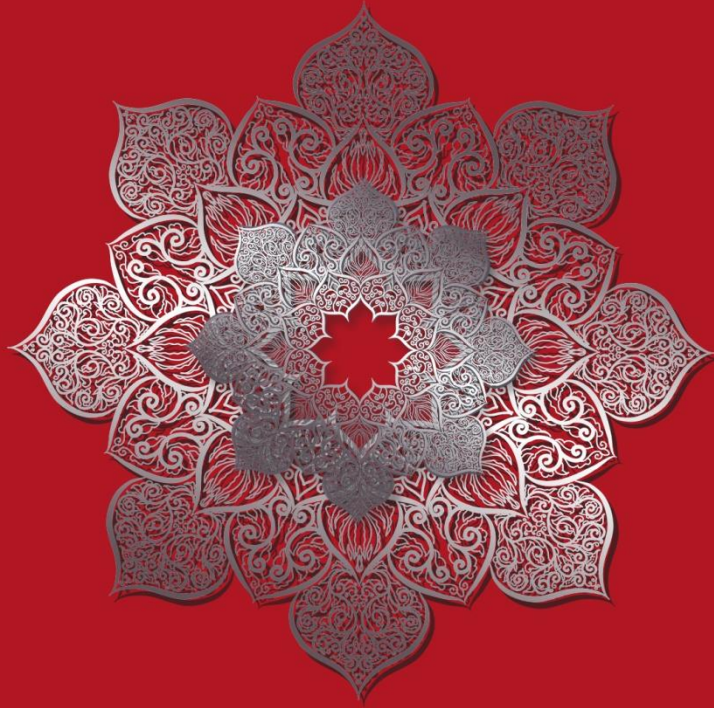


DIVERGENT PATHS



**Rijāl and Variant Reading Criticism, Critique
Frameworks, Authentication Triads, Grammatical and
Jurisprudential Challenges in Qur'anic Scholarship**

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Moreover, the author endeavours for this publication to serve as a *ṣadaqat al-jāriyah* for all living and deceased Muslims. As such, all profits generated from the publication will be utilised to offset the expenses of underprivileged students or teachers of the Qur'ān, prioritising those within the Cape Town region and, subsequently, abroad.

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مَجْمُوعَةُ الرَّسَائِلِ الذَّهَبِيَّةِ

فِي

مَسَائِلِ الْقُرْآنِيَّةِ

محمد رياض بن أمشاد أبلري

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System of Transliteration

Nr	Arabic	English	Nr	Arabic	English
1	أ	ʾ	17	ظ	ṭh
2	ب	b	18	ع	ʿ
3	ت	t	19	غ	gh
4	ث	th	20	ف	f
5	ج	j	21	ق	q
6	ح	ḥ	22	ك	k
7	خ	kh	23	ل	l
8	د	d	24	م	m
9	ذ	dh	25	ن	n
10	ر	r	26	ه	h
11	ز	z	27	و	w
12	س	s	28	ي	y
13	ش	sh	29	أَ	ā
14	ص	ṣ	30	يَ	ī
15	ض	ḍ	31	وُ	ū
16	ط	ṭ	32	أَيَّ	ay
			33	أَوَّ	aw

N.B. Arabic words are italicised except in 3 instances:

- 1- When possessing a current English usage.
- 2- When part of a heading or table/diagram.
- 3- When the proper names of humans.

The “al” of the Arabic *lām al-taʿrīf* is occasionally omitted to maintain the flow of the English.

مُقِرٌّ بِالَّذِي قَد كَانَ مِنِّي
وَعَفْوِكَ إِن عَفَوْتَ وَحُسْنَ ظَنِّي
وَأَنْتَ عَلَيَّ ذُو فَضْلٍ وَمَنِّي
عَضُّتُ أَنَامِي وَقَرَعْتُ سِيِّي
لَشَرِّ النَّاسِ إِن لَمْ تَعْفُ عَنِّي

إِلَهِي لَا تُعَذِّبِي فَإِنِّي
وَمَا لِي حِيلَةٌ إِلَّا رَجَائِي
وَكَمْ مِنْ زَلَّةٍ لِي فِي الْخَفَايَا
إِذَا فَكَّرْتُ فِي نَدَمِي عَلَيْهَا
يُظُنُّ النَّاسُ بِي خَيْرًا وَإِنِّي

قال محمد رياض بن أرشاد: **قَوْلَ اللَّهِ** - مَا أَنَا بِخَيْرِكُمْ، وَفِيكُمْ مَنْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِنِّي ...

Preamble

The discipline of Qirāʾāt (Variant Readings) has long been a terrain of rigorous scholarly investigation, critical discourse, and methodological refinement. ***Divergent Paths: Rijāl and Variant Reading Criticism, Critique Frameworks, Authentication Triads, Grammatical and Jurisprudential Challenges in Qurʾanic Scholarship*** is an assemblage of eighteen meticulously researched articles, born from extensive dialogues with esteemed colleagues and students.

The title ***Divergent Paths*** alludes to the multiplicity of scholarly trajectories within the discipline, reflecting the complexity and diversity of perspectives that have shaped this expansive field. This compendium offers a methodical exploration of the nuanced layers embedded within Qirāʾāt, illuminating the critical debates, textual variances, and underlying paradoxes that define its intellectual landscape. The work systematically examines *rijāl* criticism (narrator evaluation) as it pertains to Qirāʾāt, addressing challenges levelled against eponymous reciters, scrutinising linguistic and textual variances, dissecting authentication triads, and interrogating the grammatical and jurisprudential implications arising from these variant readings.

The inaugural chapter, ***Dissecting Disapproval: An Investigation into Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's Stance on Ḥamzah's Reading,*** undertakes a comprehensive inquiry into one of the most critically discussed readings within Tawātur (mass-transmitted) Readings. *Ḥamzah's Reading*, particularly in its *usūl* (principles of recitation) and *farsh* (individual word variations), has faced significant scholarly criticism, surpassing that of most other Tawātur Readings. Despite its firm establishment within the canon, contemporary students of knowledge continue to exhibit reservations towards it, necessitating a thorough academic reassessment.

Another pivotal chapter, ***Setting the Record Straight: Resolving Misconceptions Regarding Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī in the Scope of the Variant Readings,*** critically re-evaluates the scholarly standing of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī. Widely celebrated for his transmission of the reading of ʿĀṣim, Ḥafṣ holds an undisputed position in Qurʾanic recitation. However, his reliability as a ḥadīth narrator remains contentious. While some scholars extol his accuracy in transmitting Qirāʾāt, others raise concerns regarding discrepancies in his ḥadīth narration, citing instances of misattribution and textual inconsistencies.

This dichotomy underscores a fundamental methodological challenge: *can criticisms within the domain of ḥadīth transmission be extrapolated and superimposed to Qirāʾāt?* Each discipline—ḥadīth transmission and variant readings—operates under distinct evaluative frameworks—what constitutes a defect in ḥadīth transmission may not necessarily compromise the integrity of a Qirāʾāt chain or reciter. Thus, this work emphasises the necessity of methodological delineation, ensuring that criticisms are contextualised within their respective epistemic parameters.

The thematic breadth of this compendium extends further to interrogate the intersection between ḥadīth and Qirāʾāt scholarship.

“Beyond Boundaries: Critiquing Eponymous Readers through the Lens of Ḥadīth Scholarship,” critically examines the paradox wherein figures venerated within *Qirāʾāt* are simultaneously subjected to scrutiny within ḥadīth criticism. This chapter exposes the tensions that arise when evaluative frameworks from distinct disciplines are applied indiscriminately.

Furthering this analytical trajectory, ***“Unlocking the Triad: Unveiling a Systematic Approach to Variant Reading Authentication,”*** introduces a structured methodology for authenticating Qurʾanic Variant Readings. This triadic framework rests on three fundamental pillars: (1) adherence to Arabic linguistic conventions, (2) conformity to the ʿUthmanic codex, and (3) authentic transmission chains. These criteria provide a robust mechanism for evaluating the legitimacy of Variant Readings within the canon of Tawātur.

The discourse deepens in ***“Rijāl and Variant Reading Criticism: Unmasking the Critique Framework,”*** which explores the intricate landscape of scholarly critique within *Qirāʾāt* studies. Rooted in Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Jaʿbarī’s seminal work *Kanz al-Maʿānī*, this chapter systematically unveils the framework governing rijāl-based scrutiny in *Qirāʾāt*. It introduces a triadic model of critique, comprising:

- 1) **The Critic** – The figure responsible for issuing scholarly critique, whose methodological integrity and scholarly authority shape the discourse.
- 2) **The Target of Criticism** – The eponymous reader or canonical transmitter subjected to scrutiny.

- 3) **The Form of Criticism** – The nature, methodology, and justification of the critique, whether linguistic, jurisprudential, or based on transmission reliability.

By dissecting these critical dimensions, this chapter presents a structured exposition of the mechanisms through which Qirā'āt scholarship has historically engaged with variant readings and their transmitters. It highlights the epistemic depth, methodological precision, and scholarly rigour that underpin this discourse, offering a comprehensive contribution to the field.

Building on the critical foundations established in the preceding discussions, this compendium further explores the intricate methodologies governing *rijāl* criticism, linguistic scrutiny, and jurisprudential challenges in Qirā'āt studies.

The chapter, "***Approaches to Ḍabṭ and 'Adālah: Contrasts in Rijāl Criticism in the Disciplines of Ḥadīth and the Variant Readings in Islamic Scholarship***," systematically delineates the methodological divergences between ḥadīth and Qirā'āt criticism. It examines the nuanced application of *ḍabṭ* (accuracy in transmission) and *'adālah* (probity) within these respective fields, highlighting the distinct evaluative criteria that govern each discipline. While ḥadīth transmission demands exacting standards of both *ḍabṭ* and *'adālah*, Qirā'āt criticism operates within a textually distinct paradigm, necessitating an independent framework of assessment. The chapter underscores the potential misconceptions that arise from conflating these evaluative approaches, reinforcing the necessity of discipline-specific methodologies in Islamic scholarship.

Furthering this discourse, "***Linguistic Scrutiny vs Tawātur Authority: Challenges in Evaluating the Variant Readings***," critically interrogates the interplay between Qur'anic Variant Readings and the domain of linguistic scholarship. Traditional grammatical critiques often subject Qirā'āt to linguistic scrutiny that does not fully accommodate the scriptural authority of Tawātur (mass-transmission). This chapter challenges the dominance of conventional linguistic assessments, advocating for a recalibration of evaluative standards wherein Tawātur Readings—by virtue of their unbroken transmission from the Prophet ﷺ—hold epistemic primacy over retrospective grammatical theorisation.

The question of Tawātur itself is rigorously examined in ***“Unravelling Dissent: Examining Marginal Dissonance on the Mutawātir Status of Qur’anic Variant Readings.”*** Despite scholarly consensus affirming the Tawātur status of all Ten Variant Readings, dissenting voices—such as Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Rabī Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Qawīyy ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ṭūfī al-Ḥanbalī—challenge this assertion. The chapter critically engages with such marginal dissent, tracing its historical underpinnings and theological motivations. It further scrutinises alternative positions, including the Mu‘tazilite claim that all Variant Readings constitute *āhād* (solitary reports) and the distinct, yet contrasting stance of the *Ithnā‘ Ashariyyah Imāmiyyah*. Through a methodical analysis of transmission chains and scholarly validation, this discussion reinforces the enduring legitimacy of the Tawātur model and debunks misconceptions regarding accessibility and dissemination.

Turning to the jurisprudential dimensions of Variant Readings, ***“Stylistic Readings and Jurisprudential Foundations,”*** examines how the *A‘immat al-Madhāhib al-Arba‘ah* (*Imāms* of the Four Jurisprudential Schools of Thought) selected specific Variant Readings, often reflecting their educational lineage and methodological inclinations. These stylistic preferences subtly influenced the formation of their respective jurisprudential frameworks, illustrating the interwoven nature of *fiqh* and Qirā’āt.

A deeper exploration into *Shādh* Readings follows in ***“Shādh Readings: Semantic Essence and the Triad Pillars of Evaluation.”*** Etymologically, *Shādh* denotes singularity, irregularity, and deviation, extending beyond the Ten Canonical Variant Readings. These Readings diverge from *Tawātur*, necessitating a structured evaluative taxonomy that accounts for:

- 1) Transmission integrity,
- 2) Linguistic coherence, and
- 3) Adherence to the ‘Uthmanic codex.

The chapter introduces a classification model of *Shādh* Readings, distinguishing between:

- 1) **Authenticated *Shādh* Readings** – linguistically sound yet lacking in Tawātur.
- 2) **Conforming *Shādh* Readings** – aligning with Arabic norms but diverging from the ʿUthmanic codex.
- 3) **Weakly Attested *Shādh* Readings** – lacking both textual conformity and strong transmission.

The discourse extends to *mukhālafat rasm al-muṣḥaf*, or non-conformity to the ʿUthmanic script, as a determinant of canonical exclusion. The readings attributed to figures such as Ibn Miqṣam and Ibn Shanabūdh exemplify this phenomenon. Their stylistic choices (*ikhtiyārāt*)—whether in pronunciation, lexical variation, or the absence of a valid transmission chain—ultimately precluded their integration into the canonical corpus. This chapter, therefore, provides a methodologically precise framework for navigating the intricate and multifaceted domain of *Shādh* Readings.

The legal implications of these readings are then critically examined in “***Decoding Jurisprudential Conundrums: Shādh Readings and Their Admissibility in Legal Discourse.***” The chapter delineates three primary perspectives:

- 1) **The Permissibility View** – equating *Shādh* Readings with *āhād* reports, allowing their jurisprudential application.
- 2) **The Conformity View** – advocating for explicit conformity to canonical readings in legal derivation.
- 3) **The Rejectionist View** – negating their legal significance on the basis of their non-canonical status.

By critically analysing these perspectives, this discussion encapsulates the epistemological tensions that shape the discourse on the legal applicability of *Shādh* Readings within Islamic jurisprudence.

The final chapter in this section, “***Harmony and Discord: Unveiling the Spectrum of Scholarly Perspectives on the Amalgamation of Qurʾanic Readings in Prayer***” explores the permissibility of integrating multiple Variant Readings within a single recitation in

ṣalāh. (formal prayer) While the foundational legitimacy of Canonical Readings is undisputed, differences emerge regarding the practical application of amalgamating readings within a prayer setting. Some scholars, drawing upon Prophetic and early scholarly precedent, endorse this practice, while others advocate for strict adherence to a single recitational mode to preserve textual uniformity in worship. This chapter meticulously unpacks these divergent juristic positions, situating them within the broader framework of textual integrity and recitational propriety in Islamic practice.

The chapter, ***“Intricacies of Islamic Jurisprudence: The Complex Relationship of Integrating Shādh Readings with Tawātur Readings and the Validity of Formal Prayer,”*** explores the legal implications of incorporating *Shādh* Readings within *ṣalāh*. A unanimous scholarly consensus firmly opposes the exclusive recitation of *Shādh* Readings in prayer, reinforcing the imperative of preserving the canonical integrity of the Qur’anic text. However, the discourse extends to exceptional circumstances—wherein a *Shādh* Reading is unintentionally or erroneously integrated into *ṣalāh*. Under such conditions, stringent legal and procedural parameters must be observed to maintain the prayer’s validity, particularly through the simultaneous recitation of an authenticated Tawātur Reading. This nuanced investigation thus provides a deeper understanding of the intricate legal considerations underpinning Qur’anic recitation within acts of worship.

The discussion shifts towards a technical analysis of recitational practices in ***“Sakt at Verse-Terminals: A Controversial Practice in Qur’anic Recitation.”*** This chapter critically examines the practice of *sakt*—a silent pause without renewing breath at verse-terminals—tracing the divergent scholarly perspectives on its validity. While some scholars endorse its application, others adopt a cautious stance, advocating for either *waqf* (cessation) or *waṣl* (continuation) instead. The discourse highlights the pedagogical significance of proper guidance in Qur’anic instruction, ensuring that students are not misled in their application of *sakt*.

A specific controversy regarding *sakt* (textual constraints) is explored in ***“Dissecting Distich 37 of the Durrah: The Controversy Surrounding Sakt in Idrīs’s Transmission.”*** This chapter examines the debate concerning *sakt* in the transmission of Idrīs via the *Durrah* recension, delineating two major scholarly positions:

- 1) **The Opposition View** – Upheld by Ibn al-Jazarī, this stance vehemently rejects *sakt* in Idrīs’s transmission, based on meticulous textual analysis. Ibn al-Jazarī’s eminent students, al-Nuwayrī and al-Zabīdī, concur with this position, reinforcing its dominance in classical discourse.
- 2) **The Advocacy View** – Advanced by ‘Ali al-Ḍabbā’, ‘Abd al-Rāziq ‘Ali Mūsā, and others, this perspective supports the application of *sakt* in Idrīs’s transmission, particularly through the al-Muṭṭawwi’ī recension.

Through an examination of *asānīd* (scholarly lineages/chains of transmission), historical precedent, and textual diagrams, the chapter presents a chronological assessment of scholarly resistance to *sakt* in Idrīs’s transmission, tracing this opposition from the epoch of Ibn al-Jazarī to al-Mutawallī.

The ethical dimensions of Qur’anic recitation take centre stage in **“Beyond Linguistics: The Ethical Implications of Waqf Qabīḥ in Qur’anic Recitation.”** This chapter scrutinises the moral and theological consequences of *waqf qabīḥ* (unpleasant cessation)—instances where an inappropriate stop distorts the intended meaning of a verse. The discussion categorises four primary forms of displeasing cessations, demonstrating the delicate balance between linguistic regulations and contextual exceptions. By highlighting the responsibility and precision required in Qur’anic recitation, this chapter underscores the profound ethical duty borne by reciters in preserving the integrity of divine speech.

The chapter, **“The Sequential Arrangement of Qur’anic Reciters: An Analysis of Methodologies, Underlying Rationale, and Justifications,”** rigorously investigates the structural hierarchy of Qur’anic reciters within Qirā’āt scholarship. Through an in-depth analysis of seminal works by Ibn Mujāhid, al-Dānī, Ibn Siwār, Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and others, this study demonstrates that the the sequential arrangement of reciters was neither arbitrary nor uniform. Rather, the sequential order were shaped by:

- **Regional affiliations.**
- **Theological imperatives.**
- **Scholarly lineage and transmission networks.**

By unravelling these methodological underpinnings, this chapter advances a more sophisticated understanding of the historical and intellectual dimensions of Qur'anic recitation. It demonstrates that the sequential arrangement of reciters is a product of intricate scholarly deliberation, deeply entrenched in the Islamic intellectual tradition.

The concluding chapter, *“Unpacking the Gāf al-‘Arab and the Jīm al-Qāhiraḥ: A Forensic Examination of Phonetic Integrity in Qur’anic Recitation.”* The phonetic structure of the Qur’ān is as inviolable as its written text, safeguarded through an unbroken chain of transmission that ensures its recitation remains untampered. *Paradoxically, language evolves, but revelation does not.* To suggest that phonetic shifts can be incorporated into Qur’anic recitation is to mistake the fluidity of human speech for the immutability of divine decree. Yet, recent discourse has sought to challenge this principle, advocating for the legitimacy of pronouncing *qāf* (ق) as “g”, commonly referred to as the *gāf al-‘arab* (the Arab *gāf*) in Qur’anic recitation—an argument rooted in dialectal accommodation rather than transmitted authenticity.

This study rigorously interrogates the claims presented in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* [إخمد نار فتنة الخلاف], authored by Abū ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali al-Ḥibshī, which asserts that this phonetic shift is an established feature of classical Arabic, historically recognised by linguists and jurists. While dialectal flexibility was acknowledged in early Arabic speech, the absence of this pronunciation in any *Tawātur* Readings invalidates its recitational legitimacy. The science of *Tajwīd* operates within strict parameters, ensuring that phonetic articulation conforms to the precise mode transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ through mass, uninterrupted transmission. Recitation is not an open linguistic field—it is a discipline governed by phonetic continuity, not historical possibility.

By dissecting the methodological flaws in the argument for phonetic modification, this study exposes the fundamental distinction between linguistic documentation and recitational validity. Allowing unverified pronunciations under the pretext of dialectal accommodation would not only disrupt the uniformity of Qur’anic recitation but also compromise its divinely mandated preservation. *To introduce phonetic flexibility in the name of accessibility is to destroy accessibility itself—for when recitation is no longer anchored in transmission, it becomes a matter of preference, not preservation.* And as one distortion collapses, so does the next: *to dismantle the gāf al-‘arab is to*

dismantle the *jīm al-Qāhira*—an error cannot stand when its twin has fallen. The Qur’ān is a text of revelation, not linguistic evolution; its phonetic integrity is immutable, ensuring that the divine speech remains as unaltered in sound as it is in script.

In conclusion, we fervently implore Allah ﷻ to forgive our shortcomings and accept this humble endeavour as an act of sincere devotion. May this work serve as a means of salvation in the Hereafter and as an enduring perpetual charity (*ṣadaqah jāriyah*) for the entire Muslim *ummah*—both those who walk this earth today and those who have returned to their Creator—Allah ﷻ.

تَرَكْتُ التَّوَمَّ رَبِّي فِي الْيَأِي
لَأَجَلِ رِضَاكَ يَا مَوْئِي الْمَوْلِي
فَوَقَّعْتَنِي إِلَى تَحْصِيلِ عِلْمٍ
وَبَلَّغْتَنِي إِلَى أَقْصَى الْمَعَالِي

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أَنْظُرُ بَعَيْنِ الرَّحْمَةِ يَا رَبِّ لِمُحَمَّدٍ
رِيَاضِ الْفِكْرِ بِالْأَنْوَارِ وَالْجِلَالِ
إِحْفَظْهُ وَاعْفِرْ لَهُ وَأَمَلْهُ رَحْمَةً
وَأَسْكِنَهُ الْجَنَانَ بِالثُّمُورِ وَالتَّعَمِّ

Dissecting Disapproval: An Investigation into Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's Stance on Ḥamzah's Reading¹

Allah ﷻ, in His infinite wisdom and all encompassing mercy, has irrevocably ordained the perpetual preservation of His exalted Scripture, ensuring its sanctity remains invulnerable to distortion throughout the relentless passage of time. This Divine commitment, eternally enshrined within the immutable Qur'anic text, finds its most explicit expression in the unassailable declaration:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

*"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, We will be its guardian."*²

This solemn assertion constitutes more than merely a theological axiom; it is the foundational covenant upon which the entire structure of Qur'anic preservation rests, assuring the enduring purity and incorruptibility of Divine revelation. Yet, the fulfilment of this celestial promise transcends abstract divine decree; it is actualised through a sophisticated mechanism of human custodianship meticulously established by Divine providence. This profound dynamic is further illuminated through the unequivocal Divine statement:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُأْتِنَ اللَّهُ

*"Then We caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by the permission of Allah."*³

¹ It is incumbent upon our scholarly discourse to recognise that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's aversion towards Ḥamzah's stylistic Reading did not exist in isolation. Indeed, a cadre of illustrious luminaries, including 'Abd Allah ibn Idrīs al-Awdī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, and Bishr ibn al-Ḥāfi, echoed and substantiated such reservations. Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, espousing a particularly stringent position, went so far as to declare a prayer wherein Ḥamzah's Reading was recited as invalid. In a parallel vein, Abū Bakr ibn 'Ayyāsh [Shu'bah] ventured to classify Ḥamzah's Reading as an outright *bid'ah*, an innovation within the sacred domain of Variant Readings. These condemnations of Ḥamzah's Reading are meticulously archived within compendiums of *rijāl* criticism such as *Mizān al-'itidāl*, *Lisān al-Mizān*, and *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā'*, collectively illuminate the contentious terrain traversed by this stylistic variant.

Yet, while this exposé predominantly pivots upon Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's reservations, it is incumbent upon us to underscore a consensus among the luminaries, as mentioned above, regarding their disapproval of Ḥamzah's Reading. Thus, the narrative advanced in this article serves as a methodical rebuttal against the unified sentiments expressed by these revered personages. Crucially, it must be underscored that the purpose of this discourse is not to assail the scholarly standing of any individual; rather, its intent is to illuminate the formidable challenges that characterise the scholarly domain of Qirā'at. These expositions are crafted with a conscientious aim to equip students and instructors with the requisite acumen to adeptly navigate and defend positions against the critiques leveled at this discipline. Consequently, I entreat the discerning reader to approach these discourses with an unprejudiced intellect, divested of any preconceived biases, as we collectively unravel the intricate tapestry of divergent scholarly perspectives within the discipline of Qirā'at.

² *Sūrat al-Hijr*: 9.

This discerning act of Divine selection entrusts chosen servants with the profound duty of safeguarding the Qur'ān—an obligation transcending mere guardianship to become an imperative religious mandate. These individuals, venerated as the Eponymous Readers, committed themselves to the scrupulous rectification of each letter and the meticulous mastery of the Qur'ān's recitation. Their responsibility involved the direct reception of this Divine scripture from their predecessors, meticulously tracing an unbroken lineage back to the revered Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Such an engagement demanded unwavering precision, ensuring that every vowel, consonant, affirmation, and omission was accounted for with impeccable exactitude. For these custodians, the transmission of the Qur'ān, in precisely the form conveyed by the Prophet ﷺ, was an uncompromising and sacred duty passed meticulously to successive generations—a task treated with the reverence it inherently deserves.

The relentless efforts of these distinguished guardians elevated them to the status of Eponyms, exemplars to be emulated by aspirants seeking mastery over Qur'anic recitation. Their universal acclaim as authentic authorities is an enduring testament to the meticulous accuracy and scholarly rigour that characterised their narrations. Their devotion was absolute: nights were spent refining their recitations, and days were dedicated to ensuring accurate transmission. Consequently, they became guiding luminaries within the Muslim intellectual tradition, their Variant Stylistic Readings gaining widespread acceptance and enduring recognition.

Nevertheless, even within this consensus of acceptance, Islamic scholarship records instances where distinguished scholars have voiced critical observations, reservations, or explicit disapproval regarding certain Readings. Each scholar's critique, emanating from unique interpretative frameworks and intellectual perspectives, contributed significantly to a rich and nuanced scholarly dialogue.

Notably, among these scrutinised recitations stands the Reading of Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt, an Eponymous Reader whose transmission forms an integral part of the established Tawātur Readings—mass transmitted readings universally authenticated by continuous scholarly validation. Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb, prominently positioned among the eminent Fourteen Eponymous Readers, has faced substantial

³ *Fāṭir*. 32.

critical engagement, providing profound insights into the complex and intricate landscape of Qur'anic recitation scholarship.

Yet, critical scrutiny of such a venerated Tawātur Variant Reading inevitably risks being exploited by adversaries who may seek to cast aspersions on the authenticity of the Qur'ān itself. These detractors assert that acknowledged scholarly reservations could signify deeper structural deficiencies within the Qur'ān. It therefore becomes not merely academically prudent but morally imperative to address these criticisms comprehensively, dismantling any grounds upon which doubts could be constructed. This scholarly endeavour aims not merely to refute unfounded critiques but to elucidate precisely why reservations raised by earlier scholars do not compromise the integrity or authenticity of a Divinely authenticated and mass transmitted Variant Reading.

Hence, this rigorous investigation seeks to meticulously dissect each critique directed towards the Stylistic Reading of Ḥamzah, systematically defending its legitimacy and underscoring the underlying scholarly rationale for its acceptance. This will involve highlighting both the foundational principles of his Reading and the detailed justification behind each phonetic articulation, providing clarity that eradicates misconceptions.

The deliberate scholarly focus on Ḥamzah's Reading stems from the uniquely substantial volume of scrutiny it has historically attracted, surpassing that of other Tawātur Readings. Contemporary discomfort among certain students of knowledge, often emanating from limited comprehension of the historical contexts of earlier scholarly criticisms, necessitates a detailed re-examination. By illuminating the subtle complexities surrounding these critiques, this research seeks to rectify misapprehensions, presenting a balanced and informed scholarly perspective.

Ultimately, this analysis does not merely respond to historical criticisms but fortifies the intellectual discourse on Qur'anic Variant Readings. It reinforces the essential principle that scholarly debate within Islamic scholarship serves not to undermine but to safeguard the authenticity of Divine revelation, preserving its unassailable sanctity against misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Objectives of this Inquiry

The primary aim of this rigorous scholarly inquiry is to systematically dissect each critique directed towards the Variant Reading of Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt, situating each within its precise historical and scholarly framework. This investigation seeks not only to mount a robust defence of this canonical Reading but also to clarify the nature and origins of reservations articulated by early Islamic scholars concerning its recitational particularities. Ultimately, this study aspires to address comprehensively all critical perspectives that have been perceived as challenging the integrity of a widely authenticated, divinely preserved Reading. The overarching objective, therefore, is to illuminate the scholarly justifications and inherent virtues underpinning the Reading of Ḥamzah, meticulously detailing its foundational principles and the exactitude of its phonetic articulations.

The deliberate emphasis placed upon the Reading of Ḥamzah emerges from the pronounced volume and intensity of critiques it has historically attracted, both explicit and implicit, surpassing in scope those levelled against other Tawātur Readings. Despite the universally recognised legitimacy of the Ten Canonical Readings, including Ḥamzah's, a notable contingent of contemporary scholars and students of knowledge express palpable reservations or explicit discomfort with his stylistic choices. This unease often reflects an implicit recognition that Readings external to the canonical decalogy inherently lack authoritative equivalence with the authenticated recitation of the Qur'ān.

Such contemporary apprehensions frequently stem from historical narratives highlighting earlier scholarly reservations about Ḥamzah's Reading. Yet, these reservations are often recounted absent a comprehensive grasp of their historical context or foundational rationale. This gap in understanding underscores the necessity for a rigorous and nuanced scholarly examination—precisely the undertaking this research seeks to fulfil. By delving deeply into the intricate historical and technical dimensions of Ḥamzah's Reading, this study intends to unveil the complex layers obscured by oversimplifications, thereby dispelling misconceptions that have perpetuated unwarranted critiques. In doing so, the inquiry aims to deliver a nuanced, authoritative perspective, enriching the broader discourse on Qur'anic recitation scholarship.

To achieve this ambitious scholarly objective, extensive research into various relevant treatises, dissertations, and scholarly expositions has been meticulously undertaken. These contributions provide diverse and multifaceted perspectives, thereby significantly enhancing the intellectual breadth and depth of this inquiry.

Key scholarly works critically engaged within this research include:⁴

Ḍafʻ al-Ghamzat ʻan Qirāʻat Ḥamzah (Dispelling Doubts Concerning Ḥamzah’s Stylistic Reading) by Ghāzī ibn Bunaydir al-ʻUmarī. Although Ghāzī’s treatise tends to explore peripheral dimensions rather than directly confronting core criticisms, it nevertheless enriches the scholarly dialogue by providing nuanced contextual insights rarely traversed within conventional discourses.

Radd al-Kalām wa al-Shubuhāt ʻan Qirāʻah min al-Mutawātirāt fī al-Radd ʻalā al-Ṭaʻn fī Qirāʻat al-Imām Ḥamzah al-Kūfī (Responding to Notions and Doubts Concerning a Mutawātir Reading in Refutation of Criticisms Against Imām Ḥamzah al-Kūfī’s Reading), authored by al-Sayyid ibn Aḥmad ʻAbd al-Raḥīm. This work meticulously catalogues and addresses the extensive range of criticisms levelled at Ḥamzah’s Reading, buttressed by authoritative quotations from classical scholarship. The rigorous nature of al-Sayyid’s scholarship systematically deconstructs central critiques, firmly situating them within their historical and scholarly context.

Risālah fī al-Radd ʻalā Manaʻ Qirāʻah Ḥamzah wa al-Kisāʻī (A Treatise Responding to the Prohibition of Ḥamzah and al-Kisāʻī’s Readings) by ʻAli ibn Muḥammad Tawfiq al-Naḥḥās. Despite its brevity, this treatise addresses central objections with remarkable depth and precision. It systematically dismantles the arguments supporting the prohibition of these Readings, affirming their rigorous adherence to the criteria defining correct recitation.

Qirāʻāt al-Imām Ḥamzah wa al-Intiṣār lahā (The Readings of Imām Ḥamzah and Their Defence) by Sāmī ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ Hilāl. This seminal work comprises three interconnected segments:

⁴ Regrettably, the acquisition of a copy of the seminal work titled *Qirāʻah Ḥamzah wa māʻ Uʻturīḍa bihī ʻalayhā*, penned by the erudite scholar ʻAbd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʻUbayd, has proven elusive. This notable literary composition, which I perused several years ago, stands as a testament to the erudition and scholarly prowess of its esteemed author. The intricate nuances and profound insights embedded within the text have left an indelible mark on my intellectual pursuits.

- A thorough biographical and intellectual contextualisation of Ḥamzah.
- An incisive examination of the *infirādāt* [peculiar] Readings of Ḥamzah and those which coalesce under the rubric of the Three Eponyms of the *Durrah* Readings.
- Meticulous study of the criticisms enveloping these Readings:
 - a) Sāmī's meticulous examination of purported errors in Ḥamzah's Readings.
 - b) His presentation of scholarly defences for the Seven Eponymous Readers and their respective Readings.
 - c) He thoroughly examined the reasons underpinning the differences between the *qurrā'* and grammarians.

Collectively, these scholastic endeavours constitute a tapestry that enriches our understanding of the multifaceted criticisms against Ḥamzah's Readings. Through meticulous scholarship, they present both overarching and surgically targeted responses to the objections raised, elevating the discourse on Qur'anic Tawātur Readings to new heights. The interplay of these divergent perspectives reflects the dynamic complexity inherent in evaluating Ḥamzah's Readings, offering the academic community a rich canvas to deliberate and refine the discourse surrounding this distinguished facet of Qura'nic scholarship..

Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt⁵

In the hallowed corridors of Qur'anic scholarship, the figure of Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt emerges as a luminous beacon, occupying the distinguished mantle of the sixth Eponym among the Ten Eponymous Readers. His patronym, Abū 'Ummārah, resonates with an aura of scholarly eminence, underscoring his pivotal role as *Sheikh al-Qurrā'* in the esteemed city of Kūfah. His ascendancy to this exalted station unfolded against the backdrop of the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, a temporal tapestry wherein Ḥamzah's erudition and piety radiated with incandescent brilliance.

Born in the auspicious year 80/699 in Ḥulwān, 'Irāq, Ḥamzah's earthly sojourn unfolded in an epoch steeped in historical significance. The tendrils of his intellectual lineage extended back to the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, as he—being considered a Successor to the Successors (*Tābi'ī al-Tābi'īn*)—may have had the privilege of interacting with luminaries from the generation of the Companions. This historical resonance imbues Ḥamzah's scholarly tapestry with a profound depth, forging a tangible link to the living tradition of the Qur'ān.

The mantle of Qirā'ah, once borne by the venerable 'Āṣim and al-A'mash, found a worthy custodian in Ḥamzah. Within the crucible of Kūfah's scholarly milieu, his Reading ascended in prominence, becoming the predilection of its residents following the passing of 'Āṣim. This transition in recitational authority unfolded as Shu'bah's health waned, Ḥafṣ relocated to Baghdad, and Ḥamzah rose to the mantle of leadership, ensuring the continuity of Qur'anic transmission at the heart of Kūfah's intellectual landscape.

A tableau of scholarly intrigue is captured in an account narrated by Sulaym, a pupil of Ḥamzah, depicting a moment of profound revelation in the sphere of Qur'anic recitation. When Ḥamzah first entered the gathering of al-A'mash, he was met with a degree of scepticism, a sentiment that quickly dissipated upon the eloquent cadence of his recitation. The distinctive feature of this episode lies in al-A'mash's uncharacteristic silence, an implicit acknowledgement of the magnetic potency of Ḥamzah's articulation. This transformative moment marked the genesis of Ḥamzah's

⁵ *Ma'rifāt al-Qurrā' al-Kibār*: 1/111. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/261. *al-Wāḍiḥat al-Khaḍrā'*: 103. *Aḥāsīn al-Akḥbār*: 303.

ascendancy, as an assembly that had initially regarded him with circumspection transformed into an audience captivated by his unparalleled prowess.

Ḥamzah's pedagogical ethos was imbued with an unwavering commitment to the sanctity of Qur'anic instruction. His principled stance, exemplified in his rejection of material gifts from his students, unveils a luminous facet of his character. The illustrative incident involving a monetary offering of one thousand dirhams stands as a testament to Ḥamzah's unwavering dedication to disseminating Qur'anic knowledge. His poignant remark, *"How can I accept remuneration for the teaching of the Qur'ān? My hope instead lies in attaining a lofty station in Paradise,"* encapsulates the ethos of a scholar who regarded the Qur'ān not as a commodity but as a sacred trust, transcending the confines of material recompense.

Within the expansive tapestry of his scholarly legacy, Ḥamzah's role as both a transmitter and recipient of knowledge assumes paramount significance. His illustrious teachers, including Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A'mash and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, and his eminent students, such as al-Kisā'ī and Sufyān al-Thawrī, stand as a testament to the interconnectedness of the scholarly continuum.

The final chapter of Ḥamzah's earthly journey unfolded in the vicinity of Bā' in Kūfah in 156/773, marking the culmination of a life dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the Qur'ān and its Variant Readings. With his passing, the scholarly firmament lost a radiant star, yet his indelible legacy endures, woven into the very fabric of Qur'anic transmission and scholarly devotion.

Beyond the Surface: Exploring the Layers of Meaning in Some of Ḥamzah's Stylistic Readings

Within this scholarly exploration, our attention converges upon an intricate examination and analysis of selected Stylistic Readings synonymous with Ḥamzah. However, the purview of our investigation is strategically tailored to scrutinise those particular variants that bear consequential implications for the field of *Tafsīr* (exegesis). This approach delves into the profound intersections between linguistic nuances and exegetical insights, seeking to unravel the intricate layers of meaning embedded within Ḥamzah's Readings. Through this lens, we aim to offer a nuanced perspective that enriches the scholarly discourse on Qur'anic interpretation.

- 1) The verb [فَازَ لَهَا] in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 36:

فَازَ لَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ۗ

Notably, the lexical intricacies surrounding the word [فَازَ لَهَا] emerge as a focal point of analysis. A dichotomy unfolds, as Ḥamzah and al-‘Amash read the word with *ithbāt* (affirmation) of an *alif*, diverging from the majority of esteemed *qurrā'*, including Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, Ibn 'Āmir, 'Āṣim, Kisā'i, Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, Khalaf al-'Āshir, Ibn Muḥaysin, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī, who instead opt for *hadhf* (omission) of the *alif*.⁶

From an etymological standpoint, [فَازَ لَهَا] derives from [الزَّلَّةُ], encapsulating the semantic realm of “**error or mistake**” i.e., [الْحَطِيئَةُ]. This Variant Reading accentuates Shayṭān's role in leading Prophet Ādam into error, framing his fall as an external influence exerted upon him.

Contrastingly, Ḥamzah and al-‘Amash Reading, with *ithbāt* of an *alif* [فَازَ لَهَا], denotes “**to turn away,**” i.e., [التَّنَجِيَةُ], thus, imparting a nuanced exegetical interpretation in which Prophet Ādam transitions from a state of obedience to one of disobedience. This stylistic divergence subtly shifts the interpretive emphasis, highlighting a deliberate shift in behaviour rather than a mere lapse influenced by Shayṭān.⁷ Prominently, al-Qurṭubī reconciles these Readings under a unifying exegetical

⁶ Ghayth al-Nafī: 70. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 30. *The Four Non-Canonical Readings*: 88.

⁷ *Tafsīr a-Qurṭubī*: 1/294.

framework, navigating the multifaceted tapestry of meaning that these Variant Readings introduce.

Confluence of Textual Wisdom: Variant Readings Aligned

A deeper engagement with this verse and its Variant Readings unveils profound insights into the concepts of responsibility and accountability—concepts that are central to moral and ethical discourse. These interpretative layers offer nuanced perspectives on human agency, decision-making, and the consequences of one's actions. By critically examining the Readings and al-Qurṭubī's reconciliation, we unravel the intricate interplay between individual choices, external influences, and moral agency.

Responsibility: The Influence of External Factors

The first Variant Reading, **فَأَزَلَّهُمَا**, elucidates the notion of responsibility by attributing error or mistake to Shayṭān's influence. This perspective posits that individuals bear responsibility for their actions, even when they succumb to external temptations or negative influences. It underscores the delicate balance between human agency and external manipulation, affirming that humans possess volition and the capacity for choice, yet they remain accountable for the outcomes of their decisions.

In essence, responsibility entails acknowledging one's role in decision-making and recognising the moral and spiritual repercussions of one's actions, whether beneficial or detrimental. This interpretative angle situates Shayṭān's role as an instigator rather than an absolute determinant, preserving human moral responsibility despite external interference.

Accountability: The Transition from Obedience to Disobedience

The second Variant Reading, **فَأَزَلَّهُمَا**, introduces a more pronounced concept of accountability, signifying a transition from obedience to disobedience. This exegetical shift posits that individuals are not merely responsible for their actions but are also fully accountable for the consequences that follow. Accountability, in this sense, transcends mere responsibility; it entails being answerable for one's conduct and embracing the favourable or adverse ramifications of one's choices. Within the narrative of Prophet Ādam, this perspective underscores the fundamental theological

principle that human beings are ultimately answerable for their decisions, whether they align with Divine obedience or lead towards transgression.

al-Qurṭubī's Reconciliation: A Nuanced Exegetical Perspective

al-Qurṭubī's harmonisation of these Readings offers a layered perspective that encapsulates the complexity of human behaviour and moral agency. His approach seeks to synthesise these seemingly divergent viewpoints, underscoring the intricate interplay between external influences, such as Shayṭān, and human autonomy. While acknowledging the role of external factors in shaping human actions, al-Qurṭubī's reconciliation firmly emphasises the inherent capacity of individuals to exercise volition. His exegetical approach highlights a theological equilibrium, asserting that while external forces may exert influence, the final determination of action remains within the domain of human will.

Consequently, both Readings coexist as complementary dimensions of the broader Qur'anic discourse on responsibility, accountability, and Divine justice.

Deciphering the Complexities of Responsibility and Accountability: Psychological Insights

The discourse surrounding responsibility and accountability permeates psychological inquiry, delving into the intricate interplay between individual agency and external influences. These constructs extend beyond philosophical and theological dimensions, intersecting with cognitive, emotional, and relational domains that shape human behaviour, self-perception, and interpersonal dynamics. A comprehensive understanding of these psychological mechanisms offers profound insights into the implications of accountability, both as a catalyst for self-improvement and a potential source of distress:

Advantages of Assuming Responsibility and Accountability:

- 1) **Empowerment:** Assuming responsibility serves as a catalyst for empowerment, instilling individuals with a profound sense of agency and control over their destinies. This empowerment arises from acknowledging that one's actions and decisions wield substantive influence over outcomes, thereby fostering a proactive mindset conducive to goal attainment and self-actualisation.

Individuals who embrace responsibility tend to exhibit greater confidence, resilience, and a heightened ability to navigate complex life challenges with autonomy.⁸

- 2) **Self-Development:** Embracing accountability is crucial for self-development, compelling individuals towards profound self-reflection and introspection. By viewing accountability as an opportunity for growth, individuals are better equipped to confront their mistakes, engage in emotional growth, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity. This transformative process enhances self-awareness and fosters adaptability, equipping individuals with the cognitive and emotional dexterity necessary for overcoming personal and professional obstacles.⁹
- 3) **Trust and Respect:** The ethos of accountability engenders a culture of trust and respect in both personal and professional spheres. Individuals who uphold accountability are perceived as pillars of reliability, honesty, and integrity, thereby fostering trust among peers and strengthening social bonds. This relational capital is instrumental in nurturing collaborative environments, where mutual respect serves as a cornerstone for meaningful connections and collective success.¹⁰
- 4) **Problem-Solving Skills:** Accountability acts as a crucible for honing problem-solving skills, prompting individuals to actively seek solutions and alternatives when confronted with obstacles. This proactive engagement with challenges cultivates creativity and adaptability, fostering innovative problem-solving approaches and enhancing cognitive flexibility in navigating intricate scenarios. By embracing accountability, individuals develop a solution-oriented mindset, reinforcing their intellectual growth and proficiency in managing complex domains.¹¹

⁸ Ziegler, E., Hill, J., Lieske, B., Klein, J., von dem, O., & Kofahl, C. (2022). Empowerment in cancer patients: Does peer support make a difference? A systematic review. *Psycho-Oncology*, 31, 683-704.

⁹ Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*.

¹⁰ Ribeiro, M. T., Singh, S., & Guestrin, C. (2016). "Why Should I Trust You?": Explaining the Predictions of Any Classifier. Proceedings of the 22nd ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining.

¹¹ Pachitariu, M., Sridhar, S., & Stringer, C. (2023). *Solving the spike sorting problem with Kilosort*. bioRxiv.

Disadvantages of Not Assuming Responsibility and Accountability:

- 1) **Stress and Anxiety:** The weight of responsibility and accountability can precipitate heightened levels of stress and anxiety, particularly in high-stakes contexts or under intense scrutiny. The looming spectre of failure or judgement may engender a pervasive sense of apprehension, impairing optimal performance and compromising psychological well-being. This psychological burden underscores the necessity of cultivating effective stress-management strategies, ensuring individuals can navigate responsibility without succumbing to chronic distress.¹²
- 2) **Blame and Guilt:** A heightened sense of accountability may lead to self-blame and guilt, particularly in instances of unfavourable outcomes or errors. Overly self-critical tendencies can erode self-esteem, inducing mental distress and cognitive distortions that hinder personal development. This underscores the delicate interplay between accountability and emotional well-being, necessitating a balanced approach that incorporates self-compassion and a growth-oriented perspective—viewing mistakes not as indictments of personal inadequacy, but as opportunities for learning and refinement.¹³
- 3) **Avoidance and Denial:** Some individuals evade responsibility or deny accountability, seeking refuge from the consequences of their actions or safeguarding their self-image. This evasive stance impedes self-growth, as it hinders authentic engagement with challenges and obstructs opportunities for meaningful introspection and improvement. Overcoming avoidance tendencies necessitates fostering a culture of transparency and constructive feedback, enabling individuals to confront difficult realities with maturity and self-awareness.¹⁴

¹² Schieber, M., & Chandel, N. (2014). ROS Function in Redox Signaling and Oxidative Stress. *Current Biology*, 24, R453 – R462.

¹³ Norman, S., Capone, C., Panza, K. E., Haller, M., Davis, B. C., Schnurr, P., ... & Angkaw, A. (2022). A clinical trial comparing trauma-informed guilt reduction therapy (TrIGR), a brief intervention for trauma-related guilt, to supportive care therapy. *Depression and Anxiety*, 39, 262 – 273.

¹⁴ Zhao, N., Shi, P., Xing, W., & Lim, C. P. (2022). Resilient Adaptive Event-Triggered Fuzzy Tracking Control and Filtering for Nonlinear Networked Systems Under Denial-of-Service Attacks. *IEEE Transactions on Fuzzy Systems*, 30, 3 191 – 3 201.

- 4) **Burnout:** The incessant burden of responsibility, when exacerbated by inadequate support or recognition, can precipitate burnout. The convergence of overwhelming expectations, prolonged obligations, and unrelenting pressure can result in exhaustion, reduced motivation, and diminished professional efficacy. Mitigating the risk of burnout requires a balanced approach to responsibility, prioritising self-care, emotional regulation, and the cultivation of supportive environments that acknowledge individual contributions.¹⁵

In contemplating these psychological dimensions, we discern their profound interrelation with theological discourse. Exploring these Variant Readings and their exegetical reconciliation accentuates the inseparable connection between responsibility and accountability in shaping human behaviour, decision-making processes, and moral judgements.

These concepts prompt contemplation on the interplay of external influences, personal agency, and ethical considerations, particularly within the broader context of religious and moral teachings. The narrative of Prophet Ādam, as explored through Ḥamzah’s Stylistic Readings, serves as a paradigmatic model illustrating how divine decree, human autonomy, and moral responsibility converge in the grand schema of human existence.

By examining these constructs, this scholarly inquiry invites introspection into:

- The dynamics of human responsibility,
- The nature of accountability, and
- The ethical imperatives that guide individual actions in navigating moral dilemmas and ethical frameworks.

Thus, whether approached through a theological, psychological, or philosophical lens, the notions of responsibility and accountability remain foundational to the human experience, shaping moral integrity, societal cohesion, and spiritual consciousness.

¹⁵ West, C., Dyrbye, L., & Shanafelt, T. (2018). *Physician burnout: contributors, consequences and solutions*. *Journal of Internal Medicine*, 283, 516 – 529.

2) The word [كَبِيرٌ] in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 219:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ طُ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ ۝

The lexical nuances surrounding the word [كَبِيرٌ] emerge prominently within scholarly discourse, revealing a critical schism in Variant Readings. A divergence unfolds, as Ḥamzah, Kisā'ī, and al-‘Amash diverge by reading the word with a *thā'*, while the majority of esteemed *qurrā'*, the likes of Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, Ibn 'Āmir, 'Āṣim, Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, Khalaf al-‘Āshir, Ibn Muḥaysin, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī, opt for a *bā'* in their recitation.¹⁶ This phonetic and semantic variation significantly affects the interpretative framework of the verse, particularly in relation to the severity and breadth of sin associated with alcohol and gambling.

The Majority Reading: [كَبِيرٌ] – The Gravity of Sin

Etymologically, [كَبِيرٌ], laden with connotations of “**major, great, or grave**”, denotes the severity of the sins linked to intoxicants and gambling. This interpretation aligns seamlessly with the theological gravity ascribed to these acts within Islamic tradition.

The severity of alcohol consumption is unequivocally underscored in the Prophetic tradition:

[اجْتَنِبُوا الخمر فإنها أُمُّ الخبائث]

“Abstain from intoxicants, for indeed they are the root of all evil.”¹⁷

The reading [كَبِيرٌ] reinforces the categorisation of alcohol and gambling as grave transgressions, positioning them among the major sins that corrupt moral integrity and societal order. This alignment is further fortified by the subsequent occurrence of [أَكْبَرٌ] later in the verse, strengthening the inclination towards the *bā'* variant in Qur'anic recitation.

The Minority Reading: [كَبِيرٌ] – The Multiplicity of Sin

In stark contrast, the *thā'* variant [كَبِيرٌ], translating to “**many or numerous**”, shifts the exegetical focus. Here, the sins are not merely categorised as major but are

¹⁶ *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 111. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 60. *The Four Non-Canonical Readings*: 98.

¹⁷ *Sunan al-Nasa'i*: 5 683.

emphasised as multifarious, expanding the scope of transgression to include the numerous corruptions stemming from intoxicants and gambling.

This interpretation is substantiated by the Prophetic condemnation of not only the consumption of wine but also its broader network of facilitation and engagement:

[لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْخَمْرَ وَشَارِبَهَا وَسَاقِيَهَا، وَبَائِعَهَا وَمُبْتَاعَهَا، وَعَاصِرَهَا وَمُعْتَصِرَهَا، وَحَامِلَهَا وَالْمَحْمُولَةَ إِلَيْهِ]

“Allah ﷻ has cursed wine, its drinker, its server, its seller, its buyer, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, the one who carries/distributes it, and the one to whom it is carried.”¹⁸

Similarly, another narration further expands the scope of sin:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ لَعَنَ الْخَمْرَ وَعَاصِرَهَا وَمُعْتَصِرَهَا وَحَامِلَهَا وَالْمَحْمُولَةَ إِلَيْهِ وَشَارِبَهَا وَسَاقِيَهَا وَبَائِعَهَا وَمُبْتَاعَهَا وَأَكَلَ ثَمَرِهَا

“The Prophet ﷺ has cursed wine, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, the one who carries/distributes it, and the one to whom it is carried, its drinker, its server, its seller, its buyer, the one for whom it is bought, as well as its profiteer – makes a living and thus eats from the profit generated.”¹⁹

This Variant Reading of [كَثِيرٌ] nuances the exegetical interpretation, reinforcing the notion that the prohibition of intoxicants extends beyond individual consumption. It encompasses the entire economic and social system that sustains, facilitates, and profits from it, indicating that sin proliferates in multiple forms rather than being confined to a singular transgression.

Exegetical Implications and Corroborative Evidence

A notable textual observation further bolsters the interpretative weight of the *thā'* variant [كَثِيرٌ]. In the codex of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ, the word [كَثِيرٌ] appears in tandem with [أَكْثَرٌ], mirroring its linguistic configuration within his *muṣḥaf* (codice).²⁰ This concurrence strengthens the assertion that this reading carries significant exegetical weight, offering a distinct lens through which to understand the ramifications of sin.

Thus, the variant [كَثِيرٌ], rather than contradicting the majority reading [كَبِيرٌ], serves to enrich the exegetical discourse, imparting an additional layer of interpretative nuance. While the *bā'* variant underscores the gravity of sin, the *thā'* variant amplifies its

¹⁸ *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: 3 674. *Sunan Ibn Mājah*: 3 380. *Musnad Aḥmad*: 4 787.

¹⁹ *Majmū‘ al-Fatwā Ibn Taymiyyah*: 12/484.

²⁰ *Tafsīr a-Qurṭubī*: 3/49.

expansiveness, illustrating that the transgressions linked to intoxicants and gambling extend across multiple dimensions—social, economic, and moral.

Conclusion: Semantic Enrichment in Exegetical Discourse

The divergence between these Variant Readings is not merely a phonetic or lexical alteration; rather, it represents a profound exegetical expansion that deepens the understanding of Qur'anic moral teachings.

- The majority reading [كَبِيرًا], aligns with a strict condemnation, framing intoxicants and gambling as among the gravest sins.
- The variant reading [كَثِيرًا] broadens the semantic scope, highlighting the multiplicity of transgressions linked to these vices.

This exegetical interplay accentuates the Qur'ān's multi-layered depth, demonstrating how Variant Readings serve to refine and elucidate theological, moral, and legal implications. The harmonisation of these readings enriches the scholarly discourse on Qur'anic exegesis, offering a more comprehensive theological framework for understanding the nature of sin, accountability, and divine injunctions.

Ultimately, these readings invite a more profound contemplation on the extensive societal and spiritual ramifications of actions, urging a deeper engagement with Qur'anic moral imperatives within legal, ethical, and theological contexts.

Confluence of Textual Wisdom: Qur'anic Variant Readings and Ḥadīth Aligned

The intricate interplay between prophetic traditions (ḥadīth) and Qur'anic Variant Readings unveils a profound orchestration of Divine and prophetic condemnation, particularly regarding the deleterious effects of alcohol. The initial ḥadīth invokes Divine censure upon all those entwined with intoxicants, a Divine reprimand that resonates with an authoritative proclamation of condemnation [كَبِيرًا]. This establishes an unequivocal gravity associated with the act of consuming alcohol or facilitating its proliferation, positioning it as a transgression so weighty that Allah ﷻ Himself deems it deserving of explicit condemnation.

In tandem, the second ḥadīth amplifies this denunciation, with the Prophet ﷺ reinforcing the Divine displeasure towards those complicit in the propagation of

alcohol. This dual censure, emanating from both the Divine and prophetic realms, accentuates the severity of the transgression, forging an indelible imprint on the moral landscape of Islamic ethics. The sin [كَيْسِرٌ], as inferred, from these traditions, transcends the boundaries of mere moral impropriety, evolving into a transgression that elicits Divine wrath and necessitates unambiguous repudiation.

