we need His help to not give in to those thoughts and not to act on them. Arrogance is not just a disease that limits itself to thoughts of superiority, but rather it manifests itself in our actions, often leading to people being

¹²⁷ Masīḥullah Khan, *The Path to Perfection*, 67.

¹²⁸ Mustadrak al-Ḥākim, 2000.

unjust or oppressive towards others, and then justifying their actions to themselves by convincing themselves of their own superiority over those they oppressed.

Another powerful remedy is to reflect upon the greatness of Allah ﷻ which in turn will make us aware of our own insignificance, reminding us that it is only ever Allah ﷻ that is truly beautiful and truly powerful. If we feel superior to others due to our knowledge, acts of worship, beauty, or wealth, it is beneficial to remind ourselves that none of these blessings can be assigned to the self. Rather they are the blessings of Allah ﷻ and just as He, Most High has blessed us with them, He ﷻ can remove them.¹²⁹ We are not inherently better than others due to our blessings. When we become aware of a blessing of Allah ﷻ in ourselves, being grateful to Allah ﷻ, and assigning that gift to Allah ﷻ will *in shā'* Allāh protect us from arrogance.

Lastly, learning the *sīrah* of the beloved Prophet ﷺ, as well as reading about the humility of the companions رضي الله عنهم will inculcate a sense of humility in us, as we see that the best of creation ﷻ and the best generation رضي الله عنهم conducted themselves with the utmost humility.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Tabligh-e Dīn*, 149.

¹³⁰ Ḥamza Yūsuf, *Purification of the Heart*, 113.

Ostentation

Ostentation or *riyāʿ* is one of the more subtle spiritual diseases. It is “the intention to enhance one’s dignity in the eyes of people by means of acts of obedience to Allah Most High.”¹³¹ To perform an act of worship, such as prayer, for the sake of being seen by people is mentioned as a quality of the hypocrites in the Qurʾān.¹³² In a hadith, the Prophet ﷺ described ostentation as minor *shirk*.¹³³

The signs of ostentation are that acts of worship performed in public are more or of better quality than acts of worship performed privately. It can also manifest itself as a desire for fame and recognition.

The remedy for ostentation is to purify our intention and to renew it often. Also, we should not intend to display or to conceal an act of worship. Our concern should be with the act itself.¹³⁴ Another activity that may help is to imagine that we are standing in front of Allah on the Day of Judgment or lying in our grave. Where will the people whose praise we sought or whose blame we tried to avoid be? Neither their praise nor their blame will influence our questioning in the grave. Similarly, their praise will

¹³¹ Masīhullāh Khan, *The Path to Perfection*, 64.

¹³² 4:142.

¹³³ Musnad Aḥmad 23,360; Ibn Mājah 4204.

¹³⁴ Masīhullāh Khan, *The Path to Perfection*, 65.

not benefit us, and their blame will not harm us on the Day of Judgment. *In shāʾ Allāh*, this exercise will help us to keep our focus on Allah alone.

It is also important not to be overly suspicious of our intention as this is one of the ploys of Shaitan. We should establish our intention before every act of worship and renew it if we feel that our intention may have changed. However, we should not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with such thoughts.¹³⁵

Spiritual Routine

After reading the above, it is natural to ask what preventative measures we can take to protect ourselves from falling into the spiritual ailments mentioned above. The most powerful shield is a strong connection with Allah. In addition to our obligatory worship (*farḍ*), and avoiding major and minor sins, it is important that every Qurʾān reciter have a spiritual routine. This can be a formulation that is prescribed by our teachers, or something that we formulate ourselves based on what we find in the Qurʾān and *sunnah*. Our daily spiritual routine should include the following:

1. **Recitation of the Qurʾān:** This should be a *khatam* that we are reading that is not related to our learning and teaching. It was the practice of the *ṣaḥābah* to complete the Qurʾān in three to forty days.

¹³⁵ Masīḥullāh Khan, *The Path to Perfection*, 65.

2. **Ṣalawāt on the Prophet ﷺ:** There are so many virtues of sending ṣalawāt on the Prophet ﷺ that entire books have been written on them. One should have a minimum amount of ṣalawāt that they send on the Prophet ﷺ daily.¹³⁶
3. **Istaghfār and Ḥamd:** It is important to make at least some istaghfār daily as this is from the *sunnah*. One may choose any prescribed method in the Qurʾān and *sunnah* and repeat it at least one hundred times daily. A similar amount should be completed of the praise of Allah.¹³⁷
4. **Duʿāʾ:** This can either be a time of the day that one sits and makes duʿāʾ or a time in the day when one reads from a collection of duʿāʾs from the Qurʾān and *sunnah*.¹³⁸ One should also make it a habit to read the duʿāʾs from the *sunnah* before and after routine tasks like eating, sleeping, entering the restroom, etc.
5. **Adhkār of Protection:** It is imperative that we protect ourselves from the evil of Shayṭān as well as ḥasad. Every reciter of the Qurʾān should be particular about reading *adhkār* of protection in the morning and evening. These

¹³⁶ I recommend three hundred times a day to my students. And Allah knows best.

¹³⁷ To my students, I recommend *subḥān Allāhi wa bi-ḥamdihi subḥān Allāh al-aẓīm* and/or *Subḥān Allāh wa al-Ḥamdu li-Allāh Lā ilāha illā Allāhu wa Allāhu Akbar*.

¹³⁸ I recommend *The Accepted Whispers* by Hazrat Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī, translated by Mufti Khalid Baig.

include: *āyat al-kursī*, Sūrahs al-Kāfirūn, al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Falaq, al-Nās, the last two verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah, the last three verses of Sūrah al-Ḥashr, and other *adhkār* from the *sunnah*.

Further Reading:

This section discussed some of the major obstacles that students and teachers of the Qurʾān face on their journey. However, this is not a comprehensive study of the etiquette, both physical and spiritual, that should be observed by Qurʾān reciters. For a more detailed study of this genre, the reader may consult the following books:

1. *Al-Tibyān fi Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qurʾān*. This book is by Imam al-Nawawī and has been translated into English by Shaykh Musa Furber.
2. *Akhlāq Ḥamalāt al-Qurʾān*. This book is by Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Ājurri and has multiple English translations.
3. *Books of tazkiyah*. In general, students and teachers of the Qurʾān can benefit from books that describe the praiseworthy qualities that must be inculcated in a believer and the blameworthy qualities that should be removed from the spiritual heart of a believer.

By the great mercy of Allah, the draft of this work was completed on the 13th of the blessed month of Sha‘bān 1447 AH. Like all my other writing, this work, too, falls short of its goal. I ask Allah to accept it from me and all those who helped me with it and make it a source of khair for its readers. Āmīn.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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