Concurrently, both ḥadīth seamlessly extend the discourse, portraying all affiliates of alcohol as deeply enmeshed in a multitude of sins [كَيْسِرٌ]. This expansive categorisation implies a plethora of moral, social, and psychological transgressions that stem from intoxicant consumption and its wider implications.

The Societal and Psychological Ramifications of Alcohol Abuse

The testimonies of lives marred by alcohol-induced fatalities—spanning from fatal alcohol poisoning to tragic road accidents caused by driving under the influence—serve as poignant and visceral reminders of the far-reaching societal consequences of this proscribed elixir. The catalogue of heinous crimes linked to intoxication—ranging from suicide to murder, domestic abuse, and sexually motivated offences including rape and molestation across diverse demographics—further underscores the gravity of its effects.

Additionally, alcohol abuse exacts a severe toll on physiological well-being, engendering irreparable damage to critical organs such as the liver, brain, and heart. Chronic alcohol dependence is a primary catalyst for liver cirrhosis, cognitive decline, and cardiovascular afflictions, imposing an overwhelming strain on healthcare infrastructures while simultaneously jeopardising individual well-being and societal stability.

Beyond the physiological detriments, the societal repercussions of alcohol abuse are multifaceted and profound. Intoxicant addiction nurtures familial and communal disintegration, fostering environments riddled with domestic discord, negligence, and psychological trauma. Children reared in households plagued by alcoholism frequently endure disrupted childhoods, often falling prey to physical and emotional maltreatment, thereby perpetuating cycles of dysfunction and suffering across successive generations.

Similarly, gambling shares a parallel trajectory of devastation. From tragic accounts of suicide to episodes of murder, domestic strife, verbal abuse, substance misuse, and the forfeiture of possessions and assets—each serves as poignant exemplars of the pervasive consequences of this illicit practice. The repercussions of gambling addiction extend beyond mere financial destitution and emotional distress. The psychological toll is particularly severe, with gambling addiction serving as a precursor to major mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Those grappling with gambling dependency frequently suffer social ostracism, isolation, and strained interpersonal relationships, further compounding their sense of despair and disillusionment.

This aligns with Qur’anic guidance, which categorically condemns gambling alongside intoxicants, recognising their insidious impact on individual morality and societal cohesion. The Qur’ān states:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ ۚ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾

“Indeed, Shayṭān seeks to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. Will you not then desist?”²¹

This verse affirms the far-reaching repercussions of these vices, underscoring their capacity to rupture social harmony and sever one’s connection with spiritual devotion.

Through contemplating these narratives, it becomes evident that each Variant Reading serves as a harmonising agent, complementing and elucidating the multifaceted dimensions of the sin at hand.

- The term [كَبِيرٌ], indicative of a grievous offence, aligns seamlessly with the explicit condemnation and curse articulated in the *ḥadīth* from both Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ.
- Conversely, [كَثِيرٌ], as evident from subsequent traditions, conveys the sheer multitude of transgressions associated with intoxicants and gambling, offering an expansive understanding of their widespread repercussions.

²¹ *al-Mā’idah*: 91.

This exegetical interplay between Variant Readings and prophetic ḥadīth yields a comprehensive tapestry of understanding, illuminating the nuanced and profound implications of alcohol-related and gambling-induced transgressions. Furthermore, it serves as a guiding framework, directing believers towards a deeper comprehension of the ethical imperatives surrounding the consumption of intoxicants, any association with them, and the multitude of consequences they entail.

Thus, these Variant Readings do not function in isolation but rather synergise within the Qur'anic discourse, broadening the exegetical horizon and offering a layered theological and moral perspective that resonates across spiritual, social, and psychological dimensions.

Conclusion: Theological and Ethical Implications

Ultimately, the harmonisation of the Variant Readings with prophetic ḥadīth strengthens the Islamic ethical framework, accentuating the gravity and breadth of these forbidden practices.

- Alcohol is not merely a prohibited indulgence; it is the root of moral corruption, a sin explicitly condemned by Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, and one that perpetuates widespread harm across social, economic, and psychological domains.
- Gambling, like intoxicants, is an insidious vice that disrupts financial stability, psychological well-being, and family structures, reinforcing the Qur'anic injunction against its practice.

Thus, the theological narrative woven through the Variant Readings and prophetic teachings urges a comprehensive rejection of these destructive practices, guiding the believer towards a life of moral integrity, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness.

3) The verb [تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ] in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 236:

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمْ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۗ

The lexical intricacies surrounding the verb [تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ] elicit a scholastic divergence, reflective of the nuanced interplay between language, jurisprudence, and Qur'anic

exegesis. A variance emerges in its recitation, wherein Ḥamzah, Kisā'ī, Khalaf al-Āshir, and al-ʿAmash diverge by reading the word with a *ḍammah* on the *tā'*, followed by *ithbāt* (affirmation) of an *alif* following the *mīm*, as evidenced in [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ]. This contrasts sharply with the majority reading, which includes Nāfiʿ, Ibn Kathīr, Abū ʿAmr, Ibn ʿĀmir, ʿAṣim, Abū Jaʿfar, Yaʿqūb, Ibn Muḥaysin, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī, all of whom opt for it with *fathḥ* of the *tā'*, followed by *hadhf* (omission) of the *alif*, as in [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ].²²

This phonetic and morphological divergence carries significant implications for the semantic and jurisprudential interpretation of the verse, particularly in defining the scope of physical intimacy within marriage and its impact on legal rulings concerning divorce and dowry obligations.

Etymologically, [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ] is derived from the trilateral root [مَسَّ - يَمَسُّ] imbued with the connotation of “**touching**” in a general sense. However, within jurisprudential discourse, it is frequently interpreted as a metonym for physical consummation, particularly within the context of marital relations.

In this verse, the majority reading [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ] situates the linguistic focus on unilateral action, whereby the husband is understood to be the subject of the verb, implying that the absence of consummation absolves the marriage from certain legal obligations. This interpretation aligns with the traditional understanding that the verse addresses divorce prior to physical consummation, wherein a husband who has not engaged in intimate relations with his spouse bears no financial liability if no dowry has been stipulated.

Conversely, the variant reading [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ], following the *tafāʿul* [تَفَاعُلٌ] morphological pattern, introduces a reciprocal dimension to the interaction, rendering the meaning as “**mutually touching**.” This nuanced grammatical variation emphasises the bilateral nature of intimacy, underscoring that physical contact—especially consummation—is not merely a one-sided act, but a mutual engagement between both spouses. This interpretive shift expands the jurisprudential implications of the verse, prompting

²² Ghayth al-Nafī: 115. al-Budūr al-Zāhirah: 64. The Four Non-Canonical Readings: 97.

further discourse on marital rights, obligations, and the legal ramifications of unconsummated marriages.²³

Furthermore, the verse delves into some of the multifaceted aspects within Islamic jurisprudence concerning divorced women, navigating through nuanced rulings and interpretations:²⁴

- **Pre-Consummation Divorce:** The phrase *“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched”* establishes the legal permissibility of divorce prior to consummation. This ruling clarifies that a marital bond, while sacred, does not necessitate an irreversible commitment if intimacy has not occurred. Furthermore, it underscores the legal distinction between a fully consummated marriage and one that remains unconsummated, impacting financial obligations and procedural requirements in cases of divorce.
- **Dowry Obligations and Financial Liabilities:** A scholarly debate ensues regarding the obligatory nature of the dowry in the event of divorce prior to consummation.
 - a) If a dowry had been stipulated at the time of marriage, scholars discuss whether the entire sum or only half of the agreed amount becomes mandatory upon divorce.
 - b) If no dowry had been specified, the verse absolves the husband from financial obligations, allowing him to divorce without incurring a compensatory payment.

This ruling highlights the Qur’ān’s equitable approach, ensuring that financial impositions are proportionate to the degree of matrimonial commitment.

- **Classification of Divorced Women:** The Qur’ān classifies divorced women into distinct legal categories based on:
 - a) Whether the marriage had been consummated,

²³ *al-Futūḥāt fī al-Qirā’āt al-‘Ashr*. 1/483.

²⁴ *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*. 3/180.

- b) Whether a dowry had been stipulated, and
- c) The implications for financial and waiting-period obligations.

This classification system determines rulings regarding the waiting period (*'iddah*), dowry rights, and other legal responsibilities.

- **Nikāḥ al-Tafwīḍ – Marriages Without a Stipulated Dowry:** The verse alludes to the permissibility of marriage contracts that do not specify a dowry at the time of the contract (*nikāḥ al-tafwīḍ*). However, a scholarly divergence arises as to whether a financial obligation remains post-marriage but pre-divorce. Some jurists hold that the dowry remains a deferred right and becomes due upon divorce unless otherwise renounced, while others argue that its omission negates any subsequent financial claim.
- **Legal Implications of a Husband's Death Prior to Dowry Stipulation:** A notable juristic discourse emerges concerning cases where a husband passes away before stipulating a dowry:
 - a) Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ legal position asserts that the woman in such a scenario is entitled to an amount equivalent to the dowries of women from her social class or tribe.
 - b) This opinion remains a subject of rigorous debate, with scholars divided over its validity, coherence, and applicability.
- **Interpretation of مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ:** The phrase مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ signifies divorced women with whom the marriage had not been consummated. The reciprocal nature of the construct مَا denotes that divorcing an unconsummated wife without a specified dowry entails no waiting period (*'iddah*). This interpretation underscores the precision of Qur'anic legal injunctions, highlighting how jurisprudential rulings delicately balance individual rights, responsibilities, and financial fairness.
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Exegetical and Legal Harmonisation

These Variant Readings, rather than presenting contradictory interpretations, function as complementary dimensions within the broader exegetical and legal framework:

- The majority reading [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ] aligns with unilateral agency, reinforcing the primary legal condition of non-consummation as a determinant of financial and procedural obligations.
- The minority reading [تُمَسُّوهُنَّ] highlights mutuality, offering a broader jurisprudential perspective that considers marital intimacy as an interaction of shared engagement rather than a one-sided act.

These interpretive nuances demonstrate the precision and adaptability of Qur'anic discourse, illustrating how Variant Readings enrich Islamic legal thought by deepening the understanding of matrimonial rulings and their wider implications.

Conclusion: The Intersection of Linguistics, Law, and Theology

This scholarly inquiry into the Variant Readings of [تَمَسُّوهُنَّ] highlights the linguistic, theological, and legal sophistication of Qur'anic exegesis.

- 1) It affirms the precision of Qur'anic language in defining marital rights and obligations,
- 2) It underscores the theological depth of legal rulings, balancing equity and responsibility, and
- 3) It reinforces the necessity of textual rigor in understanding Qur'anic injunctions, ensuring that legal interpretations remain firmly rooted in authentic linguistic and scholarly traditions.

Thus, these Variant Readings serve not as mere phonetic variations but as essential components of Islamic legal hermeneutics, providing a layered and comprehensive discourse on the jurisprudence of marriage and divorce.

Laudatory Accolades Showered upon Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt

Amidst the scholarly tapestry that envelops the subject of Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt, a compendium of venerable voices resonates, attesting to the manifold virtues and exceptional qualities that have crowned him as a luminary in the firmament of Qur'anic scholarship.

In the meticulous course of composing and concluding this research, an array of authoritative voices from the annals of Islamic erudition has been consulted, each contributing a distinct perspective to the laudatory accolades showered upon Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt. These testimonies, articulated by preeminent scholars across generations, reinforce his enduring stature as an unrivalled authority in the transmission and mastery of Qur'anic recitation.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's Acclamation: Commencing this orchestration of praise, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, an eminent stalwart of ḥadīth and Islamic jurisprudence, unequivocally extolled Ḥamzah, deeming him *thiqah* (trustworthy and prudent) in ḥadīth transmission.²⁵ Such an imprimatur from a luminary of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's stature lends an undeniable weight to Ḥamzah's credibility, affirming his uncompromising precision and integrity in transmitting Prophetic traditions.

Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn's Assertion: Equally, the eminent Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn, when questioned by al-Dāramī concerning Ḥamzah's scholarly standing, unreservedly affirmed his trustworthiness, classifying him as *thiqah* and bestowing upon him the unassailable epithet of "trustworthy".²⁶ This testimony, emanating from one of the most rigorous authorities in ḥadīth criticism, serves as an indelible testament to the unimpeachable calibre of Ḥamzah. Ibn Ma'īn's declaration situates Ḥamzah's scholarly legacy within the highest echelons of reliability and academic rigor.

al-A'mash's Metaphor: The appellation "*the inkwell of the Qur'ān*", as articulated by al-A'mash, further amplifies the acclaim accorded to Ḥamzah.²⁷ This metaphorical portrayal encapsulates his meticulous commitment to the sacred text, depicting him as

²⁵ *al-'Ilal wa Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*: 115.

²⁶ *Tārīkh al-Dāramī*: 102. *Min Kalām Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*: 54.

²⁷ *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*: 7/97.

a reservoir from which the ink of Divine revelation flows—a testament to his mastery over the Qur’anic sciences. This analogy resonates profoundly, emphasising his unparalleled dedication to the refinement, preservation, and transmission of Qur’anic recitation.

Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl’s Divine Endorsement: The encomiums extend to Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl, who, in his expressive utterance, perceived Ḥamzah as a Divine bulwark, averting calamities from the people of Kūfah.²⁸ This profound characterisation underscores the perceived sanctity and piety encapsulated within Ḥamzah’s persona, portraying him as a safeguard through whom Divine protection was bestowed upon the city. Such a perception is not merely an acknowledgment of scholarly prowess but a reflection of his deep-rooted piety and spiritual gravitas.

Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid’s Acknowledgment: Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid, a connoisseur of Reading traditions, credited Ḥamzah with upholding the established traditions of authoritative figures in recitation.²⁹ His affirmation attests to Ḥamzah’s profound knowledge of the Qur’anic recitative schools, positioning him as a formidable custodian of transmission methodologies and recitational authenticity. Ibn Mujāhid’s recognition reinforces Ḥamzah’s scholarly eminence, attesting to his meticulous adherence to the canonical methodologies of Qur’anic recitation.

al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī’s Eminent Characterisation: Venturing further into the expansive pantheon of testimonials, Abū al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī extolled Ḥamzah as an eminent figure, unparalleled in virtue during his epoch. The commendation, “*the eminent figure of his time, unique in his era*”, suggests a singular eminence that distinguished Ḥamzah from his contemporaries, placing him at the zenith of scholarly authority.³⁰ This acknowledgment cements his unrivalled standing in Qur’anic recitation.

al-Andarābī’s Comprehensive Description: The laudatory expressions of al-Andarābī paint a portrait of unparalleled virtue and scholarship, depicting Ḥamzah as a paragon of asceticism, righteousness, chastity, and unwavering devotion.³¹

²⁸ *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*: 3/28. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/263.

²⁹ *al-Ma’rifah wa al-Tārikh of al-Fasawī*: 3/180.

³⁰ *al-Kāmil*: 80.

³¹ *al-Iḍāḥ*: 88.

His exemplary character, fused with an abundance of worship and linguistic proficiency, constructs a multifaceted depiction of scholarly excellence, illustrating Ḥamzah’s embodiment of both erudition and spiritual integrity. This intricate tapestry of praise underscores his holistic mastery of not only Qur’anic sciences but also ethical and moral refinement.

Yāqūt al-Ḥimawī’s Laudatory Epithets: Yāqūt al-Ḥimawī, in his seminal works, fashioned a comprehensive portrait of virtue and scholarly prowess, referring to Ḥamzah as:

“An imām, a reciter, the ascetic encompassing virtue and piety, and an established authority.”³²

These epithets encapsulate his leadership role and proficiency in Islamic scholarship, portraying him as an intellectual colossus whose influence transcended mere technical mastery.

al-Sakhāwī’s Era-Defining Imprint: al-Sakhāwī noted Ḥamzah’s monumental role, describing him as:

“An imām of his era in Kūfah and beyond.”³³

This testimony affirms Ḥamzah’s transcendent influence, positioning him as a paragon of excellence whose legacy permeated geographical boundaries, extending far beyond the confines of Kūfah into the broader Islamic world.

Abū Shāmah’s Singular Distinction: Abū Shāmah extolled Ḥamzah’s exceptional asceticism, noting:

“None of the Eponymous Seven Readers rivalled him in abstaining from seeking remuneration for Qur’anic recitation.”³⁴

This singular distinction underscores Ḥamzah’s unparalleled devotion to the integrity of Qur’anic scholarship, situating him as a beacon of selfless dedication to the transmission of Divine revelation.

³² *Irshād al-Arīb*: 3/1219. *Ma’rifāt al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/252. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/262.

³³ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/468.

³⁴ *Ibrāz al-Ma’ānī*: 1/104.

His renunciation of material compensation reflects a rarefied level of piety, setting him apart even among his esteemed peers.

Conclusion: An Enduring Legacy of Scholarly Eminence

The multitude of accolades showered upon Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt, spanning multiple generations and diverse scholarly disciplines, cements his position as an irreplaceable figure in Qur'anic scholarship.

- His mastery over the Qur'anic sciences,
- His unwavering asceticism,
- His unparalleled integrity, and
- His immense contributions to the transmission and preservation of Qur'anic oral tradition.

all render him an indelible luminary in the annals of Islamic erudition.

Thus, Ḥamzah's legacy endures, not merely in the ink of scholarly writings, but in the very recitational traditions that continue to echo across the Muslim world—a testament to his immortal imprint upon the discipline of Qirā'āt.

The Eminence of Ḥamzah's Reading and Scholarly Recognition

Section A: The Eminence of His Reading:

In the resplendent tapestry of Qur'anic recitation, the resonance of Ḥamzah's Reading emerges as a paramount thread, weaving itself into the very fabric of Qur'anic scholarship. The pervasive recognition and embracement of Ḥamzah's Reading on a across vast geographical expanses bears testament to its profound acceptance, not merely as a stylistic mode of recitation but as a scholarly endorsement transcending regional boundaries. In certain enclaves, the sonorous echoes of Ḥamzah's Reading resonate with such unparalleled profundity that they eclipse alternative recitational modes, rendering his rendition virtually synonymous with Qur'anic articulation. This prevailing noteworthiness underscores the widespread acceptance of his Reading, with communities and scholars converging in unanimous acclaim for its authenticity, precision, and scholarly merit.

Ḥamzah's Ascendancy in Kūfah and Beyond

In the illustrious city of Kūfah, Ḥamzah's Reading ascended to an unparalleled zenith, establishing an indelible imprint upon the collective auditory consciousness. The city, in turn, became a crucible for the refinement and proliferation of his distinct recitational style, its influence remaining uncontested for decades.

However, the arrival of luminary figures, such as Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn Khayrūn al-Ma'āfirī al-Andalūsī (d. 306 A.H.), heralded a paradigmatic shift in Qayrawān's recitational landscape.³⁵ Despite Qayrawān's prior adaptation and affiliation with Ḥamzah's Reading, the influence of al-Andalūsī precipitated a notable transition towards the stylistic cadence of Nāfi'. This adaptive fluidity within the Muslim community, attuned as it was to the presence of esteemed reciters, underscores a profound receptivity to variation in recitational traditions. Rather than imposing rigidity, the evolution of recitational preferences serves as an enduring testament to the dynamic and organic nature of Qur'anic scholarship.

The endorsement of Ḥamzah's Reading was not a mere matter of individual preference; rather, it metamorphosed into a communal allegiance. The majority of

³⁵ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/217. *Nafh al-Tayyib*: 2/66.

Kūfah's populace, as corroborated by the authoritative accounts of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn al-Sallām, al-Sakhāwī, and Abū Shāmah, bore witness to a city-wide paradigm shift in recitational preference, with Ḥamzah's cadence becoming the leitmotif of Kūfah's auditory landscape.³⁶ Ibn Mujāhid, in his seminal exposition, illuminated the prevailing sentiment by attesting that a preponderance of Kūfah's inhabitants embraced Ḥamzah's Reading. This steadfast preference endured, reverberating through the annals of time, with Kūfah's scholarly community preserving the recitational legacy bequeathed by Ḥamzah.³⁷

The influence of Ḥamzah's Reading was not confined to Kūfah's geographical bounds. His preeminent disciples, entrusted with the sacred duty of transmission, became the conduits through which his Reading reverberated across diverse regions, including Baṣrah, the Ḥijāz, Egypt, and the Levant. The dissemination of Ḥamzah's Reading across these multifaceted cultural and intellectual landscapes accentuates its enduring significance, permeating the auditory spheres of varied communities. This expansion underscores the resilience of his transmission, its acceptance by successive generations, and its profound role in shaping Qur'anic recitational traditions beyond Kūfah.

Among the most illuminating narratives that solidify the widespread reach of Ḥamzah's Reading is the venerable account bequeathed to posterity by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. This meticulously preserved narrative, relayed through an illustrious chain of narrators, comprises:

- Ibrāhīm ibn Makhlad, from,
- al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Kamāl, from,
- Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Sulamī, from,
- 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī.

³⁶ *Jamāl al-Qurrā'*: 2/430. *Murshid al-Wajīz*: 164.

³⁷ *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*: 76.

In this documented account, the erudite Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah emerges as a sage observer, articulating an observation of profound import:

“Two phenomena stand out as paragons of transcendent influence: the widespread dissemination of Ḥamzah’s Reading and the jurisprudential oeuvre of al-Imām al-A’ṭham, Abū Ḥanīfah.”³⁸

Within this intellectual tableau, Ibn ‘Uyaynah—a luminary of his epoch—underscores an unexpected but pervasive reality: the dissemination and transcendence of Ḥamzah’s Reading far beyond the provincial boundaries of Kūfah. This unexpected phenomenon, articulated with the nuanced eloquence characteristic of scholarly discourse, serves as a prelude to a deeper exploration of the universality and resonance of Ḥamzah’s recitational tradition.

The assertion that Ḥamzah’s Reading traversed spatial boundaries is not a mere acknowledgment of geographic diffusion; rather, it signifies a profound acceptance and scholarly endorsement of his distinctive style across expansive horizons. In this regard, the resonance of his Ḥamzah’s Reading, akin to the jurisprudential legacy of Abū Ḥanīfah, exemplifies a phenomenon that defies regional constraints. It stands as a testament to the scholarly continuity between Qur’anic recitational traditions and jurisprudential thought, wherein both legacies have transcended their origins, shaping the intellectual fabric of the Muslim world.

In contemplating the significance of this testimonial, one discerns a multifaceted revelation. It serves as an eloquent testament to the universal acclaim and endorsement of Ḥamzah’s Reading, positioning it as an auditory beacon illuminating the spiritual journey of believers across the expanse of the Muslim world. The parallel drawn between Ḥamzah’s Reading and the legal precepts of Abū Ḥanīfah is not arbitrary; rather, it aligns two monumental intellectual legacies, both of which have become wellsprings of guidance and acceptance transcending their geographic and temporal origins. Thus, Ḥamzah’s Reading stands as a monument to the synthesis of scholarship, transmission, and widespread adoption, affirming its immortal imprint upon the discipline of Qirā’āt.

³⁸ *Tārīkh Baghdādī*. 13/347.

Section B: Eminence in the Echoes: Scholarly Acclaims for Ḥamzah's Reading

In the august realm of Qur'anic scholarship, the resounding praise bestowed upon Ḥamzah's Reading resonates as a harmonious melody across the corridors of time, emanating from the lips of erudite luminaries who recognised the unparalleled brilliance embedded within his distinct oral rendering.

1) al-A'mash's Testimonial: An Acclamation of Unrivalled Excellence

Among those who eulogised Ḥamzah's erudition, none stood as a greater champion than his venerable mentor, Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A'mash (d. 148 A.H.)—a paragon of recitation and tradition, whose laudatory testimonial serves as an enduring beacon, illuminating the exceptional qualities of his distinguished protégé. The testimony of al-A'mash, preserved through the conduit of al-Hudhalī, encapsulates his profound admiration for Ḥamzah's scholarly prowess:

*"If you seek someone more knowledgeable than me in the Qur'ān, then it is this young man [Ḥamzah]."*³⁹

This extraordinary commendation—an accolade from a seasoned luminary to an emerging star—vividly portrays Ḥamzah as the very epitome of Qur'anic erudition.

Yet, the effusive expressions of al-A'mash transcend mere acknowledgment, elevating Ḥamzah to a pedestal of unparalleled distinction. Bestowing upon him the prestigious epithet:

"The scribe of the Qur'ān."

This honorific title is not a mere flourish of rhetoric; rather, it is a declaration of profound trust—a recognition of Ḥamzah's meticulous precision in recitation and his custodianship of the sacred text. Such an attribution aligns him with the meticulous preservation of the Qur'ān itself, underscoring his role as a guardian of divine transmission. Further, al-A'mash, with an enthusiast's fervour, hails Ḥamzah as:

*"The apple of the qurrā'" and "The leader of the qurrā'."*⁴⁰

These metaphoric designations transcend mere accolades; they cast as a luminary guiding his contemporaries, illuminating the path for those who tread the intricate

³⁹ *al-Kāmil*: 80.

⁴⁰ *Jamāl al-Qurrā'*: 2/440 and 469.

terrain of Qur’anic Readings. To be the “apple” is a metaphorical allusion to the melodious quality of Ḥamzah’s recitation, which resonated with an inimitable sweetness, pleasing all who partook in its auditory splendour. Moreover, these praise-laden appellations affirm that Ḥamzah’s mastery over the Variant Readings surpassed and transcended even the most accomplished students of al-A‘mash, rendering him peerless in his generation.

2) **Abū Ḥanīfah’s Admiration: A Recognition of Superiority**

The eulogies accorded to Ḥamzah extend beyond the domain of the qurrā’. Even the eminent Abū Ḥanīfah, a towering bastion of Islamic jurisprudence, recognised his unique stature.

In a remarkable admission of scholarly humility, Abū Ḥanīfah proclaimed:

“There are two things in which you have surpassed us, and we do not compete with you in them: the Qur’ān and the Farā’id [inheritance laws].”⁴¹

For a jurist of Abū Ḥanīfah’s eminence to acknowledge another’s superiority is no trivial matter. This declaration exemplifies the magnanimity of a scholar who witnessed greatness and was unhesitant in his reverence. Here, the two disciplines singled out—Qur’anic recitation and inheritance jurisprudence—become the benchmarks against which Ḥamzah’s unparalleled stature is measured.

3) **Sufyān al-Thawrī’s Validation of Authenticity:**

The tributes bestowed upon Ḥamzah are not merely commendations of his melodic excellence but also testimonies to his scrupulous adherence to authentic transmission. Sufyān al-Thawrī, having presented four renditions of the Qur’ān before Ḥamzah, uttered a proclamation of utmost significance:

“Ḥamzah did not recite a single letter without an established source.”⁴²

This pronouncement, beyond being a testament to his scholarly rigour, underscores Ḥamzah’s unwavering commitment to preserving the Qur’anic text exactly as received from his predecessors. Every phoneme and nuance—each elongation, pause, and

⁴¹ *Ma’rifāt al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/113. *Ghātyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/263.

⁴² *Siyar al-A‘lām al-Nubulā’*: 7/90. *Ma’rifāt al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/114. *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/440.

articulation—echoed the authoritative authenticity of the unbroken chain of transmission, ensuring that his Reading remained pristine.

4) **Shurayk al-Nakha‘ī’s Inquiry: An Acknowledgment of Singular Mastery**

The reverence accorded to Ḥamzah finds further resonance in the venerable words of al-Ḥāfiṭh Abū ‘Abd Allah Shurayk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha‘ī.⁴³

When questioned about Ḥamzah’s distinct enunciation of the hamzah, he responded:

“This is Ḥamzah.”

In this terse yet profound declaration, Shurayk acknowledged a distinctive quality in Ḥamzah’s speech, one that—rather than diminishing his mastery—only enhanced his unique contribution to Qur’anic recitation.

In the scholarly precincts of Kūfah, Shurayk further attested:

“I do not know anyone more knowledgeable nor better than him.”

And, with a rhetorical flourish, he posed the query:

“Who is like Ḥamzah?”

This simple yet weighty question encapsulates the universal recognition that Ḥamzah’s recitational style was without equal—his precision, depth, and melodic cadence rendering him inimitable among his contemporaries.

5) **From Scepticism to Conviction: The Testimonial of Abū Ṣāliḥ Shu‘ayb al-Madā’inī**

The testimonies in Ḥamzah’s favour extend even to those who initially harboured reservations regarding his stylistic nuances. Abū Ṣāliḥ Shu‘ayb ibn Ḥarb al-Madā’inī, having once expressed reservations, experienced a transformation upon witnessing Ḥamzah’s recitation first-hand. His subsequent admonition to ḥadīth scholars, lamenting their neglect in inquiring about *“the Durr”*—a reference to Ḥamzah’s Reading—accentuates its profound impact.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/469.

⁴⁴ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/473.

This shift in perspective, from scepticism to ardent advocacy, elucidates the transformative power embedded within the nuances of Ḥamzah's Stylistic Reading.

In conclusion, these tributes, voiced by the most esteemed scholars, collectively validate the enduring impact of Ḥamzah's Reading upon the intellectual and spiritual domains.

Beyond mere eulogies, these commendations signify an authoritative acknowledgment of:

- The authenticity of his transmission.
- The precision of his methodology.
- The unique musicality and precision of his recitation.

Thus, Ḥamzah emerges not merely as an Eponym, nor merely as a master reciter, but as a guardian, a luminary, and a standard-bearer of Qur'anic excellence. His legacy, etched indelibly upon the annals of Islamic scholarship, remains a testament to the reverence and admiration his Reading has commanded across generations.

Scholarly Critiques in the Uṣūl [Foundational Principles] of Ḥamzah’s Reading

In the realm of Quranic recitation, Ḥamzah finds himself at the centre of scholarly discourse, with criticisms aimed at certain *uṣūl* [foundational principles] with his Reading, inviting profound scrutiny.

- 1) **The Pronunciative Technique of Imālah:** Among these critiques, the pronunciative techniques of *imālah* [tonal deflection from ā to ē] emerge as a focal point—woven with nuanced objections from revered scholars that demand meticulous exploration. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal stands as a notable critic, expressing reservations concerning instances of *imālah* within Ḥamzah’s Reading. This disapproval, articulated eloquently, extends to concerns about the perceived excessive application of *idghām* [assimilation/amalgamation] and overextended prolongation of *madd*—pertaining to the duration of *ṭūl* [6 morae]. The resonance of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s sentiment concerning the pronunciative techniques of *imālah* reverberates in specific instances, as elucidated in his critique of words such as [خَابَ]⁴⁵, [طَابَ]⁴⁶, and [حَاقَ]⁴⁷.⁴⁸ The disapproval is not merely a rejection; it is a discerning analysis of linguistic intricacies, as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, with a discerning eye, identifies areas of perceived imbalance. This critical perspective finds continuity in ‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who echoes his father’s disapproval.⁴⁹ The generational alignment in their sentiments emphasises a shared concern regarding *imālah*, excessive application of *idghām*, and the overextended prolongation of *madd* present in Ḥamzah’s Reading. The transmission of disapproval from father to son showcases the seriousness with which these criticisms are regarded within scholarly circles.
- 2) Ḥarb ibn Ismā‘īl al-Karmānī reported Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal disliking *imālah*, particularly in verses like [وَالضُّحَى]⁵⁰ and [وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا]⁵¹, the excessive

⁴⁵ *Ṭāhā*: 61.

⁴⁶ *al-Nisā’*: 3.

⁴⁷ *Hūd*: 8.

⁴⁸ *Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābilah*: 1/74.

⁴⁹ *Ma‘rifat al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/116.

⁵⁰ *al-Duḥā*: 1.

application of *idghām* [assimilation/amalgamation] and overextended prolongation of *madd*.⁵²

- 3) Ibn Qudāmah, rationalising Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s disapproval of Ḥamzah’s Reading, mentioned factors such as the inclusion of excessive *kasrah* [*imālah*], *idghām* [assimilation/amalgamation], complexity, and overextended prolongation of *madd*.⁵³
- 4) Ya‘qūb ibn Shaybah’s account unveils the disapproval voiced by ‘Ali ibn al-Madīnī regarding Ḥamzah’s Reading. With an authoritative tone, al-Madīnī condemns and, by extension, engages in a critical discourse on the stylistic choices of Ḥamzah, asserting that the Qur’ān’s revelation aligns with the eloquence of the Quraysh, necessitating a meticulous emphasis on specific linguistic facets. This disapproval unfurls a tapestry of critique, weaving together linguistic precision, cultural context, and the aesthetic nuances of Qur’anic revelation. The emphasis on the eloquence of the Quraysh, the esteemed custodians of the Arabic language, underscores a commitment to preserving the linguistic sanctity of the Qur’ān. ‘Ali ibn al-Madīnī, as the voice of critique, encapsulates the sentiment that the Qur’anic revelation is not merely a collection of words but a symphony crafted in the refined linguistic palette of the Quraysh.⁵⁴
- 5) This scholarly debate is not unidimensional. Counterpoising the disapproval, an argument surfaces—one anchored in a ḥadīth echoing the declaration that “The Qur’ān was revealed with *tafkhīm* [verbalisation].”⁵⁵ This counter-narrative adds a layer of complexity to the discourse, challenging the notion that the eloquence of the Quraysh is synonymous with a singular linguistic emphasis.

⁵¹ *al-Shams*: 1.

⁵² *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*: 1/146. *al-Manhaj al-Aḥmad*: 1/288.

⁵³ *al-Mughnī*: 2/165.

⁵⁴ *Siyar al-A‘lām al-Nubulā*: 47/9.

⁵⁵ *al-Mustadrak*: 2/231. In the context of the ḥadīth, *tafkhīm* is delineated as the act of reciting with *fath* vowel, diverging from *imālah*, which conversely entails the recitation characterised by the *tarqīq* of the *fath* vowel.

Idiosyncrasies in Imālāh: A Critical Assessment

As we tread this intellectual path, it is paramount to underscore that Ḥamzah's Reading stands adorned with the regality of Tawātur [mass transmission]. Within this luminal context, the affirmations from his erudite teacher, Sulayman ibn Mihrān al-A'mash, and his esteemed student, Sufyan al-Thawri, become pillars of validation, testifying to the meticulous precision with which every letter of the Qur'ān was breathed by Ḥamzah's Reading—a testament that resonates in the halls of scholarly corridors.

Amidst the symphony of affirmation, critiques emerge, casting shadows on the pronounciative technique of *imālāh* within Ḥamzah's Reading. In response, this scholarly exposition unveils a panoramic perspective, navigating through linguistic nuances intrinsic to the Arabic tapestry. Here, the discourse acquires a broader dimension, countering critiques with the assertion that *imālāh* is not a capricious embellishment but an inherent linguistic feature bestowed upon the Qur'ān.

This rebuttal, akin to an erudite brushstroke, emphasises that *imālāh* finds its roots in the very fabric of Arabic, a language Divinely chosen for the Qur'ān's revelation. The scholarly tapestry weaves further, encompassing the canonical Seven Variant Readings transmitted through a continuum [Tawātur].

Quoting al-Sakhāwī, the narrative takes on the resonance of authority, asserting, “*Imālāh* and *tafkhīm*—of the *fathah* vowel—pertaining emerge as quintessential linguistic elements through which the Qur'ān unfolded its Divine verses. A harmonious chorus reverberates across all Seven Canonical Readings, showcasing that superiority lies not in isolation but in the perpetual Tawātur transmission of these linguistic nuances—from the Prophetic era—through the corridors of time to our present juncture.⁵⁶

The luminary al-Hudhalī emerges as a guide, steering our intellectual odyssey, wielding an insightful quill to delineate the ubiquity of *imālāh*—an embellishment

⁵⁶ *Jamāl al-Qurrā'*: 2/498.

whose historical resonance reverberates across the diverse tapestry of Qur’anic Readings.⁵⁷

al-Hudhali’s argument’s cornerstone stands poised on linguistic authenticity’s precipice. His discerning observation posits that if *imālah* were an audacious innovation, those vigilant grammarians, the custodians of Arabic grammar, would have undoubtedly raised their formidable pens against it.⁵⁸ This astute assertion draws attention to the pervasive presence of *imālah*, not as a clandestine intruder but as a revered guest among Readers—its echoes traversing through the annals of Variant Readings with a harmonious cadence, albeit nuanced in degrees. al-Hudhali dismantles the conjecture that grammarians, the custodians of linguistic sanctity, could have paid no heed to this feature—the pronounciative technique of *imālah*—underlining the historical consecration of *imālah* in the realm of the Variant Readings.

Nevertheless, beyond the linguistic tableau, al-Hudhali unfurls a second layer of argumentation—a moral tapestry woven with threads of piety and righteousness. He stands defiant against those who, in denying *imālah*, inadvertently cast aspersions upon the very character of the Companions. To challenge *imālah*, in his view, is not merely an academic deviation but an audacious attempt to dismantle the meticulous transmission legacy of the Companions. His rhetorical query, piercing in its implications, inquires how one could presume to traverse a path divergent from those luminaries who, as custodians of the Qur’ān and Prophetic Tradition, left no room for the shadows of ambiguity or omission.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ The utilisation of mediate *imālah*, known as *taqlīl bayyin bayyin* or *imālah ṣuḡhrā*, is a prevalent feature among diverse Eponyms, reflecting a spectrum of usage. Warsh, known for both *taqlīl* and *imālah* application, incorporates this feature, as do Abū ‘Amr. Notably the former, *taqlīl* application, is restrained in the Readings of Qālūn [with *khulf*—optation in variation] and Hamzah [without *khulf*]. Whereas *imālah kubrā* is a prevalent feature in the Readings of Hamzah, Kisā’ī, and Khalaf al-‘Āshir. Instances of this application are also present in the Readings of Ibn Dhakwān, ‘Āṣim, and Ya’qūb, with a notable exclusion in the Readings of Ibn Kathīr, Hishām, and Abū Ja’far.

The degree of *imālah kubrā* exhibits variation, manifesting as more restrained in the Readings of Warsh, Ibn Dhakwān, ‘Āṣim, and Ya’qūb, and more expansive in the Readings of Abū ‘Amr, Hamzah, Kisā’ī, and Khalaf al-‘Āshir. This nuanced diversity is meticulously documented in authoritative treatises on the Variant Readings, including *al-Taysīr*: 46. *al-Kāfi*: 1/262. *Taqrīb al-Nashr*: 55.

⁵⁸ *al-Kāmil*: 310.

⁵⁹ *al-Kāmil*: 308.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, whose disapproval, we assert, necessitates a methodical excavation through layers of historical context and the potential distortions inherent in transmitted information.

Notably, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, born posthumously to Ḥamzah, emerges as a central figure in this discourse, his reservations echoing through the corridors of history. However, a perspicacious inquiry unveils a salient facet: the dissenting voices emerge not from those directly acquainted with Ḥamzah's Reading but from intermediaries who purportedly transmitted his mode. Articulated by Ibn al-Jazarī, this revelation casts a discerning light on a nuanced dimension, highlighting the potential embellishments or biases introduced by these conduits of Ḥamzah's unique Reading.

Ibn al-Jazarī's astute observation unfolds a pivotal juncture in the discourse: objections to Ḥamzah's *imālah* Readings pivot on narratives conveyed by individuals claiming firsthand exposure to his Variant Reading. The vulnerability inherent in these narratives reverberates through the reliability and interpretative subtleties of the narrators, beckoning a judicious stance in embracing these critiques without due scrutiny.

In the eloquent words of Ibn al-Jazarī, "The flaws of news are only in its narrators."⁶⁰ This encapsulates the crux of the critique—acknowledging that the censure is intricately linked to the conduits of Ḥamzah's Reading, raising questions about the impartiality and reliability of these narrators. This nuanced comprehension implores us to navigate through the transmission layers, cognisant of the potential influence wielded by narrators' perspectives.

An illuminating anecdote, 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Ṭayālīsī adds another layer to this scholarly tapestry. Engaging in dialogue with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Ṭayālīsī delves into the intricacies of praying behind an *imām* reciting in Ḥamzah's recitative style, unearthing layers of subtlety within Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's stance.

al-Ṭayālīsī meticulously records Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's disapproval, encapsulated in the succinct phrase, "I dislike it." However, the narrative takes a discerning turn as al-

⁶⁰ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/263.

Ṭayālīsī probes further, seeking clarity on the permissibility even in the absence of *idghām* [assimilation] or *al-kassr*—connoting *imālah*. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s response adds depth to the narrative, asserting, “If there is no *idghām* [assimilation] or *idjā‘* [overextended prolongation of *madd* for the duration of *tūl*—6 morae], then there is no harm.”⁶¹

This nuanced exchange unveils a crucial facet of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s objection—it is not a sweeping rejection but rather contingent on specific elements within Ḥamzah’s Reading. The meticulous inquiry into the absence of *idghām* or *idjā‘* as mitigating factors showcases the nuanced and contextual nature of *idghām* or *idjā‘* disapproval. The unravelling layers of this dialogue beckon us to navigate through the intricacies, acknowledging that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s stance hinges on the presence of specific tonal and articulation features, adding depth to the scholarly discourse surrounding Ḥamzah’s unique style.

However, the entanglement deepens when a contentious hadith surfaces, proclaiming, “The Quran was revealed with *tafkhīm*,” sparking a divergence of opinions on its authenticity. al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, the compiler of the *Mustadrak* collection, ardently upholds its *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic] status. In contrast, the succinct avoucher, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, stands as a dissenting voice, denoting the ḥadīth as *wāḥin* [dubious] and *munkar* [denounced], based on the disparaged standing of two narrators, namely, al-‘Awfī and Bakkār.⁶² Acknowledging its contentious nature, scholars embark on a scholarly odyssey, unravelling nuanced dimensions and proffering diverse interpretations to discern its intended meaning.⁶³ The pivotal phrase, “The Quran was revealed with *tafkhīm*,” becomes the epicentre of meticulous scrutiny. Scholars delve into intricate linguistic analyses, postulating that *tafkhīm* involves modulating the midpoints of words [*sākin*/devocalised letter], oscillating between a vocalised *ḍammah* or *kasrah*. This interpretative lens harmonises with the broader context of the ḥadīth,

⁶¹ *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*: 1/229.

⁶² *al-Mustadrak*: 2/231.

⁶³ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/503. *al-Itqān*: 1/123. *Sunan al-Qurrā’ wa Manāḥij al-Mujawwidin*: 140.

finding resonance in specific Qur'anic verses as exemplified by [كَهَيْمَةَ الظَّيْرِ] ⁶⁴, [عُدْرًا أَوْ] ⁶⁵, [الَّذِينَ] ⁶⁶, and [أَلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ] ⁶⁷.

Intricately traversed by scholars, the linguistic labyrinth unveils layers of complexity in understanding the ḥadīth's implications. Despite its weakened status, the ḥadīth remains a subject of scholarly contemplation. By adopting a nuanced stance, scholars recognise its fragility while delving into the intricacies of language to illuminate its potential intended meaning. This scholarly journey through contested narratives showcases the meticulous navigation scholars undertake to unravel the profound depths of the ḥadīth.

Additionally, al-Bayhaqī's compendium unfurls the perspectives of al-Ḥalīmī, adding nuanced layers to the discourse on the allowance for variations in pronunciation. al-Ḥalīmī, positing a counterpoint, contends that this allowance does not implicitly endorse the criticised *imālah*. Instead, it signifies the permissibility of a recitation style akin to that of women, distinct from the conventional male mode. al-Ḥalīmī further asserts that this distinction should not be misconstrued as disapproval of *imālah*, aligning himself with *qurrā'* who adopt this nuanced stance. ⁶⁸

Additionally, al-Bayhaqī's compendium unfurls the perspectives of al-Ḥalīmī, introducing nuanced layers to the discourse on phonetic variation in Qur'anic recitation. Al-Ḥalīmī, positing a counterpoint, contends that the allowance for phonetic variation does not implicitly endorse the criticised *imālah* (لا يدخل في هذا كراهية (الإمالة)). Instead, he delineates a subtle distinction—arguing that this allowance pertains to phonetic variations that maintain the authoritative transmission of the Qur'an, ensuring clarity and proper articulation.

He clarifies that the Qur'an should be recited in the manner of men (أن يقرأ على قراءة الرجال) and not with a softened articulation resembling women's speech (ولا خضع الصوت به، فيكون مثل (كلام النساء)). His concern is not that *imālah* is inherently linked to women's speech but that its phonetic effect creates a softness in pronunciation that mirrors a speech style

⁶⁴ *Āl 'Imrān*: 49.

⁶⁵ *al-Mursalāt*: 6.

⁶⁶ *al-Kahf*: 69.

⁶⁷ *al-A'rāf*: 54.

⁶⁸ *al-Jāmi' li Shu'b al-Imān*: 5/238.

associated with leniency and inclination. Thus, recitation should maintain a clear and firm articulation (ولا يكون مثل كلام النساء), avoiding excessive inclination that may compromise the strength and precision of the recitation.

This, he asserts, differs from the historical standard of Qur’anic recitation, which prioritises firmness and phonetic clarity, avoiding vocal leniency. His assertion thus separates the discussion on linguistic leniency from the specific disapproval of *imālah*, aligning himself with *qurrā’* who uphold this nuanced stance.

Furthermore, al-Bayhaqī expands upon this by acknowledging that even if the Qur’ān was revealed with *tafkhīm* (أنزل القرآن بالتفخيم), a concession was granted for *imālah* in cases where it enhanced the beauty of recitation and remained within the acceptable parameters of phonetic variation. He references the statement:

وقد يجوز أن يكون القرآن نزل بالتفخيم، ورخص مع ذلك في إمالة ما يحسن إمالته على لسان جبريل - عليه السلام

“It is possible that the Qur’ān was revealed with tafkhīm, yet permission was granted for imālah where its articulation was deemed appropriate, as conveyed by Jibrīl – ‘alayhi al-salām.”

Thus, al-Bayhaqī’s meticulous exploration navigates the complex interplay of phonetic rigidity and flexibility, ensuring that *imālah* is not an unrestricted phonetic adaptation but a variation that must be examined within the parameters of authentic transmission.⁶⁹

Furthermore, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr posits a compelling argument, asserting that the predominant linguistic framework in the Qur’ān mirrors that of the Quraysh. This foundational assertion becomes a linchpin for understanding the Qur’ān’s linguistic essence.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr fortifies his stance with a meticulous examination of authentic Readings, where he discerns distinct features aligning with the linguistic conventions of the Quraysh. His discerning eye mainly captures the nuances of *hamzah* realisation, a linguistic subtlety embedded in the fabric of the Qurayshī dialect. A crucial juncture in his argument unfolds as he emphasises that the Quraysh dialect

⁶⁹ *al-Jāmi’ li Shu’b al-Īmān*: 5/238.

distinctly abstains from *hamzah* realisation—*taḥqīq*/affirmation of the *hamzah*.⁷⁰ This elucidation becomes a profound reaffirmation, establishing an unbreakable link between the Qur’anic revelation and the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the Quraysh.

Abū Shāmah, in harmonic resonance with ‘Uthmān’s ﷺ resolute assertion, intricately unfurls the profound notion that the Qur’ān descended in the resplendent tapestry of the Qurayshī dialect. ‘Uthmān ﷺ initially anchors his discourse in the historical crucible of the Qur’ān’s inception, where the Qurayshī dialect embraced the first revelations. This steadfast invocation of the Qurayshī linguistic tapestry, a hallmark of Divine communication, lays the groundwork for a nuanced exploration.

‘Uthmān ﷺ gracefully pivots, invoking the Divine facilitation that transcends the confines of the Qurayshī dialect. As Allah ﷻ, in His boundless mercy, illuminated the comprehension of the Qur’ān for humanity at large, the canvas broadened, permitting the diverse Arabic tongues to caress its verses. This allowance, a benevolent concession from the Divine, etches a narrative of linguistic inclusivity.

Nevertheless, the compass of this linguistic permission is meticulously delineated. Rooted in the shared heritage of linguistic eloquence that permeates the Arab expanse, the Qur’ān retains its pristine clarity in Arabic—a beacon for all linguistic expressions within this shared tapestry.

As for the Qur’anic memorisation, the sagacious counsel emanating from ‘Umar ﷺ to Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ unfolds as a radiant gem, illuminating the intricate considerations surrounding non-Arab aspirants. The crux of this guidance encapsulates a profound acknowledgement that, for non-Arabs navigating the labyrinth of Qur’anic memorisation, the Qurayshī dialect emerges as the optimal choice.⁷¹ This strategic counsel, steeped in linguistic discernment, stems from a nuanced understanding that the linguistic challenges presented by various Arabic languages to non-native speakers are inherently comparable. Consequently, a judicious selection among these linguistic variants becomes imperative, with the Qurayshī dialect, the language of the esteemed Prophet ﷺ, naturally assuming a preeminent position.

⁷⁰ *al-Tamhīd*: 8/280.

⁷¹ *Murshid al-Wajiz*: 102.

This linguistic tapestry, carefully woven by ‘Umar’s ﷺ guidance, extends its embrace to a broader spectrum. While the Qurayshī dialect claims precedence, the permissibility of reciting the Qur’ān in any Arabic dialect, so long as it aligns harmoniously with the Qur’anic script, stands as a testament to the universality of the Qur’anic message. Here, linguistic diversity converges with scriptural unity, offering a mosaic where the Qur’ān resonates in various Arabic dialects.

However, as the luminous thread of guidance further unwinds, a concessional allowance surfaces—a dispensation granted to Arabs who find the Qurayshī dialect burdensome. Within this allowance, Allah’s ﷻ Divine permission manifests, permitting the recitation of the Qur’ān in one’s native dialect. This inclusive gesture, a manifestation of Divine benevolence, attests to the Qur’ān’s universality, ensuring accessibility and comprehension for individuals traversing the diverse landscapes of linguistic backgrounds.

Beyond Assimilation: A Profound Inquiry

Delving further into the tapestry of Ḥamzah's Reading, the scholarly domain unfolds a chapter adorned with linguistic intricacies, notably featuring the concept of *idghām* or assimilation.⁷² This scholarly odyssey, as narrated by Ḥarb ibn Ismā'īl, unveils the depth of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's disdain for its excessive application—a discerning critique nuanced in its scrutiny.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's objection focuses on applying *idghām*, specifically manifested in excessive assimilation. The gravity of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's disapproval is underscored by the additional insight from the author of *al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*, highlighting Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's perception of excessive assimilation leading to the potential loss of letters from the Qur'ān, with each assimilated letter representing a forfeiture of ten merits—as accorded to by the ḥadīth.⁷³

Essentially, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's critique stems from a concern that excessive *idghām*, when taken beyond its natural bounds, may compromise the precision of Qur'anic articulation and diminish the merit associated with preserving each letter exactly as transmitted. The gravity of his objection is heightened by the profound notion that each instance of *idghām* within Ḥamzah's Reading potentially entails the forfeiture of merits—each assimilated letter seemingly representing the relinquishment of ten merits. This perspective transcends a mere aesthetic concern, metamorphosing into a principled stand against any alteration that might detract from the Divine essence encapsulated in the Qur'an.

Perhaps at the core of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's discerning critique lies a profound commitment to preserving the sanctity inherent in the Qur'anic text. His meticulous scrutiny extends beyond the surface, delving into the intricacies safeguarding the essence of the Divine revelation. The crux of his disapproval is not merely a

⁷² In linguistic parlance, *idghām* denotes the fusion or amalgamation of one letter into another, culminating in the amalgamated formation of a single, fortified [*mushaddad*] letter. In the domain of Qur'anic Variant Readings, *idghām* encompasses the integration of a letter into another in a manner that transmutes them into a unified, accentuated letter. Should the both letters [the *mudgham* and the *mudgham fihī*] be vowelised, it is denoted as *idghām kabīr* [major assimilation]. Conversely, if the initial letter [the *mudgham*] is a vowelised and the subsequent letter [the *mudgham fihī*] is unvowelised, it yields *idghām ṣaghīr* [minor assimilation].

⁷³ *al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*: 3/470.

dissenting perspective but a conscientious effort to shield the sacred corpus from any compromise to its inherent integrity.

In response to the discerning critiques levied against the phenomenon of excessive *idghām* [assimilation], a scholarly rejoinder unfolds, positing *idghām* as an inherent linguistic feature embedded in the Arabic language— the very conduit through which the Qurʾān descended. This linguistic facet, *idghām*, manifests as one among the *Seven Aḥruf* [Seven Sanctioned Dialectic Modes], an inheritance transmitted through the unbroken chain of continuous narration, attaining the revered status of Tawātur.

Crucially, the application of *idghām* is not an exclusive terrain of Ḥamzah’s Reading. Instead, it is a shared element woven into the fabric of diverse Readings, each revealing distinctive variations in its application. Minor *idghām* instances, where the initial assimilated letter assumes a stoic *sukūn* [non-vocalisation], resonate among several Readers. Exemplified in verses such as [إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ]⁷⁴, [أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ]⁷⁵, [فَدَّ جَعَلَ]⁷⁶, and [هَلْ] ⁷⁷ [تَعْلَمُ]⁷⁷, this echoes a nuanced practice embraced by diverse luminaries. Additionally, a spectrum of Readers converges in assimilating letters marked by akin articulation, as witnessed in [يُرِدُّ ثَوَابَ]⁷⁸, [يَغْلِبُ فَسَوْفَ]⁷⁹, [يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ]⁸⁰, and [أَرْكَبُ مَعَنَا]⁸¹. This comprehensive argument endeavours to illustrate that the concept of *idghām* transcends the confines of a singular recitative style, functioning as a pervasive linguistic phenomenon across diverse Readings.

In this nuanced exploration, it becomes evident that instances of *idghām* transcend the distinctive cadence of Ḥamzah, permeating the Readings of esteemed practitioners within the revered Ten Variant Readings. This shared tradition extends beyond Ḥamzah, finding eloquent expression in the Readings of the venerable Abū ‘Amr al-Baṣrī, who deftly manoeuvres through *idghām* without eliciting censure. Henceforth, a compelling argument surfaces in scrutinising the criticism directed at Ḥamzah’s

⁷⁴ *al-Baqarah*: 166.

⁷⁵ *al-Baqarah*: 261.

⁷⁶ *Maryam*: 24.

⁷⁷ *Maryam*: 65.

⁷⁸ *Āl ‘Imrān*: 145.

⁷⁹ *al-Nisā’*: 74.

⁸⁰ *al-Mā’idah*: 40.

⁸¹ *Hūd*: 42.

application of *idghām*—how can a practice accepted in the individual tapestry of other reciters be disparaged when harmoniously resonating with Ḥamzah’s rendition?

This rhetorical question highlights a perceived inconsistency, a dissonance in the critique of Ḥamzah’s application of *idghām* when aligned with the harmonious chords struck by other revered Eponyms. The mosaic of recitation, embellished with the intricate brushstrokes of various *qurra’*, underscores the dynamic nature of *idghām*—a linguistic phenomenon transcending individual Eponyms and gracefully weaving itself into the rich tradition of Qur’anic Readings.

Moreover, it prominently emerges that instances of *idghām*, a phonetic phenomenon denoting the assimilation of one letter into another, find unanimous acceptance among the revered Eponymous Ten Readers. Noteworthy among these instances are verses such as [فَدَّ تَبَيَّنَ]⁸², [يُدْرِكُكُمْ]⁸³, and [قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ]⁸⁴, wherein the convergence of sounds is a harmonious feature recognised by all.

The scrutiny cast upon Ḥamzah’s Reading, specifically concerning Ḥamzah’s application of *idghām*, invites a discerning analysis. This critique, notably, appears to be an echo of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s disapproval as conveyed through certain narrators. However, a crucial revelation surfaces—this disapproval seems more a reflection of the narrator’s bias than an inherent flaw in Ḥamzah’s Reading. The grounds for such contention become pronounced when juxtaposed with the unanimity observed among all Ten Variant Readings on numerous instances of application of *idghām* in their Readings.

In scrutinising the intricate landscape of Ḥamzah’s Reading, the nuanced contours of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s disapproval come to the fore, seemingly rooted in a discerning concern for linguistic fidelity. This becomes apparent through an insightful exchange recorded in the biography of al-Ṭayyib ibn Ismā‘īl al-Muqri’, where he sought clarification from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal regarding the aspects of Ḥamzah’s Reading that elicited his aversion.

⁸² *al-Baqarah*: 256.

⁸³ *al-Nisā’*: 78.

⁸⁴ *al-Aḥzāb*: 13.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, with characteristic precision, identified the *imālah* [tonal inflexion] and the excessive application of *idghām* [assimilation] as the elements drawing his disfavour. This condemnation, however, was met with an astute query from al-Ṭayyib, who pointedly inquired about the *alif* and *lām* in the opening verse [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ]. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's discerning response, "If it is like that, then there is no issue,"⁸⁵ implies a conditional acceptance contingent on adherence to linguistic norms.

Crucially, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's disapproval appears to be grounded not in an absolute rejection of *idghām* but in its perceived deviation from the norms of the Arabic language. This manifests in his subsequent declaration when confronted with *idghām* universally recognised and confirmed across various Readings. He concedes, "If Ḥamzah's application of *idghām* is in this manner and similar to it, sanctioned by the Arabic language and confirmed by recitation, then there is no issue."

⁸⁵ *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*: 1/179.

The Madd Dilemma: An In-depth Analysis

In delving into the intricate nuances of Ḥamzah's stylistic Reading, a salient facet emerges, encapsulated in the criticism of perceived excess in the elongation of *madd* attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. As elucidated by Ibn Qudāmah, this censure finds its roots in the discerning perception of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who disapproved of Ḥamzah's Reading on multiple fronts. These nuanced objections, meticulously voiced, embody Imam Ahmad's commitment to the pristine articulation of the Divine text, where deviations from established norms evoke his disapprobation.

A pinnacle of the critique revolves around Ḥamzah's perceived excess in the elongation of *madd tabri'ah*—the *lā* of absolute negation, as exemplified in the phrase [لا رَبَّ] ⁸⁶. This targeted elongation, subjected to the expert scrutiny of the recension from the *Shāṭibiyyah* and echoing through the corridors of recitation expertise, draws censure as an anomalous deviation—a *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical/Anomalous] Reading. As custodians of recitative authenticity, experts unite in dismissing this peculiar elongation as invalid, adding a layer of complexity to the discourse. ⁸⁷

A rebuttal unfurls like an erudite tapestry, intricately woven to counter the criticism levied against Ḥamzah's judicious use of *madd*. The crux of this scholarly rejoinder pivots on the contention that the comprehensive deployment of total elongation, marked by the distinctive cadence of six vowel counts [*tūl*/6 morae], stands as a shared convention among the erudite custodians of Qur'anic Readings. Herein lies the cardinal assertion: this mode of elongation, heralded by Ḥamzah, is not a solitary beacon but resonates across the annals of recitation. The *qurrā'*, the venerable custodians of recitation, converge in consensus upon the deployment of total elongation [*tūl*/6 morae] of *madd lāzim* and one of the three *awjuh*, the multifaceted options presented of *madd 'āriḍ li al-waḳf al-sukūn*.

Similarly, this shared tradition extends beyond Ḥamzah's deployment of *tūl* in *madd munfaṣil* and *madd muttaṣil*, finding eloquent expression in the Readings of the venerable Warsh, who judiciously prolongs *madd munfaṣil* and *madd muttaṣil* for the duration of *tūl* [6 morae] without eliciting censure. Henceforth, a compelling

⁸⁶ *al-Baqarah*: 2.

⁸⁷ *al-Minah al-Fikriyyah*: 248.

argument surfaces in scrutinising the criticism directed at Ḥamzah’s judicious use of *madd*—how can a practice accepted in the individual tapestry of other Readers be disparaged when harmoniously resonating with Ḥamzah’s Reading?

Moreover, Warsh’s distinctive application of total elongation emerges as a noteworthy phenomenon, setting him apart from his contemporaries. This distinctive feature finds expression in various instances, including the replacement elongation of *madd al-badl* and the elongation of the *līn* [diphthongs] letters preceding a *hamzah*, each marking a departure from conventional recitation norms.

An intriguing paradox surfaces when contemplating the reception of Warsh’s distinctive elongation practices. Despite the departure from established norms, Warsh encounters neither criticism nor disapproval for his recitative styles. This raises a poignant query: *how does Warsh navigate the recitative terrain with acceptance, while Ḥamzah, in a similar vein, faces censure and disapproval?*

As for the critical scrutiny by Mullā ‘Ali al-Qāri’ concerning the elongation, particularly in the context of *madd tabri’ah*, al-Qāri’, wielding the tool of criticism, deems this elongation an anomaly—a deviation from established norms. However, this critical stance encounters a robust rebuttal, where the validity of such elongation is staunchly affirmed.

The crux of the refutation lies in the acknowledgement that this particular mode of elongation is not a whimsical departure but, in fact, a valid and extensively transmitted Reading. The transmission lineage traces back to none other than the venerable Eponym Ḥamzah, resonating through the recensions [*ṭuruq*] of the *Ṭayyibat al-Nashr*. While absent from the *Shāṭibiyyah* recension, the elongation of *madd tabri’ah* is fully authenticated through the *Ṭayyibah* recensions, indicating that its classification as anomalous is relative to specific transmission routes rather than an absolute disqualification.

In the cogent response to Mullā ‘Ali al-Qāri’s pronouncement, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Marṣafī al-Marṣafī asserts that al-Qāri’s rejection stems from his lack of engagement with the *Ṭayyibat al-Nashr* recensions. al-Marṣafī’s exegesis is a testament to the

scholarly dialectics that underscore the discourse on the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān.

Furthermore, al-Marṣafī, with a sagacious demeanour, initiates his discourse by postulating that al-Qāri's apparent rejection of *madd* may stem from a conceivable lacuna in his recitation repertoire—precisely, an oversight in engaging with the *Tayyibah* recensions. This inference, articulated with a diplomatic yet pointed finesse, implies that a more comprehensive immersion in the *Nashr* might have ameliorated al-Qāri's disposition towards the contested elongation. In doing so, al-Marṣafī's response unfurls a layered critique, suggesting that al-Qāri's view might have been mollified had he more intimately embraced the recensions of the Variant Readings encapsulated in the *Nashr* as they showcase the application of *madd* in *madd al-ta'ḥīm*—in reference to the Eponyms who apply *qaṣr* in *madd munfaṣil*.

However, al-Marṣafī does not merely contest al-Qāri's position on *madd* but extends his commentary to the specific case of Ḥamzah's Reading, notably the elongation of *madd tabri'ah*. The term “anomalous” is delicately probed, introducing an element of scholarly scrutiny. al-Marṣafī intimates that al-Qāri's perception of Ḥamzah's Reading as anomalous might be rooted in a skewed perspective, perhaps influenced by an overarching inclination against Readings not traversing the *Shātibiyah* recension.

In the final proclamation, al-Marṣafī delicately navigates the tenor of scholarly disagreement, expressing a sense of bewilderment at the perceived anomaly categorisation—a sentiment further heightened by al-Qāri's esteemed scholarly standing. The term “strange” subtly underscores a measured incredulity, prompting a reflective pause within the reader to consider the apparent incongruity of al-Qāri's classification.⁸⁸

Crucially, this defence showcases a broader principle—accepting numerous Tawātur Readings beyond the scope of the *Shātibiyah* yet confined to the realm of the Seven Eonymous Readers. Thus, a critique hinged on the absence of the *Shātibiyah* recension is deftly refuted, emphasising that Readings extend beyond the confines of a singular recension. This nuanced argument safeguards the validity of the contested

⁸⁸ *Hidāyat al-Qāri*: 1/278.

elongation and prompts a deeper reflection on the diverse transmission channels that enrich the vibrant tapestry of the Variant Readings.

In light of the above, Ibn Qudāmah, the meticulous expositor, discerns a salient dimension—the accentuation of elongations, a pivotal facet that steers the course of their scholarly discourse. The elucidation conveys a nuanced understanding, positing that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s disapproval is not a sweeping denunciation of elongation per se but a measured objection to a specific manifestation observed in Ḥamzah’s Readings.

The crux lies in the auditory realm, where Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s discerning ear, attuned to the nuances of Qur’anic recitation, apprehends an ostensible excessiveness in Ḥamzah’s elongations. This discernment becomes a critical pivot for the ensuing critique, emphasising that the disapproval is not a blanket condemnation of elongations but a measured objection to a perceived immoderation within the specific context of Ḥamzah’s Readings.

In the ensuing passages, the narrative unfolds with the weight of evidence, highlighting a compelling paradox—Ḥamzah’s own proscription of excessive elongation—beyond its allowance within a given Reading.

In this noteworthy episode, recounted by ‘Abdullah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ijlī, the nuances of Ḥamzah’s approach to Qur’anic recitation unfold, offering insight into the intricacies of his stylistic preferences. The narrative centres on an encounter between Ḥamzah and al-‘Ijlī’s elder brother, whose recitation, marked by exaggeration in elongation, prompts Ḥamzah to intervene with a pointed directive: “Do not do that.”⁸⁹

In this erudite exploration, the scholarly lens delves into the nuances of Ḥamzah’s disapproval of exaggerated elongation, unravelling a tapestry of metaphorical richness that enshrouds his critique. Ḥamzah, using metaphorical expressions, likens excessive prolongation (*tūl*) to unnatural extensions, just as excessive curls in hair or unnatural whiteness in skin indicate a defect. This figurative language is a lens into Ḥamzah’s meticulous emphasis on precision, crafting a discourse that heralds a commitment to

⁸⁹ *al-Tadhkirah*: 1/107. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/263. *al-Mufīd Sharḥ ‘Umdat al-Majāz*: 58.

delivering the sacred verses with utmost exactitude, shunning any semblance of excess.

The metaphors, evocative in their imagery, unfurl a paradox inherent in Ḥamzah's discerning critique—the negative connotations of warts and leprosy subtly hint at a pursuit of purity and an unadulterated rendition, unburdened by embellishments like the over-exaggeration of the *madd*. The metaphorical tapestry, thus, serves not only as a critique but as a manifestation of Ḥamzah's aspiration for an unsullied, authentic Qur'anic delivery.

Beneath the surface of this discourse lies the pedagogical intent of Ḥamzah's guidance, manifest in his choice of metaphors over blunt criticism. It is a mentorship approach, an endeavour to instil a profound comprehension of the sanctity enveloping the delivery of the Qur'ān. Far from mere condemnation, the metaphorical expressions serve as a guiding beacon for the apprentice, directing them toward a refined and disciplined recitative approach.

While the encounter may initially emanate a sense of stringency, it unfolds within the broader context of preserving the pristine beauty of Qur'anic Readings. Here, readers are beckoned to appreciate the delicate equilibrium between expressive eloquence and the imperative for disciplined adherence to established norms in the realm of Qur'anic elocution. The paradox embedded in this interplay between mentor and disciple adds layers to the discourse, unravelling the intricacies that define the mentor's critique of his disciple's stylistic choices. The acknowledgement of Ḥamzah's self-imposed restrictions further enriches the scholarly dialogue, revealing a profound self-awareness within the reciter and contributing additional dimensions to the multifaceted nature of this discourse.

Similarly, in expounding upon the assessment of Ḥamzah's Reading, al-Sakhāwī, with discerning perspicacity, articulates the existence of detractors who cast a critical gaze upon Ḥamzah's stylistic Reading. Within the contours of al-Sakhāwī exposition, a subtle paradox unravels—the convergence of critique and commendation. Despite the censure directed at Ḥamzah's Reading, an intriguing facet emerges—an ethos of patience and deliberate guidance towards novices in the realm of Qur'anic recitation. In his sagacious mentorship of novices, Ḥamzah advocated for *tartil* [elocutionary

precision] and simultaneously cautioned against the trespassing of predefined boundaries—such as over-exaggeration of prolonging the *madd*.⁹⁰

This duality within Ḥamzah’s pedagogical stance encapsulates a rich tapestry of mentorship—a mentor capable of withstanding critique yet extending benevolence and measured advice to those traversing the initial stages of recitative mastery. al-Sakhāwī’s narrative, adorned with scholarly finesse, showcases the dynamic interplay between criticism and mentorship intricately woven into the fabric of Qur’anic elocution. It prompts a reflective journey into the complexities inherent in the cultivation of Qur’anic recitation, where the confluence of critique and guidance shapes the pedagogical landscape in pursuit of mastery within the sacred domain of Qur’anic Readings.

Lastly, in the elucidation of Ḥamzah’s recitative idiosyncrasies, Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham al-Nakha’ī emerges as a crucial witness, providing a firsthand account of his prayer behind Ḥamzah—an act that transpires within the sanctified sphere of the Divine Liturgy. al-Nakha’ī, with the gravitas befitting his scholarly stature, articulates a discerning observation—Ḥamzah was observed to avoid excessive elongation of *madd* in prayer, demonstrating his nuanced approach to recitation.⁹¹

The utterance of al-Nakha’ī bears testament to an experiential encounter, a sombre testimony within the sanctum of devotional supplication. The phraseology employed by al-Nakha’ī—choosing “intense prolongation” as the focal point—projects nuanced scrutiny, implying a departure from established norms—such as reciting via different *ṭarīq* [recension] with shorter *madd* durations in prayer. This pointed language, resolute in its expression, emphasises the divergence inherent in Ḥamzah’s recitative approach during the solemnity of prayer.

In sum, the three episodes display Ḥamzah’s unwavering commitment to the meticulous observance of *madd* rules in Qur’anic recitation. The passages unveil a narrative imbued with the essence of precision and dedication. Ḥamzah’s critique of excessive elongation is not a denunciation but rather a testament to his ardent devotion to preserving the purity and exactitude of the Qur’anic delivery.

⁹⁰ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/471.

⁹¹ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/471.

The metaphors deployed, notably warts and leprosy, serve as eloquent expressions encapsulating the profundity of Ḥamzah’s quest for an unblemished rendition—a delivery untainted by superfluous embellishments or unwarranted deviations. While metaphorically potent, these vivid metaphors unveil a paradoxical layer, indicating Ḥamzah’s simultaneous embrace of expressive eloquence and an uncompromising commitment to adherence.

The passages shed light on a nuanced aspect of Ḥamzah’s approach, witnessed in his measured deviation from established norms during prayer, as recounted by al-Nakha‘ī. This deviation, far from being arbitrary, underscores Ḥamzah’s conscientious stance, wherein even moments of devotional supplication become arenas for upholding the prescribed rules with unwavering diligence.

In essence, the passages weave a narrative that transcends mere critique, portraying Ḥamzah as a custodian of the sacred, meticulously navigating the fine line between expressive freedom and the rigidity of established norms. His metaphoric expressions elevate the discourse, emphasizing the sanctity of the Qur’anic delivery and the perpetual pursuit of an elevated standard, manifesting through every recited verse—a testament to the multifaceted nature of the scholarly dialogue surrounding Qur’anic recitation.

Justification in Dissent: Contextualising Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's Concerns Toward Ḥamzah's Hamz Reading

Furthermore, in the intricate labyrinth of Ḥamzah's stylistic Readings, the nuanced exploration of the hamzah element stands as a focal point, inviting a scholarly discourse that delves into its complexities, sparking meticulous analysis and giving rise to contrasting viewpoints.

The scrutiny of Ḥamzah's Reading concerning the realisation of the *hamzah*—reading with *taḥqīq* [affirmation] of the *hamzah*—unfolds in a dualistic panorama, encapsulating distinct facets. Firstly, the emphasis converges upon the correct articulation and elucidation of *hamz*, as Abū Bakr ibn al-Khallāl reported. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal responds to inquiries regarding the intensity [*taḥqīq*] of *hamz* in Ḥamzah's Reading. His disapproval resonates in unequivocal terms, declaring, “I am not pleased with the strong *hamz*.” In a parallel account, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal avows a preference for an easier [*tas-hīl*] *hamz*, subtly alluding to a deliberate divergence in stylistic choices within the broader spectrum of Qur'anic delivery.⁹²

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, further shaping the discourse, posits a regional nuance in the utilisation of *hamz*, asserting, “The Kūfans are the people of *hamz* [*taḥqīq* of the *hamzah*], and the Quraysh do not have *hamz* [*tas-hīl/ibdāl* of the *hamzah*]”⁹³ This regional distinction introduces an additional layer to the discourse, intertwining linguistic variations with the intricacies of recitative traditions.

In the unfolding scholarly discourse on the labyrinthine intricacies of Qur'anic Readings, the exploration of Ḥamzah's approach to the elusive element of *hamz* takes centre stage. Two interrelated facets of this exploration emerge, with the second facet delving into the modulation of *hamz* during cessation—a terrain marked by a spectrum of modifications such as *ibdāl*, *naql*, and *ḥadhf*. Within this scholarly tapestry, Ibn Ḥajar draws upon the annotations of al-Dhahabī to reveal a corpus of dissenting voices.

⁹² *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*: 1/84.

⁹³ Manifested within a ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ articulates a resolute endorsement of *hamzah* pronunciation, specifically emphasising the idiosyncrasy of *istithām*, with *taḥqīq* of the first *hamzah* and *ibdāl* of the second *hamzah*—where two *hamzahs* coexist within a singular word, as observed in [اللَّهُ مَا أَجَسُّكُمْ]. This linguistic phenomenon, elucidated in the designated ḥadīth collections—*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 2701, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*: 3379, and *Sunan al-Nasaʿī*: 5441—attests to the Prophet's ﷺ authoritative advocacy for the nuanced enunciation of the *hamzah*, particularly when confronted with the intricacies of *istithām*.

The dissenting voices, critical of Ḥamzah’s Reading, articulate concerns about perceived excesses, encompassing elongation of vowels, calculated pauses, and alterations in the pronunciation of *hamz* during cessation—specifically, the *awjuh* [options in reading] of *waqf* on a *hamzah* for Ḥamzah. Ibn Ḥajar’s statement, “I read in the handwriting of al-Dhahabī, justifying those who disliked Ḥamzah’s Reading, expressing concern about the excessive elongation of vowels, and the alteration [*awjuh*] of *hamz* when stopping...” marks a pivotal juncture in this scholarly dialogue. It serves as a testament to the richness of dissenting perspectives within the intricate realm of Qur’anic Readings, recognising a diverse spectrum of opinions that animate the discourse.

The phrase “citing reasons for those who disapproved of Ḥamzah’s Reading, particularly its *madd*, *sakt*, and modifications in *waqf*” encapsulates the scholarly endeavour to contextualise dissenting perspectives, thereby acknowledging the multiplicity of opinions within the discourse. This nuanced engagement showcases the breadth of the ongoing dialogue, recognizing variegated viewpoints that animate the scholarly landscape. The deployment of the term “justification” conveys a scholarly rigour in presenting the rationale underpinning reservations toward Ḥamzah’s Reading, becoming an intellectual fulcrum facilitating an informed and nuanced understanding of the divergent opinions circulating within the scholarly milieu.

As this scholarly discourse unfolds, meticulous attention to detail characterises the engagement with the intricate element of *hamz* realisation, probing the multifaceted nature of Ḥamzah’s approach and the nuanced threads embedded within the rich tapestry of his Reading. The scholarly landscape, thus, becomes a dynamic arena where dissent and diversity converge, contributing to the continual evolution of understanding within the realm of Qur’anic scholarship.

The initial contention concerning Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, challenging the exclusive focus on *hamz* realisation within Ḥamzah’s purview, encounters a sagacious rejoinder. It becomes evident that Ḥamzah’s scholarly endeavours transcend a singular fixation on *hamz*, positioning him as a stalwart among Kūfic scholars—who all realise the *hamzah*, indicating that Ḥamzah is not alone in this practice. His contributions

extend to the meticulous examination of *hamz* in diverse contexts, exemplified by his approach to *hamzah* realisation when two *hamzahs* appear within a single word.

Contrary to the prevailing perception of Ḥamzah’s meticulousness in *hamz* realisation, a counterpoint emerges, revealing his disapproval of excessive pronunciation. As reported by al-Sakhāwī, a narrative unfolds wherein a concern is raised about a follower elongating *hamz* excessively, reaching the point of breaking a button. Ḥamzah’s response, marked by a measured demeanour, categorically disclaims any endorsement of such extremes, asserting, “I did not instruct them to do all of this”.⁹⁴ This quote exemplifies Ḥamzah’s restraint and his aversion to exaggeration, reinforcing a balanced approach in matters of recitation.

Moreover, the emphasis Ḥamzah places on *hamz* realisation is intricately linked to educational objectives, primarily aimed at training students to master the nuanced intricacies of its pronunciation, given its acknowledged difficulty. This educational dimension adds a layer of pedagogical intent to Ḥamzah’s engagements with *hamz*, unveiling a multifaceted approach that blends scholarly rigour with a commitment to nurturing the proficiency of aspiring reciters.

The narrative weaves an illuminating and substantiating tapestry through an account reported by al-Sakhāwī and narrated by Sufyān al-Thawrī. al-Thawrī’s probing inquiry to Ḥamzah, accompanied by a quest for elucidation on the pronounced enunciation of *hamz* and sharp breaks [*sakt*—textual constraints] in his recitation, unveils a moment of scholarly discourse encapsulated in the question, “O Abū ‘Ummārah, what are this intense *hamz* [realisation] and severe cutting?—referring to *sakt* [textual constraints].”⁹⁵

The resonance of this question reverberates in Ḥamzah’s measured response, evoking a pedagogical essence. Ḥamzah, in his role as an instructor, responds, “O Abū ‘Abd Allah, this is the exercise of the learner.” This exchange unveils a nuanced dimension of Ḥamzah’s recitative approach—an intentional pedagogical method. Sufyān al-Thawrī’s acknowledgement of the truth embedded in Ḥamzah’s response elevates this

⁹⁴ *Jamāl al-Qurrāʾ*: 2/471.

⁹⁵ *Jamāl al-Qurrāʾ*: 2/471.

moment beyond mere eccentricity, positioning Ḥamzah's distinct pronunciation not as an idiosyncratic practice lacking merit but as a purposeful instructional technique.

Essentially, this account transcends being a mere historical anecdote; it becomes a testament to the sophistication and foresight embedded in Ḥamzah's instructional methodology. It portrays Ḥamzah as a conscientious mentor, employing his unique recitative style not as a departure from established norms but as a deliberate means to refine and enhance the learners' pronunciation skills.

Thus, in examining Ḥamzah's approach, it becomes apparent that his method was tailored to the needs of his students. The meticulous emphasis on pronunciation and detailed scrutiny served as a means of guidance and training for learners. Once proficiency was achieved, the need for such intensity diminished.

Ḥamzah's response, stating that this was the learner's exercise, implies a purposeful and deliberate instructional technique rather than an arbitrary or objectionable practice. Notably, the acknowledgement from Sufyān al-Thawrī, *ṣadaqta* [you have spoken the truth], reinforces the understanding that Ḥamzah's methodology was recognised and accepted as a legitimate educational tool.

Support for this perspective can be found in the observation of Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham al-Nakha'ī, who prayed behind Ḥamzah and noted that he did not excessively elongate vowels or emphasise *hamz* intensely during prayer.

Similarly, Salīm ibn 'Isā, one of the most reliable and precise students of Ḥamzah, reported Ḥamzah's guidance: "Ḥamzah's said, 'Omitting *hamz* in the *maḥārib* [pulpits] is a matter of proficiency.'"

This collective evidence underscores that Ḥamzah's approach was intentional, aimed at instructional benefit and that his students, who understood and practised his method, found it effective in their educational process.

As for the examination of Ḥamzah's approach to the pronunciation of unrealised *hamz* [*takhfīf* of the *hamzah*] during cessations unveils a broader panorama that transcends the singular confines of his distinctive practice. This leniency [*takhfīf*], characterised by modifications in *hamz* articulation during cessations, emerges as a

common thread interwoven into the fabric of various Eponyms’ methodologies. The examination of similar adaptations in the practices of other revered Eponyms, including but not limited to the Canonical Tramitter of Ibn ‘Āmir al-Shāmī, namely Hishām⁹⁶, serves as a testament to the shared nature of this nuanced stylistic choice—*khamsat al-qiyās* [five rational ways] on the cessation of [السَّفَهَاءُ], or *thalāthah ibdāl* of the cessation of [أَنْبِيَاءَ], and *naql* and *idghām* on cessations of [شَيْئِي], with the option of *rawm* and *ishmām* pending the end casing.⁹⁷

The resonance of this leniency reverberates through the annals of Qur’anic Readings, finding echoes in the narratives of Warsh. Warsh’s renditions, intertwined with *naql* [hamzah elation] and *ḥadhf* [omission] of the *hamzah*, echo a similar sentiment of flexibility in pronunciation during pauses. Furthermore, the pages of recitation history unfold additional layers with the unrestricted practices of *ibdāl* [changing] or *ḥadhf* of the *hamzah* for Warsh, al-Sūsī and Abū Ja‘far,⁹⁸ each contributing to the rich tapestry of adjustment modifications to *hamz*.⁹⁹

This multifaceted exploration highlights the diversity inherent in the modifications applied to the *hamzah* during cessations, showcasing a spectrum including but not limited to leniency and omission. Crucially, this practice, far from being an idiosyncrasy exclusive to Ḥamzah, resonates as a shared tradition—a nuanced convention embraced by a cadre of esteemed reciters. In acknowledging this shared legacy, the scholarly discourse transcends the individuality of Ḥamzah’s Reading, casting light on a broader tradition where the subtleties of *hamz* pronunciation are subject to a spectrum of interpretative choices, thereby enriching the expansive narrative of Qur’anic Readings.

In conclusion, Ibn al-Jazarī’s¹⁰⁰ discerning observation illuminates the weightiness inherent in the phonetic articulation of the *hamzah*, positioned as one of the most sonorous and distantly pronounced letters within the Arabic phonemic spectrum. His

⁹⁶ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 2/515. *al-‘Aqd al-Naḍīd*: 2/971.

⁹⁷ Eminently, Ḥamzah conspicuously exhibits a discernible inclination towards employing *takhfīf*, particularly in the nuanced modulation of the *hamzah* phoneme. This distinctive predilection assumes a pivotal role within the intricate tapestry of his Reading, signifying a purposeful departure from established phonetic norms. The proclivity for *takhfīf*, denoting phonetic lightening or ease, becomes markedly apparent in the meticulous treatment of the *hamzah*, thereby imparting a unique auditory signature to his Reading.

⁹⁸ *al-Tajrīd*: 124, 138, and 162. *Taqrīb al-Nashr*: 30, 36, and 46. *Tahbīr al-Taysīr*: 215 – 221.

⁹⁹ In specific lexical contexts, Ḥamzah aligns himself with this practice.

¹⁰⁰ *al-Nashr*: 1/428.

meticulous examination further unravels a fascinating mosaic of linguistic ingenuity exhibited by the Arab linguists, who, faced with the phonetic gravity of the *hamzah*, ingeniously diversified their approach, employing an array of phonetic manoeuvres concerning *takhfif* [leniency]. These included *naql* [*hamzah* elision], *ibdāl* [substituting the *hamzah* of a letter of *madd*], *idghām* [amalgamation], and other nuanced stratagems devised to navigate the intricacies of *hamzah*'s enunciation.

An intriguing regional nuance emerges, wherein the communities of the Quraysh and Ḥijāz exhibit a predilection for a more lenient pronunciation of *hamzah*, thereby engendering diverse approaches within their distinct recitational traditions. The resonance of this leniency reverberates through the tapestry of their Readings, manifesting in multifaceted techniques to facilitate the phonetic expression of the *hamzah*. Ibn Kathīr, drawing from the recension of Ibn Fulayḥ, provides a notable example, underscoring the scholarly lineage of this tradition.

The thread of leniency is further woven into the fabric of recitational practices articulated by prominent figures such as Nāfi' in the Warsh rendition and Abū Ja'far, particularly in the rendition of al-'Umarī. A similar approach is discerned in the Reading of Ibn Muḥaysin, an Eponym hailing from the esteemed city of Makkah, who aligns with the phonetic leniency observed in the Eponym Ibn Kathīr's tradition. The lineage of this phonetic approach extends to the narration of Abū 'Amr al-Baṣrī, intricately intertwined with the recitation traditions of the Ḥijāz.

The legacy of leniency is perpetuated by 'Aṣim, whose rendition from al-A'shī, from Abū Bakr, with the scholarly lineage reaching back to the venerable Companion 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, stands as a testament to this enduring trend.

In summation, Ibn al-Jazarī's astute observation and enumeration of these nuanced phonetic strategies reveal a rich mosaic within the realm of Qur'anic phonetics. The leniency in the *hamzah* pronunciation, as evidenced in diverse recitational traditions, reflects not merely a regional idiosyncrasy but a sophisticated linguistic response to the inherent phonetic challenges posed by this intricate letter, thereby enriching the vibrant panorama of Qur'anic recitation.

In the Scholarly Crosshairs: Dissecting the Charges of Excess in Ḥamzah's Sakt

This chapter, dedicated to *sakt* [textual constraint] on the consonant antecedent to the *hamzah*, emerges as a distinct hallmark of Ḥamzah's renowned recitational style. Within this paradigm, Ḥamzah orchestrates a deliberate and nuanced *sakt*, a silence, a resounding hush, poised meticulously on the precipice of the last impeccably unvoveled consonant that heralds the impending arrival of the elusive *hamzah*.

This enigmatic technique reverberates in phrases such as [مَنْ أَمَّنَ] and [فَدَّ أَفْلَحَ], where Ḥamzah's application of *sakt* is a defining feature of his Reading, carefully applied before *hamzah* to ensure clear articulation. The artistry of Ḥamzah's Reading further unfolds as he navigates the intricacies of the Arabic language, orchestrating a symphony of *sakt* around the unvoiced *yā'* in [شَيْءٍ], be it in its nominative, accusative, or genitive forms in *wasl* mode. The profound *sakt* orchestrated by Ḥamzah extends its wings to envelop the definite article [ال] when it manifests in constructions like [الأَرْضِ] and [الإنسان]. These instances stand as luminous examples of Ḥamzah's nuanced approach, where the *sakt* becomes a canvas upon which the subsequent *hamzah* is delicately painted, ensuring a nuanced and precise articulation.

Within the scholarly discourse, echoes of disapproval by early luminaries, ostensibly directed towards what might be perceived as an excess in *hamzah* pronunciation in Ḥamzah's Reading, find a potential alignment with the practised art of *sakt*. The ensuing passages cast a revealing light on the contentious element of *sakt*, laying bare the sentiments of critics who sought elucidation from the eminent Ḥamzah himself in their explicit criticism and profound astonishment. As previously mentioned, al-Sakhāwī imparted a statement resonating with criticism and perplexity, attributing it to the venerable al-Thawrī. Notably, al-Thawrī, in a moment of candid inquiry, directed his questioning gaze toward Ḥamzah, invoking the moniker "Abu 'Ammārah."¹⁰¹ The interrogation is poised with a trinity of accusations: excessive *hamzah*, *madd*, and *sakt*. These charges, laden with nuance, underscore the perplexity and perhaps disapproval that lingers in the scholarly air. The explicitness of the

¹⁰¹ *Jamāl al-Qurrā'*: 2/471.

critique, marked by the weighty terms “excessive” and “severe,” suggests a palpable concern about the boundaries of Ḥamzah’s recitational proclivities.

In response to this pointed interrogation, Ḥamzah unveils the rationale behind what is perceived as an excess—labelling it the “exercise of the learner.” The terminology chosen, “exercise,” imbues the act with purpose and intentionality, suggesting a methodical approach rather than an arbitrary eccentricity. This response bears the *imprimatur* of Ḥamzah’s pedagogical acumen, positioning the perceived excess as a deliberate instructional strategy, a method to hone the skills of those embarking on the intricate journey of Qur’anic mastery.

Upon receiving this elucidation, the sagacious al-Thawrī offers a succinct acknowledgement—“You have spoken the truth.” This concurrence, albeit brief, signifies a recognition of the validity of Ḥamzah’s justification. It hints at an understanding that transcends the surface critique, perhaps acknowledging the pedagogical wisdom encapsulated within Ḥamzah’s unconventional approach.

The resolution to the presented argument resides in a nuanced comprehension of the purpose behind the practice of *sakt* on the consonant preceding the *hamzah*. Scholars, delving into the intricacies of this deliberate pause, assert its primary objective as a facilitative measure for the extraction and enunciation of the *hamzah*. This strategic pause, conceived as a moment of repose preceding the challenging articulation of the *hamzah*, is predicated on acknowledging the inherent difficulty in its pronunciation.

The intentional introduction of a momentary silence (*sakt*) before the *hamzah* emerges as a means of facilitating the pronunciation of *hamzah*, akin to a preparatory breath before engaging in the nuanced phonetic challenge that the *hamzah* presents. This nuanced articulatory manoeuvre is conceived as a means to enhance the precision and clarity of *hamzah*’s pronunciation—the adequate *jahr* and *shiddah*, offering the reciter a moment of focused preparation for the linguistic intricacies that follow.

Crucially, the practice of *sakt*, far from being an idiosyncratic feature exclusive to Ḥamzah’s Reading, finds resonance in the Readings of other Canonical Transmitters. An exemplary instance lies in the unique occurrences of *sakt* in the Readings of Ḥafṣ.

This showcases the legitimacy of *sakt* within the broader spectrum of Qur’anic Readings and dispels any notion of it being a contentious or irregular element.

The universality of *sakt* as a shared feature among various Readers extends to specific points in the Qur’anic text, as evidenced by the verses *مَا أَعْتَى عَتَى مَالِيَهُ * هَلَكَ عَتَى سُلْطَانِيَهُ*.¹⁰² This passage, recited with *sakt* by certain Eponyms in one of the two transmitted ways, accentuates the consistency of this practice across different Readings.¹⁰³ Notably, the absence of contestation or criticism directed at *sakt* in this context reinforces its status as a legitimate and accepted aspect within the tapestry of the Variant Readings.

In essence, this discourse unveils a nuanced understanding of *sakt*, weaving together linguistic precision, pedagogical strategy, and the shared traditions of Canonical Transmitters. The intentional use of *sakt* emerges not as a divergence but as a calculated and accepted feature that enriches the oral transmission of the Qur’ān, transcending the confines of any singular reciter’s approach.

Supplementary Insights and Observations in the Scholarly Discourse

The antecedent chapters meticulously chronicle Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s disapproval of Ḥamzah’s stylistic Reading, delineating a comprehensive framework encapsulating five nuanced issues that form the crux of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s dissent:

- 1) Foremost among these objections is the superimposing of the pronounciative technique of *imālah*.
- 2) A second dimension of his critique converges on the matter of prolongation of *madd* for the duration of *idjā*‘ [tūl-6 morae].
- 3) A third focal point in his critique revolves around the superimposing of *idghām*—meaning that, to some degree, Ḥamzah’s Reading encompasses more applications of *idghām* than some of the Kūfans, particularly in comparison to ‘Āšim.

¹⁰² *al-Ḥāqqah*: 28 – 29.

¹⁰³ Ḥamzah and Ya’qūb executed the phrase employing the *hadhf* [omission] of the *hā*’ in *waṣl* mode, whereas the remaining Eponyms, specifically, Nāfi’, Abū ‘Amr, Ibn ‘Āmir, ‘Āšim, Kisā’i, Abū Ja’far, and Khalaf al-‘Āshir, read it with *ithbāt* [affirmation] of the *hā*’. It is noteworthy that those who opt for the *ithbāt* of the *hā*’ encounter two potential *awjuh* [options in reading]:

- *Idghām* [assimilation] of the unvocalised *hā*’ into the vocalised *hā*’.
- *Sakt* [textual constraint] with *ith-hār* [clear enunciation] of *hā*’s.

- 4) The fourth dimension of his objections delves into the superimposing of *sakt* [textual constraints].
- 5) The final point of contention involves the intricacies of specific pronunciation techniques, particularly the *taḥqīq* of the *hamz* as opposed to *tas-hīl/ibdāl*.

Notably, the venerable Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal espoused a distinct preference for the Readings of Abū ‘Amr al-Baṣrī, ‘Āṣim, and the denizens of Madīnah, Abū Ja‘far and Nāfi‘—Readings that he himself proficiently delivered. He read under the tutelage of Yahyā ibn Ādam, who traced his scholarly lineage back to Shu‘bah from ‘Āṣim, and under Ismā‘il ibn Ja‘far, with his scholarly lineage tracing back to the Eponym Nāfi‘ and Ibn Wardān from the Eponym Abū Ja‘far, solidified his connection to the diverse tapestry of Variant Readings.

Additionally, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal read to the students of Abū ‘Amr, thereby enriching his understanding and highlighting the depth of his engagement with the Variant Readings. He extolled the virtues of Sūsī, proclaiming, “He is a man of virtue and a staunch follower and advocator of the *sunnah*; we have only learned good from him.” Renowned for his judicious discernment in matters of the Variant Readings, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal meticulously sifted through various Readings, evincing discerning impartiality devoid of favouritism towards any particular Reading. Under his guidance, his son ‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal absorbed these selected Readings, a testament to the meticulous transmission of knowledge within the scholarly tradition. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, however, expressed marked disapproval of the Variant Readings synonymous with Ḥamzah and al-Kisā’ī.

However, in contemplating the corpus of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s Readings, the inevitable query arises concerning the extent of his engagement with the Readings of ‘Āṣim. Specifically, the inquiry delves into whether Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s reading was confined to the *Shāṭibiyyah* recension or if it encompassed the comprehensive array of ‘Āṣim’s recensions—via the *Ṭayyibah*.¹⁰⁴ The crux of this matter lies in the potential divergence between these recensions, particularly in nuanced elements such as the

¹⁰⁴ *Ṣarīḥ al-Naṣ*, 26. Although Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s [d. 241 A.H.] Readings predates the compilation of the *Taysīr* and the *Shāṭibiyyah*, a discernible congruence emerges, indicating an alignment between his Readings and the selections made by al-Dānī [d. 444 A.H.] and al-Shāṭibī [d. 590 A.H.].

variations in *madd munfaṣil* and *madd muttaṣil* for ‘Āṣim and the diverse pronounciative technique of *imālah* for Shu‘bah.¹⁰⁵

The nuanced exploration into the *Ṭayyibah* reveals multiple *ṭuruq* [recensions] transmitting *idjā’ tūl* in *madd munfaṣil* and *madd muttaṣil* for ‘Āṣim—thus showcasing that Ḥamzah was not alone in this application. These nuances may have eluded Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal if his readings were tethered solely to the *Shāṭibiyyah* recension. Furthermore, the kaleidoscopic variations concerning the pronounciative technique of *imālah* for Shu‘bah, as exemplified in the reading of specific words, such as [نَأَى], beckon scholarly scrutiny. The tripartite variations within the *Ṭayyibah* recensions, each a distinct facet of Shu‘bah’s nuanced articulation—with *fath* of the *nūn* and the *hamzah*, or *imālah* of the *nūn* and *fath* of the *hamzah*, or *fath* of the *nūn* and *imālah* of the *hamzah*, again showcases that Ḥamzah was not alone in this application.¹⁰⁶

As the gaze turns toward Ḥafṣ, the other Canonical Transmitter for ‘Āṣim, the revelation unfolds that certain *ṭuruq* [recensions] transmit *sakt* [textual constraints], a unique feature in Ḥafṣ’s stylistic readings. However, as opposed to Ḥamzah’s Reading, where the manifestation of *sakt* was confined to two separate words, as observed in [مَنْ] , as well as confined to the definite article [ال] and [الْحَيَاءِ], Ḥafṣ Readings uniquely featured an additional application of *sakt*, which occurred in one word, as exemplified by [الْقُرْآن].¹⁰⁷ This further raises questions about the contours of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s exposure to the interplay between these recensions—the *Shāṭibiyyah vis-à-vis* the *Ṭayyibah*. Moreover, this again showcases that Ḥamzah was not alone in this application.

The scholarly discourse takes an intriguing turn as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s potential restriction to the *Shāṭibiyyah* recension prompts considerations regarding the comprehensiveness of his insights into the diverse applications of *idghām* within the broader landscape of Qur’anic Variant Readings. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s reservation on the issue of applying *idghām* for Ḥamzah introduces a layer of intellectual engagement with the practices of Kūfans, particularly in the realm of *idghām*. There

¹⁰⁵ *Aḥsan al-Ṣuḥbah*: 146 – 177.

¹⁰⁶ *Aḥsan al-Ṣuḥbah*: 146 – 177.

¹⁰⁷ *Ṣarīḥ al-Naṣ*: 30 – 32.

exists a plausible inference that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, assuming a general reluctance to apply *idghām* among Kūfans, voiced this concern based on an impression rooted in regional practices. However, to a certain extent, the nuanced reality emerges as ‘Aṣim’s Readings restrict the application of *idghām*. Notably, the Readings of Shu‘bah, to some degree, exhibit the application of *idghām*, whereas the Readings of Ḥamzah, Kisā‘ī, Khalaf al-‘Āshir, and al-A‘mash, in comparison to ‘Āsim, exhibit a more superimposed application of *idghām*.

The intriguing instance of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s reading for Abū ‘Amr, a Baṣran, where Sūsī superimposed the application of both *idghām saghīr* [minor assimilation of an unvocalised consonant into a vocalised consonant] and *idghām kabīr* [major assimilation of identical vocalised consonants], unveils a tapestry of idiosyncrasies within the Baṣran tradition. Notably, Dūrī Baṣrī’s Readings align with this superimposed application via the *Ṭayyibah*, providing a compelling dimension to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s considerations. The reserved application of *idghām* by Ya‘qūb, also from Baṣrah, further nuances the landscape, potentially shaping Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s perceptions of the regional nuances in *idghām* practices.

The meticulous examination of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s readings and considerations unveils a tapestry of nuanced decisions, potentially influenced by the intricate interplay between regional practices as well as his restriction to the *Shāṭibiyyah* recension—as far as the pronounciative technique of *imālah* and *sakt* is concerned. Furthermore, the scholarly discourse surrounding the extent of his exposure to the *Ṭayyibah* and the nuanced variations in *idghām* practices may have eluded Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal if his readings were tethered solely to the *Shāṭibiyyah* or if he harboured misconceptions regarding the regional exclusivity of particular phonetic practices such as *idghām*.

Scholarly Critiques in the Farsh [Individual Variants] of Ḥamzah's Reading

Within this segment, our exploration transcends the realm of generalities [*uṣūl*] to scrutinise the minutiae of criticisms embedded within the *farsh*, delving into the individual variants that characterise Ḥamzah's Readings.

- 1) [وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُثَمِّلُ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ]
- 2) [وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ]
- 3) [وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا]
- 4) [قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ]
- 5) [مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِي]
- 6) [فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا]
- 7) [اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ]
- 8) [وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُثَمِّلُ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ]

108 [وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُثَمِّلُ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ]

The first focal point of contention surfaces in Ḥamzah's enunciation of the term [يَحْسَبَنَّ], with a *ta' al-khiṭāb*, where a notable departure emerges—a divergence from the collective cadence shared by the remaining Eponymous Readers who articulate it with a *yā' al-ghayb*.¹⁰⁹

The crux of objection pivots on the intricacies of the *i'rāb* [grammatical analysis] tethered to this Reading. The prevailing contention hinges on the purported incongruity between Ḥamzah's rendition and established grammatical norms. It is posited that the linguistic structure could only align cohesively either with a *kasrah* on the *hamzah* in [إِنَّمَا] or *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] on [خَيْرٌ]. However, Ḥamzah deviates from these grammatical archetypes in his distinct recitation.

Should the articulation involve a *kasrah* on the *hamzah* in [إِنَّمَا], the sentence would unfold seamlessly, with the latter part construed as the object of the verb [يَحْسَبُ]. An

¹⁰⁸ *Āl 'Imrān*: 178.

¹⁰⁹ *al-Taysir*: 92. *Talkhiṣ al-'Ibārāt*: 79. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 101.

illustrative example could manifest as [إِنَّمَا نُنبِي لَهُمْ حَيْرًا], intimating a withheld benevolence or akin connotations.

Alternatively, if the pronunciation gravitates towards a *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of [حَيْرًا], then [إِنَّمَا نُنبِي لَهُمْ حَيْرًا] would supplant [الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا], signifying a nuanced implication that their anticipation of our favour does not entail goodness.

Ḥamzah’s enunciation, however, deviates, addressing with [تَحْسَبَنَّ], embellished with *fath* of [إِنَّمَا] and elevating [حَيْرًا]. This artistic departure draws forth criticism, with some detractors, namely, Abū Ḥātim, decrying it as bereft of a proper grammatical structure. Hence, it is rejected.¹¹⁰ Additionally, Abū Shāmah deems the Reading problematic.¹¹¹

Firstly, the response to the criticism of Ḥamzah’s Reading suggests that his Reading allows for multiple interpretations. One possible interpretation is to consider [إِنَّمَا نُنبِي لَهُمْ] as a substitute for the inclusive phrase [الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا]. In this context, [حَيْرًا] serves as the predicate for an omitted subject, implying that the favour being extended to them is actually suitable for themselves. The intended meaning could be: “Do not think that what we dictate to them is good for them. It is, in fact, good for themselves.” Similar constructions can be found in Arabic poetry, as exemplified by Abū Shāmah’s explanation:¹¹²

مِنَّمَا الْأَنْبَاءُ وَبَعْضُ الْقَوْمِ يَحْتَسِبُنَا
أَنَّا بَطْلَاءٌ فِي إِبْطَائِنَا سَارِعٌ

He provides an example from poetry to illustrate this grammatical structure, where the omitted subject is deduced from the context. This flexibility in Arabic grammar allows for various valid interpretations, and this particular reading aligns with the rhetorical and linguistic nuances of the Arabic language. Therefore, Ḥamzah’s Reading can be understood as linguistically sound and contextually meaningful, providing depth to understanding the verse.

Delving deeper into the tapestry of the distich, despite Abū Shāmah deeming the Reading as problematic, his elucidation unveils the intricacies of a grammatical

¹¹⁰ *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: 3/444.

¹¹¹ *Ibrāz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/47.

¹¹² *Ibrāz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/50.

structure marked by the word [أَنَا] following the exposition of the initial act [المفعول الأول]. Within this grammatical framework, a linguistic latitude is engendered, permitting expressions akin to [حَسِبْتُ زَيْدًا أَنَّهُ قَائِمًا] “I thought of Zayd as standing,” thereby conveying “I considered him to be in a state of standing.” The rationale underpinning the use of the *fath* of the *hamzah* in this context is anchored in its reference to a consummated action embedded within a singular circumstance—the second act [المفعول الثاني] within the cognitive process.

In more accessible terms, this grammatical construct facilitates articulating an action that attains completion within a specific situation. Abū Shāmah illustrates this concept by “contemplating Zayd”—as the [المفعول الثاني] and connoting “his standing”—as the [المفعول الأول] since it appears after [أَنَّهُ]. The employment of the *fath* of the *hamzah* in this syntactical arrangement serves as a linguistic device, signifying that the action unfolds within a precisely defined context. This showcases the nuanced flexibility inherent in Arabic grammar, adeptly capturing the subtleties of meaning and contextual specificity within the tapestry of linguistic expression. Abū Shāmah’s explication demystifies this grammatical facet. It accentuates Arabic’s rich, expressive potential, where structure and meaning converge to convey refined shades of thought and perception.

Secondly, within the contextual exegesis of the verse [تَحْسِنَ], a distinctive interpretative paradigm unfolds, contending that the active agent [فاعل] encapsulated within the pronoun [أَنْتَ] pertains to the venerable Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. In this nuanced perspective, the composition of the verse delineates [الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا] as the primary object, with [أَنْتُمْ نُمِّي لَهُمْ خَيْرًا] assuming the role of the secondary object. Crucially, this interpretative framework necessitates the omission of a possessive construction, an omission applied selectively to either the first or the second object. The implicit connotation burgeons into two plausible renditions. Thus, the implied meaning could be:

- a) “Do not assume that the situation or condition of those who disbelieve is good,” or
- b) “Do not assume that the disbelievers are better off with what We delay for them.”

In more accessible terms, the admonition against presuming the disbelievers' situation, command, or circumstance or the caution against entertaining the notion that the Divine dictation bestowed upon them is inherently beneficial.

This interpretative intricacy invites contemplation on the nuanced syntactic structure, where the Prophet's ﷺ agency [as the *fā'il*—active agent or doer] becomes a focal point, threading together the elements of disbelief, Divine communication, and the intricacies of perceived goodness. The dual potentialities of the implied meanings, stemming from the deliberate omission of possessive markers, showcase the multifaceted nature of Qur'anic discourse, where precision in interpretation is vital. This scholarly elucidation navigates the complex interplay of linguistic components and theological subtleties, offering a profound exploration of the verse's semantic tapestry. The exegesis serves as a testament to the richness of Qur'anic hermeneutics and exemplifies the depth of scholarly engagement in unravelling the layers of meaning within the sacred text.

Notably, the scrutiny of this Reading yields a compelling conclusion: it stands resilient against criticism, unfolding as a bastion of linguistic intricacy rather than vulnerability. In contrast to being a subject of reproach, it emerges as a tapestry woven with grammatical threads, accommodating not just one but a manifold of grammatically correct interpretations. Thus, Ḥamzah's Reading, far from being a linguistic aberration, aligns seamlessly with the contours of the Arabic language, weaving through its subtleties and intricacies with grace. This linguistic analysis transcends a mere defence; it celebrates the language's inherent richness and the interpretative diversity it accommodates.

[وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ]¹¹³

The arcane realm of Qur'anic Readings becomes the focal point of scholarly discord—a discord emanating from the divergent enunciations of Ḥamzah's and the decachord of renowned Readers. Ḥamzah, with a sonorous audacity, introduces a Reading of the word [وَالْأَرْحَامَ] with *jarr* [genitive end-casing], juxtaposed against its Reading with *naṣb*

¹¹³ *Āl Imrān*: 178. The matter under consideration has been comprehensively expounded upon in detail on page 78; hence, an exhaustive analysis will not be undertaken at this juncture.

[accusative end-casing] as observed by the venerable cohort of Ten Eponymous Readers.¹¹⁴

However, this syntactic heterodoxy—non-standard syntactic structure—has not escaped the discerning gaze of grammarians’ *cognoscenti domiciled* in the intellectual crucible of Başrah. This coterie includes luminaries such as Sibawayh and al-Māzinī, along with the discerning pens of masterful Qur’anic exegetes such as al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn ‘Aṭīyah.¹¹⁵ Their collective opprobrium finds its locus in the perceived impropriety: the illicit tethering of an explicit noun to a pronoun bereft of the requisite recitation of the connective—a violation of linguistic propriety dictated by the normative utterance: “I passed by him and by Zaid.”

Yet, amidst the echo of grammatical reproach, a counterpoint emerges—a sonnet of interpretive ingenuity. Scholars, with acuity and intellectual finesse, posit that the Reading adorned with *jarr* [genitive end-casing] implies an intricate connection—a semantic leitmotif intertwining the swearing of oaths by kinship/wombs/relatives and Allah ﷻ. Their contention, an oratorical crescendo, purports that swearing by “wombs” transmogrifies into oaths. A prescient echo reverberates from the annals of prophetic wisdom, wherein Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prohibited swearing by entities other than Allah ﷻ, articulated in the canonical proclamation, “Do not swear by your fathers, and whoever swears, should swear by Allah ﷻ.”¹¹⁶

In response to the censure levelled against the Reading that adorns the said verse, a defence is erected upon the sturdy pillars of linguistic validity—an edifice buttressed by the Qur’anic tapestry and the lyrical cadence of Arabic poetry. The critique, echoing through the corridors of grammatical orthodoxy, contends against the seamless fusion of an explicit noun [الله] and a pronoun [الَّذِي] *sans* the reiterated connector [به]—In more accessible terms, the deployment of both [الَّذِي] and [به] serving the same purpose in the verse, is noted for their functional redundancy. This artistic liberty seems, to some, akin to linguistic malfeasance.

¹¹⁴ *al-Talkhīṣ*: 242. *Ghāyat al-Ikhtīṣār*: 2/459. *al-Ithāf*: 1/501.

¹¹⁵ *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān*: 2/6. *al-Kash-shāf*: 1/452. *al-Muḥarrir al-Wajīz*: 2/4.

¹¹⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: 7401.

In defiance, proponents of this Reading unfurl a richly embroidered mantle embellished with Qur'anic verses that share its syntactic hue. The verses, [قُلِ اللَّهُ يُمَيِّنُكُمْ]¹¹⁷ and [وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَسْتُمْ لَهُ بِرَازِقِينَ]¹¹⁸, resonate in rhythmic and prose forms, elucidating the linguistic tapestry woven into the Qur'anic revelation. The same melodic strains echo in the verses of Arabic poets such as al-'Abbās bin Mirdās [تُعَلِّقُ فِي مِثْلِ السَّوَارِي] and Miskīn al-Dāramī [أَوْ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَالْكَعْبُ مِنَّا تَتَأْتِفُ *** سِيُوفُنَا *** أَكْرَعُ عَلَى الْكَنِيبَةِ لَا أَبَالِي] and [وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَ بِالْأَرْحَامِ]¹¹⁹, exemplifying that this structure is not an isolated aberration but a recurring motif in the literary *repertoire*.

The caviel, asserting an undue linkage, as in [وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَ بِالْأَرْحَامِ], thereby implying an oath, faces a robust riposte. Scholars assert that the prohibition against swearing by entities other than Allah ﷻ, as articulated by the Prophet ﷺ, finds no resonance here. To swear by kinship is not a sacramental oath; rather, it is a narrative of habitual expression, falling outside the ambit of prohibited oaths.¹¹⁹ A parallel perspective posits that the structure is shortened with an omitted connecting particle, deftly sidestepping the implication of a conjunction as observed in [وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ]¹²⁰ *وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ بِالْأَرْحَامِ*.¹²⁰

Amidst the linguistic ebb and flow, the prevailing perspective stands resolute—a resounding affirmation of the conjunction with the pronoun. This is not a mere melodic variation but a note inscribed in the Qur'anic score, both in prose and poesy, emblematic of linguistic fluidity. According to the proponents, the dissonance of those questioning this Reading is a superfluous disquiet. Therefore, this Reading is a venerated exemplar, a grammatical axiom etched into foundational principles. Ibn Mālik, in his *Alfiyyah*¹²¹, resonates across the centuries, encapsulating the essence of this defence with eloquence and authority.

وَعَوْدُ خَافِضٍ لَدَى عَظْمِ عَالٍ صَمِيرِ خَفِضٍ لَازِمًا قَدْ جُعِلَ
وَلَيْسَ عُنْدِي لَازِمًا إِذْ قَدْ أَتَى فِي التَّظْمِيمِ وَاللَّتْرِ الصَّحِيحِ مُثَبَّتًا

¹¹⁷ *al-Nisā'*: 127.

¹¹⁸ *al-Hijr*: 20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibrāz al-Ma'āni* 3/590

¹²⁰ It is noteworthy that the excluded connecting particle in question is the *بِ*, which should precede *الْأَرْحَامِ*. In contradistinction, the recurrence of the verb *تَسَاءَلُونَ* is specifically emphasised to elucidate not only the accurate syntactic arrangement of the sentence but also to underscore the presence of a counterargument within the linguistic analysis.

¹²¹ *Alfiyat Ibn Mālik*, distichs 559 – 560.

In essence, the scholarly directive resonates clearly: pay no heed to the detractors, for in the bosom of this particular recitation lies not just an isolated grammatical quirk but a profound elucidation of linguistic principles—an elucidation encapsulated in the erudite verses of Ibn Mālik’s *Alfiyah*, where the connection between the pronoun [الَّذِي] and the omitted connecting particle [بِ] stands affirmed, resonating through the annals of both poetic and prosaic linguistic expression.

[وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا]¹²²

A conspicuous divergence emerges, captivating the discerning eye of scholars and triggering a nuanced evaluation. At the epicentre of this scholarly discourse lies the enigmatic rendition of Ḥamzah, who, in the unfolding drama of linguistic cadence, reads the phrase [مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ] with *khafḍ* embellishing the letter [و], a deviation from his counterparts who opt for the sonorous *fath*.¹²³

The spectre of criticism, in this instance, dons the cloak of linguistic scrutiny. It emanates from the pens of luminaries such as Abū ‘Amr and al-Iṣma‘ī, whose discerning gaze perceives a melodic resonance in Ḥamzah’s Reading. From their vantage point, the Reading woven into Ḥamzah’s recitative style is acknowledged as a *lahn* [erroneous].¹²⁴ This resonant critique, articulated with a flair for the melodic, contends that the chosen form of the scale [فِعَالَةٌ], which is generally read with *khafḍ* the *fā’*, is traditionally reserved for denoting professions or signifying meanings akin to other lexemes such as [سِقَايَةٌ] (a drink dispenser) and [رِفَادَةٌ] (a purveyor of provisions).

This linguistic demarcation prompts a symphony of perspectives, where the proponents of critique, with Abū ‘Amr and al-Iṣma‘ī at the helm, discern in Ḥamzah’s Reading—a deviation from the purported linguistic norms. Their contention pivots on the discerning eye that perceives the use of the form [فِعَالَةٌ] as an artifice reserved for specific semantic domains, principally tethered to professional designations or meanings that mimic established paradigms. Notably, The discernment of Abū ‘Amr and al-Iṣma‘ī, emboldened by their erudition, adds a melodic dimension to the

¹²² *al-Anfāl*: 72.

¹²³ In *Sūrat al-Kahf*, specifically in verse 44, it is imperative to note that Ḥamzah, Kisā‘ī, and Khalaf distinctly execute the Reading of the word with *khafḍ* of the *wāw*. *al-Tadhkirah*: 2/355-414. *al-Unwān*: 101–123. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 333.

¹²⁴ *al-Muḥarrir al-Wajiz*: 3/519.

critique, challenging not only the deviation itself but also the harmonious congruence between tonal choices and semantic fidelity.

The scholarly response to this melodic departure stands fortified on the bastions of linguistic precision, as it avows the veracity of the *kasrah*-infused pronunciation, asserting its congruence with the *fathah*-laden counterpart.

The crux of this linguistic discourse emanates from the rich lexical repository of Arabic, where derivations from a common root [*maṣḍar*] assume diverse forms. The pairings of [الْوَصَايَةَ] and [الْوَصَايَةِ], or [الْوَصِيَّةَ] and [الْوَصِيَّةِ], or [الدَّلَالََةَ] and [الدَّلَالََةِ], or [الدَّلِيلَ] and [الدَّلِيلِ], stand as testimony to the linguistic latitude inherent in Arabic, wherein variations in vowel markings do not eclipse the semantic equivalence rooted in shared etymology. In this lexicon, the *kasrah* and the *fathah*, like harmonious symphonies, resonate with identical meanings, forging a linguistic duality akin to the harmonious interplay of synonyms.¹²⁵

However, amidst this linguistic equipoise, a scholastic schism surfaces, echoing the sentiments of luminaries such as Sībaway. Within the contours of his discernment, a semantic distinction unfurls its wings – [وَلَايَتِهِمْ] with a *fathah* assumes the mantle of denoting a *maṣḍar* [verbal noun], akin to lexical compatriots [الإِمَارَةَ] and [النِّيَاقَةَ]. In contrast, [وَلَايَتِهِمْ] bedecked with a *kasrah*, it assumes the mantle of signifying an *ism* [noun]. Contrastly, Abū ‘Ubayd contends that [الْوَلَايَةَ] is the *maṣḍar* of [الْوَالِيَّ], whereas [الْوَلَايَةَ] is a *maṣḍar* just as [الْعِلْمَ] is *maṣḍar* of [أَمَرَ], and [أَمَرَ] is the *maṣḍar* of [الْعِلْمَ] of , as observed in [وَلَيْتُ الْعِلْمَ وَالْأَمَرَ تَلِيَهُ].¹²⁶

A discerning exploration of these phonetic nuances unravels a lexicon where the *fathah*, akin to a Divine cadence, orchestrates a narrative of **Divine support** and **beneficence** bestowed upon the allies of Allah ﷺ. In this harmonious rendition, the *fathah* becomes a melodic invocation, heralding **victory**, **honour**, and **dignified eminence to those who stand as Divine confidants**.

Conversely, the *kasrah*, like a syntactic maestro, transposes the symphonic narrative to a different register, wherein [الْوَلَايَةَ] metamorphoses into the **source of authority**, a

¹²⁵ ‘Umdat al-Huffāth fi Tafsir al-Alfāḥ: 4/342.

¹²⁶ Majāz al-Qur’ān: 1/405.

mantle of guardianship draped upon the shoulders of the One in charge—Allah ﷻ. The lexical panorama expands, encapsulating the semantic resonance of **guardianship** or assuming **command**, epitomised in the phrase [وَلَيْتُ الشَّيْءَ وَلَايَةً/ وَلَايَةً] emblematic of **seizing charge** or **assuming custodial responsibility**.¹²⁷

Amidst this lexical reverie, the erudition of al-Farrāʾ emerges as a beacon. His aphorism encapsulated in “We have heard both Readings, with a *fathah* and with a *kasrah*, used in both of their intended meanings,” is a testament to the harmonious coexistence of both Readings and showcases the permeable boundary between the realms of **Divine support** and **authoritative guardianship**.¹²⁸ The resonant echoes of both *fathah* and *kasrah*, echoing in unison with their intended meanings, amplify the linguistic opulence inherent in Qurʾanic Variant Readings.

قُلْ أَذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ¹²⁹

In this Reading of Ḥamzah, a notable discordance arises in the melodic rendering of the phrase [وَرَحْمَةً], where Ḥamzah, with a nuanced *khafd*, as in [وَرَحْمَةٍ], diverges from the harmonic convention embraced by fellow Eponyms, who, in a contrasting cadence, opt for a *rafʿ* [nominative end-casing], as in [وَرَحْمَةٌ].

Within the framework of Ḥamzah’s Reading, the term [وَرَحْمَةٍ] (mercy) assumes the role of an appositive to [خَيْرٍ] (goodness), thereby implying that the responsive ear possesses both goodness and mercy. In essence, it conveys the notion of a listener characterised by benevolence. However, the association of [وَرَحْمَةٍ] with [لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ] (to the believers) is deemed incongruent, given that the conjunction [لِ] in [لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ] denotes a possessive relationship, signifying belief in or validation of the believers.

Critics among grammarians cast aspersions on Ḥamzah’s Reading, decrying the perceived disjunction between the two nouns resulting from the subdued tone, which they find aesthetically displeasing. It is imperative to underscore that the interpretative stance leans towards aligning [وَرَحْمَةً] with [لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ] when adopting the Quranic sense of mercy. In this context, the conjunction with [لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ] becomes plausible, and the

¹²⁷ *Hujjat al-Qirāʾāt*: 468.

¹²⁸ *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*: 1/419.

¹²⁹ *al-Tawbah*: 61.

interpretation harmonizes with the connection to [أُذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ] (extending a hearing is for goodness).¹³⁰

In response, the contention positing a significant distinction between conjoined and conjoining elements within nominative, accusative, or genitive cases is systematically debunked, lacking substantiating evidence. The rebuttal underscores the absence of a genuine dichotomy between these grammatical components, irrespective of their grammatical cases.

Within the framework of rendering it with *raf*^c [nominative end-casing], exemplification emerges in the specified verse where [وَرَحْمَةً], despite its distance in the given verse, finds union with [أُذُنٌ], thereby presenting a distinctive syntactic structure. A corollary instance is manifest in *Sūrah Tāhā*, verse 129, [وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا] , [وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى] . In this context, a deliberate hiatus is introduced between [كَلِمَةٌ] and [أَجَلٌ], imbuing the discourse with heightened eloquence and rhetorical vigour, augmenting clarity and emphasis without appending substantive alterations to the meaning.

In another illustrative instance, the divergence between the modulated tones of *khafḍ*, despite their distance in separation, becomes apparent in in *Sūrat al-Zukhruf*, verse 85, [وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ] , specifically within the statement in verse 88, [وَقِيلِهِ يَا رَبِّ] . Within this textual milieu, the term [وَقِيلِهِ] articulated with *khafḍ*, establishes an affiliation with [السَّاعَةِ], according to the consensus of the majority of scholars, thereby introducing a palpable separation between the two elements.¹³¹

In elucidating this linguistic phenomenon, Abū ‘Ali al-Fārsī astutely remarked, “The distance between the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] [وَقِيلِهِ] and what it is connected to [السَّاعَةِ] does not prevent the connection.”¹³²

The manifestation of this linguistic intricacy, wherein two words are grammatically entwined yet conceptually distinct and distant, attests to the profound richness of the Arabic language and the layers of meaning that can be gleaned through diverse Readings. Recognising and comprehending these subtleties contribute indispensably

¹³⁰ *Mushkil I’rāb al-Qur’ān*: 2/285. *I’rāb al-Qur’ān*: 2/223.

¹³¹ *I’rāb al-Qirā’at al-Sab’ wa ‘Ilalihā*: 1/250 and 2/304. *al-Hijjat li al-Qurrā’ al-Sab’*: 4/204.

¹³² *al-Hijjat li al-Qurrā’ al-Sab’*: 4/204.

to a holistic understanding of the Qura'nic text, showcasing the depth and sophistication embedded in its linguistic structure.

133 [مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ]

Another distinctive divergence emerges in this Reading of Ḥamzah, notably when reading the word [بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ], Ḥamzah introduces a *kasrah* on the letter *yā'* in *waṣl* mode, as in [بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ]. A contrarian rendition by the remaining Eponyms, employing a *fath* in *waqf* mode, starkly contrasts Ḥamzah's nuanced articulation.¹³⁴ The unanimous agreement among the Eponyms concerning reading the word [بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ] in *waqf* mode remains unassailable. However, the subtlety lies in Ḥamzah's rendition of the word in *waqf* mode, with *rawm*, to the fractured nature of the letter *yā'* inherent in this unique Reading.

This distinctive Reading, marked by *khafḍ* of the *yā'* in *waṣl* mode, has not evaded scrutiny, drawing criticism from eminent grammarians. Noteworthy among these critiques is the condemnation articulated by Abū Ḥayyān.¹³⁵ Further underscoring the censure, Abū Shāmah, relying on the words of Abū 'Ubayd, unequivocally asserted, "As for *khafḍ* of the *yā'*, we consider it an error."¹³⁶

The erudite linguist al-Farrā', in a discerning analysis, posited that the genesis of this divergence could be traced back to a misconception prevalent among the *qurrā'* of Yaḥyā's generation. al-Farrā' conjectured that a fraction of them fell prey to the misconception that the letter *bā'* in [بِمُصْرِحِيٍّ] operated as a modifier, exerting a *khafḍ* influence on the word. This, he contended, led to the erroneous assumption of the letter *yā'* being a *yā' mutakallim* [speaker], divorcing it from its intended linguistic function and creating a deviation in the Reading.¹³⁷

Furthermore, al-Zajjāj, a luminary figure in linguistic analysis, emphatically pronounced judgment on this particular recitation. His critique resounded with an unequivocal disapproval, categorising this rendition as inherently flawed and

¹³³ *Ibrāhīm*: 22.

¹³⁴ *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 293. *al-Kāfi*: 2/411. *al-Tajrīd*: 249.

¹³⁵ *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: 6/426.

¹³⁶ *Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/293.

¹³⁷ *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 2/75.

unanimously rejected by the entire spectrum of grammarians.¹³⁸ al-Akhfash, aligning his voice with the chorus of grammatical authorities, unequivocally labelled this variation as a palpable mistake, an anomaly unheard of among the Arab linguistic *cognoscenti*.¹³⁹

The crux of their objection revolves around the meticulous analysis of the *yā'* in [بُضْرِيَّ], contending that it assumes the role of a possessive *yā'*—*yā' al-idāfah*. Their foundational argument posits that the correct vowelisation of this *yā'* necessitates either a *fath* or *iskān*, with the selection of one predicated on the practicality or difficulty associated with its implementation. In the intricate tapestry of linguistic nuances, should one option present challenges, the other becomes obligatory. In the specific case under scrutiny, the imposition of *iskān* is deemed impractical, thus compelling the imperative adoption of the *fath*.

The intricacies deepen upon delving into the etymological roots of [بُضْرِيَّ]. Here, the foundational [مُضْرِيَّ], signifying one who seeks help or assistance, forms the core. Adding the *yā'* for the *mutakallim* [speaker] and omitting the *nūn* in the possessive [idāfī] construction create a linguistic conundrum. The prohibition against two adjacent *sukūns* prompts the dismissal of *sukūn*, leaving *fath* as the sole viable recourse. Consequently, a convergence transpires, wherein two akin letters, distinguished by one carrying a *sukūn* and the other a vowel, meet in adherence to the rule of *idghām*. In this harmonious amalgamation, the *yā'* metamorphoses into a *yā' maftūḥah*, which is *mushaddad*.

In response to the raised objection, a meticulous linguistic analysis unfolds, delving into the very roots of the word under scrutiny – [بُضْرِيَّ]. The crux of the matter lies in the subsequent addition of the possessive *yā'* attributed to the speaker, a linguistic embellishment that begets the omission of the letter *nūn*. This intricate lexical evolution leads to the amalgamation of the plural *yā'* into the possessive *yā'*. The consequential convergence of two *sukūns* [*iltiqā' al-sākinayn*] emerges as a linguistic conundrum, prompting an imperative shift in vowelisation to *fath*.

¹³⁸ *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān*: 3/159.

¹³⁹ *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān*: 2/407.

This recalibration aligns seamlessly with the prevailing Reading embraced by the majority, orchestrating a delicate dance between phonetic elements to circumvent the ostensible violation of the prohibition against the tandem existence of two *sukūns*. The meticulous manoeuvring ensures not only the avoidance of the proscribed adjacency of two *kasrahs* but also the prevention of the sequential alignment of two *yā's* following two *kasrahs*, thus navigating the complex terrain of linguistic propriety.

The nuanced exploration of Ḥamzah's Reading unfolds, spotlighting the distinctive phonetic choice involving a *kasrah* delicately placed on the initial *yā'*. This phonetic subtlety finds its genesis in the intricate interplay of linguistic dynamics, as the first *yā'*, bearing the grammatical mantle of plurality, traverses the labyrinthine terrain of *idghām* [assimilation]. This harmonious assimilation adheres to the prescribed path and facilitates the seamless entry of the stationary *yā'* of possession.

The meticulous orchestration of pronunciation patterns becomes evident as the assimilated *yā'* of plurality, now attuned to the cadence of *idghām*, gracefully paves the way for the introduction of the unyielding *yā'* of possession. The final vocalisation, adorned with a *kasrah*, becomes the resounding echo of this intricate linguistic choreography. This harmonic convergence, marked by the intersection of two *sākin* [stationary] letters, unveils the depth of phonetic precision and grammatical acumen inherent in Qur'anic recitation.

The genesis of this linguistic form, expressed as [بُصْرِيٍّ], becomes a testament to the meticulous artistry within the Banī Yarbū' dialect, where the *yā'* *al-iḍāfah* finds kinship with the connecting *yā'*. However, a strategic omission unfolds to circumvent the potential confluence of three *yā's*. The connecting *yā'* gracefully retreats, leaving behind a subtle *kasrah* on the *yā'* of possession, an eloquent testament to the omitted element.

A judicious acknowledgement prevails in response to the critique directed at this Reading. This phonetic manifestation, bearing the imprint of three intertwined *yā's*, stands validated by its Tawātur status—widespread transmission, thereby solidifying its linguistic legitimacy. Moreover, Quṭrub, in his attestation, and the erudite grammarian and Eponym Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Ala al-Baṣrī, in his endorsement of

excellence, affirm the linguistic finesse embedded within this Reading.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the discourse unfolds not merely as a linguistic exercise but as a manifestation of the rich and varied dialectical nuances inherent in the Arabic language.

﴿فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا﴾¹⁴¹

The verse mentioned above from *Sūrāt al-Kahf* emerges as a locus of phonetic scrutiny, where the divergence between Ḥamzah's rendition and the majority's Reading beckons the discerning gaze of linguistic connoisseurs. The pivotal phrase, ﴿فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا﴾, unfolds in a tapestry of subtle variations, encapsulating the essence of linguistic fluidity within the sacred text.

Ḥamzah's resolute articulation, embellished with the strengthening [*tathqīl*] of the letter *tā'* ﴿فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا﴾, stands in stark contrast to the majority's rendition, characterised by the lightening [*takhfif*] of the same *tā'* ﴿اسْطَاعُوا﴾.¹⁴² The divergence, though seemingly rooted in the intricacies of phonetic modulation, unveils profound implications within the syntax of the original reading ﴿اسْطَاعُوا﴾—with a *tā' maftūḥah* preceding the *tā'*.

In the majority's rendition, the omission [*ḥadhf*] of the *tā'* transpires as an act of linguistic simplification, a concession to ease of pronunciation. In contrast, Ḥamzah's Reading boldly assimilates the *tā'* into the ensuing *tā'*, forging an audacious encounter of two *sukūns*. While indicative of Ḥamzah's distinctive approach, this linguistic audacity becomes a focal point for critical scrutiny.

The critics, staunch in their grammatical orthodoxy, raise their pens against Ḥamzah's Reading. According to the grammarians, the amalgamation of two *sukūns* within the assimilation [*idghām*] becomes a transgression against established rules. Ibn Mujāhid, unequivocal in his stance, deems such amalgamation [*idghām*] impermissible, denouncing the juxtaposition of the silent [*sākin*] *sīn* and the assimilated [*mudgham*] *tā'* as a linguistic *faux pas*.¹⁴³ al-Zajjāj echoes this sentiment, categorising the reciter who ventures into such assimilation as misguided.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 2/76. *Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/295.

¹⁴¹ *al-Kahf*: 97.

¹⁴² *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 339. *al-Itḥāf*: 2/227.

¹⁴³ *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*: 401.

¹⁴⁴ *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa l-Rābūh*: 3/312.

In the face of the grammatical censure directed at the amalgamation of two *sukūns* within Qur’anic Readings, a formidable defence emerges, fortified by both linguistic reasoning and historical precedent. The contention pivots on the assertion that the confluence of two *sukūns*, as witnessed in instances like the assimilated *tā’*, is not merely permissible but entrenched within the established fabric of linguistic norms. This assertion finds its grounding in the nuanced behaviour of the second *sukūn*, elevated by the tongue’s positioning in relation to the assimilated *tā’*, thereby exhibiting traits akin to a movable [*mutaḥarrik*] letter. Consequently, the initial *sukūn* finds itself in the company of a letter endowed with mobility, a linguistic idiosyncrasy that authorises such amalgamation [*idghām*].¹⁴⁵

This linguistic defence extends its roots into the prophetic traditions, as articulated in the saying of the revered Prophet: [نِعْمًا بِالْمَالِ الصَّالِحِ لِلرَّجُلِ الصَّالِحِ] “How excellent is the property of a righteous man”.¹⁴⁶ Herein lies a validation of the practice of assimilation, embedded within the utterances of the Prophet himself, bestowing upon it an imprimatur of linguistic virtue.

In the annals of scholarly discourse, al-Ṣafāqūsī emerged as an ardent advocate, wielding the mantle of unwavering truth and grounded reality, substantiated by unequivocal evidence. The permissibility of combining two *sukūns*, a practice woven into the fabric of Qur’anic Readings, stands fortified by the resounding echoes of the Canonical Readers and other luminaries who have lent their vocal cadence to this linguistic phenomenon. This legacy, authenticated by trustworthy narrators and resounding through the corridors of linguistic scholarship, finds affirmation in the choices of esteemed language scholars such as Abū ‘Ubayd, casting the amalgamation of two *sukūns* as not only permissible but, indeed, a preferred and time-honoured tradition.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*: 417.

¹⁴⁶ *al-‘Adab al-Mufrad*: 47. *Musnad Aḥmad*: 4/197. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*: 8/6. *al-Mustadrak*: 2/2. Additionally, al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī asserts its authenticity in accordance with the stringent criteria delineated by Muslim. Noteworthy is al-Ḥākim’s assertion in a specific instance 2/436, where he extends the authenticity of this ḥadīth to meet the exacting standards of both al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the two preeminent compilers of ḥadīth collections. Notably, al-Dhahabī, a luminary of the science of ḥadīth, aligns himself with al-Ḥākim’s pronouncement, thus attesting to the veracity of the subject ḥadīth. This concurrence adds a layer of scholarly consensus to the affirmation of its authenticity.

¹⁴⁷ *Ghayth al-Naf*: 1/422. *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*: 1/64.

Thus, the defence marshals a formidable array of linguistic analysis, prophetic validation, and scholarly consensus to uphold the legitimacy of the assimilation of two *sukūns*, unravelling the layers of nuance within the complex terrain of Qur’anic Variant Readings.

Furthermore, in numerous instances within the Qur’anic verses, a notable consensus among the Seven Eponymous Readers is evident regarding the convergence of non-vocalised consonants [two *sākin* letters].

This linguistic phenomenon extends beyond the Reading of Hamzah, manifesting in verses like:

- [فَنِعْمًا هِيَ] (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 271)¹⁴⁸ – The nuanced phenomenon of the convergence of non-vocalised consonants, specifically the occurrence of two *sākin* letters— *iltiqā’ al-sākinayn*, is distinctly exemplified in the scripted representation of the word [فَنِعْمٌ مَا هِيَ]. This phonetic intricacy prompts an exploration into a specific *wajh*, or option in Reading, read by Qālūn, Abū ‘Amr, and Shu‘bah. In this particular Reading, the word is articulated with the application of *khafḍ* of the *nūn* and *iskān* of the ‘ayn, thereby introducing a distinct articulatory configuration. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Ja‘far, aligning with the afore-mentioned Eponyms in embracing this *wajh* characterised by the nuanced handling of the concurrent or meeting of two *sākin* letters [*iltiqā’ al-sākinayn*]. This alignment is not merely a fortuitous concurrence but a testament to the meticulous preservation of the linguistic intricacies inherent in the Qur’anic text, exemplifying a shared commitment to preserving the scriptural phonology.
- [نِعْمًا يَعْظُمُ] (*Sūrat al-Nisā’*, 58) – The *iltiqā’ al-sākinayn* is distinctly exemplified in the scripted representation of the word [نِعْمٌ مَا], read with *khulf* [option in Reading] by Qālūn, Abū ‘Amr, and Shu‘bah. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Ja‘far, aligning with this Reading of the afore-mentioned Eponyms.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ *Ghayth al-Naf’*: 121 – 122. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 72.

¹⁴⁹ *Ghayth al-Naf’*: 172. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 115.

- [لَا تَعُدُّوْا فِي السَّبْتِ] (*Sūrat al-Nisā'*, 154) – The *iltiqā' al-sākinayn* is distinctly exemplified in the scripted representation of the word [لَا تَعُدُّوْا], read with *khulf* [option in Reading] by Qālūn. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Ja'far, aligning with this Reading of the afore-mentioned Eponym.¹⁵⁰
- [لَا يَهْدِي] (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 35) – The *iltiqā' al-sākinayn* is distinctly exemplified in the scripted representation of the word [لَا يَهْدِي], read with *khulf* [option in Reading] by Qālūn. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Ja'far, aligning with this Reading of the afore-mentioned Eponym. Furthermore, in Shu'bah's Reading, the scripted representation of the word is exemplified as [لَا يَهْدِي].¹⁵¹
- [وَهُمْ يَخْضَمُونَ] (*Sūrah Yā Sīn*, 49) – The *iltiqā' al-sākinayn* is distinctly exemplified in the scripted representation of the word [وَهُمْ يَخْضَمُونَ], read with *khulf* [option in Reading] by Qālūn. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Ja'far, aligning with this Reading of the afore-mentioned Eponym.¹⁵²
- The *tā'āt li al-Bazzī* [peculiar *tā's* for Bazzī], illustrated in verses such as [هَلْ] (*Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 52).¹⁵³
- [إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ] (*Sūrat al-Nūr*, 15) – The *tā'āt li al-Bazzī* [peculiar *tā's* for Bazzī], as in [إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ]. This phonetic variance finds convergence in the Reading of Abū Abū 'Amr, Hishām, Ḥamzah, Kisa'ī, and Khalaf al-'Āshir, aligning with the Reading of the afore-mentioned Canonical Transmitter.¹⁵⁴

These instances collectively serve to affirm the orthodoxy of the linguistic structure wherein non-vocalised consonants converge, a phenomenon consistently embraced by the Seven Eponymous Readers. The absence of explicit proscription by grammarians against this linguistic construct becomes apparent. It is discerned that this mode of

¹⁵⁰ *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 182. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 130.

¹⁵¹ *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 287 – 288. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 234.

¹⁵² *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 492 – 493. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 483.

¹⁵³ *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 275. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 225.

¹⁵⁴ *Ghayth al-Naf'*: 421. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 388.

recitation aligns seamlessly with established linguistic norms, a characteristic deeply embedded in the Arabic language as evidenced by diverse Arab communities.

Moreover, the pervasive nature of this linguistic phenomenon across various Qur'anic Readings dispels any reservations surrounding its authenticity or merits. The recurrent adherence of the Seven Eponymous Readers to this linguistic construct further fortifies its legitimacy, rendering it impervious to disputation or censure.

In conclusion, the convergence of non-vocalised consonants in Qur'anic verses, validated by the unanimous consensus of the Seven Eponymous Readers, underscores its linguistic authenticity and harmonises with established Arabic language conventions. This linguistic feature, consistently observed in diverse Readings, is a testament to the inherent linguistic precision of the Qur'an, thereby dispelling any doubts or criticisms against its legitimacy.

اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ¹⁵⁵

The verse in question emanates from *Sūrah Fāṭir*, verse 43, delving into the intricacies of the Variant Readings encapsulated within the phrase [وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ]. Distinguished for his unique recitational finesse, Ḥamzah articulates this word with a nuanced divergence, skillfully preserving the *hamzah* as a coherent element during *waṣl* mode. However, in moments of cessation, Ḥamzah strategically substitutes [*ibdāl*] the *hamzah* with a discrete *yā'*, attributing this substitution to the *sukūn* and the phonetic disruption preceding it. This subtle phonetic oscillation, a testament to the phonological richness of the Qur'anic text, unfolds distinctive nuances contingent upon the mode of recitation. In the majority's rendition, they articulate it with *khaḍ* of *hamzah* in *waṣl* mode and *iskān* of the *hamzah* in *waqf* mode.¹⁵⁶

Nevertheless, a scholarly discord ensues, with a contingent of grammarians challenging the authenticity of Ḥamzah's rendition. Their contention orbits around the characterisation of Ḥamzah's Reading as a form of melodic embellishment, deeming it erroneous and impermissible in both prose and poetry. The crux of their objection is rooted in the perceived deletion of syntactic movement, a transgression

¹⁵⁵ *Fāṭir*. 43.

¹⁵⁶ *al-Kāfi*: 2/484. *al-Iqna'*: 2/741.

viewed as a breach against linguistic norms and a potential source of semantic ambiguity.

Esteemed grammarians, typified by al-Zajjāj, categorically denounce Ḥamzah's Reading as a melody, asserting its impermissibility and incompatibility with linguistic propriety.¹⁵⁷ al-Naḥḥās aligns with this perspective in tandem, emphatically labelling it as an impermissible melodic deviation.¹⁵⁸

However, al-Zamakhsharī interjects into this scholarly dialogue with a nuanced conjecture, proposing that Ḥamzah may have unintentionally applied substituted the *hamzah*, perceiving it as a *sukūn*, or introduced a subtle pause before resuming with [وَلَا يَجِيئُ].¹⁵⁹ This insightful intervention underscores the multifaceted nature of the debate, intertwining issues of phonetics and linguistic norms.

In response to the discerning critique directed towards Ḥamzah's Reading, an erudite and exhaustive rejoinder has been presented, staunchly asserting the legitimacy of Ḥamzah's rendition of the word by delineating two permissible facets. These facets, intricately interwoven with the expansive tapestry of the Qur'anic context and the linguistic norms of the Arab milieu, are expounded upon with scholarly precision.

The initial facet, advanced with nuanced dexterity, posits that the convergence of two *kasrahs* upon the intensified *yā'*—a *yā' mushaddad*, and the resonant *hamzah* constituting substantial phonetic elements undergoes a transformative augmentation when bestowed with an additional *kasrah*. This augmentation accentuates their phonetic weight [*tathqīl*], compelling the *hamzah* to gracefully adopt a *sukūn*—a subtle and harmonious phonetic alleviation [*takhfīf*]. This nuanced adjustment is eloquently justified by its alignment with the inherent flexibility characterising Arabic phonetics.

al-Ṣafāqṣī, in his meticulous analysis, lends formidable support to the nuanced pronunciation entailing the application of *sukūn* upon the phrase [وَلَا يَجِيئُ] (and does not encompass). His cogent defence unfolds through a series of compelling aspects,

¹⁵⁷ *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa l'rābuhū*: 4/275.

¹⁵⁸ *l'rāb al-Qur'ān*: 3/278.

¹⁵⁹ *al-Kaṣh-shāf*: 3/278.

each constituting a veritable bulwark for the legitimacy of this nuanced phonetic choice.

Primarily, al-Şafāqṣī contends, with rhetorical finesse, that the strategic placement of *sukūn* in the final position—a locus of alteration at the end of the word—is an eloquent testimony to the appropriateness of this phonetic modification, thereby resonating harmoniously within the sanctioned alterations of Qur’anic recitation.

Secondly, with pedagogical acumen, he underscores the temporal sequence of recitation, emphasising the occurrence of *sukūn* subsequent to vocalic movements—the *sukūn* appears after a *ḥarakah*. This sequential justification not only substantiates but elevates the strategic placement of *sukun* within the temporal cadence of recitation.

The third facet of al-Şafāqṣī’s defence unfolds with an emphasis on the weightiness [*tathqīl*] of the *kasrah*, a vowel movement originating from the forceful descent of the lower larynx, engendering a robust downward phonetic trajectory. This delineation of phonetic gravity underscores the intricate artistry embedded within Qur’anic recitation.

The fourth element in al-Şafāqṣī’s scholarly defence centres on the *kasrah* delicately falling upon a consonant of substantial weight—*muthaqqal* letter, thereby amplifying its phonetic significance within the expansive realm of Qur’anic pronunciation—an observation that augments the depth and resonance of the chosen phonetic variation.

Lastly, al-Şafāqṣī, in a rhetorical denouement, underscores the consonantal emphasis antecedent to the nuanced phonetic variation and the subsequent consonantal elements as contributory factors all coalescing to buttress the justification of this intricate phonetic divergence—In more accessible terms, preceding it are veralised [full] letters, both of which are weighty [*muthaqqal*].

In response to Zamakhsharī’s antecedent conjecture, a discerning and erudite counter-argument emerges, firmly repudiating the suggestion that Ḥamzah’s deviation in Qur’anic Reading may have transpired inadvertently. This counter-argument, far from hastily dismissing Zamakhsharī’s proposal, robustly contends that any intellectual concessions within the realm of Qur’anic Readings harbour the potential to

compromise the sacred integrity of this Divine scripture. With unassailable authority, the ensuing rebuttal posits the scholars' unequivocal commitment to meticulous scrutiny, resolute certainty, and an unwavering dedication to preserving the sacrosanct Words of Allah ﷻ. It ardently discourages any semblance of laxity that might imperil the sanctity inherent to the Quranic text.

Central to the cogent argument is the assertion of scholars' heightened responsibility, profound acumen in the Arabic language, and acute awareness of linguistic intricacies. The discourse judiciously highlights their conscientious aversion to deviating from the established consensus—a collective commitment to orthodoxy. It posits that such venerable scholars, especially those engaged in Qur'anic Readings during pivotal epochs, stand as paragons of qualification for this sacred task, thereby showcasing an unparalleled dedication to upholding the authenticity of the Qur'anic text amidst the labyrinthine challenges and potential misconceptions that may arise.

The second perspective, articulated with scholarly finesse, posits an alternative lens to scrutinise the nuanced pronunciation. It asserts that this phonetic peculiarity may result from the application of assimilation within the context of a cessation or the assimilation of a detached element within the confines of a connected one. Drawing a parallel with the Divine statement, "I have come to you with certain news from Sheba" [An-Naml: 22], this perspective extols the merit of the *kasrah* resting upon a heavy [*muthaqqal*] letter, specifically the *hamzah*, manifesting after a *yā'* *maksūrah* which is *mushaddad*.

Conclusion: In encapsulating its denouement, it is imperative to underscore the inexorable integrity and linguistic virtuosity inherent in the transmissions of the Eponymous Readers, which collectively erect an indomitable bastion, unequivocally repudiating any scepticism regarding the authenticity of their Readings. Within this illustrious cadre of scholars stands Ḥamzah, a luminary whose memory is sanctified by Divine mercy.

The august position of Ḥamzah amidst the pantheon of Eponymous Readers is incontrovertibly manifested through the intricate network of his mentors and disciples. His tutelage, enriched by the wisdom of erudite scholars, intertwines with the strands of a scholarly legacy that spans generations.

The eminence of Ḥamzah’s stylistic Readings, distinguished by its unwavering consistency, is extolled by scholars who, with unanimous veneration, affirm that he approached the Qur’anic text with an unparalleled blend of diligence and devotion. Every verse bore witness to his meticulous engagement, leaving an indelible imprint on the scriptural tapestry.

Ḥamzah’s *modus operandi*, characterised by an aversion to affectation, is a testament to his commitment to authenticity. Under his sagacious guidance, his disciples imbibed the values of precision, thoroughness, and mastery with a stern admonishment against the perils of exaggeration, as delineated previously. In this context, Ḥamzah emerges not merely as an Eponymous Reader but as a pedagogue of discernment and virtue, shaping the intellectual landscape of his disciples.

The criticism levelled against Ḥamzah’s Readings by certain early scholars is fundamentally grounded in their reliance upon transmitters who conveyed his rendition. The fervour of these transmitters may have led to the introduction of embellishments, including but not limited to exaggerations, undue elongations, and affected assimilation—*idghām*. Ḥamzah, cognisant of the potential pitfalls, actively dissuaded such excesses, thereby distancing himself from the unintended embellishments engendered by overzealous reciters in his circle.

Notably, the grammatical objections to Ḥamzah’s stylistic Readings, articulated by certain grammarians, do not warrant categorical condemnation. Instead, Ḥamzah’s Readings are Tawātur and linguistically correct. While they may appear incongruent with established grammatical norms according to certain critics, they constitute valid linguistic forms bolstered by adherents who vouch for their legitimacy.

Furthermore, in the discerning aphorism of al-Suyūṭī, a luminary of Islamic scholarship, the discourse unfurls a profound contemplation on the intersection of the Variant Readings and the Arabic language. His meticulous assertion, “*Anything reported to have been read is admissible as evidence in Arabic, whether it [the Variant Readings] are Mutawātir [mass transmissions], Āḥād [isolated transmissions], or Shādh [Extra-Canonical/anomalous transmissions],*” serves as a cornerstone,

challenging conventional paradigms and casting the Variant Readings into the hallowed realm of linguistic jurisprudence.¹⁶⁰

The term “*admissible*” conveys a juridical weight, elevating the reported Readings to the status of authoritative evidence within the expansive tapestry of Arabic linguistics. al-Suyūṭī’s inclusivity, encapsulated in the expansive “*Anything reported*,” signifies a departure from rigid norms, welcoming a diverse array of Readings into the lexicon of permissible linguistic evidence.

The categorisation of Variant Readings into Mutawātir, Āḥād, and Shādh introduces a taxonomy that transcends mere transmission frequency. The acknowledgement of Mutawātir Readings, characterised by mass consensus, bestows upon them a collective authority that reverberates through generations. Conversely, Āḥād Readings, although isolated, find validation within the umbrella of admissibility, underscoring a nuanced acceptance of linguistic diversity. The inclusion of Shādh Readings, often deemed Anomalous or Extra-Canonical, extends an even-handed recognition, challenging preconceived notions and fostering a comprehensive understanding of linguistic evolution.

Contrary to an orthodoxy that may emphasise rigid adherence to a single Reading, al-Suyūṭī’s expansive perspective embraces the inherent richness of linguistic diversity, acknowledging the legitimacy of both widespread and unconventional Readings. This stance transcends the boundaries of mere linguistic inquiry, delving into the realms of epistemology and the preservation of Divine revelation.

As this discourse unfolds, al-Suyūṭī’s pronouncement serves as an invitation to a broader engagement with the dynamic nature of the Arabic language, acknowledging that the variegated hues of Variant Readings contribute to, rather than detract from, the profound tapestry of linguistic jurisprudence.

Moreover, and in the profound assertion of al-Ṣafāqūsī, a resounding proclamation resounds through the corridors of Arabic scholarship: “*Recitation does not follow the rules of Arabic; rather, Arabic follows recitation [Variant Readings].*”¹⁶¹ This

¹⁶⁰ *al-Iqtirāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Nahw*: 36.

¹⁶¹ *Ghayth al-Naf*: 1/420.

declaration, pregnant with implications, serves as a fulcrum upon which the intricate relationship between Readings and the Arabic language pivots, challenging entrenched paradigms and beckoning scholars to traverse the hallowed ground where linguistic tradition meets the dynamic evolution of Readings.

The authoritative tone embedded in al-Şafāqūsī's declaration compels attention, positioning the statement as an observation and an unwavering dictum. This foundational tenet reshapes the contours of linguistic discourse. The stark dichotomy between Readings and the conventional rules of Arabic articulated in the proposition "*Recitation does not follow the rules of Arabic*" upends established hierarchies, emancipating the former from the shackles of linguistic orthodoxy.

The bold assertion that "*Arabic follows recitation*" invokes a profound paradigm shift, delineating Readings as a trailblazer, a vanguard that dictates the trajectory of linguistic norms. This inversion of influence challenges preconceived notions, casting Variant Readings not as a passive adherent to linguistic rules but as a dynamic force that shapes and moulds the very fabric of Arabic expression.

The unanimous endorsement of this principle by "*the most eloquent Arabs*," a lineage inaugurated by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his esteemed Companions, and their successors, imparts a historical gravitas to al-Şafāqūsī's proclamation. This unanimity establishes a precedent that transcends temporal and geographical boundaries, suggesting a continuity of acceptance among the luminaries of linguistic tradition.

Acknowledging a diminishing purity of tongues, exacerbated by the proliferation of non-native speakers, introduces a poignant dimension to al-Şafāqūsī assertion. Including "*some of the most eloquent Arabs*" among non-native speakers underscores the transformative impact of linguistic diffusion, blurring the once-clear boundaries between native and non-native expressions of Arabic.

As scholars navigate this nuanced terrain, al-Şafāqūsī dictum serves as a beacon, urging them to recalibrate their perspectives, recognising Variant Readings not as a mere echo of linguistic rules but as a living entity that influences and, in turn, is influenced by the evolving contours of the Arabic language. Therefore, this assertion

invites a profound dialogue between tradition and innovation, where recitation assumes its rightful role as a dynamic force shaping the linguistic landscape.

Setting the Record Straight: Resolving Misconceptions Regarding Ḥaḥḥ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī in the Scope of the Variant Readings

In the earnest pursuit of disseminating knowledge within the Islamic intellectual sphere, each discerning individual has an onerous responsibility to explicate veracity, rebuff mendacity, and foster an elevated state of cognisance.

The contemporary eminence of ‘Āṣim ibn Abū al-Najūd and his esteemed protégé Ḥaḥḥ ibn Sulaymān commands unwavering attention.¹⁶² ‘Āṣim, lauded for his unparalleled prowess in Qur’anic recitation—a sacred text venerated globally by adherents of Islam—and Ḥaḥḥ, the custodian entrusted with safeguarding and disseminating this sacred Reading, have become pivotal subjects of scholarly inquiry. However, an intriguing facet surface as Ḥaḥḥ ibn Sulaymān is recurrently portrayed in ḥadīth literature as academically challenged, instigating scepticism among erudite circles. This characterisation has garnered broad acceptance among authors delving into the corpus of Ḥaḥḥ’s literary contributions. Seeking to assuage this assessment, some scholars posit, “A scholar may evince exceptional proficiency in a specific domain while exhibiting deficiencies in other realms.” Consequently, Ḥaḥḥ exhibits profound expertise and eloquence in Qur’anic recitations, yet his acumen in the domain of ḥadīth fails to attain commensurate levels of excellence.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Eminent scholars within the Twelver Shī’ah sect, albeit to a large degree of inaccuracy, posit the existence of an inherent shī’ī proclivity in the persona of ‘Āṣim. This assertion draws sustenance from his scholarly lineage, intricately intertwined with the venerated Companion, ‘Ali ؑ, proposition meticulously expounded upon in Āqā Bazrak al-Ṭīhrānī’s seminal work, *al-Dharīrah*: 1/516, and in Manṣūr Legheai’s treatise, *Sciences of the Qur’ān*: 41. Furthermore, adherents of this viewpoint posit that the exclusive sanctioned Reading emanates from the recension of Ḥaḥḥ, attributing it to ‘Āṣim, thus unequivocally disavowing the legitimacy of the remaining Tawātūr Readings. This potentially deceptive belief hinges on the contention that Ḥaḥḥ maintained contemporaneity with Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, coupled with a questionable ḥadīth proposing the singular revelation of the Qur’ān in a solitary ḥarf, a proposition incongruent with the well-established notion of the Seven Aḥruf.

Notably, a perplexing and ostensibly contradictory stance surfaces in the assertions of Mawlā Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Mazandarānī, who categorically repudiates the entire corpus of the Seven Variant Readings, thereby encompassing the rejection of ‘Āṣim’s Reading, as articulated in *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi*: 76 – 85. Additionally, al-Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr emphatically asserts that the pioneers in the compilation of the Variant Readings and written works on the Discipline of Qirā’āt were, unequivocally, the Shī’ah. He further contends that figures such as ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, and al-Kisā’ī were distinctly affiliated with the Shī’a fold, as elucidated in *Ta’āsīs al-Shī’ah li ‘Ulūm al-Sharī’ah*: 242 and 319. Contrary to the afore-mentioned claims, it is noteworthy that, upon a thorough examination of *rijāl* criticism compendia—Sunni and Shī’ī, not a single antecedent work preceding al-Ṭūsī’s [d. 460/1067] seminal work, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, has ever ascribed the term *rūmiya bi al-tashayyu’* [accused of Shī’asm] to prominent figures such as ‘Āṣim, Ḥaḥḥ, Ḥamzah, or al-Kisā’ī. It is crucial to emphasise that the allegation of possessing Shī’ah inclinations in the earlier generations did not, by any means, denote a firm belief in Shī’ism nor adherence to the Twelver or *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* sect.

¹⁶³ *Siyar A’lām al-Nubulā’*: 5/560. *Mizān al-I’tidāl*: 2/319.

Had the critique of Ḥafṣ been confined solely to his inadequate mastery of ḥadīth, it might have been deemed acceptable.¹⁶⁴ However, it transcended those confines, eliciting investigations into his integrity and prompting allegations of mendacity by certain scholarly luminaries. The conundrum arises: *How can an individual be deemed fit for safeguarding the Variant Readings of the Qurʾān while concurrently grappling with allegations within the realm of ḥadīth?* This apparent paradox necessitates meticulous reconciliation.

Thorough scrutiny of narratives and scholarly perspectives sought to expound and mitigate their influence, thereby unravelling nuanced viewpoints and discerning the intricate threads of scholarly discourse enveloping the subject matter.¹⁶⁵ The objective was to ensure they would not serve as a substratum for critiquing the Qurʾanic Variant Readings. Upon delving deeper, heretofore, unexplored facets materialised, compelling a reexamination and dissemination of these revelations to individuals with a vested interest in the subject matter. The study anticipates engendering satisfaction among Qurʾān enthusiasts and those immersed in the study of Variant Readings, with an optimistic expectation for the recognition of the merit and value of these findings by specialists in ḥadīth. The pursuit of truth, guided by the acquisition of wisdom, takes precedence for individuals adhering to this belief.

The study culminates in the assertion that the criticism levelled against Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān in the realm of ḥadīth studies was founded upon a fallacious notion propagated by certain early traditionists. This misapprehension endured among their successors, evolving into an impregnable verity impervious to discourse.

¹⁶⁴ In 2006, under the guidance of my mentor, Shaykh Yāsīn ‘Abbās, a directive was issued for an in-depth exploration into the scholarly standings of the *qurrāʾ* within prominent compendia of *rijāl*. The exhaustive investigation encompassed a meticulous examination of seminal works such as *Tah-dhib al-Kamāl*, *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulāʾ*, *Mizān al-ʿIṭidāl*, *Lisān al-Mizān*, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, and *Tārīkh al-Dimashq*, alongside supplementary compendia including *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, *Kitāb al-Duʿafāʾ*, *Tārīkh al-Duʿafāʾ*, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn*, and the *Suʾālāt* collections of Yahyā ibn Maʿīn, al-Dāraqūṭnī, among others. Following a comprehensive year-long inquiry, the ensuing observations were delineated:

- Significantly, an overwhelming majority, ranging between 85% and 90% of the *qurrāʾ*, were unequivocally classified as *ḍaʿīf* [weak] in their transmission of ḥadīth. Furthermore, the extent of disparagements [*jarḥ*’s] levelled against the *qurrāʾ* exhibited considerable variance, spanning from moderate disparagements to severe.
- The basis for their *ḍaʿīf* status in transmitting ḥadīth stemmed from the incontrovertible fact that their specialised expertise predominantly lay within the domain of Qirʾāt, diverging from an emphasis on the collection, compilation, and dissemination of Prophetic ḥadīth.

Notably, as of December 2023, it remains pertinent to underscore that my esteemed mentor, whose continued vitality endures, stands as a living witness who can substantiate the afore-mentioned scholarly inquiry.

¹⁶⁵ *Mukhāḍarāt fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*: 155.

Firstly, Commencing with a meticulous exploration of his biography is essential to embark on a comprehensive examination of the Canonical Transmitter and reciter, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, laying the groundwork to give the reader a more explicit context.

Ḥafṣ¹⁶⁶

Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī, renowned as Ḥufayṣ, bore the patronyms Abū ‘Umar and Abū Dāwūd. He was born in the year 90/709.

A unique facet of Ḥafṣ’s upbringing and education is his status as the stepson of ‘Āṣim following ‘Āṣim’s marriage to Ḥafṣ’s mother. Under the tutelage of ‘Āṣim, the distinguished *Sheikh al-Qurrā’* of Kūfah during that era, Ḥafṣ diligently absorbed the teachings of the Qur’ān. He engaged in extensive Qur’anic study, reading the Qur’ān countless times to his mentor, ‘Āṣim. Many esteemed scholars have attested to Ḥafṣ’s distinction as the most accurate transmitter of ‘Āṣim’s Readings. Afterwards, Ḥafṣ established residences in Baghdad and later Makkah, disseminating the knowledge he acquired from ‘Āṣim. He remained a trustworthy transmitter in matters on the Qur’ān while regrettably bearing a diminished stature in the field of ḥadīth.

Ḥafṣ’s dedication to scholarship is evident in his dialogues with ‘Āṣim. On one occasion, he questioned the variance between the Qur’anic readings he had learned from ‘Āṣim and those he transmitted to Shu‘bah. In response, ‘Āṣim clarified that he conveyed to Ḥafṣ what he had learned from Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, according to his recitation from ‘Ali ؑ. Conversely, the teachings imparted to Shu‘bah were drawn from his recitation to Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh, which derived from ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ؑ.

Ḥafṣ further recounted that when someone recited the Qur’ān to ‘Āṣim, he would meticulously extend his hand and count the verses. His unwavering commitment to transmitting the Qur’ān is evident in the singular point of variance between him and ‘Āṣim — a divergence related to the reading of the word (صَف) in *Sūrat al-Rūm*, verse 54. ‘Āṣim’s instruction included a *fathah*, while Ḥafṣ recited it with a *dammah*.

¹⁶⁶ *Ma’rifat al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/140. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/254. *Narratives of the Seven Great Readers*: 49 – 50. *In their Footsteps*: 81 – 82.

Teachers:

- 1) ‘Āṣim.

Students:

- 1) ‘Amr ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.
- 2) ‘Ubayd ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.
- 3) Hubayrah.
- 4) Abū Shu‘ayb al-Qawwās.

Ḥafṣ’s life came to a close in the year 180/796.

Commencing with a meticulous exploration of his biography is essential to thoroughly examine the Canonical Transmitter, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, laying the groundwork to give the reader a more explicit context. The ensuing discussion pivots on two pivotal excerpts that encapsulate divergent perspectives from scholars well-versed in Variant Readings and ḥadīth, offering a nuanced exploration of the disparate evaluations of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān.

The initial excerpt, culled from Ibn al-Jazarī’s illustrious opus, which serves as a biographical compendium, “*Ghāyat al-Nihāyat fī Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā’*,” strategically accentuates the positive facets of Ḥafṣ’s character.¹⁶⁷ In contradistinction, the subsequent excerpt is extracted from Ibn al-Jawzī’s treatise, “*al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn*,” adeptly consolidating critical statements that, if substantiated, could potentially cast a shadow on Ḥafṣ’s religious standing.¹⁶⁸

- 1) Ibn al-Jazarī extensively documented that Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī, widely known as Ḥufayṣ, demonstrated a profound mastery of the Qur’anic Readings, acquiring them directly from his stepfather ‘Āṣim. Notable contributions mark Ḥafṣ’s scholarly journey:
 - According to al-Dānī, Ḥafṣ diligently presented and disseminated ‘Āṣim’s Readings, imparting his knowledge during teaching stints in Baghdād and later in Makkah.

¹⁶⁷ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/254 – 255.

¹⁶⁸ *Kitāb al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn*: 1/221.

- Yahyā ibn Maʿīn underscored the authenticity of Ḥafṣ’s transmission from ‘Āṣim Readings.
 - Abū Hishām al-Rifāʿī lauded Ḥafṣ as the most knowledgeable among ‘Āṣim’s disciples, particularly regarding his Readings.
 - In a noteworthy distinction, al-Dhahabī emphasised Ḥafṣ’s reliability and scholarly standing in the context of the Variant Readings, describing him as *thiqah* [prudent], *thabt* [established], *dābiṭ* [accurate] in his transmission—attributes not mirrored in his standing as a scholar/narrator in ḥadīth—Notably, this suggests he could potentially undergo examination within the context of ḥadīth but not in the Variant Readings.
 - Ibn al-Munādī, providing further insight, highlighted Ḥafṣ’s exceptional memorisation skills, surpassing even Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh [Shu‘bah] and earning commendation for his precision in transmitting ‘Āṣim’s Readings.
- 2) Ibn al-Jawzī’s meticulous notation of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah al-Asadī acknowledged as the reciter and Canonical Transmitter of ‘Āṣim, also known as al-Ghādīrī or Ḥafṣ ibn Abī Dāwūd, hails from Kūfah and narrated from Simāk bin Ḥarb, Layth, ‘Āṣim ibn Bahdalah, and ‘Alqamah ibn Marthad, revealed diverse opinions on his reliability:

However, it is crucial to note that there are diverse opinions regarding his reliability:

- Yahyā expressed reservations, describing Ḥafṣ as *daʿīf* [weak in the transmission of ḥadīth] and, on another occasion, *laysa bi thiqah* [he is not considered a prudent transmitter of ḥadīth].
- Aḥmad, Muslim, and al-Nasaʿī concurred on Ḥafṣ’s status, deeming him *matrūk al-ḥadīth* [a narrator of discarded ḥadīth].
- The categorical statement by al-Bukhārī, *tarakū hu* [they discarded him—implying that scholars discarded his ḥadīth], further contributed to a negative perception of Ḥafṣ’s reliability.
- al-Saʿdī’s observation that Ḥafṣ had been *qad furigha minhu mundhu dahr* [he has been neglected for an extended period—implying that none was interested

in his transmission of ḥadīth] added weight to the scepticism surrounding his reliability.

- The severe categorisation by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yūsuf ibn Kharrāsh, labelling him as *kadh-dhāb* [a liar, a fabricator of ḥadīth], *matrūk* [discarded] and *yaḍa’ū al-ḥadīth* [a fabricator of spurious ḥadīth], intensified the critical stance.¹⁶⁹
- Ibn Ḥibbān’s account of Ḥafṣ as *kāna yuqallib al-asānīd wa yarfā’ al-marāsīl*—tampering with chains of narration and elevating *marāsīl* ḥadīths deepened the scepticism.
- Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī and al-Dāraqūṭnī concurred with the *da’if* [weak] characterisation, contributing to the critical stance concerning Ḥafṣ’s questionable reliability.

In sum, Ibn al-Jazarī, through his meticulous exposition, sheds light on the brilliance of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān—an accomplished reciter whose scholarly prowess permeates the intricate corridors of lineage and resonates in the precise transmission of the sacred Readings of ‘Āṣim. The widespread acclaim for Ḥafṣ as an unparalleled

¹⁶⁹ The critical assessment of Ḥafṣ by Ibn Kharrāsh necessitates deliberate scrutiny, given several factors that impede its credibility and integrity:

- **Diminution of Esteemed Narrators:** Ibn Kharrāsh consistently exhibited a proclivity for diminishing the scholarly stature of revered narrators, as evidenced in his evaluation of Aḥmad ibn ‘Abduh al-Ḍabī. The reservations articulated about al-Ḍabī, encapsulated in the phrase *takallam al-nās fīhi* [the people spoke regarding him], imply a challenge to al-Ḍabī’s credibility as a ḥadīth narrator. Importantly, eminent scholars such as al-Dhahabī not only defended al-Ḍabī’s scholarly position but also accused Ibn Kharrāsh of propagating falsehood in his disparagement of al-Ḍabī.
- **Disparaged Scholarly Standing:** In several instances, Ibn Kharrāsh has erroneously impugned the scholarly reputation of conscientious narrators, including Abū Mas‘ūd Aḥmad ibn al-Farrāt al-Rāzī and Abū Salamah Mūsā ibn Ismā‘īl al-Tabūdhkī. These unwarranted disparagements have not only instilled scepticism regarding the dependability of Ibn Kharrāsh’s assessments but have also prompted a rigorous examination and censure of his own scholarly integrity and standing.
- **Controversial Religious Affiliation:** Distinguished figures in the realm of ḥadīth, including al-Dāraqūṭnī, al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, contested Ibn Kharrāsh’s religious standing by categorising him as a *rāfiḍī shi‘a*. This categorisation, indicative of a *Shī‘ah* who rejected the early Caliphate of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān ؓ, suggests potential biases that may have influenced his assessments.
- **Explicit Heretical Accusation:** al-Dhahabī transcended mere dissent and overtly labeled Ibn Kharrāsh as a *zindiq*, a term connoting heresy. This severe indictment introduces substantial doubts about the reliability and orthodoxy of Ibn Kharrāsh’s perspectives, thereby casting shadows on the legitimacy of his denunciation of Ḥafṣ.

In light of these considerations, Ibn Kharrāsh’s critique of Ḥafṣ appears compromised by potential biases, debatable scholarly judgments, and accusations of heresy. A meticulous and critical examination is imperative to ensure a fair and balanced evaluation of Ḥafṣ’s standing as a narrator. *Su‘ālāt al-Dāraqūṭnī*: 341. *Mizān al-‘Itidāl*: 1/118 and 4/200. *Lisān al-Mizān*: 1/16. *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubulā’*: 12/487 and 13/510. *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāth*: 2/685.

authority in the cosmopolitan centres of knowledge, Baghdād and Makkah, elevates his scholarly standing within the realm of Qur’anic Readings. Nevertheless, this commendable recognition exists in tension with nascent debates that permeate the scholarly milieu, casting Ḥafṣ into an intellectual tumult concerning his reliability in the domain of ḥadīth. According to authoritative chronicles, the temporal contours of his biography, concluding in 180 A.H., provide a chronological anchor for his narrative.

In stark contrast, the writings of Ibn al-Jawzī, encapsulated in his compendium, “*Kitāb al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn*,” unfold an opposing narrative—a deft synthesis of critical statements that, if substantiated, possess the potential to cast doubt upon Ḥafṣ’s religious standing. This profound dichotomy of perspectives sets the stage for exacting scrutiny of Ḥafṣ’s dual roles as a reciter and, simultaneously, as a figure embroiled in the intricate tapestry of divergent evaluations spanning the realms of both ḥadīth and Qur’anic Readings.

Entering the realm of scholarly critique, the towering figures of Shu‘bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Yahyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān emerge as principal arbiters, their discerning gaze casting shadows upon the reliability of Ḥafṣ as a narrator of ḥadīth. Their formidable influence was witnessed in the discipleship of luminaries such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, ‘Ali ibn al-Madīnī, Yahyā ibn Ma‘īn, and ‘Amr ibn al-Fallās, establishes a foundational framework for the subsequent discourse. The scrutinous lens through which Ḥafṣ was assessed emanates from these venerable scholars’ evaluations, a theme astutely underscored by Ibn Kathīr.¹⁷⁰

Delving into the core of the matter, the perspectives of Shu‘bah and Yahyā assume pivotal importance in the broader context of scholarly evaluation. However, it is imperative to recognise the nuanced stance proffered by Aḥmad, oscillating between affirmation and reservation regarding Ḥafṣ’s reliability. As delineated by Ibn Kathīr, this nuanced oscillation imparts an understanding of the intricate nature inherent in evaluating a narrator’s scholarly standing.

Navigating the intricate terrain of *rijāl* criticism mandates contextualising these evaluations. The reservations articulated by Shu‘bah and Ibn Ma‘īn, characterised by

¹⁷⁰ *al-Bā‘ith al-Ḥathīth*: 137.

meticulous scrutiny, demand an interpretative lens attuned to the rigours of their discerning gaze. Aḥmad's ambivalence, expressed through a dual stance, underscores the necessity of a balanced perspective when ascertaining the veracity of Ḥafṣ's contributions. Amidst divergent assessments, the call for a positive outlook resonates as crucial in the pursuit of truth. It befalls the discerning scholar to traverse this intricate landscape, cognizant of the inherent challenges accompanying the scrutiny of historical accounts. The wisdom, therefore, lies not only in recognising the multifaceted nature of these evaluations but also in appreciating that they manifest as a result of rigorous scholarly discourse—a testament to the unyielding pursuit of verity.

Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Wāsiṭī, a preeminent figure in the domain of *rijāl* criticism originating from the illustrious city of Baṣrah, occupies a paramount position within the scholarly milieu. His profound erudition has left an indelible mark on subsequent luminaries, notably influencing figures of great stature such as Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī (d. 230 A.H.) and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal al-Baghdādī (d. 241 A.H.). Facilitating the transmission of knowledge was the esteemed conduit, Yahyā bin Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān al-Baṣrī (d. 168 A.H.), who conveyed Shu'bah's nuanced reservations regarding Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Minqarī al-Baṣrī. Intriguingly, this narrative underwent a subsequent misattribution to Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah al-Asadī, the distinguished reciter from Kūfah and Canonical Transmitter of 'Āṣim's Readings.

In his exhaustive work, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa'd meticulously catalogues the inhabitants of Baṣrah among the Companions of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, their successors, and the erudite scholars who succeeded them. In the fourth category, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, the freed slave of the Minqar tribe, known as Abū al-Ḥasan, is enumerated, gaining distinction for his profound understanding of the sayings of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Shu'bah, as transmitted, highlights an incident wherein Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān borrowed a book but failed to return it, emphasising his propensity for borrowing books for transcription.¹⁷¹ This account finds further corroboration in the writings of 'Abd Allah

¹⁷¹ *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*: 7/256.

ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who underscores Ḥafṣ's inclination to acquire and transcribe books from diverse sources.¹⁷²

ʿAbd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal corroborates this narrative, quoting Shuʿbah and adding that Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān once borrowed a book from me but did not return it. He had a proclivity for obtaining and transcribing books from various individuals.

Crucially, readers must discern that the Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān referenced by Shuʿbah pertains to Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Minqarī al-Baṣrī, distinct from Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī al-Kūfī, the Canonical Transmitter of ʿĀṣim. Unfortunately, certain scholars subsequently misapplied Shuʿbah's statement to Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī, erroneously positing it as evidence of his weak scholarly standing in the sphere of ḥadīth. Notably, the esteemed luminary, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, appears among the earliest to succumb to this misapprehension in his work *al-Duʿafāʾ al-Ṣaḡhīr*, declaring, “Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī, Abū ʿUmar, from ʿAlqamah ibn Marthad, *tarakūhū* [they discarded him]. Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal said Yaḥyā informed me that Shuʿbah mentioned that Ḥafṣ once borrowed a book from me but did not return it. He had a proclivity for obtaining and transcribing books from various individuals.”¹⁷³

Navigating this intricate narrative, scholars must approach it positively, recognising the inherent pursuit of truth. Despite attendant discrepancies, these accounts contribute meaningfully to the rich tapestry of scholarly discourse, showcasing the imperative of wisdom in comprehending the intricacies inherent in historical evaluations.

Consequently, within his biography, the inadvertent oversight concerning Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī al-Kūfī, the esteemed Canonical Transmitter of ʿĀṣim, has led to an unintended misattribution. Authors have, on occasion, failed to discern its origin as a Baṣran narration explicitly related to one of the ḥadīth narrators from Baṣrah. This oversight is comprehensible, particularly as the illustrious *amīr al-muʾminīn fī al-ḥadīth*, al-Bukhārī embraced it, relying on his

¹⁷² *al-ʿIlal wa Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*: 2/503.

¹⁷³ *Kitāb al-Duʿafāʾ al-Ṣaḡhīr*: 32.

transmission from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal via Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, who, in turn, narrated from Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

What often eludes those delving into this matter is the conspicuous absence of reasons to undermine the scholarly standing of Ḥafṣ, the Canonical Transmitter, apart from this particular narrative. In the realm of *rijāl* criticism, numerous scholars allude to the weakening of Ḥafṣ without explicitly delineating the underlying cause. This scenario mirrors the transmitted text from Ibn al-Jawzī, wherein the weakening is portrayed as a fact endorsed by eminent scholars of *rijāl* criticism, inadvertently overlooking the frail foundation upon which this specific critique rests.

Upon scrutinising this narrative, the weakness ascribed to Ḥafṣ al-Asadī becomes perceptibly tethered to an unreliable foundation, a fact that has eluded many scholars. The reliance on this specific Baṣran narration and its acceptance by esteemed figures such as al-Bukhārī accentuates the imperative of meticulously reevaluating Ḥafṣ’s scholarly standing in the annals of scholarly appraisal. In an earnest acknowledgement of the pursuit of truth, it becomes imperative to underscore the significance of wisdom in discerning the intricacies inherent in historical evaluations. A palpable need exists to exercise caution against the uncritical acceptance of critiques lacking a robust and sound foundation.

Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn al-Baghdādī: A scrupulous examination reveals that Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn had no direct interaction with the Canonical Transmitter, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, either in Baghdād or elsewhere, as their encounter lacks documented confirmation. Yaḥyā based his assessment of Ḥafṣ on the discernment articulated by Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil al-Baṣrī (d. 200 A.H.), an esteemed reciter who contended that Ḥafṣ exhibited a more precise rendition in the Readings of ʿĀṣim than Shūʿbah—Abū Bakr ibn ʿAyyāsh, with the latter esteemed as more judicious than Ḥafṣ. This assertion is meticulously chronicled by the historian al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his seminal work, *Tārīkh Baghdād*. Furthermore, al-Khaṭīb underscores that Ibn Maʿīn affirmed Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil as a Baṣran reciter, and this aphorism was directly received from Ayyūb.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ *Tārīkh Baghdād*: 8/186. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*: 7/13. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*: 2/345.

Regrettably, subsequent scholars in the field of *rijāl* criticism erroneously attributed Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil's statement, as reported by Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn, directly to Yaḥyā himself. With slight modification, this misattribution resulted in characterising Ḥafṣ as *laysa bi thiqaḥ* [he is not prudent]. In his magnum opus, *al-Kāmil*, Ibn ʿAdiyy relays an account wherein al-Layth ibn ʿUbayd stated that he heard Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn declare that Ḥafṣ was *laysa bi thiqaḥ* [he is not prudent], despite Ḥafṣ's transmission of ʿĀṣim's Readings being more accurate than that of Abū Bakr ibn ʿAyyāsh. However, Abū Bakr was considered more reliable than Ḥafṣ.¹⁷⁵

The genesis of this misconception lies in erroneously attributing Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil's statement to Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn himself, resulting in an inaccurate portrayal of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī's scholarly standing and reliability. A meticulous clarification of these intricacies is imperative for precisely comprehending the scholarly assessments concerning Ḥafṣ.

Furthermore, in Ibn Maʿīn's *Tārīkh*, a transmission from ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Dārāmī (d. 280 A.H.) regarding Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī is documented. When queried about the reliability of Ḥafṣ' transmission of ḥadīth, al-Dārāmī responded, "*laysa bi thiqaḥ* [he is not prudent]." Notably, other narrations attributed to Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn state that he considered Ḥafṣ as *laysa bi shayʿ* [He is nothing], while in another version, he is reported to have characterised Ḥafṣ as a *kadh-dhāb* [a liar].¹⁷⁶

Ibn ʿAdiyy, in *al-Kāmil*, transmits via al-Sājī, who, in turn, heard from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, stating that he heard Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn declare that Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī and Abū Bakr ibn ʿAyyāsh were among the most knowledgeable regarding the Readings of ʿĀṣim. Significantly, in the realm of ḥadīth scholarship, he classified Abū Bakr as *ṣadūq* [truthful], whereas he deemed Ḥafṣ as a *kadh-dhāb* [a liar]. Additionally, Ibn al-Jawzī concludes the matter by presenting varied classifications by Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn. At times, Ḥafṣ is deemed *daʿīf* [weak], on other occasions, *laysa bi thiqaḥ* [he is not prudent], and occasionally, Yaḥyā categorises Ḥafṣ as a *kadh-dhāb* [liar or fabricator of spurious ḥadīth].¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ *al-Kāmil fi al-Ḍuʿafāʾ*: 2/380.

¹⁷⁶ *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafāʾ* of al-ʿUqayli: 1/270. *Mizān al-ʾItidāl*: 2/320.

¹⁷⁷ *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkin*: 1/221.

In essence, historical accounts delineate diverse opinions on Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī's scholarly standing as a narrator of ḥadīth. Notably, Yahyā ibn Ma'īn's statements oscillate from considering him weak to expressing doubts about his trustworthiness and even labelling him a liar. These assessments are indispensable for understanding the nuanced perspectives that different scholars held regarding Ḥafṣ's credibility in transmitting ḥadīths.

A comprehensive evaluation appears to be grounded in an inaccurate interpretation of Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil's statement concerning Ḥafṣ. Whether this misinterpretation can be traced back to Ibn Ma'īn himself or the transmitters through whom his words and aphorisms were conveyed remains uncertain. This misapprehension gained momentum, notably fueled by the conflation of Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj's remarks regarding Ḥafṣ al-Minqarī with Ḥafṣ al-Asadī. An alternative perspective is presented by Ibn al-Jazarī, documenting a distinct statement from Ibn Ma'īn, asserting that the authentic narration transmitted via 'Āṣim is through Abū 'Umar Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān.¹⁷⁸

In sum, traditionists, in contesting and attributing a state of weakness to the scholarly standing of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī, anchored their assertions on Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj's declaration that Ḥafṣ borrowed books without returning them. Additionally, Ayyūb's assertion that Shu'bah was considered more prudent in the transmission of ḥadīth than Ḥafṣ could be interpreted to suggest that Ḥafṣ was indeed prudent but perhaps to a lesser degree than Shu'bah. However, upon careful scrutiny, both rationales appear insufficient to warrant the contesting and subsequent weakening of the scholarly standing of Ḥafṣ. While the former seems to rest on a misapprehension, the latter may indicate not a lack of reliability in Ḥafṣ but rather a comparative assessment with Shu'bah. A more thorough examination of this matter will be undertaken subsequent to the exposition of statements from those who vouched and attested to the scholarly standing of Ḥafṣ.

Amidst the extensive corpus of biographical and critical literature chronicling the esteemed reciter, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, a discernible chorus of affirmations attesting to his reliability becomes perceptible. However, this acclamation, albeit brimming with

¹⁷⁸ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/345.

intrinsic merit, contends with the prevailing tide of critiques that pervade the scholarly discourse, encapsulated succinctly by the axiom, “criticism precedes praise.”¹⁷⁹ The numerical asymmetry, wherein the sheer volume of detracting voices eclipses commendations, begets a nuanced narrative necessitating meticulous exploration.

Despite the numerical paucity of these commendations, they emerge as a prism, illuminating the scholarly stature of Ḥafṣ and providing invaluable insights into the dynamics of acknowledgement and knowledge acquisition within his scholarly milieu. Of particular historical resonance is the commendation bestowed by:

Waqīʿ ibn al-Jarrāḥ was a luminary hailing from Kūfah whose intellectual legacy resonated through history until his demise in 196 A.H. Drawing upon the testimony of Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī al-Andalusī (d. 444 A.H.), diverse sources converge to relay Waqīʿ’s unequivocal affirmation: “He died around the year 190, and Waqīʿ said: He was a *thiqah* [prudent transmitter]”¹⁸⁰ The gravity of this endorsement is accentuated by Waqīʿ’s dual contextual proximity – not only was he rooted in Kūfah, the very crucible nurturing Ḥafṣ’s scholarly flame, but he also traversed contemporaneously with the subject under scrutiny.

A complimentary testimonial emanates from the venerable:

Saʿd ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAwfī was an erudite disciple who navigated the intellectual landscape under the tutelage of Ḥafṣ. The chronological trajectory of Ḥafṣ, translocating from Kūfah to Baghdād in the mid-2nd century or its proximate aftermath at an age nearing sixty, enriches the contextual tapestry against which Saʿd’s testimony assumes significance. As articulated by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī through Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 A.H.), Saʿd ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAwfī imparts a vivid portrayal that Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān used to reside in *Suwayqah Naṣr*, and had you had seen him, your eyes would have filled with tears of joy [delighted] due to his knowledge and understanding.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ *Kitāb al-Duʿāfāʾ wa al-Matrūkīn*: 7/1. *Tadrib al-Rāwī*: 1/204.

¹⁸⁰ *Jamāl al-Qurrāʾ*: 2/466. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*: 7/15. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*: 2/345. *Mizān al-ʿItidāl*: 2/321. *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʾid*: 10/163.

¹⁸¹ *Tārīkh Baghdād*: 8/186. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*: 7/12. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*: 2/345.

Sa'd ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAwfi emerged as a prominent disciple within the intellectual milieu of Baghdād under the tutelage of the esteemed reciter Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān. Through this instructive mentorship, al-ʿAwfi acquires the intricate Readings of ʿĀṣim, tracing a scholarly lineage of knowledge that finds its roots in Ibn Mujāhid's seminal work, *Kitāb al-Sabaʿah*. In this intricate tapestry of transmission, Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-ʿAwfi, a narrator of notable authority, stands as a linchpin. He relays information from his father, who, in a successive link, receives his narration directly from Ḥafṣ, thus forging a formidable chain encapsulating the oral transmission of ʿĀṣim's Readings. ʿĀṣim's meticulous approach is of particular significance, as delineated by Ibn Mujāhid, wherein nuances like *كُفَوًا* and *هُرُوًا* are meticulously preserved without any omission.¹⁸² This commitment to precision is underscored by ʿĀṣim's unequivocal assertion that he would abhor the forfeiture of ten good deeds for the omission of a single letter during recitation, highlighting the gravity with which he approached the preservation of oral tradition.

Expanding upon this discourse, the venerable:

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was an eminent Islamic jurisprudence figure who directed his discerning scrutiny towards Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān. The nuances of this evaluation are encapsulated in four narrations meticulously documented by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. Within this tetralogy, three narratives resoundingly affirm the reliability of Ḥafṣ, portraying a portrait of righteousness and unblemished character. The triad of commendations bestowed by Aḥmad reads:

- *Huwa ṣāliḥ* [He is righteous].¹⁸³
- *Mā kāna bi Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Muqri' ba's* [There is no harm/problem in Hafṣ bin Sulaiman].¹⁸⁴
- A paternal endorsement, wherein Ḥanbal seeks counsel from his father, who unreservedly declares Ḥafṣ as *ṣāliḥ* [righteousness].¹⁸⁵ The paternal reference intriguingly alludes to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's uncle, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who

¹⁸² *Kitāb al-Sabaʿah*: 159. *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/142.

¹⁸³ *Tārikh Baghdād*: 8/186. *Tahdhib al-Kamāl*: 7/13. *Mizān al-ʿItidāl*: 2/321.

¹⁸⁴ *Tārikh Baghdād*: 8/186. *Tahdhib al-Kamāl*: 7/13. *Mizān al-ʿItidāl*: 2/321.

¹⁸⁵ *Tārikh Baghdād*: 8/186.

subtly acknowledges familial wisdom as integral to the assessment of Ḥafṣ's character.

However, the quadrilateral narration introduces a discordant note, resonating with the disapproval of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal concerning Ḥafṣ's involvement in the transmission of hadith. This specific critique posits *matrūk al-ḥadīth* [abandonment within the realm of hadith transmission].¹⁸⁶

Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī's articulates a narrative implying a depreciation in the credibility of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān with unequivocal precision: "Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal; in what was communicated to me, I heard my father asserting: Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, **signifying Abū 'Umar the reciter**, is *matrūk al-ḥadīth* [abandonment within the realm of hadith transmission]."

Incorporating the qualifying phrase "**signifying Abū 'Umar the reciter**" within the narration demands meticulous scrutiny, suggesting an augmentation by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, possibly introduced to avert any potential conflation with another individual named Ḥafṣ. Nevertheless, the prospect remains that Ibn Abī Ḥātim inadvertently erred in appending this phrase, mirroring the oversight observed in his attribution of Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj's statement concerning Ḥafṣ borrowing books, implying the Canonical Transmitter, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān within the same contextual framework.¹⁸⁷ The envisioned personality could plausibly be Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Minqarī.

A discerning acknowledgement must be extended to the proclivity of scholars to err in their attributions, where the inclusion of such qualifying phrases may be unintentional or influenced by extraneous factors. Despite this attenuated narration, it is paramount to contextualise it within a broader framework encompassing the diverse endorsements of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī al-Kūfī's reliability from other scholars, as previously expounded.

'Ubayd ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Kūfī, later known as al-Baghdādī, assumes a pivotal role in the rich tapestry of scholarly lineage as a devoted disciple of the venerable Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān. Aḥmad ibn Sahl al-Ushnānī, a luminary in his own right, imparts a

¹⁸⁶ *Tārīkh Baghdād*: 8/186. *Kitāb al-Du'afā' of al-'Uqaylī*: 1/270.

¹⁸⁷ *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*: 3/173.

profound testimony regarding his comprehensive rendition of the Qurʾān under ʿUbayd ibn al-Ṣabbāh’s tutelage. The sincerity and integrity of ʿUbayd’s instruction find corroboration in al-Ushnānī’s portrayal of him as a paragon of piety and righteousness. ʿUbayd’s unequivocal proclamation, “I presented an entire rendition of Quran to Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, and there was no one between him and me,” resounds with pride and serves as a forceful repudiation of any disparaging portrayals of Ḥafṣ within the critical literature.¹⁸⁸ Acknowledging the considerable weight of such a statement is paramount, especially given ʿUbayd’s scholarly standing as a righteous scholar.

al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā al-Anbārī was another distinguished figure within Ḥafṣ’s scholarly circle. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Anbārī, a reliable transmitter, conveys the Readings of Abū ʿUmar Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān via his father, al-Qāsim al-Anbārī. Drawing on the authority of his father, he emphasises the seamless oral transmission between father and son, thereby establishing an unbroken chain of narrators. al-Qāsim al-Anbārī read to his uncle, Aḥmad ibn Bash-shār ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anbārī, who, in turn, read to al-Faḍl al-Anbārī while he resided in Makkah, who, in turn, read to Ḥafṣ, who, in turn, read to ʿĀṣim.¹⁸⁹ Particularly noteworthy is the account of al-Faḍl’s unwavering commitment to learning the Readings directly from Ḥafṣ, dispelling any geographical hindrance to the pursuit of knowledge. Ibn al-Jazarī further fortifies this narrative, reporting al-Faḍl’s assertion: “I read to Ḥafṣ, and he scripted the entire Qurʾān for me in his handwriting.”¹⁹⁰ This expression of pride and honour attests to the reliability of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān and signifies the profound scholarly relationship between teacher and student.

In conclusion, the scholarly acclaim surrounding Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān emanates from historical records. It resonates in the endorsements of his contemporaries and erudite disciples, deeply entrenched in the intellectual milieu that enveloped him. These laudations serve as robust pillars fortifying his scholarly reliability, manifesting the profound trust invested in him by those intimately involved in his intellectual endeavours or the direct beneficiaries of his erudition.

¹⁸⁸ *Maʿrifat al-Qurrāʾ al-Kibār*: 1/249.

¹⁸⁹ *Iḍāḥ al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidāʾ*: 1/113.

¹⁹⁰ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/11.

Scholars are implored to transcend mere numerical assessments as they navigate the intricate tapestry woven by affirmations and critiques. The focal point is to delve into the qualitative essence of Hafṣ's scholarly legacy, fostering a nuanced comprehension that surpasses numerical limitations.

The nuanced terrain encompassing Hafṣ ibn Sulaymān's legacy unfolds through a juxtaposition of commendations and criticisms. While concerns may resonate from specific quarters, luminaries such as Waqī' ibn al-Jarrāḥ and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, tethered to Hafṣ through direct association, unequivocally validate his trustworthiness. These endorsements contextualise Hafṣ's reliability and provide a prism through which the palpable scholarly trust reposed in him becomes unmistakably evident.

Additionally, Ibn Abī Ḥātim's narration introduces a potentially extraneous phrase that might harbour an element of error, showcasing the need to approach historical accounts circumspectly. The verification of such statements mandates a comprehensive evaluation of the overall context and a judicious consideration of multiple sources, facilitating a more accurate understanding of the reliability of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī.

Amidst the intricate landscape of scholarly assessments, 'Ubayd ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ and al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā affirmations emerge as a robust counterpoint to insinuations of unreliability or falsehood attributed to Ḥafṣ. These erudite students' explicit confidence and trust, both in Ḥafṣ' prowess, competence, and their own scholarly pursuits, contribute to a nuanced comprehension of Ḥafṣ' scholarly standing within the domain of Qur'anic Readings and transmission.

Conclusion

In conclusion, thoroughly exploring the multifaceted perspectives originating from both detractors and proponents of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Asadī showcases the necessity for an exhaustive reassessment of the entire discourse. This scholarly undertaking is informed by the revelations extracted through meticulous research, and several pivotal considerations merit nuanced contemplation:

Foremost among these considerations is the imperative demand to subject the criticisms and alleged diminishing of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, the esteemed Canonical Transmitter, to a comprehensive review, with the potential for corrective scrutiny. According to a primacy, this involves statements from those who unequivocally endorsed him. Such recalibration proves indispensable, particularly when criticism, bereft of explicit causation, finds acceptance solely in alignment with well-established authenticity. On the contrary, disparagement mandates explicit elucidation of its underlying rationale.¹⁹¹

The acknowledgement that the primary source of censure directed at Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān is ascribed to Shu‘bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj is of paramount significance. However, a nuanced revelation emerges, indicating that Shu‘bah was, in truth, referencing Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Minqarī al-Baṣrī. This revelation finds substantiation in Ibn Sa‘d’s narration, highlighting Shu‘bah’s reference to Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Minqarī’s literary works concerning the aphorisms of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, which was utilised by his brother-in-law Ash‘ath ibn Abd al-Malik.¹⁹² The intricacy arising from the existence of multiple individuals bearing the nomenclature Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān becomes a contributory factor to the ensuing confusion.

Moreover, the perceived criticism and impugned position of Ḥafṣ’s scholarly standing by Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn appears to be predicated on an inaccurate interpretation of the statement articulated by Ayyūb ibn al-Mutawakkil. This underscores the necessity for a meticulous reevaluation, placing reliance on the explicit endorsement of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, especially when the critique becomes entwined with another distinct figure named Ḥafṣ.

¹⁹¹ *Tadrib al-Rāwī*: 1/202.

¹⁹² *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*: 7/276.

In the radiance of these discernments, it is paramount to recognise the confounding factor introduced by the existence of multiple individuals bearing the same name, Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān. Consequently, a judicious critical assessment should accord priority to the testimonies and endorsements, with particular emphasis on the authoritative voice of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, serving as the pivot for validating the credibility of Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān, the erudite Canonical Transmitter of ‘Āṣim.

Beyond Boundaries: Critiquing Eponymous Readers through the Lens of Ḥadīth Scholarship

After an extensive review of biographical compendia related to the Qur'anic Readers, a conspicuous trend surfaces wherein specific critics entrenched within the domain of ḥadīth scholarship articulate scepticism, thereby subverting the narrative authority of a given Reader, whether designated as an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter. While traditionalists interrogate their reliability within the ḥadīth discipline, it is imperative to approach such assessments with judicious prudence and circumspection.

A notable quandary surfaces, demanding elucidation: how can an individual be substantively recognised as a reliable authority in the sublime Variant Readings—thus securing acclaim within this particular sphere—while simultaneously facing censure within the precincts of ḥadīth narration? An explication reveals that an individual's preeminence in one academic sphere does not unilaterally validate their competence across the entire intellectual spectrum. Proficiency in a particular domain may manifest as exceptional, demonstrating meticulous control and prowess over its intricacies, yet this excellence may be accompanied by lesser conscientiousness in alternative areas. Significantly, such a phenomenon does not attenuate their overall credibility; instead, it accentuates a profound emphasis on their specialised domain. For instance, a luminary figure such as *al-Imām al-Aṭḥam*, Abū Ḥanīfah, renowned for juridical proficiency, experienced expressions of censure concerning his ḥadīth narrations without diminishing his broader stature in the realm of knowledge.¹⁹³

The dialectic of scholarly prowess, encompassing both Qirā'at and ḥadīth disciplines, finds tangible embodiment in luminaries such as Mālik ibn Anas and his erudite disciple, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī. Notably, Mālik exhibited commendable trustworthiness in his narration from Nāfi', while al-Shāfi'ī earned recognition for his exceptional rendition of Ibn Kathīr. However, disparate trajectories unfold, typified by

¹⁹³ The eminent status of this erudite figure in ḥadīth scholarship has faced scrutiny from notable scholars, a scrutiny well-documented in the compendia or *rijāl* criticism. Noteworthy figures such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Yahyā ibn Ma'īn, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Abū Zur'ah al-Rāzī, al-Nasa'ī, 'Alī ibn Madīnī, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn 'Addī, and numerous others have contributed to this comprehensive assessment. It is crucial to underscore that my objective is not to challenge or disparage the esteemed scholarly position of this erudite figure. Instead, the aim is to illuminate the subject currently under deliberation, offering a nuanced perspective informed by the critiques found in the compendia of *rijāl* criticism. Amid the discourse outlined previously, it is noteworthy that a plethora of scholarly works has been produced in defense of *al-Imām al-Aṭḥam*, Abū Ḥanīfah.

individuals like Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān al-Kūfī, whose expertise in Variant Readings coexists incongruently with a discernible *hiatus* in the realm of ḥadīth, thereby accentuating the imperativeness of methodical specialisation. This underscores the necessity of conducting a comprehensive and equitable assessment, duly considering various disciplines’ distinctive proficiencies and deficiencies.

Conversely, a paradoxical circumstance manifests wherein an individual, laudable in the domain of ḥadīth, demonstrates a pronounced discordance within the purview of the Variant Readings. This is emblematic in the case of al-‘Amash Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-Kūfī, whose *Shādh* Readings diverge conspicuously.¹⁹⁴ The dialectical equilibrium is apparent in individuals who seamlessly amalgamate proficiency in both domains, as exemplified by ‘Āṣim, Nāfi’, Abū ‘Amr al-Baṣrī, Shu‘bah [Abū Bakr bin ‘Ayyāsh], ‘Ibn ‘Āmir, Hishām, and Khalaf al-Bazzār—entities concurrently validated by both scholastic factions—traditionists and *qurrā’*’.

Hence, applying the principles of *rijāl* criticism when superimposed upon the evaluative framework of the transmission chains of a given Reader constitutes a methodological aberration. For example, reviewing and scrutinising the Eponym Asim’s Reading through traditionist perspectives may inadvertently raise scepticism regarding his given Reading [Qirā’ah], potentially resulting in dismissing a Reading read and accepted globally, not forgetting its Tawātur status.

Similarly, when considering the viewpoints of ḥadīth critics regarding the critical analysis of specific Readings, instances emerge where particular Readings encounter reservations. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, despite his eminence in ḥadīth and *rijāl* criticism, expressed reservations concerning the Reading of Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Aḥmad’s critique of a specific Reading loses its scholarly validity and merit subsequent to its acceptance by experts specialising in Variant Readings. Despite Aḥmad ibn

¹⁹⁴ *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubulā’*: 5/260.

¹⁹⁵ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal initially categorised the Reading of Ḥamzah as an innovation, contending that none, aside from Ḥamzah, adhered to this particular Reading. This stance is documented in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Abī Ya‘lā*: 1/391 – 392. However, despite his initial criticism, Aḥmad later retracted his position, emphatically conveying to Sufyān al-Thawrī, “*Antum ahl-Qur‘ān wa antum a‘lām bihī*” —“*You are the people of the Qur‘ān, and you are most knowledgeable concerning it.*” *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Abī Ya‘lā*: 2/374.

This oscillation in Aḥmad’s perspective showcases the dynamic nature of scholarly discourse and the readiness to reassess positions when confronted with a more nuanced understanding. It also highlights the gravity with which Aḥmad regarded the expertise of those immersed in Qur‘ānic knowledge, as exemplified in his acknowledgment to Sufyān al-Thawrī.

Ḥanbal's unprecedented scholarly standing in the sphere of ḥadīth and jurisprudence, he is not considered an authority in the domain of the Variant Readings. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Eponymous Readers and Canonical Transmitters possess a profound understanding and serve as specialists and pioneers in the domains of script [*rasm*], precision [*dabṭ*], and elocution [*adā*]. Therefore, cautionary counsel is proffered against the indiscriminate disqualification of Eponymous Readers and Canonical Transmitters based on the stringent tenets of ḥadīth critique. Instead, a clarion call is issued for a nuanced and comprehensive evaluation of their dual proficiency, guided by luminaries who epitomise specialised mastery. The *imprimatur* of consensus, whether amongst Eponymous Readers, Canonical Transmitters or juridical luminaries, assumes a *sine qua* non-status immunised against *facile* contravention.

Additionally, in the contemporary intellectual milieu revolving around the domain of *Tajwīd* [Elocutionary Laws], a discernible trend has emerged among certain scholars, seeking to diminish its paramountcy in both theoretical study and practical implementation. This diminishing perspective extends to the imperative nature of engaging in Qur'anic recitation with *Tajwīd*, a reductionist stance often concealing underlying, ulterior motivations driven by personal biases or shortcomings. These deficiencies range from an inadequate execution to outright neglect of *Tajwīd* principles, a discrepancy further exacerbated by the scholars' limited adherence to its application.

Counterarguments to this diminution of *Tajwīd's* significance assert that these scholars have exceeded the boundaries of their specialised domains, venturing into areas where their expertise is not definitive. This encroachment has led to unwarranted modifications and deviations from the established consensus among *qurrā'*. Eminently, luminaries such as Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Anṣārī al-Gharnāṭī (d. 540/1145), more commonly identified by his soubriquet Ibn al-Bādhish and 'Aṭṭīyyah Qābil Naṣr categorically asserted that acknowledging the universal consensus [*ijmā'*] among the *qurrā'* — *ahl al-fann* — regarding the indispensable necessity of applying *Tajwīd* in recitation is imperative.¹⁹⁶ This definitive classification unmistakably identifies *Tajwīd* as a *sunnah*, firmly grounded in the practices of the Prophet

¹⁹⁶ *al-Iqnā' fi al-Qirā'at al-Sab'*: 275. *Ghāyat al-Murīd*: 35.

Muḥammad ﷺ and is a *sunnah muttaba'ah* [generational followed prophetic norm]. However, it is emphatically stated that the application of *Tajwīd* in any recitation is not a mere recommendation or a *sunnah* but is deemed both mandatory and crucial. This imperative showcases the intrinsic connection between *Tajwīd* and the preservation of Qur'anic integrity, ensuring the accurate and reverent rendering of the Divine text.

In conclusion, the confluence of sagacious discernment dictates a judicious acknowledgement of scholarly expertise within delineated domains, eschewing the imposition of heuristic strictures from one discipline upon another. The sanctity of consensus within a particular cognitive domain, whether occupied by *qurrā'* or jurists, must be upheld unless compellingly rebutted.

Unlocking the Triad: Unveiling a Systematic Approach to Variant Reading Authentication

A nuanced understanding of the systematic approach to verifying the authenticity of a ḥadīth reveals a distinctive triad integral to the assessment of the Variant Readings. While the methodical evaluation of a ḥadīth's authenticity primarily hinges on the *isnād* [chain of transmission] and the *matn* [core text/content] of a ḥadīth, the evaluation of Variant Readings necessitates adherence to the following triad:

- **Adherence to Arabic Grammar:** The meticulous examination of Variant Readings involves a stringent adherence to Arabic grammar. This criterion ensures that the linguistic integrity of the Readings are preserved, contributing to a comprehensive assessment of their authenticity.
- **Conformity to the ‘Uthmanic Codex:** Variant Readings must align with the ‘Uthmanic codex, emphasising the importance of consistency with the established textual framework. This conformity ensures that the Readings maintain fidelity to the foundational text, enhancing their credibility.
- **Authentic Transmission Chains:** The authenticity of the transmission chains becomes a critical factor in evaluating Variant Readings. A robust and unassailable chain of transmission is paramount to establishing the reliability of the readings and, consequently, their acceptance.

Therefore, in the structured framework of the Variant Readings, the scholarly standing of a transmitter remains unassailed, exempt from the meticulous scrutiny applied in *rijāl* criticism in ḥadīth. Notable Eponyms such as Ḥamzah and al-Kisāʿī, despite their Eponym status, are recognised for transmitting additional *Shādh* Readings. For instance, the former transmits additional *Shādh* Readings via the *riwāyah* of al-‘Ijlī, and the latter via the *riwāyah* of Sawrah ibn al-Mubārak. Their scholarly standing remains unchallenged, shifting the focus towards scrutinising specific Readings rather than the transmitters.

This principle extends to figures like al-A‘mash, an Eponym associated with one of the *Shādh* Readings yet also serving as a conduit for the Reading of Ḥamzah. His scholarly standing remains unchallenged despite possessing and transmitting a

spectrum of Readings. Thus, the emphasis remains on evaluating and assessing individual Readings, where acceptance is contingent upon alignment with the above-mentioned stipulated criteria, and non-compliance results in categorisation as *Shādh*. Importantly, in all instances discussed, the scholarly standing of the Eponym or transmitter remains unequivocally unassailable.

Rijāl and Variant Reading Criticism: Unmasking the Critique Framework

In the realm of Ḥadīth scholarship, the seminal opus “*al-Rafʿwa al-Takmīl fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*,” authored by the esteemed luminary, *Allāmat al-Hind*, Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (1848 – 1886) and augmented by the insightful annotations of the unprecedented *muhaddith*, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (1917 – 1997), holds an indisputable eminence. This pioneering work serves as a guiding light, meticulously navigating the intricate landscape and systematic approach of *rijāl* criticism within the Discipline of Ḥadīth.

While such analogous treatises are not as prevalent in the Discipline of Qirāʾāt, our scholarly venture endeavours to establish a foundational framework. This framework aims to unmask a methodological paradigm for critiquing within this distinct sphere. The potential ramifications of this scholarly pursuit are profound, promising a heightened understanding of *rijāl* and Variant Reading criticism specific to the domain of Qirāʾāt, thus contributing significantly to the scholarly discourse within this domain.

After a thorough study of al-Jaʿbarī’s monumental treatise and commentary on the *Shāṭibiyyah*, *Kanz al-Maʿānī*, the discourse on *rijāl* criticism and Variant Reading manifests through a triadic prism, encompassing three pivotal components [*arkān*]:

- 1) [الطَّاعِنُ / النَّاقِدُ]: The Critic.
- 2) [الْمَطْعُونُ فِيهِ / الْمُنْقُوذُ فِيهِ]: The Target/Subject of Criticism.
- 3) [صِيغَةُ الطَّعْنِ / صِيغَةُ النَّقْدِ]: The Form of Criticism.

The first facet, encapsulated within the “**The Critic**” domain, delineates the discerning persona or entity that spearheads the critical evaluation. This facet embodies the essence of intellectual prowess, steering the evaluative process with acuity and discernment.

Central to this evaluative matrix is “**The Target of Criticism**,” which serves as the epicentre of scrutiny and analysis. This entity or subject under evaluation constitutes the focal point around which critical inquiries and deliberations converge, signifying the locus of evaluative attention.

Complementing these elements is “**The Form of Criticism,**” elucidating the methodological scaffold dictating the trajectory of critique. This facet delineates the systematic blueprint and methodical tools utilised in dissecting and appraising the subject, thereby providing a structured framework for evaluative engagements.

Collectively, these foundational pillars construct the scaffolding of the critical framework, facilitating a systematic and methodical approach to deconstructing and probing diverse facets embedded within the text. Scholars and researchers may adeptly harness this structured framework as a guiding compass, navigating their interaction with the material with precision and depth.

The Critic

Delving into the intricate tapestry of Variant Reading analysis, the foundational component known as “the critic” emerges as a multifaceted entity encompassing scholars from diverse fields, including linguistics, grammar, Qur’anic exegesis, and *qurrā’*. Among the luminaries prominently featured in this critical discourse are:

- 1) Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sariyy al-Zajjāj, whose extensive mentions *in Kanz al-Ma’ānī* underscore the profound impact of his contributions to critical discourse.¹⁹⁷
- 2) Abū ‘Ali al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Fārisī is a distinguished scholar whose critiques are highlighted on numerous occasions, showcasing his substantial impact.¹⁹⁸
- 3) Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām acknowledged for his critical insights through multiple mentions, underscoring his scholarly authority.¹⁹⁹
- 4) Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, another revered critic, was cited significantly, demonstrating his substantial role in the critical analysis.²⁰⁰
- 5) Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Amr al-Zamakhsharī a figure of notable importance within the realm of critique.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1123, 3/1166, 3/1211, 3/1275, 3/1395, 4/1820, 4/1923, 4/1987, 5/2186, and 5/2196.

¹⁹⁸ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1123, 3/1166, 3/1211, 3/1275, 3/1395, 4/1820, 4/1923, 4/1987, 5/2186, and 5/2196.

¹⁹⁹ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 2/526, 3/1275, 3/1395, 3/1559, 3/1776, 4/1923, 4/1962, and 4/1987.

²⁰⁰ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1211, 3/1275, 3/1281, 3/1395, 4/1923, 4/1987, 4/2033, and 5/2196.

²⁰¹ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1123, 3/1166, 3/1211, 3/1275, 3/1395, 4/1820, 4/1923, 4/1987, 5/2186, and 5/2196.

- 6) Abū Bishr ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān, renowned as the grammarian Sibawayh, whose contributions are widely recognised.²⁰²
- 7) Aḥmad ibn Musā ibn al-‘Abbs ibn Mujāhid contributed significantly to the critical discussions surrounding Variant Readings.²⁰³
- 8) Yaḥyā ibn Yazīd al-Farrā’ was a distinguished grammarian and influential figure in the realm of critique.²⁰⁴
- 9) Makkī ibn Abū Ṭālib acknowledged for his contributions to the Discipline of Qirā’āt.²⁰⁵
- 10) Sa‘īd ibn Mas‘adah al-Akhfash was renowned for his discerning insights and scholarly authority.²⁰⁶
- 11) Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Uthmān ibn Jinnī contributed significantly to the critical discourse with profound analyses.²⁰⁷
- 12) Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad was recognised for his scholarly rigour and meticulous critique.²⁰⁸
- 13) al-Jawharī, a prominent figure known for his contributions to grammatical analysis.²⁰⁹
- 14) al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī was renowned for his profound grammatical insights and contributions.²¹⁰
- 15) Ibn Sirāj.²¹¹
- 16) Abū al-Qāsim Shihāb al-Dīn, better known by his sobriquet Abū Shāmāh, was acknowledged for his scholarly engagements and critical evaluations.²¹²

²⁰² *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 1/479, 3/1123, 3/1130, 3/1275, 3/1449, and 4/1923.

²⁰³ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 2/526, 3/1123, 3/1166, 3/1526, 3/1923, and 4/2071.

²⁰⁴ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1244, 4/1470, 3/1503, and 4/1820.

²⁰⁵ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1275, 3/1520, and 3/1775.

²⁰⁶ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 4/1820, and 5/2408.

²⁰⁷ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 1/2493, and 3/1559.

²⁰⁸ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1275, and 5/2299.

²⁰⁹ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 4/1923.

²¹⁰ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 1/479.

²¹¹ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 5/231.

²¹² *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1703.

- 17) al-Māzinī, contributed significantly to the scholarly discourse on Variant Readings.²¹³
- 18) Aḥmad ibn ‘Ammār al-Mahdawī was known for his contributions to critical discourse and meticulous analysis.²¹⁴
- 19) Naṣīr.²¹⁵

These esteemed figures collectively epitomise the diversity and expertise encapsulated within the realm of critique, underscoring their pivotal roles in unravelling and scrutinising Variant Readings with scholarly rigour and discernment.

²¹³ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 3/1395.

²¹⁴ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 3/1395.

²¹⁵ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 3/1470.

The Target of Criticism

Within the scholarly discourse on Variant Readings, the focal point of critique, encapsulated as “the Target of Criticism,” unveils itself through two fundamental dimensions, each unveiling unique layers of scrutiny and analytical depth:

- 1) **Critiquing a Variant Reading or Wajh [Option in Reading]:** This dimension, intricately expounded within the esteemed work *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*, ventures into a meticulous exploration of various components such as *lahn* [error], *ridā’ah* [wrong/rejected], *khaṭa’* [mistake], *qubḥ* [ugly], *ḍa‘f* [weak], and other pertinent descriptors meticulously cross-referenced for scholarly validation.²¹⁶ Exemplary instances encapsulate:
 - al-Ja‘barī’s exposition of al-Zajjā’i’s astute critique regarding the enunciation of the word [يُؤْتُ], with *khafḍ* of the *bā’*, as in [يُؤْتُ], where a notable discrepancy is underscored. This critical analysis, often overlooked by grammarians, is deemed inadequate [*ridā’ah*] within Baṣran scholarly circles, revealing the nuanced intricacies of phonological scrutiny.²¹⁷
 - al-Ja‘barī’s illumination of al-Zajjā’i’s critical assessment concerning the rendition of *jarr* [genitive case-ending] reading, as in [وَالْأَرْحَامِ], in the verse [وَاتَّقُوا] وَاللَّهِ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ²¹⁸, unveils an errant conjugation [*khaṭa’*]. This deviation from established Arabic norms is meticulously identified and scrutinised, reflecting the depth of linguistic analysis prevalent within the realm of Variant Reading critique.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ The discourse under consideration centres on the target of criticism, with descriptors serving as integral components within the spectrum of various critical approaches known as forms of criticism, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. It is crucial to underscore that comprehending the target of criticism necessitates a thorough understanding of the specific form or methodology of criticism being directed towards it. In essence, the descriptors are inherently linked to the forms of criticism employed, playing a pivotal role in shaping the analytical framework and contextualising the articulated critiques.

²¹⁷ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1211.

²¹⁸ *Āl ‘Imrān*: 178. The matter under consideration has been comprehensively expounded upon in detail on page 78; hence, an exhaustive analysis will not be undertaken at this juncture.

²¹⁹ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 1/481. *al-Kaṣh-shāf*: 1/330.

- 2) **Critiquing an Eponymous Reader or Canonical Transmitter: Unraveling Interpretive Nuances:** This facet pertains to the attribution of interpretive *wahm* [fallacies], *sahwu* [oversight/ linguistic lapses], *khata'* [mistake], *lahn* [error/tonal incongruities], *'adm al-ḍabt* [inaccuracies] to the Eponym or Canonical Transmitter, albeit receiving comparably lesser emphasis within al-Ja'barī's scholarly discourse. Illustrative instances encompass:
- al-Ja'barī's reference to al-Zamakhsharī's critique of the Eponym Abū 'Amr's non-amalgamated reading of the *rā'* into the *lām*, exposing a potential semantic misstep [*wahm*] leading to the Canonical Transmitter's misinterpretation/misreading, thus engaging in a nuanced evaluation of phonetic articulation. al-Zamakhsharī claimed that *iskān*, i.e. *iḥ-hār* is read as opposed to *idghām*. al-Zamakhsharī's critique is indirectly levelled against Abū 'Amr.²²⁰
 - Ibn Jinnī's elucidation, as relayed by al-Ja'barī, regarding *idghām kabīr* [major assimilation of two identical vowelised consonants] in the phrase الْعِلْمُ [عِلْمٌ مَّالِكٌ]²²¹, shedding light on misconceptions propagated by al-Farra' and cohorts regarding phonetic nuance and pronunciation precision. al-Farra' deemed the practice of *idghām mithlayn kabīr* as *sahwu* [oversight/linguistic lapses] at this particular juncture. al-Farra's critique is indirectly levelled against Sūsī, the Canonical Tammitter for Abū 'Amr.²²²

It is paramount to acknowledge that the critique of the Eponymous Reader or Canonical Transmitter inherently encompasses a broader critique of the Variant Reading itself.

²²⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1 395. *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 2/6

²²¹ *al-Baqarah*: 120.

²²² *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 1/493.

Form of Criticism

The Critique of Form represents a meticulous examination of the lexicon employed by critics spanning diverse fields like grammar, linguistics, exegetics, and related domains. These lexical components are systematically categorised into two primary domains:

- 1) Critique of form and lexicon associated with a Variant Reading or *wajh* [option in Reading].
- 2) Critique of form and lexicon associated with an Eponymous Reader or Canonical Transmitter.

A comprehensive exploration of these categories is imperative for a nuanced understanding.

- 1) **Terms Associated with a Variant Reading or Wajh [Option in Reading]:** Critics adeptly wield twenty-five [25] terms to scrutinise and appraise Variant Readings or *awjuh* [options in reading]. Among these terms are:

- [لا يجوز] – Not permissible, denoting stark disapproval and invalidation.²²³
- [رديء أو رديئة] – Inadequate or poor indicating inadequacy or substandard quality leading to rejection.²²⁴
- [خطأ] – Error, highlighting errors or deviations.²²⁵
- [غلط] – Mistake, signifying instances of incorrectness or oversight.²²⁶
- [قبيح] – Ugly, denoting errors of a displeasing or unsatisfactory nature.²²⁷
- [ضعيف أو ضعيفة] – Feeble, signifying feebleness or lack of robustness.²²⁸
- [غير مستقيم] – Not straight or crooked, denoting deviation from normative Arabic pronunciation and grammar.²²⁹
- [لحن] – Error, signifying instances of incorrectness.²³⁰

²²³ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1166, 3/1211, 3/1559, 4/1987, and 5/2301.

²²⁴ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1130, 3/1112, 3/1820, 4/1923, and 5/2196.

²²⁵ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1395, 4/1923, 4/1987, and 5/2301.

²²⁶ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1526, 4/1820, 3/1559, and 4/2071.

²²⁷ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1272 and 3/1395.

²²⁸ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1395 and 4/1850.

²²⁹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1275 and 3/1715.

²³⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1281 and 5/2186.

- [محال] – Impossible, signifying linguistic impossibilities.²³¹
- [وهم] – Illusion, alluding to misconceptions or illusions.²³²
- [لم يسمع] – Unheard of, highlighting unrecognised or rejected readings by the scholarly community.²³³
- [غير مرضي] – Displeasing or unsatisfactory, characterising readings as unsatisfactory or unacceptable.²³⁴
- [قليل في الاستعمال] – Rarely used, indicating toward rare usage.²³⁵
- [سمجا مردودا] – Refused height, denoting outright rejection or criticism.²³⁶
- [لا أحب هذه القراءة] – I am not too fond of this reading, expressing subjective disfavour or preference against specific readings.²³⁷
- [لست أستحبها] – I do not prefer it, expressing subjective disfavour or preference against particular readings.²³⁸
- [النحويون لا يعرفونه] – Grammarians are unaware of it, suggesting readings unrecognised by grammarians.²³⁹
- [ليس بشيء] – It is nothing, indicating a lack of substance or credibility in a reading.²⁴⁰
- [ليس بجيد] – It is not good, thus labelling readings as inadequate or lacking exemplariness.²⁴¹
- [ليست بنيرة] – It is not exemplary, thus labelling readings as inadequate or lacking exemplariness.²⁴²
- [لغة قليلة] – Limited language, denoting limited vocabulary or linguistic usage.²⁴³
- [لغة مجهورة] – Obscure language, connoting obscure language deployment.²⁴⁴

²³¹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1275 and 4/1923.

²³² *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1166 and 4/2071.

²³³ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 4/1840 and 5/2343.

²³⁴ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 4/1962.

²³⁵ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1359.

²³⁶ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1560.

²³⁷ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1560.

²³⁸ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1244.

²³⁹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1211.

²⁴⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1275.

²⁴¹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 5/2775.

²⁴² *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1657.

²⁴³ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1281.

²⁴⁴ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 4/1962.

- [لم يثبت] – Not established, thus questioning the validation or support for a reading.²⁴⁵
- [متعذر] – Impossible, thus labelling readings as linguistically implausible or impossible.²⁴⁶

2) **Terms Associated with an Eponymous Reader or Canonical Transmitter:** The second aspect, delineated within the critical analysis of Variant Readings or *awjuh*, pivots upon terms associated with the Eponymous Reader or Canonical Transmitter. Several noteworthy designations emerge through a discerning examination of terms critics utilise within *Kanz al-Maʿānī*. These designations encapsulate various critique aspects, illuminating nuances in the reader's presentation, for instance:

- [الوهم] – Illusion, denoting a perception lacking accuracy.²⁴⁷
- [السهو] – Inadequate/Poor, indicating inadvertent lapses in accuracy.²⁴⁸
- [عدم الضبط] – Inaccurate, highlighting errors, inaccuracy or lack of exactness in the pronunciation or delivery of the text by the reader or narrator. It signifies a deviation from the standard or prescribed norm.²⁴⁹
- [الغلط] – Mistake, signifying mistakes or oversights.²⁵⁰
- [اللحن] – Error, denoting oversights in pronunciation or grammar.²⁵¹
- [الإختلاط] – Confusion or ambiguity, indicating a state of confusion or ambiguity in the reading of the text. It signifies a lack of clarity or precision.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 5/2495.

²⁴⁶ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 4/1923.

²⁴⁷ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 1/481, 2/520, 3/1786, and 4/1820.

²⁴⁸ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 1/493.

²⁴⁹ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 3/1275.

²⁵⁰ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 2/526.

²⁵¹ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 2/526.

²⁵² *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 3/1122, 4/1822, 4/1923, and 5/2186.

Underlying Causes for Criticism

The critical examination of Variant Readings, Eponymous Readers, and Canonical Transmitters within the esteemed work *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* unveils a realm of scholarly scrutiny that has captivated a diverse cohort of experts, including grammarians, linguists, and exegetes, among others. This profound critique, deeply embedded within the intricate fabric of textual analysis and transmission, seeks to unravel the underlying motivations propelling such intense scholarly engagement. Two fundamental domains emerge, each offering profound insights into the complexities inherent in the subject matter:

- 1) **Exploring the Underlying Causes for Criticism of Variant Readings:** A significant portion of scholarly attention gravitates towards criticisms directed at specific Variant Readings. These criticisms, while varied and multifaceted, predominantly coalesce around thirteen [13] fundamental underlying causes that underpin the discourse:
 - Grammarians’ Presumed Superiority in Linguistic Precision within the Qur’ān.
 - Grammarians’ Oversight of Linguistic and Vernacular Nuances in Variant Readings.
 - Grammarians Too Privy Towards Phonological and Morphological Nuances in Variant Readings.
 - The Fallacious Notion of Peculiarity or Unfamiliarity of a Variant Reading.
 - The Fallacious Belief in the Preeminence of the ‘Uthmanic Codex as the Sole Foundation of a Variant Reading.
 - The Fallacious Misuse of Ḥadīth as Foundational Evidence against a Variant Reading.
 - The Fallacious Ethnocentrism of a Native Arab or Grammarian Audition over Variant Readings.
 - The Fallacious Deployment of Ijmā‘ of Grammarians Imposed on Variant Readings and their Rejection.
 - Grammarians’ Fallacious Misuse of Poetry as Foundational Evidence against Variant Readings.
 - The Fallacious Misuse of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* as Evidence Against Variant Readings.

- Grammarians' Fallacious Aspersion that Variant Readings are Derived through Qiyās.
 - Grammarians' Fallacious Advocacy for the Superiority of Grammar over Variant Readings.
 - Grammarians' Fallacious Assertion that particular Variant Readings are Inaccurate in Religious Matters.
- 2) **Exploring the Underlying Causes for Criticism of Eponymous Readers and Canonical Transmitters.** Much scholarly attention gravitates towards criticisms directed at specific Eponymous Readers and Canonical Transmitters. These criticisms, while varied and multifaceted, predominantly coalesce around three [3] fundamental underlying causes that underpin the discourse:
- The Fallacious Assertion of Wahm by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter.
 - The Fallacious Aspersion of 'Adm al-Ḍabṭ by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter.
 - The Fallacious Notion of Sahwu by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter.

The causes of criticism in Variant Readings, Eponymous Readers, and Canonical Transmitters epitomise a multifaceted landscape characterised by a meticulous interrogation of linguistic nuances, interpretive intricacies, and scholarly paradigms. The ensuing comprehensive analysis showcases the dynamic interplay between text and context, tradition and transmission, fostering a scholarly discourse imbued with depth, precision, and critical acumen.

Exploring the Underlying Causes for Criticism of Variant Readings

Grammarians' Presumed Superiority in Linguistic Precision within the Qur'ān:

The discourse surrounding grammarians' purported superior linguistic precision in contrast to the *qurrā'* unfolds as a nuanced and contentious facet within the realm of Qur'anic studies. This contention is vividly illustrated in the scholarly discourse articulated by al-Ja'barī, who invokes the insights of al-Zajjāj regarding the pronunciation of the term [بَارِئُكُمْ], explicitly advocating for the *iskān* of the *hamzah*, exemplified as [بَارِئُكُمْ].²⁵³ This linguistic divergence serves as a focal point for critical analysis, precipitating a thorough examination of the underlying rationale behind grammarians' claims of linguistic precision.

al-Zajjāj's discourse is particularly illuminating, emphasising that while this variant, characterised by *iskān* of the *hamzah*, traces its transmission lineage through the Eponym Abū 'Amr, the intricacies of *hamzah* pronunciation warrant meticulous scrutiny. Contrarily, al-Zajjāj posits the superiority of Sibawayh's rendition, distinguished by the application of *ikhtilās*, specifically the vowel reduction/elision of the *kasrah* on the *hamzah*. This nuanced linguistic feature, termed [أَضْبَطَ] by al-Zajjāj, is heralded as more precise and accurate compared to the transmitted Reading of Abū 'Amr.²⁵⁴

Additionally and of notable significance is the involvement of Dūrī, the Canonical Transmitter for Abū 'Amr, who transmits both readings – the *iskān* of the *hamzah* as well as the *ikhtilās* variant.²⁵⁵

Grammarians' Oversight of Linguistic and Vernacular Nuances in Variant Readings:

The discourse surrounding Variant Readings within the scholarly milieu often reveals a dichotomy between grammarians' linguistic prowess and their sometimes limited understanding of vernacular intricacies. This juxtaposition is eloquently illuminated in al-Ja'barī's exposition of al-Nahḥās' astute critique concerning the enunciation of the word [بِيُوتٌ], where the *khafḍ* of the *bā'* results in [بِيُوتٌ]. This subtle yet significant

²⁵³ *al-Baqarah*: 54.

²⁵⁴ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1123. *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 1/136.

²⁵⁵ *Ghayth al-Nafā'*: 75. *Shifā' al-Ṣudūr*: 91. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 36.

phonetic variation highlights a historically overlooked discrepancy by grammarians, especially within the Baṣran scholarly circles, where it is deemed inadequate [*ridāʿah*].

al-Naḥḥās, in his meticulous analysis, unequivocally deems this Variant Reading as impermissible [لا يجوز غير الضم], asserting that the word cannot be read except with a *ḍammah* on the *bāʿ*. This assertion reflects a deep understanding of the phonetic nuances embedded within the Arabic language, signalling a departure from mere grammatical rules to a nuanced exploration of pronunciation and enunciation.

Furthermore, al-Zajjāj’s emphatic statement regarding the awareness level among grammarians adds another layer to this discourse. He highlights that most grammarians remain unaware of this particular Reading, underscoring a potential gap in their linguistic acumen regarding vernacular variations. Interestingly, he notes that while this may be the case among many grammarians, the Baṣrans hold a contrasting view, considering this Reading as inadequate [ردىء], thus showcasing regional variations and scholarly differences in perception.

In addressing the discourse, al-Jaʿbarī emphasises the established presence of *khafḍ* of the *bāʿ* within both *luḡhah* [linguistic analyses] and *riwāyah* [transmission records]. This dual foundation lends credence to the precedence afforded by established transmission practices over the speculative objections posited by grammarians. Furthermore, the widespread unawareness among grammarians regarding this particular Reading accentuates the minority’s awareness of this linguistic principle. Consequently, the permissibility of this Reading cannot be summarily dismissed as impermissible, given its grounding in both linguistic conventions [*luḡhah*] and validated transmission records [*riwāyah*].²⁵⁶

Grammarians Too Privy Towards Phonological and Morphological Nuances in Variant Readings:

The grammarians heralded as bastions of linguistic precision are often too privy and challenged by the intricacies of phonological and morphological nuances that underpin these Readings. One such instance illuminating this challenge is found in al-Naḥḥās’s discerning analysis of the Eponym Nāfi’s reading of the word [مَيْسِرَة],

²⁵⁶ *Kanz al-Maʿānī* 3/1211.

wherein a *dammah* on the *sīn* is read, as in, [مَيْسِرَةٌ].²⁵⁷ al-Naḥḥās, with scholarly acuity, deems this variant as *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical/Anomalous/Irregular], attributing its irregularity to its rare morphological structure falling on the scale of [مَفْعَلَةٌ] an inadequacy and a rarity within Arabic lexicon. Furthermore, he underscores the presence of a *zā'idah* [additional] *hā'* within the word, highlighting its linguistic complexity beyond conventional norms, as there is not even a known scale labelled as [مَفْعُلٌ] – leave alone a scale labelled as [مَفْعَلَةٌ]. Consequently, he dismisses this variant as linguistically incorrect, deeming it [لِخْنٌ لَا يَجُوزُ] – an impermissible error, according to his stringent linguistic criteria.

Expounding on this discourse, al-Ja'barī refutes this claim and delves into the dialectal implications of the *dammah* reading, noting its association with the Ḥijāzī dialect. Despite its linguistic divergence, the reading [مَيْسِرَةٌ] has been transmitted in this manner, introducing a dialectal variance within the broader scope of Arabic. This linguistic divergence is further exemplified by words like [مَقْدُرَةٌ] and [مَفْخُرَةٌ], both of which align with the scale of [مَفْعَلَةٌ], showcasing the nuanced interplay between phonological idiosyncrasies and grammatical frameworks within Variant Readings.²⁵⁸

The Fallacious Notion of Peculiarity or Unfamiliarity of a Variant Reading:

The fallacious concept of peculiarity or unfamiliarity of a Variant Reading is elucidated through a notable example drawn from al-Ja'barī's scholarly exposition, wherein he echoes al-Farra's discourse regarding Ibn 'Amir's rendition of the verse [بِالْعُدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيٍّ].²⁵⁹ This rendition uniquely features the *ghayn* bearing a *dammah*, *iskān* of the *dāl*, and *fath* of the *wāw*, manifesting as [بِالْعُدْوَةِ]. al-Farra's discerning scrutiny unveils the exceptional nature of this rendition, as he affirms that apart from al-Sulamī, no other individual is known to have read the word [بِالْعُدْوَةِ] as [بِالْعُدْوَةِ]. This revelation engenders a misinterpretation, propagating the erroneous belief that this reading stands as an *infirād*, denoting a singular or isolated reading, i.e., peculiar or unfamiliar reading attributed solely to al-Sulamī.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ *al-Baqarah*: 281.

²⁵⁸ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1281.

²⁵⁹ *al-An'ām*: 52.

²⁶⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1503.

The Fallacious Belief in the Preeminence of the ‘Uthmanic Codex as the Sole Foundation of a Variant Reading:

The fallacious belief in the primacy of the ‘Uthmanic script as the foundation of Qur’anic Variant Readings is vividly exemplified through a narrative recounted by al-Ja‘bari from Abu ‘Ubayd concerning Ibn ‘Āmir’s rendition of the verse [بِالْعُدُوَّةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ], with the *ghayn* bearing a *ḍammah*, *iskān* of the *dāl*, and *fath* of the *wāw*, manifesting as [بِالْعُدُوَّةِ].²⁶¹ al-Ja‘barī, quoting Abu ‘Ubayd, asserts that Ibn ‘Āmir’s adherence closely mirrors the ‘Uthmanic script, with al-Sulamī similarly reading it in this manner.²⁶²

Nevertheless, such acclaim for the script’s primacy overlooks the broader triad pillars crucial to understanding Variant Readings: *ṣiḥḥat al-sanad* [authentic scholarly lineages] and *muwāfaqat al-‘Arabiyyah* [conformity to Arabic]. The very essence of these Variant Readings lies in *talaqqī*, the oral tradition, rather than the tangible manifestation of the ‘Uthmanic codification. Initially, reliance did not hinge solely on written records; ‘Uthman’s dispatch of the *masāḥif* accompanied by proficient reciters/teachers underscores this emphasis on oral transmission. The presence of these reciters/teachers alongside the *masāḥif* underscores the foundational role of the oral tradition.

A compelling counterargument to the misconception of scriptural preeminence is found in the specific words, known as Individual or Word Variants [*farsh*], within the Qur’anic text, such as the variation in reading the word [مَلِيك] in the verse [مَلِيك يَوْمَ].²⁶³ Eponymous Readers differ in their Reading, either affirming the *alif* or omitting it. However, both readings align harmoniously with both the ‘Uthmanic codex [*rasm al-muṣḥaf*] and linguistic conventions [*muwāfaqat al-‘Arabiyyah*]. This confluence showcases that Variant Readings are firmly rooted in *talaqqī* – *‘ard* and *samā‘* – oral presentation and auditory learning rather than being dictated solely by the preeminence of the ‘Uthmanic codex.

Moreover, Abu ‘Ubayd’s observation regarding Ibn ‘Āmir’s fidelity to the script acknowledges its influence on Qur’anic Variant Readings. However, this adherence

²⁶¹ *al-An‘ām*: 52.

²⁶² *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī* 3/1502 – 1503.

²⁶³ *al-Fātiḥah*: 4.

represents merely one facet of a broader tapestry of triadic pillars that collectively shape the authenticity and acceptability of Variant Readings.

Another pertinent case study is found in al-Zamakhsharī's analysis, as conveyed by al-Ja'barī, regarding the phrase [فَتَلَّ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاءَهُمْ] ²⁶⁴ in Ibn 'Āmir's rendition as [فَتَلَّ شُرَكَاءَهُمْ] [أَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَاءَهُمْ]. al-Zamakhsharī elucidates an insightful analysis of a Variant Reading within the Qur'anic text.

The crux of al-Zamakhsharī's observation lies in an apparent orthographic [*rasm*] discrepancy found in specific Qur'anic manuscripts dispatched to Shām. This disparity is exemplified by the word [شُرَكَاءَهُمْ] scripted with a *yā'*, as observed in [شُرَكَاءَهُمْ], indicating a *hamzah* reading, akin to [شُرَكَاءَهُمْ]. ²⁶⁵ It is noteworthy that al-Zamakhsharī's discerning analysis navigates through the intricacies of the *rasm* [orthography], emphasising the representation with a *yā'* instead of a *wāw*. However, it is imperative to underscore that this apparent orthographic discrepancy does not invalidate or supersede the widely accepted and transmitted Reading.

The Fallacious Misuse of Ḥadīth as Foundational Evidence against a Variant Reading:

In certain instances, the fallacious misuse or preeminence of ḥadīth over a Variant Reading is unveiled through meticulous scrutiny and analysis. al-Ja'barī navigates through instances where specific ḥadīth undergo contextual interpretation, primarily focusing on the pronunciation and reading nuances encapsulated within the Readings of the Eponym Nāfi'. This scrutiny is imbued with scepticism and disdain regarding the precise articulation of the word [نَبِيٍّ], conventionally pronounced with a *yā'*, as opposed to Nāfi's Reading, which is read with a *hamzah*, as in [نَبِيٍّ]. Supporting evidence arises from a ḥadīth transmitted by al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī in his *chef-d'oeuvre*, *al-Mustadrak*, tracing back through a chain of narrators from Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-'Abbās, who narrated from 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Baghawī, who narrated from Khalaf, who narrated from Hishām, who narrated from al-Kisā'ī, who narrated from Ḥusayn al-Ju'fī, who narrated from Ḥumrān ibn A'yūn, who narrated from Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī, culminating with the illustrious Companion Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه. Noteworthy is this ḥadīth's recounting a Bedouin's address to the

²⁶⁴ *al-An'ām*: 137.

²⁶⁵ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 3/1565. *Tafsīr al-Zamakhsharī*: 2/42.

Prophet ﷺ as [يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ], promptly rectified by the Prophet ﷺ to [وَلَكِنِّي نَبِيٌّ] (اللَّهُ), adjusting the pronunciation to [نَبِيٌّ], employing a *yā'* instead of [نَبِيَّ], featuring a *hamzah*.²⁶⁶

Further dissecting this issue, al-Ja'barī introduces al-Naḥḥās' critique of the *khafḍ* reading of the *mīm* in [وَالأَزْحَامَ]²⁶⁷, labelling it as a *khata'* [clear error] both in *ma'nā* [meaning] and *i'rāb* [etymology], given its contradiction with a ḥadīth emphasising *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of the *mīm*. This ḥadīth relayed on the authority of esteemed Companion Jarīr ibn 'Abd Allah رضي الله عنه, features the Prophet's ﷺ instruction to a congregation using the phrase [يَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْحَامِ], with *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of the *mīm*, which mirrors the reading of the majority of the *qurrā'*, except for Ḥamzah.²⁶⁸

Understand: If a ḥadīth introduces divergent words or pronunciations in comparison to a Variant Reading—be they grammatical nuances, linguistic aspects, phonological intricacies, or morphological distinctions—it is fundamentally erroneous to extrapolate and generalise the rule inferred from the ḥadīth and extend it to a given Tawātur Variant Reading. The inherent precedence of Tawātur Variant Readings over ḥadīth emerges as a fundamental principle. This precedence stems from the extensive, widespread transmission characteristic of Tawātur Variant Readings, a stark contrast to the *āḥād* [solitary reports] often associated with the majority of authentic ḥadīth, despite their *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic] status.

The Fallacious Ethnocentrism of a Native Arab or Grammarian Audition over Variant Readings:

The exploration of an Arab or Grammarian audition is vividly portrayed in al-Ja'barī's citation of al-Akhfash concerning the Eponym Ḥamzah's rendition of the word [بِمُضْرَخِي], marked by *khafḍ* of the *yā'* instead of *fathḥ*, as in [بِمُضْرَخِي].²⁶⁹ al-Akhfash commented, "I have not heard this from any Arab or grammarian."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ *al-Mustadrak*: 2 859. Notably al-Ḥākim stated that the ḥadīth meets the stringent conditions of authenticity set by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim. *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1129.

²⁶⁷ *Sunan al-Nisā'*: 1.

²⁶⁸ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 4/1820.

²⁶⁹ *Ibrāhīm*: 22.

²⁷⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1395.

This instance underscores the argument that certain pronunciations or grammatical interpretations lacked recognition from esteemed Arab linguists or grammarians. Nonetheless, the absence of validation from such authorities does not detract from the legitimacy of a Tawātur Reading.

The Fallacious Deployment of Ijmā‘ of Grammarians Imposed on Variant Readings and their Rejection:

In scrutinising the grammarians’ consensus concerning purportedly erroneous Readings or their rejection and non-acceptance, al-Ja‘barī recounts an episode from al-Zajjāj regarding the Readings of Ibn ‘Āmir and Shu‘bah on the *نُنَجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ*], featuring a one *nūn* with a *ḍammah* and *tathqīl* of the *jīm*, as in *نُنَجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ*].²⁷¹ al-Zajjāj remarked that all grammarians unanimously classified this rendition as an error [*khata*].

Significantly, al-Ja‘barī dismisses and refutes this misguided consensus, considering it a significant deviation from the practices endorsed by the Kūfan grammarians, thus highlighting the fallacy in assuming unanimity among grammarians.²⁷²

Grammarians’ Fallacious Misuse of Poetry as Foundational Evidence against Variant Readings:

The fallacious employment of poetry by grammarians as foundational evidence against Variant Readings is vividly illustrated in al-Ja‘barī’s narrative derived from al-Zajjāj. Particularly noteworthy is al-Zajjāj’s recourse to poetic verses, including those of al-Farrā’, to contest Ḥamzah’s Reading of the word *بِمُضْرِحِي*], with a *khafḍ* of the *yā’*, as in *بِمُضْرِحِي*].²⁷³ al-Zajjāj reinforces this stance – *fath* of the *yā’* *al-mutakallim* – by invoking a didactic distich attributed to al-‘Ijlī:

قَالَ لَهَا هَلْ لَكَ يَا تَأْفِيِّي قَالَتْ لَهُ مَا أَنْتَ بِالْمُرْضِيِّي

He further solidifies this position by affirming, “All grammarians have disapproved [ردئية] of this Reading, citing the poetry as evidence while dismissing the reading due to its status as *majhūl* [unknown].”²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ *al-Ambiyā’*: 88.

²⁷² *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 4/1987.

²⁷³ *Ibrāhīm*: 22.

²⁷⁴ *Kanz al-Ma‘ānī*: 4/1820.

This episode underscores the scholarly aversion to establishing poetic verses as foundational and authoritative evidence against Variant Readings. It showcases the scholarly endeavour, exemplified by figures like al-Zajjāj, in rebuffing interpretations reliant on poetic citations that diverge from established and accepted Readings. There is a parallel effort by these scholars to utilise poetry as evidence against readings that did not adhere to the accepted norms. Scholars like al-Zajjāj dedicated considerable effort to harnessing the power of poetic citations as a tool to challenge or disapprove Readings that strayed from the recognised grammatical standards.

Despite occasional attempts to challenge Variant Readings through the use of poetry, the unanimous consensus amongst *qurrā'* remains resolute in rejecting such interpretations due to the Tawātur status of Readings.

The Fallacious Misuse of Asbāb al-Nuzūl as Evidence Against Variant Readings:

In the nuanced exploration of the *إِنَّ صُدُّكُمْ* Reading,²⁷⁵ with a specific focus on Ibn Kathīr and Abū 'Amr's rendition featuring the *khafḍ* of the *hamzah* as in *إِنَّ صُدُّكُمْ*, al-Naḥḥās draws attention to cautionary perspectives rooted in the insights of grammarians and traditionists. He posits that scholars discouraged this Reading due to its contextual intricacies, particularly highlighting the verse's *sabab al-nuzūl* [cause for revelation] during the epoch of the Faḥ of Makkah, marking the eighth year after Hijrah. al-Naḥḥās elaborates on the historical backdrop, characterised by the challenges faced by believers (*صُدّ*) hindrance) during the Ḥudaybiyah events in the sixth year after Hijrah. He contends that any *صُدّ* hindrance transpired before the revelation of this verse, thus lacking logical coherence when pronounced with *khafḍ* of the *hamzah* outside this context.²⁷⁶

However, al-Qaṣṭallānī offers a contrasting view by contesting the notion that the *صُدّ* hindrance occurred before the verse's revelation. He argues against the consensus regarding the verse's unveiling during the Conquest of Makkah, asserting that the chronological sequence of events remains debatable. al-Qaṣṭallānī proposes an alternative timeline viewpoint, challenging the premise that the hindrance preceded the verse's revelation. Adding support to the discourse, al-Yazīdī suggests that the

²⁷⁵ *al-Mā'idah*: 2.

²⁷⁶ *Irāb al-Qur'ān*: 1/256.

verse's revelation predates the hindrance, offering another layer of interpretation regarding the sequence of events.²⁷⁷

Contextualising the Variant Readings [أَنْ صُدُّكُمْ] and [إِنْ صُدُّكُمْ] reveals nuanced distinctions deeply rooted in their semantic connotations and grammatical frameworks:

- [أَنْ صُدُّكُمْ] – The utilisation of [أَنْ], in Arabic, signifies a causative correlation, delineating a causal nexus or rationale for an action. In this context, it implies a direct linkage between the action of hindrance or obstruction and its underlying cause, as manifested by the verb [صُدُّكُمْ], signifying “**they barred you**” or “**they prevented you.**” This variant elucidates a direct cause-and-effect relationship, elucidating the motive or reason behind the hindrance. Therefore, al-Nahḥās immerses himself in the historical and contextual tapestry of the verse, unveiled during the epoch of the Conquest of Makkah, a pivotal epoch in Islamic annals. He accentuates that the term [أَنْ صُدُّكُمْ] conveys a causative nexus, delineating direct causation or rationale behind an action, notably the hindrance or prevention encountered by believers during the Ḥudaybiyah episode. He, therefore, posits that this Reading aligns logically with the historical tapestry, given that the hindrance transpired before the verse's revelation, thus rendering the causal connection coherent.
- [إِنْ صُدُّكُمْ] – On the other hand, the inclusion of [إِنْ] serves as a conditional marker in Arabic, denoting a conditional or hypothetical circumstance. It introduces a conditional clause, suggesting an action's occurrence is contingent upon a specific condition. In the context of [إِنْ صُدُّكُمْ], it translates to “**if they bar you**” or “**should they prevent you.**” This variant portrays a hypothetical scenario wherein the act of hindrance or prevention hinges upon fulfilling a particular condition, highlighting a conditional aspect within the narrative, which is contrary to al-Nahḥās' perspective.

Efforts aimed at challenging and discrediting a given Tawātur Reading through the lens of *asbāb al-nuzūl* [causes for revelation] or any other historical milieu or

²⁷⁷ *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*: 5/1930.

contextual circumstances have consistently encountered firm resistance within this scholarly sphere. The unanimous stance among *qurrā'* stands resolutely in dismissing and rejecting such endeavours, primarily owing to the esteemed status attributed to Tawātur Readings.

The utilisation of *asbāb al-nuzūl* as a method to invalidate or cast doubt upon a given Reading unveils a nuanced facet of Qur'anic exegesis. Scholars who partake in this practice often strive to unearth the historical milieu or contextual circumstances that precipitated the revelation of a specific verse. However, despite the scholarly rigour invested in these endeavours, the consensus among *qurrā'*, who serve as authoritative voices in matters pertaining to the Qur'anic Variant Readings, remains unwavering in rebuffing these challenges. This steadfast rejection finds its foundation in the inherent authority and authenticity enshrined within Readings transmitted through the conduit of their Tawātur status. The widespread transmission of these Readings across successive generations and epochs, coupled with their widespread acceptance, erects a robust framework that withstands all attempts aimed at questioning their legitimacy based solely on contextual considerations.

Moreover, the scholarly community underscores the multifaceted nature of Qur'anic interpretation. While historical context undoubtedly offers valuable insights, it does not supersede the established authenticity, superiority, and authority embodied by Tawātur Readings. This approach serves to underscore the intricate and layered nature inherent in Qur'anic studies, accentuating the delicate equilibrium maintained between historical analysis and the preservation of Qur'anic integrity, as elucidated through the collective consensus of *qurrā'*.

Grammaticians' Fallacious Aspersion that Variant Readings are Derived through Qiyās:

In a meticulous examination of Various Readings, al-Ja'barī delves into a compelling case study, echoing the perspectives of esteemed scholars Ibn Qutaybah and al-Nahḥās regarding the diverse manifestations and readings of the word [الْأَيْكَةَ] across different *suwar* [chapters] of the Qur'ān. Specifically, this analysis focuses on its occurrences in *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'*, verse 176, and *Sūrah Ṣād*, verse 13, juxtaposed with its presence in *Sūrat al-Ḥijr*, verse 78, and *Sūrah Qāf*, verse 14. A unanimous consensus, denoted by *ijmā'*, emerges among the *qurrā'* regarding the appearance and

readings of the word in *Sūrahs al-Ḥijr* and *Qāf*, characterised by a definitive particle [الْ] and *jarr* [genitive end-casing] of the *tā' al-ta'nīth*, exemplified as [الْأَيْكَةِ]. Conversely, in the instances found in *Sūrahs al-Shu'arā'* and *Ṣād*, the *qurrā'* diverge in their readings due to variances in the visual presentation [*rasm*] of the word.

The visual distinction of the phrase as [أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ], lacking an *alif al-waṣl*, featuring a *fathah* of the *lām*, and devoid of a *hamzah* following the *lām*, leads Eponyms such as Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āmir, Abū Ja'far, and Ibn Muḥasin to read it as [أَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ], incorporating a *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of the *tā' al-ta'nīth*. Conversely, when the word visually appears as [الْأَيْكَةِ], featuring an *alif al-waṣl*, *iskān* of the *lām*, and a *hamzah maftūḥah* following the *lām*, the majority represented by the Eponyms Abū 'Amr, 'Āṣim, Ḥamzah, Kisā'i, Ya'qūb, Khalaf al-'Āshir, al-A'mash, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī adopts the reading as [أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ], accentuating the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] of the *tā' al-ta'nīth*.

In light of the unanimous consensus regarding the appearance and reading of the word in *Sūrahs al-Ḥijr* and *Qāf*, Ibn Qutaybah and al-Naḥḥās advocate for the rejection of divergent views in *Sūrahs al-Shu'arā'* and *Ṣād*, suggesting an analogical deduction [*qiyās*], in this case, extrapolating and superimposing the *ijmā'* readings of the former to the latter.²⁷⁸ This recommendation stems from the cohesive narrative thread maintained across all four occurrences of the word.

Similarly, Abū 'Ali al-Fārisī aligns with this perspective, albeit implicitly indicating that this analogical deduction should be enforced to promote *ittiḥād* [unity].

However, al-Ja'barī's rebuttal to the proposed analogical deduction, posited by figures like Ibn Qutaybah and al-Naḥḥās, is resolute and underpinned by scholarly rigour. He vehemently refutes the notion of deriving Readings through *qiyās*, denouncing it as impermissible within the framework of Variant Reading principles.²⁷⁹

Additionally, the illuminating case study highlights the deliberate departure of these personalities from the established *ijmā'* of the *qurrā'*, signifying a divergence from the unanimous consensus upheld by scholars.

²⁷⁸ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 4/2060.

²⁷⁹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī*: 4/2060 – 2061.

In conclusion, al-Ja'bari's stance underscores the importance of upholding the integrity of Variant Readings based on established methodologies and authoritative consensus rather than relying on analogical deductions that may introduce inconsistencies or deviations. His refutation serves as a scholarly reminder of the meticulous adherence to established principles and the avoidance of speculative applications that could compromise the authenticity and reliability of Qur'anic readings.

Grammaticians' Fallacious Advocacy for the Superiority of Grammar over Variant Readings:

The scholarly discourse surrounding grammatical rules within the realm of Qur'anic Variant Readings unveils a meticulous and nuanced approach embraced by a specific cohort of grammarians, particularly those originating from Baṣrah and analogous regions. These erudite scholars advocate for distinct grammatical configurations, cautioning against fallacious concepts that may undermine the integrity of the Qur'anic text.

One such concept is [العطف على الضمير المجرور من غير إعادة الجر], which pertains to the direct conjunction of a conjunction with an accusative pronoun without reiterating the genitive noun. This prudent counsel finds resonance in the Reading of Ḥamzah, notably exemplified in instances like [وَالْأَرْحَامَ], with *khafḍ* of the *mīm*.²⁸⁰

In a second case study, grammarians advocated against the grammatical concept [الفصل بين الفصل بين], emphasising the meticulous separation between [الفصل بين] possessive [المضاف] and possessed elements [المضاف إليه]. This practice is vividly demonstrated in Ibn 'Āmir's rendition of the phrase [أَقْتُلْ أَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ].²⁸¹ Moreover, support for this grammatical concept and Variant Reading is even evidenced in authentic Prophetic ḥadīth, as exemplified by [فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ تَارِكُوا لِي صَاحِبِي؟], in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ḥadīth number 3 461, and [تَارِكُوا لِي أَمْرَائِي] in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ḥadīth number 1 753. The latter is also cited in *Sunan al-Kubrā'* of al-Bayhaqī, ḥadīth number 2 715.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ *al-Nisā'*: 1.

²⁸¹ *al-An'ām*: 137.

²⁸² Mastery in one field is no safeguard against catastrophe in another—on the contrary, it is the very illusion of expertise that blinds the scholar to his impending fall. A man who rules over one domain will assume he may trespass into another, speaking with confidence, oblivious to the fatal cracks beneath his feet. This is the scholar's greatest miscalculation: to mistake familiarity for command, to mistake

knowledge for jurisdiction. He believes he is constructing an argument, but in reality, he is sealing his own intellectual ruin—his conclusions tainted, his authority fractured at the moment he needs it most. And worse still: the scholar who ventures beyond his expertise does not merely err—he misleads. He drags others into his misjudgment, his confidence intoxicating, his error spreading like rot. By the time he realises his mistake, it is too late. The foundation has crumbled beneath him, and his authority is irretrievable.

This dynamic is nowhere more perilously manifest than in the incursion of grammarians into the sacrosanct domain of the Qur'anic Variant Readings. It is a reality underscored by al-Ṣafāqusi, whose proclamation resounds through the corridors of Arabic scholarship: *“Recitation does not follow the rules of Arabic; rather, Arabic follows recitation [Variant Readings].”* This statement is no mere observation; it is an authoritative dictum, a declaration that inverts the traditional order of linguistic authority and compels an absolute recalibration of intellectual assumptions.

Yet, time and again, scholars entrenched within the fortress of grammar have sought to impose their linguistic framework upon Qur'anic Readings, imagining that the organic, living tradition of recitation must yield to the rigid structures of grammatical codification. Nowhere was this folly more evident than when Nouman Ali Khan, a grammarian, conducted a workshop at the CTICC, where a question was posed to him regarding Ibn 'Āmir's rendition of the phrase *قُلْ أَزَلْنَاهُمْ فُرْقَانَهُمْ*. Without hesitation, he denied the legitimacy of the Reading, dismissing it with the same finality that previous grammarians had. But herein lies the scholar's fatal error: he speaks with certainty, oblivious to the layers of authority that precede him, failing to recognise that his discipline does not dictate the rules of recitation—it is recitation that dictates the trajectory of linguistic norms.

The stark dichotomy embedded in al-Ṣafāqusi's proclamation *“Recitation does not follow the rules of Arabic”* upends established hierarchies, liberating recitation from the shackles of grammatical orthodoxy. It is not the case that Qur'anic Readings must conform to linguistic conventions, for the Variant Readings predate the codification of Arabic grammar itself. The bold assertion that *“Arabic follows recitation”* invokes a profound paradigm shift, positioning Variant Readings as the unassailable authority that shapes and moulds the very fabric of Arabic expression. The moment a grammarian presumes to adjudicate the validity of a Reading based on linguistic principles, he transgresses the boundaries of his knowledge, undermining the very foundation upon which his discipline stands.

To those of sound intellect, the reality is self-evident: *“There is no doubt that when a person speaks on a particular field of knowledge—no matter how eminent they may be in it—yet that field is intrinsically connected to another discipline in which they lack mastery, errors and misconceptions will inevitably creep into their discourse whenever they find themselves in need of that related knowledge.”* This principle is not speculative; it is an iron law of intellectual integrity. The grammarian who encroaches upon Qur'anic Readings inevitably errs, for he enters a terrain where his rules do not apply. He imposes constructs upon a tradition that existed independently of them, oblivious to the historical precedence of recitation over linguistic formalisation. This intellectual transgression is not merely theoretical—it is practical, recurrent, and insidious. The grammarian who denies the validity of an established Qur'anic Reading does not merely make an academic mistake; he commits a profound epistemological violation. His error ripples outward, misleading those who look to him as an authority, perpetuating misconceptions that corrode the very integrity of Islamic scholarship. And what is most damning: he does so with absolute conviction, unaware that he has built his argument on a foundation of sand.

The unanimous endorsement of al-Ṣafāqusi's principle by *“the most eloquent Arabs”*—a lineage inaugurated by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his esteemed Companions, and their successors—establishes an irrefutable precedent. The grammarian who seeks to challenge this consensus finds himself in an untenable position, standing against an entire lineage of linguistic authority. The purity of the Arabic tongue, though gradually diluted by the proliferation of non-native speakers, remains rooted in the integrity of recitation, not in the retroactive impositions of grammar.

Thus, the verdict is final: Nouman Ali Khan, in his denial of Ibn 'Āmir's Recitation, committed the very error that befalls all who mistake their domain for the sum total of knowledge. His rejection was not merely incorrect—it was epistemologically impossible. For Qur'anic Variant Readings is not bound by the conventions of Arabic grammar; it is Arabic grammar that is bound by Variant Readings. The linguist who seeks to assert dominion over Variant Readings does not elevate grammar—he humiliates it. He does not refine scholarship—he betrays it. And, in the end, he does not disprove the Variant Reading—he only proves his own limitations.

Nouman Ali Khan denied the Reading, but the words of Prophet ﷺ confirmed it. He thought he was rendering judgment, but in the end, it was the Reading and ḥadīth that judged him—exposing his ignorance, dismantling his authority, and leaving him with nothing but the echo of his own error.

Furthermore, attention is drawn to a third case study wherein grammarians advocated against the grammatical concept [الجمع بين الساكنين على غير حدهما], highlighting instances where two *sākin* [unvowelised] letters seamlessly appear after one another, as observed in [فَنَجِعًا].²⁸³ This grammatical concept occurs in the *iskān* of the ‘*ayn* reading of the word, particularly in one *wajh* [option in reading] for Qālūn, Abū ‘Amr and Shu‘bah, and the Reading of Abū Ja‘far²⁸⁴, thus deviating from traditional grammatical norms.

Amidst these discussions, al-Ja‘barī emerges as a pivotal figure advocating for a balanced methodology that elevates the Qur’ān as the ultimate authority and source in linguistic matters. He contends that grammatical principles should naturally emanate from the Qur’ān itself, avoiding the imposition of external grammatical conventions that may undermine the text’s authenticity and richness.²⁸⁵

Grammaticians’ Fallacious Assertion that particular Variant Readings are Inaccurate in Religious Matters:

The discourse regarding certain Variant Readings in religious contexts navigates a terrain of intricate grammatical analysis and theological interpretation. Central to this discourse is the contention posited by select grammarians, notably exemplified by al-Zajjāj’s scrutiny of Ḥamzah’s Readings, specifically honing in on his rendition of the word [وَالْأَرْحَامَ], characterised by the *khafḍ* of the *mīm*.²⁸⁶ al-Zajjāj’s argument hinges upon the premise that such deviations from grammatical norms, although potentially permissible in extreme poetic exigencies within Arabic grammar, become deeply problematic when transposed into religious contexts, particularly within the sanctified

²⁸³ *al-Baqarah*: 271.

²⁸⁴ *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 72. *Ghayth al-Nafāʾ*: 121 – 122.

²⁸⁵ Understanding the intricate interplay between grammatical principles and the Qur’ān is of paramount importance, as it delineates a foundational aspect of Islamic linguistic scholarship. At the core of this discourse lies the recognition that grammatical principles find their origins within the Qur’ān and not *viz-i-viz*, thus positioning Qur’ān as the primary source from which linguistic norms emanate. Contrary to common misconceptions, the Qur’ān, as the ultimate authority in Islam, does not derive its essence or structure from grammatical principles. Instead, it stands as the Divine revelation upon which grammatical frameworks should be anchored. Moreover, viewing the Qur’ān as the source of grammatical principles transcends mere adherence to local or regional grammatical conventions. While linguistic variations may exist across different regions, the Qur’ānic grammatical norms provide a universal standard that surpasses geographical boundaries. This universal applicability underscores the timeless relevance of the Qur’ānic linguistic framework, which remains pertinent across diverse linguistic contexts and historical epochs.

²⁸⁶ *al-Nisāʾ*: 1.

sphere of the Qurʾān. This viewpoint is substantiated through a Prophetic ḥadīth cautioning against invoking oaths by one's fathers.²⁸⁷

A historical backdrop enriches this narrative, as elucidated by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's historical insights. He sheds light on past practices where individuals intertwined oaths by invoking both Allah ﷻ and the womb or even exclusively beseeched by the womb, reflecting a cultural and linguistic milieu that allowed for such expressions.²⁸⁸ However, the evolution of religious thought and jurisprudence witnessed a negation of this practice, marked by a transition towards more stringent interpretations regarding oath-taking and linguistic formulations associated with religious rites.²⁸⁹

Critiques of Ḥamzah's Reading abound, yet its status as *thābit* [established] and *Mutawātir* [mass transmitted] lends it a degree of authority and legitimacy within the realm of Variant Readings. This underscores a nuanced aspect of Islamic scholarly discourse, where *Tawātur* Variant Readings, despite facing numerous scholarly, grammatical, and linguistic scrutiny and criticism, attained the supreme status of being impervious to reproach.

²⁸⁷ *Kanz al-Maʿānī*: 3/1395.

²⁸⁸ *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*: 9/481.

²⁸⁹ *Fath al-Waṣīd*: 2/44.

Exploring the Underlying Causes for Criticism of Eponymous Readers and Canonical Transmitters

The Fallacious Assertion of Wahm by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter: The fallacious assertion that an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter erred in their transmission is vividly encapsulated in the citation provided by al-Ja'barī, referencing al-Farrā's remarks on Ḥamzah's rendition of the word [بِصْرِيٍّ], characterised by *khafḍ* of the *yā'* instead of *fath*, as in [بِصْرِيٍّ].²⁹⁰ al-Farrā' suggested that this nuanced *kasrah* reading might be misconstrued as *wahm* [an illusion, an error in transmission] by certain *qurrā'* in the *ṭabaqah* [generation] of Yaḥyā ibn Wath-thāb, the teacher of Ḥamzah's teacher, Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A'mash, albeit acknowledging the relative weakness of such interpretations among scholarly circles.²⁹¹

Extending this discourse, al-Ja'barī delved into the critiques surrounding the *iskān* reading of the *hā' al-ḍamīr* in the word [يُؤَدُّ], as [يُؤَدُّ].²⁹² He expressed incredulity towards assertions claiming the *iskān* readers and transmitters erred by mistaking the *hā' al-ḍamīr* for a *ḥarf al-i'rāb*, denoting an organic letter of a word which assumes an end-casing pending on the context of the sentence, thus attributing a grammatical error to transmission [*wahm*].

Another illuminating case highlighted by al-Ja'barī pertains to al-Zamakhsharī's critique of the Eponym Abū 'Amr's non-amalgamated reading of the *rā'* into the *lām*, revealing a potential semantic misalignment [*wahm*] that led to the Canonical Transmitter's misrepresentation or misreading, engaging in a nuanced analysis of phonetic articulation. al-Zamakhsharī underscored that the *iskān*, i.e., *iṭḥ-hār* reading, diverges from *idghām*, indirectly critiquing Abū 'Amr's approach.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ *Ibrāhīm*: 22.

²⁹¹ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1395.

²⁹² *Al 'Imrān*: 75.

²⁹³ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 3/1 395. *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 2/6.

The Fallacious Aspersion of ‘Adm al-Ḍabṭ by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter:

The fallacious assertion of *‘adm al-ḍabṭ*, signifying inaccuracies in transmission by Eponyms or Canonical Transmitters, is elucidated through Sibaway’s insightful discourse, as transmitted by Ibn Mujāhid. This critique revolves around Abū ‘Amr’s application of *ikhṭilās*, particularly the vowel reduction or elision observed in words such as ²⁹⁴ *يَأْمُرُكُمْ* and ²⁹⁵ *بَارِئُكُمْ*. Sibaway astutely discerned that the transmitter mistakenly assumed hearing these words being recited with *ikhṭilās* when, in reality, the *ikhṭilās* reading was not transmitted, thereby implying an element of inaccuracy or *‘adm al-ḍabṭ* on the part of the transmitter.²⁹⁶

Notably, Sibaway is recognised as a masterful grammarian and linguist known for his keen discernment and expertise in grammar and linguistics. However, the discussion extends beyond Sibaway’s scholarly acumen to encompass Abū ‘Amr’s elevated status as an Eponymous Reader. Eminently, the Readings in question are transmitted via Abū ‘Amr and his Canonical Transmitters rather than Sibaway. This highlights the complexity of the transmission chain and the responsibility that falls upon Eponyms and Canonical Transmitters in ensuring accuracy and fidelity in the transmission of Qur’anic Variant Readings.

An equally enlightening case, as evidenced by the scholarly discourse preserved in al-Ja’barī’s narration, relates to an incident recounted by al-Zajjāj concerning the *iskān* of the *‘ayn* reading noted in the word ²⁹⁷ *فَنِعَمًا*. al-Zajjāj’s asserted that the transmitter in question inaccurately conveyed this specific reading, thereby implying an element of inaccuracy or *‘adm al-ḍabṭ* on the part of the transmitter – ²⁹⁸ *[لم يضبط الراوي]*.

The Fallacious Notion of Sahwu by an Eponym or Canonical Transmitter: Ibn Jinnī’s elucidation, conveyed through al-Ja’barī, unveils a profound discourse regarding *idghām kabīr*, a significant phonetic phenomenon involving the major assimilation of unidentical vowelised consonants, exemplified in the phrase ²⁹⁹ *[فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا]*. This exploration sheds light on misconceptions perpetuated by al-Farra’ and cohorts

²⁹⁴ *al-Baqarah*: 67.

²⁹⁵ *al-Baqarah*: 54.

²⁹⁶ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1123. *Kitāb al-Saba’ah*: 155 – 156.

²⁹⁷ *al-Baqarah*: 271.

²⁹⁸ *Kanz al-Ma’ānī*: 3/1275.

²⁹⁹ *Maryam*: 29.

regarding phonetic nuance and pronunciation precision. The crux of Ibn Jinnī's argument revolves around al-Farra's dismissal of *idghām kabīr*, labelling it as *sahwu*, denoting an oversight or linguistic lapse. al-Farra' posited that by employing *idghām kabīr*, the transmitter failed to attain or grasp the truth or reality of the Reading. Implicitly, al-Farra' advocated for the pronunciation convention of *ith-hār* as opposed to *idghām kabīr*.³⁰⁰

Conclusion

The criticisms levied against Eponymous Readers, their Canonical Transmitters, and their Tawātur Readings, as countered by the compendia of *rijāl* criticism, stand as bastions of scholarly acclaim and intellectual rigour. The laudable accolades and commendations attributed to the Eponymous Readers and their Canonical Transmitters epitomise the zenith of scholarly dedication, affirming their unwavering commitment to safeguarding and transmitting the sacred Qur'anic text and its Variant Readings with unparalleled precision and unwavering dedication.

The Tawātur Readings, having ascended to the pinnacle of acceptance and authority, stand impervious to reproach, illuminating the path as beacons of authenticity and reliability within the Discipline of Qirā'āt. However, amidst the scholarly critiques of certain luminaries, a discerning analysis reveals notable lacunae in their grasp of the subtle nuances intrinsic to Variant Readings. These criticisms unveil deficiencies within their own comprehension of grammar and linguistics, alongside misconceptions regarding the fallacious misuse of poetry, ḥadīth, and *asbāb al-nuzūl*, as well as the preeminence of the 'Uthmanic codification and the ethnocentrism of an Arab, serving as foundational evidence against Tawātur Variant Readings. The fallacious deployment of alleged *ijmā'* [consensus] against Tawātur Readings and the advocacy for unifying disparate Readings under the guise of *qiyās* [analogical deduction] further showcase the limitations in their scholarly acumen.

While critiques undoubtedly form an integral part of scholarly discourse, they must be approached with a comprehensive understanding and profound appreciation for the unparalleled authority and integrity upheld by Eponymous Readers, their Canonical

³⁰⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 1/493.

Transmitters, and their Tawātur Readings within the realm of the Discipline of Qirāʾat.

In conclusion, the poignant words of the masterful scholar, Jalāl al-Din al-Suyūṭī resonates with profound significance: “A cohort of early grammarians had a tendency to critique the Readings of ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, and Ibn ‘Āmir, attributing perceived linguistic deviations to them. Nevertheless, this assessment was flawed. Their Readings, in fact, stand firm [resolute] with meticulously authenticated chains of transmission.”³⁰¹

This illuminating quote encapsulates an intriguing facet of early grammatical discourse regarding Variant Readings, highlighting a collective inclination among certain grammarians to criticise the Readings of eminent figures such as ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, and Ibn ‘Āmir. The term “**cohort**” underscores the unified stance of these grammarians, suggesting a shared perspective in their critiques, which is evident throughout our discourse.

The mention of “**perceived linguistic deviations**” intimates that these criticisms may have been subjective rather than based on objective linguistic criteria, hinting at a degree of subjectivity in the evaluations made by these grammarians.

However, the quote swiftly dispels all these critiques as flawed, affirming the steadfastness and authenticity of the Tawātur Readings of ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, and Ibn ‘Āmir. The phrase “**stand firm**” conveys a sense of unwavering strength and resolute reliability in these Readings, upheld by meticulously authenticated chains of transmission.

The emphasis on “**meticulously authenticated chains of transmission**” underscores the rigorous process through which these Readings were preserved and transmitted – via *talaqqī*, further solidifying their credibility and significance in the realm of the Discipline of Qirāʾat.

Ultimately, this quote serves as a testament to these Readings’ enduring authenticity and authority, refuting unfounded criticisms and reinforcing their scholarly merit.

³⁰¹ *al-Iqtirāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Naḥw*: 69.

While critiques serve as essential components of scholarly discourse, they must be approached with scholarly rigour and a deep understanding of the intricate processes that govern the transmission of the Qur’anic text – The Oral Tradition. The enduring authority and credibility of Eponymous Readers, Canonical Transmitters, and Tawātur Readings within the Discipline of Qirā’āt are a testament to centuries of scholarly dedication and meticulous scholarship, solidifying their position as cornerstones of the Qur’anic Oral Tradition.³⁰²

³⁰² The discourse on Variant Reading criticism extends beyond the Seven Canonical Readings to include criticisms within the *Durrah* recension’s Three Variant Readings. A case study from Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī’s *Jāmi’ al-Bayān* regarding the eponym Abū Ja’far exemplifies this complexity:

Contextual Analysis: Abū Ja’far’s Stylistic Reading

The phonological variance in the reading of (الْمَلِيكَةِ السُّجُورِ), exemplifies the intricate interplay of grammatical norms and regional dialects. The predominant recitation, characterised by a *jarr* [genitive case] of the *tā’*, conforms to conventional grammatical structures. In contrast, the reading of Abū Ja’far and Sulaymān ibn Mihrān, which employs a *rafa’* [nominative case] of the *tā’* aligns with the dialectical features of the Azd Shanū’ah tribe, influenced by the preceding *jīm*.

Notably, al-Zajjāj’s critique of Abū Ja’far’s reading, branding it as erroneous, reflects a rigid adherence to standard grammatical conventions—genitive case-ending. Similarly, al-Fārisī’s disapproval underscores the tension between prescriptive grammar and dialectal variations. However, Ibn Jūnnī’s explication, emphasising the necessity of a still consonant [*sākin* letter] preceding the *hamzah* for such a phonological shift, further delineates the bounds of grammatical permissibility. al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary further provides a nuanced perspective, acknowledging the legitimacy of Abū Ja’far’s reading within the context of weak dialects. His comparison to the phrase الْخَبْرُ الْفُحْشُ elucidates the phenomenon of vowel merging in connected speech. al-Zamakhsharī’s recognition of Abū Ja’far’s stylistic variant as a characteristic of the Azd Shanū’ah dialect affirms its authenticity, despite its perceived grammatical weakness.

The scholarly support for Abū Ja’far’s reading, rooted in his direct tutelage under ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās and other esteemed Companions, underscores the legitimacy of this phonological variant. Abū Ja’far’s pedagogical lineage, culminating in the mentorship of Nāfi’ ibn Abī Nu’aym, one of the Seven Canonical Readers, bolsters the credibility of his reading. His rationale, drawing a parallel between the glottal stop and the *tā’*, posits that the non-original status of the *tā’* justifies its phonological modulation. This reasoning finds further corroboration in the Arabic linguistic practice of eliding the (السُّجُورِ) in (السُّجُورِ).

Practical Example and Contextualisation: Envision a teacher addressing students in a dialectal variant—“Students, please sit dyown”—aptly illustrates the broader principle of linguistic variation. Just as the regional dialectal form is valid within its community, Abū Ja’far’s reading is a legitimate manifestation of the rich diversity in Qur’anic reading traditions. This phonological nuance underscores the importance of respecting and understanding linguistic diversity within sacred texts, reflecting the multifaceted nature of language and its interpretations.

In conclusion, delving into the intricacies of the variant readings, such as Abū Ja’far’s, underscores the Qur’anic text’s depth and adaptability. The departure from standard Arabic grammar rules with the use of a nominative case after the (السُّجُورِ) preposition, exemplifies an acknowledged and widely accepted linguistic variance—a Tawātur variant. English translations reflect the Islamic tradition’s embrace of these variations, emphasising the oral tradition’s vitality and the dynamic linguistic milieu in early Islamic epochs. This scholarly exploration illuminates the Qur’ān’s resilience and the nuanced understanding required to appreciate its multifaceted nature within the broader context of Qur’anic scholarship. *Tafsīr: al-Ṭabarī*: 1/157.

Approaches to Ḍabṭ and ‘Adālah: Contrasts in Rijāl Criticism in the Disciplines of Ḥadīth and the Variant Readings in Islamic Scholarship

In the framework of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the study of *rijāl* criticism in the Discipline of Ḥadīth and the Variant Readings, the principles of *ḍabṭ* [precision] and *‘adālah* [probity] manifest distinct applications contingent on the subject matter:

1) Rijāl Criticism in the Discipline of Ḥadīth:

- **Ṭā‘in/Nāqid [The Critic]:** The critic status is confined to personalities within the Discipline of Ḥadīth, such as the *muḥaddithūn* [traditionists] and *nuqqād* [*rijāl* assessors]. Hence, this status does not extend beyond the purview of this domain.
- **Ḍabṭ [Precision]:** *Rijāl* criticism involves a meticulous evaluation and examination of the reliability and precision of the narrators involved in transmitting ḥadīths. This entails a comprehensive assessment of the accuracy, consistency, and meticulousness displayed by narrators in preserving and conveying the ḥadīths of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Criteria such as memory retention and the credibility of information and sources are subject to scrutiny. Notably, the term ḥadīth carries notable ambiguity, predicated on the fact that scholars specialising in ḥadīth studies have furnished it with a comprehensive delineation.
- **‘Adālah [Probity]:** The concept of *‘adālah*, in the context of *rijāl* criticism, shifts focus to the moral and ethical dimensions of narrators. Scholars evaluate whether a narrator exhibits the requisite moral character, honesty, and trustworthiness necessary for accurately transmitting the Prophet’s ﷺ words, actions, and so forth. The emphasis on integrity safeguards transmitted ḥadīths from potential fabrications or distortions.
- **Result:** The scholarly standing of transmitters remains in contention, being either vindicated or impugned, while narrations receive corresponding gradations.

2) **Rijāl Criticism in the Discipline of Qirā'āt:**

- **Ṭā'in/Nāqid [The Critic]:** The critic status is not confined to personalities within the Discipline of Qirā'āt, such as the *qurrā'* [reciters]. Instead, it extends beyond the purview of this domain, such as the realms of the *lughawīyyūn* [linguists], *nahwīyyūn* [grammarians], *fuqahā'* [jurists], and *muḥaddithūn* [traditionists].³⁰³
- **Ḍabṭ [Precision]:** In the context of Variant Readings, *ḍabṭ* entails a meticulous approach to ensuring the accurate transmission of a Reading. Scholars specialising in Qirā'āt meticulously analyse the precision of transmission, ensuring strict adherence to the established triad criteria for authenticity and acceptance of a given Reading.
- **'Adālah [Probity]:** The application of *'adālah* in the study of Variant Readings pertains to the moral character and religious integrity of the Qurra' [Readers and Transmitters]. Scholars assess whether the Readers and transmitters were individuals of upright character, adhering to Islamic principles and ethics. This ethical scrutiny is imperative to maintain the Qur'anic text's sanctity and ensure the faithful transmission of Variant Readings.
- **Result:** The scholarly standing of transmitters remains unchallenged and unassailed. At the same time, Readings are subject to either acceptance or rejection—Readings are either classified as Tawātur [mass transmissions] or *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical Readings/Irregular/Anomalous Readings].

In summation, the nuanced applications of *ḍabṭ* and *'adālah* within both *rijāl* criticism in the discipline of ḥadīth studies and the discipline of Variant Readings are contingent on the specific context. *Rijāl* criticism primarily involves the meticulous assessment of the trustworthiness of transmitted traditions, entailing careful examination of both accuracy and integrity. The ultimate outcome is a judgment rendered upon the scholarly standing of transmitters and the traditions they convey. Conversely, precision plays a pivotal role in ensuring the faithful transmission of

³⁰³ Notably, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is delineated as a dual figure, who concurrently embodies the roles of a *faqīh*, denoting his expertise in jurisprudence, and a *muḥaddith*, signifying his proficiency as a traditionist or scholar of Ḥadīth literature.

Readings in the scrutiny of Variant Readings, whereas integrity is oriented toward evaluating the moral character of transmitters. It is noteworthy that the scholarly standing of transmitters remains uncontested while Readings undergo thorough scrutiny, subject to either acceptance or rejection, thereby upholding the authenticity of the revealed scripture.

Linguistic Scrutiny vs Tawātur Authority: Challenges in Evaluating the Variant Readings

Within the domain of linguistic scholarship, the Qur'anic Variant Readings have functioned as an essential reservoir for grammarians, running parallel to their extensive exploration of the intricate fabric of the Arabic language. Manifest across the expansive corpus of established grammatical literature, these Readings constitute a pivotal linchpin, showcasing their inherent significance within the scholarly landscape. The criticisms articulated by specific grammarians against particular Readings trace their origins either to the paucity of substantive evidence aligning with their stringent standards of proof, an assumption of fallibility on the part of the reader who embraced these Readings, or the introduction of misconceptions by narrators through whom the Readings were transmitted.³⁰⁴

Linguists and grammarians, sculpting their foundational tenets from the Qur'ān, the utterances and statements of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and the eloquence interwoven in the expressions of the Arab populace, have fortified these principles as both a bulwark defending the Qur'ān and *sunnah* and a conduit advancing the cause of Allah's ﷻ Book. Once a Reading attains firm establishment, tethered to the criteria expounded earlier, it should serve as the lodestar for grammatical rulings. The inversion of this process, wherein Readings are retroactively subjected to grammatical rules, is an ill-conceived approach. The Reading, firmly anchored within the delineated pillars, emerges as the arbiter for grammatical principles. It reverberates not merely as a linguistic construct but as an auditory testament transmitted from the most eloquent Arab, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the paragon of eloquence and the foremost leader among those distinguished for clarity of expression.

Moreover, discerning scholars and diligent researchers acknowledge the considerable weight of Tawātur Readings in estimating numerous grammarians. A noteworthy cohort aligns with and embraces these Readings. Nevertheless, a perceptible landscape unfolds where specific Readings face dissent, compelling a subset of grammarians to overtly or covertly oppose or reinterpret these Readings. This schism in reception is

³⁰⁴ *al-Qirā'āt al-Qur'āniyyah wa atharuhā fī al-Tafsīr wa al-Aḥkām*: 1/249.

articulated through multifarious reasons advanced by these grammarians, thereby giving rise to a nuanced discourse within the scholarly arena.

Eminently, the grammarians embarked on a rigorous application of their lexicons and regulations when scrutinising the Variant Readings. This scholarly endeavour unfolded for a myriad of reasons, each shedding light on the multifaceted nature of their evaluative process.

Primarily, the grammarians exhibited an unwavering commitment to their established rules and regulations, serving as the lodestar guiding their assessments. Notably, the Baṣrans, staunch adherents of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, exhibited a predilection for Tawātur Readings marked by recurrence, exemplified in Ibn ‘Āmir’s Reading that accentuates the separation between the possessor and the possessed [*muḍaf* and *muḍaf ilayh*] as exemplified in ﴿اَقْتُلْ اَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَاءِ وَهُمْ﴾.

Simultaneously, their embrace extended to Readings involving the attachment of a pronoun without the explicit mention of its antecedent, a phenomenon distinctly illustrated in Ḥamzah’s Reading of ﴿وَالْاَرْحَامِ﴾, with *khafḍ* of the *mīm* as opposed to *naṣb* [accusative end-casing]. The Reading in focus, ﴿وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْاَرْحَامِ﴾ involves a subtle variation in the pronunciation of specific words in the verse, particularly regarding the presence or absence of a second *tā’*, as in ﴿تَسَاءَلُونَ﴾, with the original word being ﴿تَسَاءَلُونَ﴾, with two *tā’*s. The Kūfan Reading manifests a phonetic refinement, characterised by the omission of the second *tā’* and the application of *takhfif* to the *sīn*, exemplified in ﴿تَسَاءَلُونَ﴾, enhancing the fluidity of pronunciation. In stark contrast, the Medinites, Ibn Kathīr and Abū Ja‘far, as well as the Baṣrans, represented by ‘Abu Amr al-Baṣrī, Ya‘qūb, and the al-Shāmī Eponym, Ibn ‘Āmir, opt for *idghām* [assimilation] of the *sīn*, manifested in ﴿تَسَاءَلُونَ﴾.

Secondly, a conspicuous divergence emerges in the recitation of ﴿وَالْاَرْحَامِ﴾, where Ḥamzah employs *jarr* [genitive end-casing] of the *mīm*³⁰⁵, while the remaining Eponyms prefer the *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] variant. The particular significance

³⁰⁵ This specific Reading holds significant resonance among esteemed individuals. This roster spans luminaries such as ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allah ibn Masūd, Abū Razīn, Yaḥyā ibn Wath-thāb, Ṭalḥah ibn Muṣarrif, al-A‘mash (a notable figure among the Eponyms of the Four transmitted *Shādh* Readings), Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī, Qatādah, al-Muṭṭawwi‘ī, Mujāhid, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Aṣbahānī, al-Ḥalabī, and Abū Iyyās Hārūn ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kūfī. This comprehensive listing is meticulously documented in *Mu‘jam al-Qirā‘āt*: 2/6, attesting to the widespread recognition and acceptance of this particular recitation within the realm of the Variant Readings.

of Ḥamzah’s distinction unfolds in earnest invocations, where these elements coalesce, connoting *إِتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَتَنْسَاءَلُونَ بِالْأَرْحَامِ*, translating to “Thus, be mindful of Allah, in Whose name, and the names of the wombs, you ask.”³⁰⁶

Contentions among grammarians arose regarding the legitimacy of the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] Reading. Baṣrans asserted its error and impermissibility, while Kūfans maintained its unobjectionable nature. al-Mubarrad, as reported by Abū ‘Ali al-Fārisī, vehemently disapproved of Ḥamzah’s Reading, even suggesting leaving the prayer when confronted with such a Reading. Conversely, Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī refuted criticisms against the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] Reading, aligning it with the Tawātur Readings stemming from the Prophet ﷺ. He contends that dismissing such Readings contradicts religious authoritative structures, emphasising their consistency with the Prophet’s ﷺ traditions.³⁰⁷

Concerning the *naṣb* Reading, it conveys *إِتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوا الْأَرْحَامَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ*, translating as, “Thus, be mindful of Allah and be mindful of the names of the wombs through whom you ask.” This Reading’s lucidity resides in appending mercy to the honourable name of Allah ﷻ, accentuating the duty to preserve family ties. This implies a command to fear Allah ﷻ and uphold family bonds, averting their severance. Another variation by ‘Abd Allah ibn Yazīd, featuring *rafʿ* [nominative end-casing] of the *mīm*, as in *وَالْأَرْحَامِ*, adds an interpretive layer, either encouraging the maintenance of family ties or declaring the sanctity of kinship.³⁰⁸

In essence, both *jarr* [genitive end-casing] and *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] Variant Readings convey the same crucial message – the significance of upholding family ties as commanded by Allah ﷻ. Disagreements among grammarians and scholars should not diminish nor undermine the established Tawātur Readings transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ through generations. These linguistic nuances showcase the eloquence of the Arabic language, providing diverse perspectives without altering the core message.

³⁰⁶ *Bridges Translation of the Ten Qirāʾāt*: 51. Hamzah’s Reading unveils a historical practice rooted in the pre-Islamic era, characterised by the *ahl-jāhiliyyah* invoking Allah ﷻ while concurrently including the term “wombs” in their supplications. The employment of the term wombs holds metaphorical weight, extending its semantic reach to encompass profound concepts related to kinship and blood relations.

³⁰⁷ *Fath al-Qadir*: 1/418. *al-Futūḥāt fī al-Qirāʾāt al-‘Ashr, Sharḥan wa Tawjihān*: 1/547. *Khulāṣat al-Naṭhr fī Tawjih al-Qirāʾāt al-‘Ashr*: 187.

³⁰⁸ *Fath al-Qadir*: 1/418. *al-Futūḥāt fī al-Qirāʾāt al-‘Ashr, Sharḥan wa Tawjihān*: 1/547. *Khulāṣat al-Naṭhr fī Tawjih al-Qirāʾāt al-‘Ashr*: 187

In addition to their allegiance to established norms, grammarians responded to challenges posed by particular Readings that might not align with conventional grammatical trajectories. When the grammatical orientation of a Reading eluded comprehension, swift dismissal of the said Reading became a recourse. For instance, the Reading [هِنْتًا], adorned with a *kasrah* on the *hā'*, *iskān* of the *hamzah*, and *fath* of the *tā'*, faced criticism, with Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377 A.H.) categorising it as an illusion conjured by the transmitter.³⁰⁹ A similar scepticism surrounded Ḥamzah's Reading of [أَنْ يُخَافَا], where the structure for the object of the action prompted al-Farrā's reservations.³¹⁰ Moreover, Ibn Kathīr's Reading of [كَانَ حِطَاءً كَبِيرًا] prompted doubts, with al-Nahḥās voicing his lack of conviction, thereby asserting that his unfamiliarity of a *wajh* [option in Reading] at that juncture.³¹¹

Furthermore, a penchant for common linguistic usage emerged as a determining factor for certain grammarians. Prioritising prevailing linguistic norms over alternative possibilities, some grammarians, exemplified by Abū 'Ubaydah, critiqued Ibn 'Āmir's Reading of [بِالْعُدْوَةِ], with *iskān* of the *dāl* and *fath* of the *wāw*. Despite the criticism, their engagement with Ibn 'Āmir's Reading was rooted not in an affirmation of the *wāw* in the word but rather in the script of the Uthmanic codex, where they noted that words such as [الصَّلَاةِ] and [الزَّكَاةِ], despite being written with a *wāw*, the *wāw* was not read.

Notably, a discernible divergence emerged among grammarians, as some steadfastly adhered to a stance of rejection even when confronted with Readings that aligned with well-established linguistic norms such as *qiyās* [analogy]. An illustrative example of this phenomenon is encapsulated in the disapproval by select grammarians directed at the Reading of [أَيْمَةً] with a *yā'* as opposed to a *hamzah*. al-Zamakhsharī, a towering figure in the arena of linguistic discourse, emphatically repudiated this Reading, unequivocally asserting, “As for explicitly reading the word with a *yā'*, it is not deemed a valid Reading, and it is not permissible to consider it as such. Anyone who asserts it is, therefore, incorrect.”³¹² In contradistinction, Nāfi', traversing the avenue

³⁰⁹ *al-Hujjat al-Qirā'āt*: 4/420.

³¹⁰ *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*: 1/145.

³¹¹ *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*: 1/314. *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: 6/32.

³¹² *Ghayth al-Nafī*: 114 – 115. *al-Kash-shāf*: 2/142. *Dirāsāt li Uslūb al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*: 1/22.

of the *al-Nashr*, incorporates this Reading, thereby infusing a nuanced dimension into the scholarly discourse.³¹³

Within this intellectual milieu, Ibn Khalāwah (d. 370 A.H.), a luminary of his epoch, contributed substantively to the ongoing scholarly discourse by reinforcing the consensus that words articulated within the Qur’ān inherently possess a superior eloquence compared to their manifestation in alternative linguistic contexts.³¹⁴

Departing from this consensus, Ibn Ḥazm al-Ṭḥāhirī emerged as a resolute critic of grammarians who, ostensibly rejecting specific Readings on the grounds of linguistic violation, paradoxically endorsed linguistic expressions derived from sources beyond these Readings. Expressing incredulity, Ibn Ḥazm interrogated the inconsistency of those who extolled the linguistic prowess of poets such as Imru’ al-Qays, Zuhayr, Jarīr, al-Ḥuṭī’ah, and al-Ṭarmāḥ, while concurrently disparaging the Words of Allah ﷻ Himself—the ultimate Creator of languages—deeming them inconsequential and susceptible to alteration.

Concludingly and in the paraphrased words of al-Ṣafāqūsī, “When the venerable domains of grammarians find themselves at odds with the echelons of the *qurrā’*, the scales of preference inexorably tip in favour of the latter.”³¹⁵ This predilection is not an arbitrary inclination but a principled stance grounded in the edifice of established infallibility, wherein the *qurrā’* ascend to a pedestal of veritable authority, shielded from the labyrinthine mazes of error.

The impenetrable armour of the *qurrā’s* authority is forged through the crucible of multiple, interwoven chains of transmission [Tawātur], a testament to the meticulous scaffolding erected around the sacred citadel of their transmission. In stark contrast, the grammarians’ assertions often dangle precariously on the slender threads of

³¹³ *Ulūm al-‘Arabīyyah*: 1/213. *al-Qirā’āt wa Athruhā fī al-Tafsīr*: 1/246.

³¹⁴ *al-Faṣl fī al-Mīlāl wa al-Niḥāl*: 3/192. *al-Qirā’āt wa Athruhā fī al-Tafsīr*: 1/247.

³¹⁵ *Ghayth al-Naf’*: 152. In more accessible terms: In cases of disagreement between grammarians and reciters, precedence is given to the reciters. This is because reciters convey knowledge from individuals whose immunity from error has been verified. Furthermore, recitations are corroborated through multiple, interconnected chains of transmission [Tawātur], while the information conveyed by grammarians often relies on isolated reports [*khāb al-āḥād*]. It is important to note that the consensus [*ijmā’*] among grammarians is not reached independently of reciters, as they actively participated in transmitting the language. This emphasises the integral role of reciters in preserving linguistic nuances and highlights their authority in language and scripture.

individual reports [*khābr al-āḥād*], lacking the robust tapestry of corroborative transmission that lends credence and fortitude to the reciters' pronouncements.

Furthermore, the very bedrock upon which the consensus of grammarians stands is invariably intertwined with the threads woven by *qurrā'*. It is a symbiotic relationship where the language, akin to a sacred artefact, is guarded and disseminated through the collaborative efforts of both grammarians and *qurrā'*. The very architects of linguistic norms often don the cloak of Readings, embodying a harmonious confluence of these seemingly disparate disciplines.

Delving deeper, one unravels the layers of truth embedded in the assertion that many grammarians themselves traversed the terrain of Variant Readings.³¹⁶ Their dual roles as custodians of grammatical norms and wielders of the *qurrā'*s craft showcase the seamless symbiosis between these disciplines, bridging the chasm between syntax and the Variant Readings. This amalgamation of roles reinforces the indomitable authority of reciters and illuminates the profound interconnectedness between the guardians of language structure and the torchbearers of Divine revelation.

In summation, the proclamation of the *qurrā'*s primacy in matters of linguistic fidelity emerges not as a mere preference but as a conscientious acknowledgement of their impervious fortification against error. Their polyphonic transmissions resonate through the corridors of multiple attestations, erecting a formidable edifice of reliability. It is an edifice upon which the very sanctity of language and revelation rests, painting the reciters as custodians of linguistic sanctity and, by extension, the sacred verities enshrined in the revealed word.

³¹⁶ The manifestation of this phenomenon is conspicuously discernible within the Readings of distinguished figures such as Ibn Muḥaysin, Ibn Miqṣam, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, among other luminaries. We recommend perusing our comprehensive scholarly exposition, *In their Footsteps*, to delve deeper into this subject's intricacies. This treatise serves as a scholarly compass, guiding the reader through a meticulous exploration of the nuanced variations in articulating this linguistic phenomenon within the esteemed tradition of these eminent Readers.

Conclusion

This exploration intricately navigates the interplay between Qur'anic Variant Readings, the realm of grammarians, and the broader landscape of linguistic scholarship, underscoring the pivotal role that Variant Readings assume in shaping grammatical discourse. The diverse methodologies grammarians adopted in evaluating these Readings, stemming from their steadfast adherence to established rules and responses to linguistic challenges, took centre stage. Subsequently, a meticulous analysis sheds light on the discernible divergence among grammarians, where some align themselves with prevailing linguistic norms. In contrast, others abstain from embracing Readings that align with linguistic analogies.

Key Points:

1) Challenging Tawatur Readings:

Interplay of Linguistic Scrutiny and Tawātur Authority: Grammarians' commitment to linguistic scrutiny comes under scrutiny, especially in instances where their perspectives challenged the authoritative status of Tawātur Readings. This scrutiny highlights the importance of a nuanced reconsideration when subjecting Tawātur Readings to linguistic critique.

2) Ibn Ḥazm's Criticisms:

Unpacking Inconsistency in Linguistic Evaluation: Ibn Ḥazm's critical analysis exposes a fundamental inconsistency among grammarians, revealing their tendency to dismiss specific Readings on linguistic grounds while concurrently extolling linguistic expressions from sources beyond these Readings. This critique prompts significant questions about the integrity of their linguistic evaluations and the selective application of standards.

Reevaluating the Disparagement of the Words of Allah ﷻ: Ibn Ḥazm's incredulity regarding the preferential praise of human poets over the Words of Allah ﷻ prompts a comprehensive reassessment of the criteria and biases inherent in grammarians' linguistic assessments. It emphatically showcases the paramount linguistic excellence of the ultimate Creator, as manifested in the Qur'ān.

3) **Realigning Linguistic Assessment with Tawatur Authority:**

Advocating the Prioritisation of Tawātur Readings: The discourse showcases the necessity for a paradigm shift in linguistic assessments. Instead of subjecting Tawātur Readings to retroactive scrutiny under evolving linguistic rules, grammarians were urged to acknowledge their authoritative status in shaping grammatical principles.

4) **Recognising Nuances within Linguistic Discourse:**

Promoting a Nuanced Approach to Address Dissent: The discourse accentuates the significance of fostering a nuanced discourse, advocating inclusivity in comprehending linguistic variations among grammarians. This approach facilitates a profound understanding of the intricate linguistic dynamics within the scholarly arena.

5) **Reaffirming Qurrā's Authority:**

Upholding the Precedence of Tawātur Readings: Despite challenges posed by grammarians, it remains imperative to reaffirm the authority of Tawātur Readings, particularly in instances of disagreement. The collective and verified nature of these recitations, as highlighted by their interconnected chains of transmission, underscores their indispensable role in shaping linguistic understanding and maintaining the fidelity of scripture.

In conclusion, this discourse passionately showcases the authoritative standing of Tawātur Readings while simultaneously addressing and confronting the inconsistencies in linguistic evaluations. It advocates for a paradigm shift in linguistic assessments, urging a nuanced approach that aligns with the profound linguistic expression of the Qur'ān. By reaffirming the authority of Tawātur Readings and acknowledging the challenges posed by grammarians, the discourse emphasises the need for inclusivity and a comprehensive understanding of linguistic variations within the scholarly arena. In essence, it encourages a balanced and respectful discourse that bridges the perspectives of both reciters and grammarians, fostering a harmonious interpretation of language and scripture.

Unravelling Dissent: Examining Marginal Dissonance on the Mutawātir Status of Qur’anic Variant Readings

The consensus prevailing among the scholarly echelons, encompassing luminaries in Qur’anic Variant Readings [Qurrā’] and jurisprudential savants [Uṣūlī’s], resounds with unwavering determination in affirming the incontrovertible status of the Seven Variant Readings as unequivocally Mutawātir. This consensus, etched with the *imprimatur* of reliable transmission to the esteemed Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, stands as an unassailable testament within the intellectual citadel of Islamic erudition. However, within this enclave of erudite unity, a subtle dissonance has emerged, manifesting dissenting voices articulated notably by Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Rabīʿ Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Qawiyy ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ṭūfī al-Ḥanbalī, seeking to rupture the established orthodoxy. A meticulous dissection of this nuanced landscape becomes imperative, demanding a profound consideration of the inherent complexity permeating this discourse.

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Dimyātī, esteemed for erudition and piety, encapsulates the prevailing sentiment with succinct articulation. His reference to the revered Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, within the realm of *fatāwā* [legal verdicts], imparts instructive insights. al-Subkī, endowed with perspicacity rooted in both knowledge and spiritual acumen, delineates a definitive standpoint: “The Seven Variant Readings, distilled by al-Shātibī, alongside the triad of Readings attributed to Abū Ja‘far, Ya‘qūb, and Khalaf, are indubitably Mutawātir—classifying all Ten Readings as Tawātur. This verity is entrenched in our religious consciousness as an absolute reality, an unwavering conviction that these Readings emanated as revelations to the esteemed Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Any repudiation of this incontrovertible fact indicates ignorance, and it is paramount to underscore that no facet within these Readings is confined or relegated to those who recite them through specific narrations. On the contrary, they command universal recognition among the entirety of the Muslim ummah, each member of which professes the unequivocal testimony: ‘There is no god but Allah ﷻ, and Muḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah.’ This acknowledgement is not circumscribed by one’s Qur’anic memorisation or scholarly attainment level.”

al-Subkī, in further elucidation, expands upon the discourse, transcending the confines of this document to provide a comprehensive substantiation. Within this expansive framework, he posits that by inherent entitlement and right, every Muslim possesses the prerogative to affirm with unwavering certainty that the expounded matter is conclusively Mutawātir. Here, speculations and uncertainties find no foothold, as the assertion stands fortified against any challenge from a nuanced perspective.

The crux of the matter, residing in the unanimous acknowledgement, is that the Seven Readings ascend to the distinguished status of Mutawātir. Analogously, the triad of Readings attributed to Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf garner identical recognition, thereby constituting the preferred and accurate perspective. This selected and authentic stance, bequeathed by esteemed scholars and embraced per their teachings, posits a categorical assertion. Consequently, it is asserted that the subsequent Four *Shādh* Readings—Extra-Canonical Readings stemming from Ibn Muḥaysin, Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and al-A'mash—unanimously deviate from this established consensus.³¹⁷

In parallel affirmation, al-Nawwawī, a venerable luminary who has etched an indelible mark on Islamic jurisprudence, unequivocally asserts, “Our erudite scholars, alongside other luminaries, have consistently affirmed the permissibility of reciting any of the Seven Variant Readings in prayers and other sacred acts of worship.” Conversely, a decisive prohibition is declared against utilising Variant Readings that deviate, as such deviations render them *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical], thus falling beyond the purview of the Qur'ān. The sanctity of the Qur'ān is contingent upon its establishment through Tawātur transmission, a criterion meticulously met by each of the Seven Readings. This pronouncement stands as an immutable truth, resistant to alteration, and any divergence from this position is deemed misguided or born out of ignorance.³¹⁸

Moreover, the resonant scholarly intonation of Abū al-Baqā' Muḥamad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Najjār al-Fattūḥī al-Ḥanbalī resounds, further fortifying the prevailing consensus regarding the Tawātur status attributed to the Seven Readings. His

³¹⁷ *Ithāf al-Fuḍalā'*: 9.

³¹⁸ *al-Majmū'*: 3/392.

emphatic declaration asserts, “Unanimously, the *A’immat al-Madhāhib al-Arba’ah* and other luminaries of the *sunnah* affirm the Tawātur status of the Seven Readings.” This unanimity is communicated through the pen of al-Sarakhsī, a representative of al-Shāfi’ī adherents, elucidating this consensus within his treatise on fasting encapsulated in *al-Ghayah*. Furthermore, al-Sarakhsī expounds upon the Mu’tazilites’ divergence, who, in contrast, position the Seven Variant Readings as *āḥād* [solitary report].³¹⁹

Noteworthy is the unwavering affirmation by the erudite scholar al-Zarkashī, who staunchly contends, “The rigorously substantiated evidence, fortified by unambiguous indications, unequivocally establishes the Tawātur status of all Ten Variant Readings.” This categorical standpoint garners resolute endorsement from assiduous researchers entrenched within the spheres of foundational principles and Qur’anic Variant Readings, as exemplified by illustrious luminaries such as Ibn al-Subkī, Ibn al-Jazarī, and al-Nuwayrī.³²⁰

To grasp the profundity of this assertion, it becomes imperative to elucidate the profound significance encapsulated within the term Mutawātir, signifying Variant Readings that have undergone meticulous and universally disseminated transmission. This scholarly lexicographic term is a testament to the widespread acceptance and acknowledgement of the Tawātur status characterising these Ten Variant Readings. The convergence of opinions among authorities hailing from diverse intellectual traditions, prominently represented by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas’ūd al-Baghawī, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, his son Ibn al-Subkī, Ibn al-Jazarī, and al-Nuwayrī,

³¹⁹ *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*: 2/127. Contrary to the perspectives advanced by various scholars, as well as the *ijmā’* predating Ibn al-Jazarī, the esteemed scholar, in his seminal work *Munjid al-Muqri’in*, emphatically asserts the existence of a unanimous consensus, or *ijmā’*, encompassing all Ten Variant Readings of the Qur’ān. This pronouncement by Ibn al-Jazarī, introduces a critical juncture where the latter *ijmā’* takes precedence and supersedes the antecedent consensus. Ibn al-Jazarī’s decisive declaration posits a paradigm shift, challenging and effectively overturning any prior notions that may have suggested a lack of consensus on the matter. By explicitly stating that *ijmā’* stands in favour of recognising the legitimacy and authenticity of all Ten Variant Readings, Ibn al-Jazarī establishes a new interpretive framework.

It is crucial to underscore the significance of this intellectual shift and the subsequent implications for the broader discourse on the Qur’anic Variant Readings. Scholars who may have held divergent views are, in essence, overridden by this proclaimed *ijmā’*. This dynamic underscores the evolving nature of scholarly consensus and the adaptability of interpretive frameworks within the field of Qur’anic studies.

In conclusion, Ibn al-Jazarī’s authoritative stance, supported by *ijmā’* as delineated in *Munjid al-Muqri’in*, serves as a pivotal point of reference, effectively superseding any dissenting perspectives that may have existed prior to this consensus.

³²⁰ *Manāhil al-’Irfān*: 1/441.

underscores the profound scholarly consensus on this matter.³²¹ This unity embedded within the scholarly discourse accentuates these Readings' sacred and revered nature, signifying a profound understanding of their authenticity and reliability across a spectrum of scholarly perspectives.

Moreover, a nuanced and probing inquiry frequently emerges within intellectual spheres, casting doubt upon the authenticity of the *asānīd* [transmission chains] intricately associated with the Eponymous Ten Readers of the Variant Readings mentioned earlier. These *asānīd* are often construed as delimited and predominantly *āḥād* [singular or solitary] in nature, prompting a legitimate query: *How can the Readings attributed to these Eponymous Readers confidently assert their esteemed status of Tawātur?*

In addressing this concern, it becomes imperative to dispel this enduring fallacy, a task diligently undertaken by numerous erudite scholars specialising in the intricate realms of Variant Readings. It is paramount to underscore that the venerable Eponyms, whose names have become synonymous with these Readings, did not operate in isolation as the exclusive custodians of their meticulous preservation. The chains of transmission that link back to these Eponyms were not confined within a finite temporal boundary but transcended their epoch, reaching into the epochs preceding them and enduring well into subsequent periods. The authenticity of these Variant Readings finds perpetuation not solely through the endeavours of the given Eponyms but also through a collective initiative that engaged contemporaneous scholars and their successors. This engaged scholarly community actively contributed to the Eponyms' acquisition, codification, and dissemination.

Consequently, the Tawātur status attributed to these Readings emanates from the singular exertions of the initial Eponyms and the collaborative and successive efforts of those who partook in the transmission and meticulous preservation of these Variant Readings. This collaborative scholarly enterprise, extending beyond the immediate temporal confines of these Eponyms, substantiates the enduring and perennial nature of the Tawātur status. The reliability of these Variant Readings,

³²¹ *Munjid al-Muqri'in*: 55. *Ḥawāshī al-Shirwānī wa al-'Abbādi 'alā Tuḥfat al-Minhāj*: 2/29. Significantly, Sulaymān al-Kurdī and Muḥammad Maḥfūṭh al-Tarmasī corroborate the afore-mentioned perspective in their respective renditions of the *Ḥawāshī*.

validated through an unbroken chain of mass transmission, bears witness to the concerted endeavours of a diverse cadre of scholars spanning different epochs.

Furthermore, the esteemed and revered Sharaf al-Dīn al-Dimyaṭī, in providing a discerning rejoinder, articulates, “I affirm that circumscribing the documented *asānīd* [transmission chains] to a specific cohort does not negate the emergence of Variant Readings from alternative sources. The attribution of these Readings to this particular group emanates from their assiduous dedication to the systematic arrangement of the ḥurūf [Qirā’āt/Variant Readings] and the preservation of their *sanad* [scholarly lineage] in this domain. Acknowledging that each luminary within their tier possesses numerous Mutawātir transmissions commensurate with the stratum they represent is imperative.

This perspective finds validation among meticulous scholars. The divergences noted in certain facets of Ibn al-Ḥājjib’s assertions elicited a cogent rebuttal from the *muḥarrir*, *Sheikh al-Qurrā’*, Ibn al-Jazarī, who expounded extensively on these intricacies in his seminal work, *al-Munjid*. His comprehensive clarifications demand thorough consideration, shedding light on the nuanced dimensions inherent in this discourse.³²² Ibn al-Jazarī’s succinct aphorism regarding the isolated viewpoint of Ibn al-Ḥājjib resounds with authority: “Our cognisance does not encapsulate any antecedent—whatsoever—to Ibn al-Ḥājjib in this particular investigation. Significantly, scholars specialising in *uṣūl* unanimously affirm the comprehensive corpus of these Readings as bearing the Mutawātir status—a consensus underscored by eminent figures such as al-Qādī Abū Bakr in his seminal treatise *al-Intiṣār* among other texts.” This statement categorically asserts that Ibn al-Ḥājjib was isolated with this viewpoint.

Notably, Ibn al-Najjār al-Fattūḥi, as expounded in his exhaustive exegesis within *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*, ardently espouses a critical standpoint in response to contentions proffered by figures such as al-Ṭūfī in his commentary. al-Ṭūfī’s assertion of the *āḥād* [solitariness] status of these chains, as showcased by Ibn al-Najjār, lacks substantive support. According to al-Ṭūfī, the essence of the matter revolves around the unambiguous linkage of the chains of the Seven Eponymous Readers, associated with the Seven Canonical Readings, to the esteemed Prophet ﷺ — *Tawātara ‘anhum*

³²² *Ithāf al-Fuḍalā’*: 9.

lā ilayhim. The erroneous ambiguity, according to al-Ṭūfī, hinges on the fact that the Tawātur status of the Readings only emerged from their epoch going forward and not from the epochs preceding them. Significantly, these transmission chains are meticulously archived within the extensive body of Variant Reading literature. However, al-Ṭūfī astutely notes that these chains fall short of meeting the rigorous criteria for Tawātur, given their generational transmission from one narrator to another, thus classifying them—the entire corpus of Variant Readings as *āḥād* [solitary transmissions].³²³

Responding to this contention, a judicious rejoinder is articulated, firmly asserting that the confinement of these chains to a specific group does not preclude the emergence of Variant Readings from other sources. As recognised by Ibn al-Najjār, the erudite scholars shed light on the dynamic nature of this transmission process. Each Eponymous Reader, intricately connected to diverse regions, received a plethora of Readings via the Readings of their respective predecessors, linking to the Prophet ﷺ. This intricate network of transmission, spanning figures from the Companions and others, weaved a complex lattice. This ongoing exchange facilitated the dissemination of Readings and, crucially, fostered the establishment of Tawātur within this scholarly milieu. Significantly, the dedicated Eponyms, devoted to the meticulous arrangement of Variant Reading and the preservation of their scholarly lineage, played pivotal roles as conduits for the direct transmission of these chains.

In an apt analogy, Ibn al-Najjār draws a parallel between this scenario and the reports encapsulated in the Farewell Pilgrimage [*Hajjat al-Widāʿ*] sermon, resonating through the ages despite their *āḥād* [solitary] nature. These reports, though characterised as *āḥād*, maintain an unbroken transmission through individuals dedicated to ensuring the continuity of Tawātur. As emphasised by Ibn al-Najjār, exercising discernment becomes imperative, resisting the sway of contentions erroneously advocating for the singularity or *āḥād* nature of the transmission chains of the Eponymous Readers.

Additionally, when confronted with the pivotal question of how one asserts the validity of the term Mutawātir or Tawātur and its conceptualisation, particularly

³²³ *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munir*. 2/127 – 128.

considering its absence before Ibn Mujāhid, the septuplist—the pioneer canoniser of the Seven Canonical Readings—a nuanced understanding is required:

- 1) Mutawātir or Tawātur signifies a form of knowledge that is *‘ilm al-yaqīnī* [certain and unequivocal knowledge] *qaṭʿī* [definitive], which is immune to doubt or dispute as it is impervious to reproach. This definitive and unequivocal knowledge is distinctly divergent from *‘ilm al-ṭhannī* [speculative knowledge].
- 2) It is simply dubious and erroneous to assume that Arabs from the prophetic era would be familiar with the usage of *Tajwīd* [Elocutionary Laws] technical terms such as *ikhfāʾ*, *iqḷāb*, *hams*, *istiʿlāʾ*, *madd* and so forth. An illustrative case study is found in an instance whereby a reciter read the verse [إِنَّمَا الصَّدُفْتُ]³²⁴ إِلَى الْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ to Ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه and applied *qasr* [2 morae] in *madd muttaṣil* [a *hamzah* following the letter of *madd* in one word] as opposed to applying *tawassuṭ* [4 morae] or *tūl* [6 morae]. Essentially, there was no directive from Ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه to modify the elongation or prolongation of the application of *madd*. Instead, Ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه rectified the error by accurately demonstrating his reading of the verse by prolonging the *madd*. This incident illuminates the existence and application of precepts, underscoring their intrinsic nature beyond the confines of technical terminology despite their adaptation centuries later.³²⁵
- 3) Another pivotal aspect within this discourse, as elucidated by the German orientalist Theodore Nöldeke (1836 – 1930), pertains to the principle of the majority.³²⁶ It serves as a cornerstone in understanding the evolution and standardisation of Qurʾanic Readings and its Oral Tradition. Thus, delving into the historical context, it becomes apparent that early *qurrāʾ* navigated the complexities of Qurʾanic transmission without the formalised terminologies that are commonplace in contemporary Islamic studies. Terms such as Mutawātir or Tawātur, which denote widespread transmission, were absent from their lexicon. However, this absence does not imply a lack of conceptual

³²⁴ *Sūrat al-Tawbah*: 60.

³²⁵ al-Ṭabṛānī in his *Muʿjam al-Kabīr*: 8677.

³²⁶ *The History of the Qurʾān*: 482 – 484.

understanding or a void in scholarly discourse. On the contrary, early *qurrā'* employed nuanced terms such as *ijtimā' al-āmmah 'alayhi* or *ijtimā' al-jamā'ah/al-kāffah/al-jumhūr/al-nās* to articulate principles akin to the concept of Tawātur.

The term "*ijtimā' al-āmmah 'alayhi*" encapsulates the notion of a widespread agreement or consensus among the *qurrā'* regarding a particular Qur'anic Reading or Variant. Although not explicitly labelled Mutawātir, this collective agreement reflects a similar foundational principle of widespread acceptance and transmission. Similarly, "*ijtimā' al-jamā'ah/al-kāffah/al-jumhūr/al-nās*" signifies the majority agreement within the scholarly community regarding a specific Qur'anic Variant Reading. While nuanced in terminology, this collective agreement embodies the essence of Tawātur in terms of the authoritative mass agreement, which, in turn, leads to mass transmission and reliability.

The attribution of these terms to Theodore Nöldeke as the principle of the majority underscores their significance in early Islamic scholarship. Nöldeke's scholarly insights shed light on how the concept of Tawātur was comprehended and articulated within the intellectual milieu of early Muslim scholars. While the terminology may have evolved over time, the fundamental principles of widespread consensus and majority agreement remained integral to developing and preserving the Oral Tradition of the Variant Readings.

- 4) Concurrently, in the Discipline of Ḥadīth, the Discipline of Uṣūl al-Fiqh, and analogous disciplines, the belated introduction of a specific term does not nullify the pre-existing understanding it encapsulates within its domain. The deferred emergence of a particular term does not obliterate the familiarity with its substance among practitioners in those fields.

Addressing the contention that Mutawātir might not have been accessible beyond specialised circles or widely disseminated, it is imperative to underscore that such limitations should not be misconstrued as a repudiation of the existence or validation of the content in question.

The erudite Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī delved into this issue, affirming, “The universal dissemination of Mutawātir across the entire Ummah is not a prerequisite. Within the *qurrāʾ* domain, Tawātur elements are unfamiliar to others. Jurists grapple with Tawātur issues transmitted through their *imāms*, unbeknownst to the *qurrāʾ*. Similarly, among traditionists, Mutawātir narrations may elude the awareness of jurists or be transmitted to them based on *ʿilm al-ṭhannī* [speculative knowledge]. The grammarians and linguists, too, are privy to *qaṭʿ* [definitive] matters.”³²⁷ In contemplation of al-Dhahabī’s statement, it is imperative to unequivocally recognise that the discourse surrounding the Tawātur status of the Ten Variant Readings transcends the realms of *masʿalat al-fiqhiyyah* [jurisprudential discussion] and *masʿalat al-uṣūliyyah* [legislative discussion]; rather, it firmly dwells within the domain of being a *masʿalat al-qurrāʾ* [discussion confined to the purview of the *qurrāʾ*]. Despite the issuance of *fatāwā* [legal verdicts] by legendary scholars such as al-Subkī and the perspectives articulated by various *fuqahāʾ* and *uṣūlī* scholars, primacy on this matter is indeed accorded to the viewpoint of the *qurrāʾ*.

Furthermore, the statement of al-Dhahabī underscores a fundamental principle: the prerequisite for Mutawātir is not its universal dissemination throughout the entire scholarly community. Instead, it may manifest within specific spheres or disciplines, transmitted and known among specialists in those respective domains. al-Dhahabī’s comprehensive observation encapsulates the diverse array of Mutawātir elements present within various scholarly domains, emphasising that the universality of awareness does not determine the legitimacy or substantiation of Mutawātir content.

Notably, in the opening address of his *Munjid al-Muqriʿin*, a similar sentiment is asserted by Ibn al-Jazarī, which articulates a profound doctrine that reverberates through the annals of scholarly discourse, resonating with discerning insight into the intricacies of intellectual authority. Ibn al-Jazarī states, “*Cultivating a deep understanding of each field necessitates a thorough investigation into the expertise of its practitioners. It is evident to those with astute discernment that an individual, regardless of their authority within a specific domain of knowledge, may encounter*

³²⁷ *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*: 10/171.

*pitfalls of misunderstanding and error when venturing into unfamiliar territories or discussing interconnected fields where their proficiency is limited.*³²⁸

The concept encapsulated in the maxim “*Cultivating a deep understanding of each field necessitates a thorough investigation into the expertise of its practitioners*” elucidates the intrinsic requirement of comprehending individuals’ contextual intricacies and historical backgrounds within a given discipline. This principle underscores the indispensable need for integrating humanistic considerations alongside the technical or theoretical dimensions within the purview of any academic pursuit.

Moreover, the adage “*It is evident to those with astute discernment that an individual, regardless of their authority within a specific domain of knowledge*”, illuminates the inherent limitation of expertise to particular spheres of knowledge. Possessing knowledge or proficiency in one area does not automatically confer an equivalent level of mastery in related or overlapping domains. Therefore, superimposing the authoritative status of a scholar from one domain to another is simply erroneous—even if the individual in question is considered an authority within one or even two domains.

Furthermore, the cautionary admonition against “*may encounter pitfalls of misunderstanding and error when venturing into unfamiliar territories or discussing interconnected fields where their proficiency is limited*” accentuates the potential hazards of transgressing the boundaries of one’s knowledge domain. It serves as a reminder of the perils of assuming unwarranted authority or making definitive pronouncements devoid of a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This admonishment underscores the necessity for perpetual learning and the cultivation of humility in scholarly pursuits.

Ibn al-Jazari’s assertion showcases the interconnectedness of diverse fields of inquiry and the paramount importance of acknowledging and embracing intellectual limitations as integral components of scholarly endeavours.

³²⁸ *Munjid al-Muqri’in*: 5.

Lastly, throughout the annals of history, there remains an unequivocal absence of any proclamation by the *qurrā'* categorising the Three Variant Readings above the Seven Canonical Readings as lacking the status of being Mutawātir. This historical trajectory not only underscores the distinctive nature of the discussion but also emphasises the elevated standing and authoritative role assumed by the *qurrā'* in shaping the discourse on the Tawātur status of the Ten Variant Readings.

Stylistic Readings and Jurisprudential Foundations: An In-Depth Analysis of the Choices of the *A'imat al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*

The intricate interplay between Variant Readings and jurisprudential insights is a testament to the profound depth of legal scholarship within Islamic jurisprudence.³²⁹ This relationship is underscored by the fact that specific divergences in legal decrees often trace their roots back to particular readings, revealing the meticulous attention that jurists dedicated to the nuances of textual interpretations. Much akin to linguists who meticulously parse words for linguistic insights, jurists regard readings as fundamental pillars upon which legal frameworks are constructed, highlighting their indispensable role in the legislative landscape. Despite the exacting nature of jurisprudence, the complex role of readings in shaping Islamic legislation remains a subject of multifaceted inquiry. Scholars engage in thorough examinations aimed at discerning the evidential weight of readings, a process that involves extensive study, intricate analysis, meticulous comparison, and detailed elucidation of variances in legal rulings stemming from differing readings. This scholarly endeavour is methodologically rigorous, requiring a preliminary phase dedicated to defining readings and outlining the types relevant to legal deductions, ensuring a robust foundation for legal inference. By critically examining Variant Readings, scholars illuminate the intricate web of legal interpretation and emphasise the nuanced relationship between textual analysis, legal reasoning, and the formulation of jurisprudential principles.

Eminently, the chosen Readings of the esteemed *A'imat al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah* [Scholars of the Four Jurisprudential Schools of Thought], revered authorities in jurisprudence and scholarly pursuits, stand as monumental influences shaping their legal reasoning and intellectual contributions. Their careful selection and nuanced

³²⁹ While this article predominantly focuses on delineating the impact of Variant Readings on jurisprudential matters, it is imperative to acknowledge that the nexus between these Readings and various scholarly domains is far-reaching and multifaceted. The influence of Variant Readings transcends the confines of jurisprudence. It permeates into realms such as Theology [*Aqā'id*], Qur'anic Exegesis [Tafsīr], and Linguistics [*Lughah*]; and extends to pivotal areas like the principles of jurisprudence [*Qawā'id al-Fiqh-hiyyah*] and foundational legal theory [*Uṣūliyyah*].

This comprehensive interplay between Variant Readings and diverse scholarly disciplines underscores the profound and extensive implications these Readings have within the broader spectrum of Islamic scholarship. It signifies the interconnectedness of various branches of knowledge within the Islamic tradition. It underscores the nuanced understanding required to appreciate the holistic impact of Variant Readings on Islamic intellectual discourse.

interpretations of Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions epitomise the classical Islamic legal tradition’s rigorous intellectual rigour and methodological precision. Through their profound engagement with the Qur’anic text and the Prophetic traditions, these scholars illuminate the intricate lexical nuances embedded within Islamic legal discourse. This authoritative stature ensures that their chosen stylistic Readings reflect the richness of Islamic legal heritage and serve as enduring sources of guidance and reference for generations of jurists, scholars, and students navigating the complexities of Islamic law and ethics.

The first illustrative case study of juristic alignment is discerned in the word **وَالْعُمْرَةَ**], highlighted explicitly in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 196. This word, encapsulating a profound lexical significance, serves as a focal point for our scholarly discourse:

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ط

Exploring Varied Interpretations of **وَالْعُمْرَةَ** – The noun **وَالْعُمْرَةَ**] within the Qur’anic verse unfolds a rich tapestry of diverse Readings, giving rise to distinct interpretations that spotlight two prevailing Readings. This lexical exploration unveils the nuanced nature of these Readings. The first Reading, credited to the majority, the venerable Eponyms, the likes of Nāfi‘, Ibn Kathīr, Abū ‘Amr, Ibn ‘Āmir, ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, Kisā‘ī, Abū Ja‘far, Ya‘qūb, and Khalaf al-‘Āshir, read with *naṣb* [accusative case-ending] of the *tā’*, thus presenting the Reading as **وَالْعُمْرَةَ**]. Additionally, the stylistic Readings of Ibn Muḥayṣin, al-A‘mash, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī align in a harmonious agreement with the Reading of their *aṣl* [basis].

In contrast, the second Reading incorporates *raf‘* [nominative case-ending] of the *tā’*, aligning with the remaining Eponym, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who reads it as **وَالْعُمْرَةُ**].³³⁰

Exploring Varied Interpretations of **وَأَتِمُّوا** – The linguistic imperative encapsulated in the phrase **وَأَتِمُّوا**], connoting “**And complete**”, resonates with authoritative undertones, compelling a thorough and meticulous execution. Various scholarly interpretations contribute to our nuanced grasp of this imperative. al-Shāfi‘ī interprets it as an unequivocal command, mandating the flawless and comprehensive fulfilment of both

³³⁰ *The Four Non-Canonical Readings*: 96.

Ḥajj and ‘Umrah. Conversely, Abū Ḥanīfah posits a conditional understanding, asserting that once these rituals are initiated, they must culminate in their entirety. This scholarly discourse enriches our comprehension of ‘Umrah; under al-Shāfi‘ī’s interpretation, ‘Umrah assumes an obligatory status devoid of any conditional constraints.

al-Shāfi‘ī fortifies his argument by equating completion with the pinnacle of perfection, drawing analogies from Qur’anic instances where the concept of completion signifies unparalleled excellence.³³¹ This interpretation garners precedence over the notion of conditional completion due to its harmonious alignment with the original intent, effectively mitigating any interpretive ambiguities. Furthermore, the precedence set by the Prophet Muḥammad’s ﷺ observance of ‘Umrah prior to Ḥajj underscores the profound significance attributed to ‘Umrah, seamlessly aligning with the Qur’anic verse that underscores humanity’s sacred responsibility towards Ḥajj.³³²

While ‘Umrah does not inherently carry an obligatory mandate, its obligatory nature manifests once initiated, fostering a pragmatic and beneficial comprehension within religious contexts. The Qur’anic verse “On the Day of the greater Ḥajj”³³³ serves as a testament to the validation of the lesser Ḥajj, symbolising ‘Umrah. At the same time, Ḥajj stands firm as an obligation decreed by divine authority.

Grammatical Analyses of the Verse – In the *naṣb* reading [accusative state], both [الْحَجَّ] and [وَالْعُمْرَةَ] act as the *maʿūl* [object] and are both connected to the imperative command [وَأَتِمُّوا], thus connoting “**Complete the [farḍiyyah/obligation of] Ḥajj and ‘Umrah**”. Conversely, in the *rafʿ* reading [nominative end-casing], the word [وَالْعُمْرَةُ] is a separate sentence. It acts as the *mubtada’* [subject] of the *khabr* [predicate], which is [لِلَّهِ], thus connoting “**Complete the Ḥajj, while ‘Umrah [as another virtuous act] is only for Allah**”.

Shifting our focus to the realm of jurisprudence, a kaleidoscope of perspectives unfolds regarding the nuanced issue at hand as scholars delineate the following viewpoints:

³³¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah*: 124.

³³² *Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān*: 97.

³³³ *Sūrat al-Tawbah*: 3.

The Naṣb Reading: The discourse surrounding the interpretation of the terms “Umrah” and “Ḥajj” within Islamic jurisprudence manifests a rich tapestry of divergent viewpoints among jurists, notably regarding the obligatory status of ‘Umrah. A contingent of scholars argues for the compulsory nature of ‘Umrah when read in the accusative case alongside “Ḥajj,” contrasting with the perspective that the nominative reading denotes a voluntary act. This dichotomy arises from the nuanced understanding that the phrase “and complete” signifies the performance of both ‘Umrah and Ḥajj, a divine injunction endorsed by narrations attributed to eminent figures such as Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ via his *Shawādh* and al-Ṭabarī via Masrūq, amplifying ‘Umrah’s obligatory stature alongside Ḥajj.³³⁴

Historically, the revered Companions, including ‘Ali ؓ, Ibn ‘Umar ؓ, and Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, alongside prominent figures the likes of ‘Atā’, Ṭāwus, Mujāhid, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, al-Sha‘bī, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr, and Masrūq as well as proponents of the Shāfi‘iyyah and the Ḥanābilah, advocate for the obligation of ‘Umrah based on textual evidence.³³⁵ Their argument rests on the premise that Allah ﷻ mandates completing ‘Umrah in conjunction with Ḥajj, assigning it equivalent legal weight as Ḥajj itself. However, counterarguments from scholars such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, and Ibn al-‘Arabī posit that the accusative reading alone does not offer conclusive proof for ‘Umrah’s obligatory nature, drawing parallels with voluntary Ḥajj where obligation stems from commitment rather than mere intention.³³⁶

A consensus emerges among scholars regarding the obligation to fulfil ‘Umrah once a pilgrim enters *iḥrām* [customary white robes worn by Muslim pilgrims symbolising a sacred or consecrated state] for it, irrespective of the initial voluntary intent. This consensus aligns with the principle that ‘Umrah, akin to voluntary Ḥajj, transitions into a mandatory act upon initiation. In contrast, Ḥajj is inherently obligatory, as elucidated in the Qur’anic verse emphasising Allah’s ﷻ mandate upon humanity concerning Ḥajj. This viewpoint garners support from Companions such as Ibn

³³⁴ *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*: 2/369. *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*: 2/121.

³³⁵ *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*: 2/368.

³³⁶ *al-Kaṣh-shāf*: 1/238 – 239. *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*: 1/119.

Mas'ūd ؓ and Jābir ؓ, alongside Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī and proponents of the Ḥanafīyah and Mālikīyah jurisprudential schools of thought.³³⁷

The Raf' Reading: The exploration of the concept of 'Umrah, mainly through its nominative reading, reveals a nuanced perspective indicating that 'Umrah, in its essence, does not carry inherent obligatory status but rather represents a sacred pilgrimage to the House of Allah ﷻ. This understanding revolves around the intricate rituals encapsulated within the term “Umrah,” with the fulfilment of these rituals symbolising the completion of 'Umrah itself. Unlike the comprehensive nature of Ḥajj, which includes additional rites such as *wuqūf* [standing at the plains of 'Arafah] and the visitation of Mīnā and Muzdalifah, the culmination of 'Umrah occurs with *ṭawāf* [circumambulation] and *sa'ī* [moving between mounts Ṣafā and Marwah]. Once these obligatory actions are performed, no further prescribed rites remain, underscoring 'Umrah as a profound act of devotion exclusively dedicated to Allah ﷻ.

The second case study intricately delves into the semantic complexities encapsulated within the term [أُحْصِنَ] specifically highlighted in *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, verse 25, providing a comprehensive exploration of its nuanced interpretations within Islamic jurisprudence. This focal point serves as a linchpin for a detailed investigation into Variant Readings and their legal implications, garnering scholarly attention for its potential impact on the understanding of capital punishment for an unmarried enslaved woman.

فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ط

Exploring Varied Interpretations of [أُحْصِنَ] – The verb [أُحْصِنَ] within the segment of the Qur'anic verse unfolds a rich tapestry of diverse Readings giving rise to distinct interpretations that spotlight two prevailing Readings. This lexical exploration, meticulously documented by al-Ṣafāqūsī and al-Qāḍī, offers valuable insights into the subtle nuances embedded within these readings.

³³⁷ *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*: 2/122. It is of paramount importance to underscore, drawing upon the discussions delineated above, that the Four Jurisprudential Schools of Thought uniformly adhere to the *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] reading methodology. It is imperative to dispel any misapprehension that suggests divergence within this consensus, particularly concerning the Ḥanafīyah and Mālikīyah, allegedly deviating towards the *raf'* [nominative end-casing] reading associated with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

The passive voice reading [أُحْصِنَ], championed by venerable Eponyms, the likes of Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, Ibn 'Āmir, Ḥafṣ, Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, Ibn Muḥayṣin, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Yahyā al-Yazīdī, portrays a grammatical structure with a *ḍammah* on the *hamzah* and *khafḍ* of the *ṣād*.³³⁸

In contrast, the active voice reading [أَحْصَنَ] garners favour among the remaining Eponyms such as Shu'bah, Ḥamzah, Kisā'i, Khalaf al-'Āshir, and al-A'mash, thus showcasing *fath* of both the *hamzah* and the *ṣād*, which, reflects distinct phonological nuances.³³⁹

The detailed exegesis under examination meticulously navigates the convolutions of Islamic legal theory, notably addressing the intricate nuances inherent in the jurisprudential landscape surrounding the capital punishment framework concerning an unmarried enslaved woman. This meticulous analysis assumes paramount significance in deciphering the intricate legal doctrines and ethical imperatives delineated within the Qur'anic framework and the Prophetic tradition.

In the tapestry of Islamic jurisprudence, a fine-grained differentiation emerges in the punitive measures prescribed for fornication and adultery, contingent upon the matrimonial status and personal liberty of the individuals involved. Illustrated by the Qur'anic stipulations, a single, free individual engaging in fornication incurs a punitive sentence of one hundred lashes, a punitive measure dutifully endorsed by Qur'anic teachings. Conversely, the harrowing transgression of adultery committed by a free married individual attracts the gravest of punishments, namely *rajm*, or stoning to death, as perpetuated by the sacrosanct traditions established by the Prophetic traditions.

However, the analytical gaze narrows upon a peculiar narrative thread woven within the Qur'anic fabric, delineating the punitive course for an unmarried enslaved woman embroiled in transgressions of this nature. Herein lies the crux of interpretative conundrums, particularly concerning the application of *rajm* upon a married enslaved woman. Scholarly consensus coalesces around the contention that the [أَحْصَنَ] reading

³³⁸ *Ghayth al-Naf*: 169. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 110.

³³⁹ *Ghayth al-Naf*: 169. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 110.

connotes “Islam”, which articulates an inherent adherence to the “Islamic ethos”, propelling the concurred opinion [*ijmāʿ*] that the capital punishment for adultery among enslaved married individuals finds no enforcement. This stands as a testament to the immutable nature of *rajm*, which cannot be halved by virtue of its intrinsic nature.³⁴⁰ Conversely, the [أُحْصِنَ] reading, tethered to the concept of “marriage,” is deemed inapplicable in this context, aligning with the unambiguous punishment stipulations for adultery. Consequently, the punishment for adultery, irrespective of the marital or enslaved status of the perpetrator, remains *rajm* [stoning to death]. However, it is imperative to note that this viewpoint represents a minority and contrasts the prevailing *ijmāʿ* [unanimous consensus] as refuted by Ibn Ḥazm.³⁴¹

The crux of this nuanced discourse is fortified by the edifice of Prophetic traditions, where the Prophet ﷺ delineated the penal course for an unmarried enslaved woman embroiled in acts of *zinā*.

إِنْ زَنَّتْ فَاجْلِدُوهَا، ثُمَّ إِنْ زَنَّتْ فَاجْلِدُوهَا، ثُمَّ إِنْ زَنَّتْ فَبِيعُوهَا، وَلَوْ بِصَفِيرٍ

“If an enslaved person commits *zinā*, then lash her. If she again commits *zinā*, then lash her. After that, if she commits *zinā*, sell her, even if it is for saffron.”³⁴²

The prescription of lashes in response substantiates and accentuates the lucidity of the [أُحْصِنَ] reading, intricately elucidating the legal complexities surrounding the gravity of adultery within the framework of Islamic law.

The third illustrative case study of juristic alignment is discerned in the word [لَمَسْتُمْ] specifically highlighted in *Sūrat al-Nisāʿ*, verse 43, and *Sūrat al-Māʿidah*, verse 6. This word, encapsulating a profound lexical significance, serves as a focal point for our scholarly discourse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا^ط وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ^ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا ﴿٦﴾

³⁴⁰ *al-Mughnī*: 9/41.

³⁴¹ *al-Muḥallā*: discussion 2210 – 2212.

³⁴² *al-Bukhārī*: 6 837. *Muslim*: 1703.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ^ط وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا ^ط وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ ^ط مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Exploring Varied Interpretations of [الْمَسْتُمْ] – The verb [الْمَسْتُمْ] within two sets of Qur’anic verses unfolds a rich tapestry of diverse Readings, giving rise to distinct interpretations that spotlight two prevailing Readings. This lexical exploration, meticulously documented by al-Şafāqūsī and al-Qādī, unveils the nuanced nature of these Readings. The first Reading, credited to the venerable Eponyms Ḥamzah and Kisā’ī, purposefully omits the *alif* [*hadhf* of the *alif*], thus presenting the Reading as [الْمَسْتُمْ], connoting “**to merely touch**” – whether intentional or unintentional. Additionally, the stylistic Readings of Khalaf al-‘Āshir and al-A‘mash align in a harmonious agreement with the Reading of Ḥamzah and Kisā’ī.³⁴³

In contrast, the second Reading incorporates the *alif* [*ithbāt* of the *alif*], aligning with the prevailing remaining Eponymous Readers, namely Nāfi‘, Abū ‘Amr, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āmir, ‘Āşim, Abū Ja‘far, Ya‘qūb, Ibn Muḥayşin, al-Ḥasan al-Başrī, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī.³⁴⁴ This reading, anchored in the verb [الْمَسْتُمْ], denoting “**to mutually touch**”, garners favour among the remaining Eponyms who transmit the sacred text.

Shifting our focus to the realm of jurisprudence, a diverse spectrum of opinions emerges regarding the impact of physical contact with a woman on the validity of ablution, reflecting the nuanced perspectives of Islamic Jurisprudential scholars:³⁴⁵

³⁴³ *Ghayth al-Naf’*: 171. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 136.

³⁴⁴ *Ghayth al-Naf’*: 171. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 136.

³⁴⁵ The ongoing scholarly discourse oscillates between *ḥadath al-asghar* and *ḥadath al-akbar*, representing minor and major forms of ritualistic impurity within Islamic legal frameworks. However, for the sake of brevity and pragmatic focus, this discussion opts to confine its analysis to the *ḥaqīqah* or literal interpretation of the term “*lams*,” signifying the notion of tactile contact or touching.

This deliberate choice to limit the discourse to the realistic interpretation of “*lams*” allows for a more streamlined exploration, avoiding the complexities of delving into potential metaphorical connotations. Such metaphorical dimensions, particularly in the context under consideration, extend beyond mere physical contact, instead referencing the deeply intimate act of sexual intercourse, denoted as *jimā’* in Islamic terminology.

Within both the realms of *ḥadath al-asghar* and *ḥadath al-akbar*, encompassing minor and major states of ritual impurity, respectively, the practice of *tayammum* [the act of dry ritual purification using purified/clean sand/soil/dust etc.] emerges as a practical recourse in situations where access to water is limited or unavailable. This pragmatic solution serves as a substitute for the customary ritual

The Ḥanafīyyah: Maintain the unwavering stance that ablution remains intact despite physical contact with a female, even when accompanied by desire. Ibn Hamām explicitly asserts that such touching, regardless of desire, does not nullify ablution.³⁴⁶

The Mālikīyyah: Firmly asserts that ablution is invalidated by any form of physical contact with a woman, irrespective of desire. Ibn Rushd underscores the consensus among Mālikī's on this pivotal matter.³⁴⁷

The Shāfi'īyyah and the Ṭḥāhiriyyah: Argue that the mere touching of a female nullifies ablution. al-Nawwawī emphasises the Shāfi'ī position, positing that such touching a female, whether with or without lust, nullifies ablution.³⁴⁸

The Ḥanābilah: Contend that touching women with lust nullifies ablution. Ibn Qudāmah, representing the majority, affirms that touching a female with desire nullifies ablution, while touching them without desire does not.³⁴⁹

In summation, a pronounced scholarly divergence prevails on the question of whether touching a female nullifies ablution, with the majority associating its nullification with desire. The *Aḥnāf*, however, advocate for a more lenient perspective. This exemplar underscores the meticulous attention bestowed upon the intricacies of Qur'anic Variant Readings, wherein the alignment of esteemed jurists elucidates a shared understanding of [لَمَسْتُ]. Such discerning juristic alignment reaffirms the scholarly commitment to precise textual interpretation. It emphasises the cohesive tradition that unifies the intellectual heritage of Qur'anic Variant Readings and their impact on Islamic Jurisprudential Thought.

Moreover, the nuanced divergence among jurists in their perspectives, meticulously expounded upon by Ibn Rushd, draws its origin from the intricate semantics encapsulated within the term [لَمَسَ] (touch) within the Arabic discourse. The expansive employment of this term by the Arab linguistic tradition, oscillating

procedures of *wuḍū'* [ablution] and *ghusl* [ritual bathing], ensuring the maintenance of ritual purity and adherence to religious obligations even under challenging circumstances.

³⁴⁶ *Fath al-Qadīr*: 1/56.

³⁴⁷ *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*: 1/491.

³⁴⁸ *al-Majmū'*: 2/30. *al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥaz al-Ṭḥāhirī: 1/244.

³⁴⁹ *al-Mughnī*: 1/153.

between a comprehensive interpretation encompassing any modality of contact and a more delimited construal confined specifically to manual touch, instigated a proliferation of interpretative diversity. Moreover, discernible disparities emerged pertaining to the determinative criterion for impurity – oscillating between the perspective that it hinges on pleasurable/lustful touch and the alternative assertion that any manual contact is consequential.

The fourth illustrative case study of juristic alignment is discerned in the word [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ] specifically highlighted in *Sūrat al-Mā'idah*, verse 6. This word, encapsulating a profound lexical significance, serves as a focal point for our scholarly discourse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ط

Exploring Varied Interpretations of [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ] – The noun [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ] within the segment of the Qur’anic verse unfolds a rich tapestry of diverse Reading, giving rise to distinct interpretations that spotlight two prevailing Readings. This lexical exploration, meticulously documented by al-Şafāqūsī and al-Qāḏī, unveils the nuanced nature of these Readings. The first Reading, credited to the venerable Eponyms Nāfi‘, Ibn ‘Āmir, Ḥafṣ, Kisā’ī, and Ya‘qūb, read with *naşb* [accusative case-ending] of the *lām*, thus presenting the Reading as [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ]. In the accusative state, [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ] is connected to [فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ], thus connoting “to wash”.³⁵⁰

In contrast, the second Reading incorporates *jarr* [genitive case-ending] of the *lām*, aligning with the prevailing remaining Eponymous Readers, namely Ibn Kathīr, Abū ‘Amr, Shu‘bah, Ḥamzah, Abū Ja‘far, and Khalaf al-‘Āshir.³⁵¹ In the accusative state, [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ] is connected to [وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ], thus connoting “to wipe”, garners favour among the remaining Eponyms who transmit the sacred text. Additionally, the stylistic Readings of Ibn Muḥayşin, al-A‘mash, and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī, al-A‘mash align in a harmonious agreement with the Reading of their *aşl* [basis]. Notably, al-Ḥasan al-Başrī, in isolation, reads it with *raf*² [nominative end-casing] of the *lām*, as in [وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ].

³⁵⁰ *Ġhayth al-Naf*: 189. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 136.

³⁵¹ *Ġhayth al-Naf*: 189. *al-Budūr al-Zāhirah*: 136.

Shifting our focus to the realm of jurisprudence, a kaleidoscope of perspectives unfolds regarding the nuanced issue at hand as scholars delineate four distinct viewpoints:

The *Madhāhib ‘Arba‘ah* [The Four Schools of Jurisprudential Thought]: The foremost and prevailing viewpoint, championed by the majority, unequivocally asserts the obligation of washing the feet. al-Nawwawī relates this widely embraced *ijmā‘* [consensus].³⁵² Additionally, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī expounds upon the procedural intricacies surrounding the act of *wuḍū’* [ablution]. With unwavering conviction, he posits that the aḥādīth elucidating the details of this ritual act has attained the venerable status of Tawātur, indicative of widespread transmission. Moreover, he underscores the *ijmā‘* [consensus] among the esteemed Companions, elucidating their unanimous agreement on the obligatory act of washing the feet, diverging from merely wiping them during the ablution process.³⁵³

Conversely, a second perspective, rooted in the *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* Shī‘ah tradition³⁵⁴, asserts that the mandatory act of wiping the feet, a stance attributed to a minority among early scholars, as discerned by Ibn Ḥazm. These include luminaries such as ‘Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ‘Ikrimah and al-Sha‘bī. Notably, this is also considered a viewpoint for al-Ṭabarī.³⁵⁵

A third viewpoint, articulated by al-Ṭabarī and certain Mu‘tazilites³⁵⁶, proposes a nuanced alternative: individuals in a state of ritual impurity possess the prerogative to choose between washing and wiping the feet. Ibn Rushd highlights this perspective, noting Dāwūd al-Ṭḥāhirī’s affinity for this middle ground, showcasing the nuanced intricacies inherent in these divergent views.³⁵⁷

The fourth perspective, a synthesis of both washing and wiping, emanates from scholars adhering to the apparent or literal meaning of the Qur’anic verse, particularly

³⁵² *al-Majmū‘*: 1/417.

³⁵³ *Fath al-Bārī*: 1/320.

³⁵⁴ *al-Kāfi*: 3/30. *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*: 1/418. *al-Majmū‘*: 1/417. *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: 4/191. *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*: 6/86. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*: 11/162. *al-Manār*: 6/228.

³⁵⁵ *al-Muḥallā*: 2/56 – 57.

³⁵⁶ *al-Majmū‘*: 1/417.

³⁵⁷ *al-Majmū‘*: 2/30. *al-Muḥallā*: 1/244.

associated with some followers of the al-Ṭḥāhirī jurisprudential school of thought³⁵⁸, as expounded by Ibn Rushd. This synthesis also seems to be another viewpoint of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, as well as of Dāwūd ibn ‘Alī and al-Nāsir li al-Ḥaqq of the *Zaydiyyah* Shī‘ah sect.³⁵⁹

Notably, these diverse and divergent opinions weave a rich tapestry within Islamic jurisprudence, emphasising the imperative of contextual understanding and acknowledging the multifaceted nature inherent in these perspectives. The scholarly discourse surrounding this issue exemplifies the nuanced intricacies that characterise the expansive landscape of Islamic legal thought, where linguistic subtleties and interpretative choices shape the doctrinal landscape.

Furthermore, in the discourse concerning the issue of ablution, the divergence among scholars, as articulated by Ibn Rushd, finds its roots in the distinct Readings that permeate the relevant verse. The crux of their divergence does not lie in the fundamental content of the Readings but rather in their nuanced application within the context of ablution.³⁶⁰

Ibn Rushd delineates two overarching approaches that encapsulate the scholars' divergent methodologies in grappling with the implications of the dual Readings. The first approach gravitates towards a preferential treatment of the explicitness inherent in one of the Readings, advocating for the interpretation of the apparent meaning of the other. This perspective posits a specific definition of the obligation, affording the worshiper the liberty to choose between the two forms of purification—namely, washing or wiping.

Conversely, the second approach adopts a posture of precaution, contending that the evidence stemming from each Reading possesses equal persuasive force. According to this viewpoint, the preference for one Reading over the other, grounded in its apparent meaning, does not invalidate the alternative Variant Reading. This cautious stance underscores a meticulous approach that refrains from categorically favouring

³⁵⁸ *al-Majmū‘*: 1/417.

³⁵⁹ *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*: 6/86. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*: 11/162. *al-Manār*: 6/228.

³⁶⁰ *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*: 1/383.

one Reading over the other, acknowledging the compelling nature of both interpretations.

These divergent approaches underscore the intricate nature of interpreting religious texts and emphasise the significance of considering varied perspectives within the scholarly pursuit of comprehension. The scholars' discerning evaluation of the recitations and their nuanced applications within the framework of ablution reflects pedagogical prudence that encourages a comprehensive exploration of differing viewpoints in the quest for a more profound understanding of the subject matter.

In the scholarly pursuit of elucidating the intricacies inherent in diverse Readings, the methodologies deployed unravel intricate nuances, particularly in the realm of the current subject *ghusl* or *mash* [washing or the mere wiping of the bare feet]. The prevailing approach, embraced by the majority, staunchly establishes the incumbent obligation [*farḍiyyah*] of *ghusl* [washing] the feet. Within this paradigm, the *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] Reading accentuating *ghusl* [washing] is the bedrock, deemed both foundational and authentic. However, the scholarly milieu is not monolithic in interpreting this Reading, yielding a spectrum of divergent viewpoints:

As noticed, certain scholars advocate for a direct correlation between the *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] and *jarr* [genitive end-casing] Readings, emphasising *ghusl* [washing] and its contiguous counterpart, *mash* [wiping].

Concurrently, an alternative narrative posits a more contextually exclusive interpretation of the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] Reading emphasising *ghusl* [washing], suggesting that it specifically alludes to *mash* [wiping] when donning the *khuff* [a leather sock which covers the entire foot up to the ankles]. This nuanced perspective finds resonance among select Shāfi'ī scholars, including luminaries such as Abū Ḥāmid, al-Dāramī, and al-Māwardī.³⁶¹

A further divergence emerges with a proposition that the term wiping in the *jarr* [genitive end-casing] Reading associated with *mash* [wiping], in fact, implies *ghusl* [washing] of the feet. Advocates of this stance, including esteemed linguists such as

³⁶¹ *al-Majmū'*: 1/420.

Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī and Ibn Qutaybah³⁶², anchor their position in meticulous linguistic analysis. The rationale underlying the use of *mash* [wiping] for *ghusl* [washing] is construed as a linguistic device, subtly accentuating the moderation of water usage/prevention of water wastage and portraying the act of washing the feet as a lighter form of ablution when compared to the profound immersion entailed in the act of complete washing.³⁶³

Moreover, a scholastic dichotomy emerges, dividing erudite minds into two distinctive factions regarding the apt practice of *ghusl* [washing] the feet. As previously elucidated, one faction staunchly upholds the view that the correct jurisprudential ruling entails *mash* [wiping] over the feet. Noteworthy is that this perspective finds fervent champions within the ranks of Shīʿī scholars. Conversely, an opposing faction ardently contends that the *Sunnah* [Prophetic Tradition] unequivocally prescribes and showcases the act of washing the feet, thereby supplanting the ruling of wiping delineated in the Qurʾanic verses.

This dissenting standpoint resonates notably with the articulated position of Ibn Ḥazm. Having meticulously presented narrations from the *Sunnah* that underscore the act of washing, Ibn Ḥazm resolutely asserts, “So, this is the preferred view based on what is found in the *Sunnah*, the narrations we have mentioned, and the consensus reached on this matter. It is a position firmly grounded in both evidence and logic, considering the additional aspects of the issue and adhering to what is obligatory.”

In the edifice of Ibn Ḥazm’s argument, adherence to the *Sunnah* — washing the feet as opposed to mere wiping, is elevated to a paramount principle, eclipsing the Qurʾanic mention of wiping. He vehemently dismisses the notion of wiping, contending that the evidentiary support from the *Sunnah*, buttressed by narrations and scholarly consensus, reinforces the categorical obligation of washing as opposed to wiping. According to Ibn Ḥazm, this perspective aligns seamlessly with the consensus among scholars and is fortified by robust reasoning and comprehensive scrutiny of the multifaceted dimensions inherent in the issue.

³⁶² *al-Majmūʿ*: 1/420.

³⁶³ *al-Ithāf*: 198.

These refined and nuanced interpretations showcase scholars' diverse methodological approaches when navigating the intricate terrain of Variant Readings. They underscore the imperative for a comprehensive understanding of context and a nuanced grasp of linguistic subtleties to formulate judicious perspectives on this intricate and multifaceted subject.

Significantly, upon a scrupulous perusal of the seminal treatises emanating from various jurisprudential schools of thought, a salient observation crystallised: an explicit invocation of differences in Readings as a contributory factor to the variations in doctrinal perspectives was notably absent. Scholars, it seems, did not deem it requisite to tether their interpretative frameworks to specific Variant Readings to buttress their doctrinal edifices. This discerning insight posits that the divergent Variant Readings within these verses did not wield a palpable impact on the nuanced opinions among jurists concerning the intricate legal rulings germane to the specific matter under consideration. In more accessible terms, it is discerned that the *fuqahā'*, eminent scholars immersed in the nuanced exegesis of legal principles, exercised a certain discretion by refraining from explicitly disclosing that their juridical perspectives were predicated upon a specific Variant Reading.

Notably, *al-Imām al-A'ṭham*, Nu'mān ibn Thābit, more commonly known by the sobriquet Abū Ḥanīfah, having undergone the pedagogical guidance of al-A'mash and 'Āṣim³⁶⁴, articulated a resolute position to Ḥamzah, declaring, "Two matters have overwhelmed us, and we do not dispute with you about them: the Qur'ān and the inheritance."³⁶⁵ Though considered but classified as *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical], Abū Ḥanīfah's distinctive stylistic Reading via al-A'mash laid the groundwork for Ḥanafī legal discourse, asserting the acceptance of diverse Readings. His endorsement of Ḥamzah—deeming him an *imām* of Variant Readings, including Ḥamzah's Readings reverberated among *aḥnāf* [Ḥanafī followers], imprinting a distinctive stance on the acceptance of Ḥamzah's Readings in prayer, diverging from the practices entrenched in other theological traditions.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/342.

³⁶⁵ *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā'*: 7/19.

³⁶⁶ *Jamāl al-Qurrā'*: 2/430. *Murshid al-Wajīz*: 164. *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*: 76.

In contrast, the esteemed Medinite luminary Mālik ibn Anas immersed himself under the tutelage of great Nāfi‘ al-Madanī, esteeming his Reading as a *sunnah* [exemplary practice].³⁶⁷ This reverence for Nāfi‘’s Reading profoundly influenced the Mālikī school of jurisprudential thought, establishing a predilection for Nāfi‘’s Reading above others. When questioned about the audible recitation of the *Basmalah*, Mālik responded succinctly, “Ask Nāfi‘, as every knowledge is sought from its people—specialists in its Discipline.”³⁶⁸ Additionally, Mālik commended Abū Ja‘far al-Madanī as a virtuous individual who diligently recited the Qur’ān to the inhabitants of Madīnah.³⁶⁹

As for the illustrious Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, a luminary who combined the schools of Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik ibn Anas, thereby formulating an independent jurisprudential school of thought, he demonstrated an unwavering adherence to the Readings of Ibn Kathīr al-Makkī.³⁷⁰ This deliberate choice bore significant consequences, as it prompted al-Shāfi‘ī to advocate for the audible recitation of *Basmalah* during prayers. Furthermore, he advocated and subsequently recommended the vocalisation of the *Takbīr* when reciting the *khatm al-suwar* [concluding chapters], from *Sūrat al-Duḥā* to *Sūrat al-Nās*, thereby aligning seamlessly with the distinctive features embedded in Ibn Kathīr’s stylistic Readings. al-Shāfi‘ī’s meticulous alignment with Ibn Kathīr’s Reading showcases the profound impact a specific Reading can exert on liturgical practices.

In a divergent scholarly domain, the venerable Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal espoused a distinct preference for the Readings of Abū ‘Amr al-Baṣrī, ‘Āṣim, and the denizens of Madīnah, Abū Ja‘far and Nāfi‘—Readings that he himself proficiently delivered. He read under the tutelage of Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, who traced his scholarly lineage back to Shu‘bah from ‘Āṣim, and under Ismā‘il ibn Ja‘far, with his scholarly lineage tracing back to the Eponym Nāfi‘; and Ibn Wardān from the Eponym Abū Ja‘far, solidified his connection to the diverse tapestry of Variant Readings.

Additionally, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal read to the students of Abū ‘Amr, thereby enriching his understanding and highlighting the depth of his engagement with the Variant

³⁶⁷ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/230.

³⁶⁸ *Laṭā‘if al-Ishārāt*: 1/94.

³⁶⁹ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/382.

³⁷⁰ *al-Nashr*: 2/320.

Readings.³⁷¹ He extolled the virtues of al-Sūsī, proclaiming, “He is a man of virtue and a staunch follower and advocator of the *sunnah*; we have only learned good from him.” Renowned for his judicious discernment in matters of Variant Readings, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal meticulously sifted through various Readings, evincing discerning impartiality devoid of favouritism towards any particular Reading. Under his guidance, his son ‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal absorbed these selected Readings, a testament to the meticulous transmission of knowledge within the scholarly tradition.³⁷² Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, however, expressed marked disapproval of the Variant Readings synonymous with Ḥamzah and al-Kisā’ī, grounding his objection in the criterion of *mutawatir* [widespread mass transmission], a standard that he considered essential.³⁷³

Nevertheless, this stringent stance exhibited by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was not universally endorsed, as evidenced by the acceptance of these contested Readings by other venerable scholars such as Abū Ḥanīfah and Sufyān al-Thawrī. Sufyān, notably, affirmed, “Hamzah did not recite a letter [Qirā’ah—a given Reading] except based on authority [*sanad*],” illuminating the spectrum of perspectives among scholars on the legitimacy of specific Readings. This divergence in opinion underlines the nuanced nature inherent in Qur’anic Readings within the rich tapestry of the scholarly tradition.

In Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s discerning approach to Readings, a discernible reluctance towards endorsing Ḥamzah and al-Kisā’ī’s Readings emerges, underscored by his insistence on the primacy of Tawātur transmissions. However, this perspective does not foreclose the acceptance of these Readings by other eminent scholars, revealing several criteria within the scholarly discourse. The multiplicity of opinions, while apparent, serves as a testament to the perennial pursuit of truth within the scholarly tradition, epitomising the multifaceted nature inherent in the study of the Qur’ān.

In conclusion, the *A‘imat al-Madhāhib al-Arba‘ah*’s choices in stylistic Readings testify to their educational foundations and personal predilections. Abū Ḥanīfah’s distinct preference for Ḥamzah’s Readings defined the Ḥanafī’s school’s unique embrace of

³⁷¹ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/112.

³⁷² *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/112.

³⁷³ *al-Mughnī*: 2/165.

Readings. At the same time, concurrently, Mālik's favouritism towards Nāfi's laid the foundation for the Mālikī school's affinity for his Readings. Both A'immah, seeking enlightenment from trusted sources, established enduring practices steeped in sagacity and tradition.

Notably, these selections were meticulously made, devoid of arbitrariness; each *imām's* choice of Readings bore indelible imprints from personal recitation experiences to establishing a jurisprudential school of thought. al-Shāfi'ī's explicit endorsement of Ibn Kathīr's Reading informed nuanced recommendations for audible expressions—such as the *Takbīr* at the *khatm al-suwar* and the *basmalah* during prayers, showcasing a profound harmony with the idiosyncrasies of Ibn Kathīr's Reading. In contrast, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's proclivity for the Readings of Abū 'Amr, 'Āṣim, and the denizens of Madīnah, Abū Ja'far and Nāfi' revealed a mastery acquired through direct practice. Far from being rigid impositions, their commitment to specific Readings manifested as a testament to the authenticity and continuity of their transmitted traditions.

These luminaries' diverse choices showcase the intricate and multifaceted nature of Qur'anic Readings within the expansive terrain of Islamic Jurisprudential scholarship.

Shādh Readings: Semantic Essence and the Triad Pillars of Evaluation

Linguistic Definition: The term *al-Qirā'āt al-Shādh-dhah*³⁷⁴ [Extra-Canonical/Anomalous/Irregular Readings], when dissected linguistically, derives its semantic essence from the Arabic root letters [شَدَّ - يَشُدُّ], symbolising singularity, irregularity, distinctiveness, and deviation. The expression [شَدَّ عَنْهُ] conveys the notion of deviating from a standard, encapsulating anything that occupies a singular, irregular, or distinctive position. The broader application of *Shādh* extends beyond the realm of Variant Readings to describe individuals who are themselves unique or stand apart from the collective majority. In the context of people, the expression [شَدَّادُ النَّاسِ] denotes those residing within a community but have not aligned nor conformed with its tribes or residents.³⁷⁵

In sum, the term *al-Qirā'āt al-Shādh-dhah* linguistically implies a Reading characterised by its divergence from the prevailing norm, Tawātur Readings, thus holding a distinctive and infrequent stance.

Technical Definition: Within the scholarly domain, a profound schism has emerged, intricately weaving a nuanced tapestry around the elucidation of *Shādh* Readings, sparking a multifaceted discourse concerning its technical definition. Within this intricate web of perspectives, Abū 'Amr ibn Ṣalāḥ posits that a *Shādh* Reading encompasses a Qur'anic Variant Reading that, despite achieving widespread acceptance – *istifādah mutalaqqāh bi al-qabūl* – has not ascended to the level of Tawātur or mass transmission.³⁷⁶

Contrastingly, al-Sakhāwī delineates a *Shādh* Reading as a Variant Reading excluded from the *ijmā'* or consensus despite its transmission via *thiqāt* or prudent transmitters. Despite conforming to Arabic grammar and aligning with the 'Uthmanic codices,

³⁷⁴ The term *al-Qirā'āt al-Shādh-dhah* holds a pivotal position within Qur'anic scholarship, particularly concerning the Variant Readings. Its semantic intricacies extend to alternative designations like *al-Qirā'āt al-Shawādh*, *al-Arba' al-Zā'idah*, or *al-Qirā'āt al-Arba' al-Zā'idah fāwqa al-'Asharah*, elucidating a subset of Qur'anic Readings that surpass the conventional decadal standard – The Conventional Ten Canonical Readings.

³⁷⁵ *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*: 334. *Tāj al-'Urūs*: 9/ 423 – 425.

³⁷⁶ *Munjid al-Muqri'n*: 20.

these Readings, in general, trace their *asānīd* [scholarly lineages] via the *āḥād* or solitary transmissions.³⁷⁷

Adding to this discourse, al-Nuwayrī asserts the existence of an *ijmāʿ* or unanimous consensus among the majority of *uṣūlīʿs* [legists], *fuqahāʿ* [jurists], and the *qurrāʿ* that *Shādh* Readings do not attain the status of Tawātur. Instead, they are considered *āḥād* despite being transmitted via *thiqāt*.³⁷⁸

Further accentuating this perspective, Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd maintains that *Shādh* Readings find their transmission through *āḥād* or solitary transmissions.³⁷⁹

Contrary to these positions, al-Suyūṭī unequivocally states that *Shādh* Readings have not been transmitted via *ṣaḥīḥ* or authentic *sanads* [scholarly lineages]. This comprehensive array of perspectives within the scholarly discourse navigates the complex terrain surrounding the technical definition of *Shādh* Readings, revealing a rich panorama of divergent viewpoints and intricate nuances.³⁸⁰

Notably, in the expansive domain of Qurʿanic Readings, a scholarly consensus has crystallised, defining a *Shādh* Reading as one that deviates from one or more fundamental elements inherent in an authentic Tawātur Reading. These crucial elements are intricately interwoven with the subtleties of conformity to Arabic grammar and the ʿUthmanic codices. Aligning with this perspective, Abū Shamah staunchly asserts that a Reading acquires validity and significance only when it adheres scrupulously to the Qurʿanic script [ʿUthmanic script], demonstrates linguistic excellence in Arabic [conforms to Arabic grammar], and traverses authentic, reliable channels of transmission [*qirāʿat al-ṣaḥīḥah muʿtabarah*]. Any compromise to the integrity of these triad pillars inevitably consigns the Reading to the classifications of *Shādh* [irregular/anomalous] or *ḍaʿīf* [weak].

Elaborating on this viewpoint, al-Nuwayrī accentuates that a deviation in any of the three foundational aspects swiftly renders the Reading as *ḍaʿīf*, *Shādh*, or even *bāṭil*

³⁷⁷ *Jamāl al-Qurrāʿ*: 331.

³⁷⁸ *al-Qirāʿat al-Shādh-dhah: Dirāsatan, Ṣawtiyyatan, wa Dalāliyah*: 1/31.

³⁷⁹ *Munjid al-Muqriʿin*: 22.

³⁸⁰ *al-Itqān*: 1/265.

[invalid]. This evaluative framework applies uniformly whether the Reading aligns with the Seven Variant Readings or ventures beyond these established boundaries.³⁸¹

This scholarly stance serves as a taxonomy for categorising Readings. It unveils the intricate interplay among linguistic precision [conformity to Arabic grammar], fidelity to the scriptural text [conformity to the ‘Uthmanic codices], and the reliability of transmission [*ṣiḥḥat al-sanad*/Tawātur]. It underscores the imperative of safeguarding these pillars, emphasising that a given Reading must adhere to them to retain its validity, irrespective of its linkage to the canonical Readings or alternative variants.

In light of the above, the nuanced categorisation of *Shādh* Readings unfolds through the discerning lenses of three distinctive classifications:³⁸²

Authenticated *Shādh* Readings, grounded in reliability and authenticity [*ṣiḥḥat al-sanad*], rely on *āḥād* [solitary] transmissions while maintaining linguistic integrity in adherence to Arabic grammar. Despite this commendable adherence, these variants deviate from the canonical ‘Uthmanic script, rendering them unsuitable for recitation. The primary impediments lie in their non-universal acceptance, tethered to isolated transmissions that fall short of *ijmā‘* [unanimous recognition and consensus]. Additionally, reciting these Readings is deemed impermissible due to their contradiction of *ijmā‘*, although such transgression does not brand the reciter as a *kāfir* [disbeliever]. The meticulous scrutiny of *Shādh* Readings unveils a dichotomy, categorising them into distinct classifications hinging upon the veracity of their transmission:

Conforming *Shādh* Readings without Explicit Transmission encompasses Readings aligning with Arabic linguistic norms and the ‘Uthmanic script, lacking explicit transmission through a continuous chain of narrators. Despite their more stringent

³⁸¹ *al-Qirā‘at al-Shādh-dhah: Dirāsatan, Sawtiyyatan, wa Dalāliyah: 1/31 – 32*. It is paramount to elucidate that the domain of *Shādh* Readings transcends the precincts of those Readings that surpass the canon of the Ten Variant Readings. Contrary to a common misconception, *Shādh* Readings encapsulate a broader spectrum, extending to encompass those Readings nestled within the canonical Ten Variant Readings, yet have not garnered the *imprimatur* of inclusion by the discerning pen of Ibn al-Jazārī.

This nuanced understanding begets a multifaceted exploration, where the intricacies of the *Shādh* Readings emerge as a terrain that diverges from the established canon and infiltrates within its hallowed precincts. Ibn al-Jazārī, in his discerning curation of the Ten Variant Readings, exercised meticulous discernment, selectively embracing particular Readings while relegating others to the realm of *Shādh*. The criteria for such inclusion or exclusion can be traced back to a confluence of conformity to Arabic grammar, the ‘Uthmanic script, and transmission considerations, further underscoring the sophistication embedded within the scholarly discourse.

³⁸² *Madkhal ilā Qirā‘at al-Shādh-dhah: 97*.

rejection, the discouragement of their recitation emphasises their designation as a considerable transgression.

Weakly Attested *Shādh* Readings, tracing their origins to both reliable and unreliable narrators or lacking linguistic validation in Arabic, face dismissal even if aligning with the ‘Uthmanic script. Their rejection stems from dubious transmission or the absence of linguistic conformity.

This systematically organised classification system adeptly navigates the complex terrain of evaluating *Shādh* Readings, scrupulously considering authenticity [*ṣiḥḥat al-sanad*/Tawātur], linguistic coherence [*muwāfaqat al-‘Arabiyyah*], and alignment with the ‘Uthmanic codices [*rasm al-muṣḥaf*].

Authentic Transmission and Conforming to Arabic, yet Non-Conforming to the ‘Uthmanic Script

The phenomenon of *Mukhālafat Rasm al-Muṣḥaf*, or Non-Conforming to the ‘Uthmanic Manuscript, manifests in a triad of distinctive modes, each encapsulating a nuanced departure from the canonical codices, elucidating the intricate dynamics of Qur’anic Variant Readings.

- a) **Substitution of Words:** This *Shādh* Variant Reading materialises in the meticulous Reading of the Companion, Abū Dardā’ رضي الله عنه within *Sūrat al-Dukhān*, verses 43 – 44, where the prescribed phrase [طَعَامُ الْأَنْيَمِ] undergoes a deliberate substitution, transforming into [طَعَامُ الْفَاجِرِ].³⁸³
- b) **Addition of Words:** The addition of words emerges prominently. An illustrative instance unfolds in *Sūrat al-Mā’idah*, verse 89, as the Companions, Ubay ibn Ka’b رضي الله عنه³⁸⁴ and ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه³⁸⁵ introduce [مُتَتَابِعَاتٍ] to the phrase [ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ]. They thus produce the Reading as [ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ مُتَتَابِعَاتٍ].
- c) **Omission of Words:** A nuanced form of *mukhālafat rasm al-muṣḥaf* materialises in the deliberate omission of words, exemplified in the Reading of the Companion, Abū Dardā’ رضي الله عنه within *Sūrat al-Layl*, verses 1 – 3. The verse

³⁸³ *al-Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*: 3 741.

³⁸⁴ *al-Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*: 3 132.

³⁸⁵ *Sunan al-Kubrā*: 10/60. *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah*: 12 504. *al-Ṭabrānī fī al-Tafsīr*: 12 503.

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى], meticulously pronounced as [وَالذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى], strategically omits [مَا خَلَقَ], adding an intriguing layer to the exploration of intentional variations.³⁸⁶

Disregarding Authentic Transmission, yet Conforming to Arabic and the ‘Uthmanic Script: The Stylistic Choices of Ibn Miqsam

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ya‘qūb, known as Ibn Miqsam, emerges as a luminary figure in the Baghdādī intellectual landscape, born in the year 265/878. Bearing the patronym Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī al-‘Aṭṭār, he ascended to scholarly eminence, leaving an indelible mark on the annals of Kūfī grammar. His demise in 354/965 marked the conclusion of a life dedicated to profound intellectual pursuits.

In his appraisal, renowned traditionist and historian al-Dhahabī underscores Ibn Miqsam’s unparalleled authority, particularly in the domain of Kūfī grammar, positioning him as a foremost luminary of his era. The depth of his knowledge extended seamlessly to Variant Readings, encompassing both Canonical and Extra-Canonical dimensions.

Noteworthy is the perspective introduced by Ibn Jazarī, presenting the viewpoint of Abū al-Faraj al-Shanabūdī, which sheds light on Ibn Miqsam’s distinctive stance. According to reports, Ibn Miqsam believed that any Qur’anic Reading adhering to the textual form [*rasm*] of the *muṣḥaf* [‘Uthmanic codices] and aligning with the norms of the Arabic language should be deemed acceptable. This acceptance, however, was independent of a formal transmission through a *sanad* – he championed and underscored that this permissibility extends regardless of the absence of a *sanad* [transmission chain/scholarly lineage].³⁸⁷ This nuanced perspective offers a glimpse into Ibn Miqsam’s methodology in validating his stylistic choices and Variant Readings, transcending conventional paradigms and contributing to the evolving discourse of his scholarly milieu.³⁸⁸

In more accessible terms, Ibn Miqsam emerges as a luminary figure whose distinctive approach transcends conventional paradigms. His Readings predominantly adhere to

³⁸⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: 3/742.

³⁸⁷ *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt*: 2/338.

³⁸⁸ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 3/1058 – 1060. *al-Muntaḥam*: 7/30 – 32.

the *rasm al-muṣḥaf*, deviating from the commonly accepted norm while simultaneously challenging the established criteria of authentic transmission chains and the Tawātur principle. His discerning acumen prioritises personal stylistic choices in Arabic grammar, showcasing a profound engagement with the intricacies of the language. This departure from the conventional criteria reflects the depth of Ibn Miqṣam’s scholarship and his profound engagement with the intricacies of Arabic grammar, encapsulating a scholarly journey that extends beyond the confines of traditional paradigms.

Furthermore, in exploring *ikhtiyārāt* [stylistic choices], Ibn Miqṣam introduces a nuanced dimension to the realm of Qur’anic Variant Readings. His discerning approach reveals a meticulous consideration of various elements, reflective of a scholar deeply immersed in the intricacies of the Qur’ān. Among the notable *ikhtiyārāt* that characterise Ibn Miqṣam’s distinctive stylistic Readings are:³⁸⁹

فَاسْتَعَانَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ ۚ فَوَكَّرَهُ مُؤَلَّى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ ۙ

فَأَعَشَيْنَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

- a) In *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, verse 15, and *Sūrah Yāsīn*, verse 9, the divergence lies in the reading of [فَاسْتَعَانَهُ] and [فَأَعَشَيْنَهُمْ], where Ibn Miqṣam opts for [فَاسْتَعَانَهُ] and [فَأَعَشَيْنَهُمْ], featuring an ‘*ayn* instead of a *ghayn*. This stylistic choice aligns with the Readings of notable figures such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sībaway, and Ibn Jabbārah al-Hudhalī.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ ﴿٣٠﴾

- b) In *Sūrah Ṣād*, verse 5, the reading of [عَجَابٌ] takes a distinctive turn with Ibn Miqṣam vocalising it as [عُجَابٌ], with *tathqīl* of the *jīm*. This nuanced stylistic choice mirrors the Readings of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, Abū al-‘Āliyah, and Ibn Sumayfa’.

³⁸⁹ *Ikhtiyārāt Ibn Miqṣam min al-Qirā’āt al-Qur’āniyyah*: 72 – 102.

بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَ تَاٰءُكَ اٰبِيٖ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاَسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

- c) In *Sūrat al-Zumar*, verse 59, the transformation occurs in the conjugated second-person masculine state of [فَكَذَّبْتَ ، وَاَسْتَكْبَرْتَ] and in a first-person masculine state of [وَ كُنْتَ] , to a conjugated second-person feminine state [فَكَذَّبْتِ ، وَاَسْتَكْبَرْتِ ، وَ كُنْتِ]. This stylistic choice in Reading is shared by Ibn Kathīr through the narration of al-Shāfi‘ī and ‘Āṣim al-Jaḥḍarī, further underscoring the multifaceted nature of *Shādh* Readings and their resonance within the broader Qur’anic discourse.

Authentic Transmission, Conforming to Arabic, yet Non-Conforming to the ‘Uthmanic Script: The Stylistic Choices of Ibn Shanabūdh

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb ibn al-Ṣalt ibn Shanabūdh, distinguished as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, emerges as a prominent figure in the intellectual tapestry of Baghdād, adorned with the prestigious title of *Sheikh al-Qurrā’* in the revered region of ‘Irāq. His documented passing in the month of *Ṣafar*, in the year 328/940, though subject to variant historical accounts, underscores his significant legacy.³⁹⁰

The nuanced doctrinal stance of Ibn Shanabūdh encapsulated in the belief in the permissibility of *Shādh* Readings even when diverging from the *rasm al-muṣḥaf* [‘Uthmanic script] stands as a defining feature of his scholarly identity. In contrast to his contemporary, Ibn Miqṣam, Ibn Shanabūdh ardently advocates adherence to Arabic grammar and staunchly upholds the concept of *isnād* [transmission chain] while vehemently rejecting conformity to the textual form [*rasm*] of the ‘Uthmanic codices.

Additionally, in exploring *ikhtiyārāt* [stylistic choices], Ibn Shanabūdh introduces a nuanced dimension to the realm of Qur’anic Variant Readings. His discerning approach reveals a meticulous consideration of various elements, reflective of a scholar deeply immersed in the intricacies of the Qur’ān. Among the notable *ikhtiyārāt* that characterise Ibn Shanabūdh’s distinctive stylistic Readings are:³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/962 – 968.

³⁹¹ *Ibn Shanabūdh wa Maṭhāhir Qirā’atihī bayna al-Qirā’āt al-Qur’āniyyah*: 24 – 27.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ^ط

- a) Within the confines of *Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān*, verse 104, a noteworthy *Shādh* Variant Reading surfaces, characterised by the inclusion of an additional phrase: [وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيَسْتَعِينُونَ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ], which translates as “they forbid evil while they seek Allah’s ﷻ assistance upon that which afflicts them.” This unique stylistic divergence, woven into the fabric of the Qur’anic text, traces its lineage to revered figures such as ‘Uthmān ibn Affān ﷺ, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ, and Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr ﷺ, epitomising a distinct auditory expression.

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَكَ آيَةً ^ط

- b) *Sūrah Yūnus*, verse 92, provides a canvas for another distinctive *Shādh* infused variant, distinguished by the substitution of a *ḥā* in lieu of the *jīm*. This metamorphosis engenders a nuanced auditory rendition: [فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ]. This nuanced stylistic choice, echoing through the corridors of Qur’anic resonance, finds harmony with the Readings of luminaries such as Ubay ibn Ka‘b ﷺ, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ, Ibn Sumayfa‘, and Abū al-Simāl.

وَكَانَ أَمَامَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِيئَةٍ غَضْبًا ﴿٥٩﴾

- c) The vista of *Sūrat al-Kahf*, verse 79, unfolds a nuanced Reading attributed to Ibn Shanabūdh. Here, the conventional [وَرَأَاهُمْ] gracefully yields to the *Shādh*-infused [أَمَامَهُمْ], while [صَالِحِيَّةٍ] takes precedence over [غَضْبًا]. Ibn Shanabūdh’s distinctive vocalisation, presenting [وَكَانَ أَمَامَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِيئَةٍ صَالِحِيَّةٍ], echoes the cadence of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ, intertwining a symphony of variant articulations.

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿٥٧﴾

- d) *Sūrat al-Masad*, verse 1, provides a canvas for another distinctive *Shādh* Variant Reading, sculpted by the addition of an elucidative phrase: [وَقَدْ تَبَّتْ] [يَدَا]. This nuanced stylistic choice, resonating with the Readings of Ubay ibn

Ka'b ؓ, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, and al-A'mash, enhances the textual tapestry, adding a layer of intricacy to the verse's auditory rendition.

From our observations, a discernible pattern emerges within the discipline of Qirā'āt, where a notable segment of students, graduates, and occasionally instructors exhibit a palpable distaste or an outright aversion toward *Shādh* Readings and its study. This sentiment, as discerned, often emanates not from a rational or academic rationale but rather is steeped in emotional or personal biases, underscoring a marked reluctance to engage with these specific Readings. A parallel can be drawn to disciplines like ḥadīth, where a bona fide *muḥaddith* [traditionist] directs attention not solely to the *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* or the *ṣaḥīḥ sittah* [The Six Canonical Books of Ḥadīth], but embraces the entire ḥadīth corpus, inclusive of collections housing *mawḍū'āt*—spurious ḥadīth. Remarkably, eminent scholars, postdating the crystallisation epoch of ḥadīth compilations, undertook the compilation of *mawḍū'* collections, including luminaries such as:

- 1) Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 507 A.H.) – *Tadhkirat al-Mawḍū'āt*.
- 2) al-Ḥusayn ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jawzaqānī (d. 543 A.H.) – *al-Mawḍū'āt min al-Aḥādīth al-Marfū'āt*, which also became known as *Kitāb al-Abāṭil*.
- 3) Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 A.H.) – *Kitāb al-Mawḍū'āt*.
- 4) Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Mūṣilī (d. 622 A.H.) – *al-Mughnī 'an al-Hifḍḥ wa al-Kitāb: bi qawlihim "lam yaṣīḥḥu shay' fi hādḥā al-bāb"*.
- 5) Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751 A.H.) – *al-Manār al-Munīf fī al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa al-Ḍa'īf*.
- 6) Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H.) – *al-La'ālī al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Ḥadīth al-Mawḍū'ah*.
- 7) Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Kinānī (d. 963 A.H.) – *Tanzīh al-Sharī'ah al-Marfū'ah 'an al-Akḥbār al-Shanī'ah al-Mawḍū'ah*.
- 8) Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014 A.H.) – *al-Maṣnū' fī Ma'rifat al-Ḥadīth al-Mawḍū'*.

Unassailably, these compilations, though comprehensive in their treatment of *mawḍū'* ḥadīth, find no standing in legal discourse and offer no basis for legal deductions.

In marked contradistinction, *Shādh* Readings, when subjected not merely to perusal but to comprehensive study, unveil a spectrum of utility. Firstly, they serve as repositories from which grammatical and linguistic rules may be extrapolated, contributing substantively to understanding linguistic intricacies. Secondly, these Readings emerge as invaluable tools for interpreting the Qurʾān, aiding scholars in unravelling its multifaceted meanings and implications. Thirdly, the admissibility of *Shādh* Readings in legal discourse is a topic that elicits fervent scholarly debate, with proponents and detractors engaged in discussions regarding their permissibility. This tripartite functionality underscores the nuanced and multifaceted nature of *Shādh* Readings, inviting a profound exploration of their potential contributions to linguistics, Qurʾanic interpretation, and legal discourse. Concurrently, a comprehensive study of *Shādh* Readings broadens our understanding of the triad concepts for the admissibility of a given Reading, i.e., the triad concepts of Tawātur Readings.

Conclusion

In the culmination of this erudite exploration, the term *al-Qirāʾāt al-Shādh-dhah* unfurls its intricate semantic tapestry when subjected to linguistic scrutiny, drawing sustenance from the Arabic root letters [شَدَّ - يَشُدُّ]. Rooted in this lexical foundation, the term emanates connotations of singularity, distinctiveness, irregularity, and deviation, transcending the boundaries of Variant Readings to encompass singular individuals within communities, eloquently encapsulated by the expression [شَدَادُ النَّاسِ]. In a succinct encapsulation, *al-Qirāʾāt al-Shādh-dhah* emerges as a Reading marked by its divergence from the established norm embodied by Tawātur Readings, occupying a distinctive and infrequent stance within the broader expanse of Qurʾanic Readings.

Delving into the technical intricacies, the scholarly discourse on *Shādh* Readings unfolds as a complex and variegated tapestry interwoven with diverse perspectives. Insights gleaned from luminaries such as Abū ʿAmr ibn Ṣalāḥ, al-Sakhāwī, al-Nuwayrī, Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, and al-Suyūṭī collectively paint a rich panorama of divergent viewpoints. A scholarly consensus, etched in the intellectual domain, crystallises around the definition of *Shādh* Readings as deviations from fundamental elements inherent in authentic Tawātur Readings, intricately tethered to adherence to Arabic grammar norms and fidelity to the ʿUthmanic codices.

The taxonomic framework introduced by Abū Shamah intricately classifies *Shādh* Readings into three distinct categories: Authenticated *Shādh* Readings, Conforming *Shādh* Readings without Explicit Transmission, and Weakly Attested *Shādh* Readings. Navigating the intricate terrain of evaluating these Readings, this taxonomy underscores authenticity, linguistic coherence, and alignment with the ‘Uthmanic codices as indispensable criteria for their meticulous categorization.

The phenomenon of *Mukhālafat Rasm al-Muṣḥaf* introduces an additional stratum of complexity to the exploration of *Shādh* Readings, manifesting as a nuanced departure from the ‘Uthmanic Manuscript. The deliberate modes of substitution, addition, and omission of words, exemplified in specific Qur’anic verses, contribute to the nuanced nature of *Shādh* Readings, enriching the scholarly discourse with layers of profound inquiry.

Moreover, the scholarly exposition navigates through *Shādh* Readings that deviate from the ‘Uthmanic script in myriad ways, such as substituting, adding, or omitting words. It illuminates the stylistic choices of erudite scholars like Ibn Miqṣam and Ibn Shanabūdh, whose departure from conventional criteria bears testament to their contribution to the evolving discourse of their scholarly milieu.

Ibn Miqṣam, in his advocacy, accentuates the paramount importance of adherence to the ‘Uthmanic script and Arabic grammar, dismissing the need for formal transmission through a *sanad*. This paradigmatic shift from established norms underscores a profound engagement with the intricacies of language and scriptural fidelity.

Conversely, Ibn Shanabūdh propounds the permissibility of *Shādh* Readings even when diverging from the ‘Uthmanic script. His nuanced doctrinal stance introduces an additional layer of complexity to the discourse, highlighting the significance of adherence to Arabic grammar and the conceptual mooring of *isnād*.

Additionally, it is pertinent to acknowledge that the conscientious exploration of *Shādh* Readings, despite encountering some measure of hesitancy within certain scholarly realms, emerges as a profound and indispensable scholarly pursuit. Its intrinsic value transcends mere linguistic scrutiny, elucidating the intricate meanings

embedded within the Qur'ān. When undertaken thoroughly, a nuanced examination of Shādh Readings unfolds a diverse array of utilities, positioning them as not merely textual curiosities but as reservoirs of grammatical and linguistic precepts.

In the pursuit of a deeper understanding, *Shādh* Readings emerge as more than historical curiosities; they function as repositories where the grammatical and linguistic intricacies of the Arabic language manifest in a distinct manner. This facet unveils a wealth of knowledge for linguistic scholars and students, providing a unique lens to perceive the language nuances prevalent in the Qur'anic text.

Furthermore, the significance of *Shādh* Readings transcends linguistic exploration, extending into the domain of Qur'anic interpretation. A meticulous analysis of these readings unravels layers of meaning embedded within the Qur'ān, presenting scholars and exegetes with additional tools to delve into the profound depths of the sacred text. When harnessed judiciously, the interpretative potential of *Shādh* Readings enriches the scholarly discourse surrounding the Qur'ān's multifaceted meanings.

A noteworthy dimension of *Shādh* Readings lies in their catalytic role within legal discourse. The robust debates among scholars, both in favour and in opposition to their admissibility, exemplify the contentious nature of their potential application in legal settings. The intersection of linguistic, interpretative, and legal dimensions in the study of *Shādh* Readings mirrors the complexity inherent in grappling with these textual variants.

In essence, the comprehensive analysis of *Shādh* Readings weaves a nuanced narrative, elucidating the intricate interplay among linguistic precision, fidelity to the scriptural text, and the reliability of transmission. This meticulous categorisation, firmly anchored in linguistic foundations and technical definitions, is a scholarly edifice contributing significantly to a holistic understanding of Shādh Readings within the expansive domain of Qur'anic scholarship. This profound exploration offers a nuanced and comprehensive perspective, catering to the discerning minds of scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Decoding Jurisprudential Conundrums: *Shādh* Readings and their Admissibility in Legal Discourse

The exploration of the juridical ramifications associated with *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical] Readings and their potential alignment with the treatment of ḥadīth, which are classified as *khābr al-āḥād* [solitary reports], constitutes a nuanced inquiry within the realm of Islamic legal discourse. At the forefront of this investigation stands the scrutiny of a Reading attributed to illustrious Companion ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه regarding fasting for three consecutive days [فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ مُتَتَابِعَاتٍ], prompting an examination of whether such Extra-Canonical Readings can engender legal inferences akin to *āḥād* ḥadīth [solitary reports].

However, addressing the implications of *Shādh* Readings necessitates elucidating their status *vis-à-vis* legal rulings and understanding the criteria guiding their utilisation. Scholars who draw an analogical nexus between *Shādh* Readings and solitary reports posit that akin to the latter, these Readings may wield legal consequences contingent upon the fulfilment of specific criteria.

For illustrative purposes, let us consider the Reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه advocating fasting for three consecutive days as a potential exemplar of such legal implications. As with solitary reports, the veracity of this *Shādh* Reading becomes pivotal. Should scholars corroborate this Reading through meticulous authentication of the chain of transmission and discern congruity with analogous pronouncements in established sources, it may be deemed a plausible basis for a legal ruling. However, it is imperative to underscore that such endorsement is contingent upon the scrupulous adherence to the specific conditions elucidated by scholars to accept *Shādh* Readings.

Crucially, it must be emphasised that this perspective does not advocate an unconditional parity between *Shādh* Readings and solitary reports across all facets. Instead, it accentuates the concept that both categories may entail legal implications under discrete circumstances, delineating a nuanced framework wherein the authenticity of the chain of transmission and the alignment with established legal principles become paramount.

The elucidation of an accepted Reading within the domain of Qur’anic scholarship is characterised by a tripartite criterion, as discerned and postulated by erudite scholars. This criterion, a *sine qua non* for the ascription of authenticity to a given Reading, unfolds in three discreet facets: first, linguistic alignment with the Arabic language, albeit partial; second, hypothetical conformity with the ‘Uthmanic script; and third, the indispensable possession of an unassailable [*ṣaḥīḥ*] chain of transmission. It is imperative to underscore that any diminution or compromise of these pillars renders a Reading categorically anomalous within the scholarly purview.

The defining principle governing the authentication of a Qur’anic Reading is encapsulated in the tripartite criterion delineated by scholars of verification. Any Reading that satisfies these three conditions—alignment with the Arabic language, hypothetical conformity with the ‘Uthmanic script, and an unbroken chain of transmission of unimpeachable authenticity—is classified as a *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic] Reading.³⁹² However, should any one of these pillars be compromised, the Reading is categorically deemed anomalous [*Shādh*], deficient, or outright invalid within the scholarly paradigm.

Ibn al-Jazarī’s pronouncement leaves no room for ambiguity:

“Any Reading that aligns with the Arabic language, even partially, and corresponds to one of the ‘Uthmanic scripts, even hypothetically, while maintaining a sound chain of transmission, is deemed a *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic] Reading. Any Reading that fails to meet even one of these conditions is unconditionally classified as weak, anomalous, or false—whether attributed to the Seven Qurra’ or to those more eminent than them.”

This declaration establishes an unwavering scholarly consensus, reaching across generations, affirming that no dissenting voice has ever contradicted this methodological standard. It is not merely a theoretical proposition but a categorical imperative—the very foundation upon which the validation or rejection of a Reading stands.

The impermissibility of rejecting or denying a given Reading that fulfils these criteria is underscored as a categorical imperative. Ibn al-Jazarī asserts the validity and

³⁹² *al-Nashr*. 1/9.

obligatory nature of accepting such Readings, positioning them within the paradigm of the Seven Canonical Modes [Seven *Ahruf*] revealed in the Qur'an. The magnitude of this obligation is cast upon the broader spectrum of humanity, making it imperative for all to acknowledge and adhere to the authenticated Readings.

A critical juncture of Ibn al-Jazarī's discourse resides in the nuanced differentiation between the authentic and the *Shādh* Readings. The compromise of any pillar within the tripartite criterion, whether it pertains to the canonical modes or extends beyond them, is delineated as reflective of the authentic stance according to scholars of verification spanning both the early and later generations. This establishes a continuum of methodological fidelity, harkening back to the predecessors with an avowal that no record exists of any dissenting voice against this paradigm.

The scholarly insight proffered by Ibn al-Jazarī is a testament to the meticulous depth of his engagement with the subject matter. This work, positioned within the broader context of Qur'anic Variant Readings, serves as a repository of methodological principles that traverse the epochs, attesting to the enduring nature of the criteria he delineates.

The intricate tapestry of Qur'anic Readings is further complexified by the divergent perspectives among scholars concerning the utilisation of *Shādh* Readings as a foundational basis for deducing practical legal rulings. This academic inquiry unfolds a dialectic discourse, and two principal viewpoints crystallise within the intellectual landscape.

1) **Permissibility of Legal Deduction**

The first doctrinal stance, substantiated by a consortium of scholars, posits the permissibility of deploying *Shādh* Readings as a legitimate source for deducing practical legal rulings, contingent upon the authentication of their chain of transmission. This perspective finds resounding support primarily within the Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī jurisprudential schools of thought, and it is one of the viewpoints ascribed to the eminent scholars Mālik ibn Anas and Muḥammad Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī.³⁹³

³⁹³ *Nihāyat al-Sūl*: 2/333. *al-Iḥkām*: 1/160. *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*: 2/138.

Proponents of this perspective advocate a heuristic alignment between *Shādh* Readings and solitary reports concerning practical applications. Despite deviating from the ‘Uthmanic script and thus not attaining the categorical status of the Qur’ān, *Shādh* Readings, in essence, trace their lineage to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The absence of Qur’anic status does not diminish their nature as established reports from the Prophet ﷺ, thereby permitting their integration into the realm of legal deduction.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, a luminary of Mālikī Islamic jurisprudence, lends authoritative support to this doctrinal position. He contends, “Using Readings not found in ‘Uthman’s codex when there is nothing to refute them in ‘Uthman’s codex is permissible according to the majority of scholars. They liken it to acting upon *khābr al-āḥād* [solitary reports], wherein the meaning is implemented based on its content without absolute certainty.” — *al-‘aml bi mā yaqtaḍihi dūna al-qaṭ‘*. This assertion encapsulates the essence of the permissibility argument, grounding it in a nuanced analogy with solitary reports and underscoring the absence of substantive refutation within ‘Uthman’s codex as a pivotal criterion.

2) **Conditional Permissibility Based on Conformity**

The second doctrinal stance regarding the utilisation of *Shādh* Readings in legal deliberations delineates a cautious perspective that discourages their invocation if they precipitate the establishment of a new legal ruling. However, within this nuanced perspective, a discerning allowance is made if the Reading, despite its Extra-Canonical nature, is explicit in its intent, possesses a robust [*ṣaḥīḥ*] chain of transmission, and remains unopposed by established narrations or analogical reasoning [*qiyās*]. This scholarly viewpoint, encapsulated in the elucidation of the Shāfi‘ī doctrine by al-Zarkashī, conveys a meticulous consideration of the legal implications associated with *Shādh* Readings.

al-Zarkashī articulates this doctrinal standpoint: “A *Shādh* Reading may either aim to clarify an existing legal ruling or introduce a new one. Suppose it aims to clarify an existing ruling. In that case, it holds weight as evidence according to *Shāfi‘iyyah*, such as the narration from ‘A’ishah regarding breastfeeding and the Reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ: “their oaths” and “before their returning.” However, if the *Shādh* Reading introduces a new ruling, like Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ؓ Reading on “consecutive days,” it is not

considered valid legal proof.”³⁹⁴ In this exegesis, the Shāfi‘ī perspective is expounded, navigating the intricate terrain of legal hermeneutics with precision and scholarly rigour.

The delineation offered by al-Zarkashī unveils the dual nature of *Shādh* Readings within the Shāfi‘ī legal framework. On the one hand, if the Reading is elucidative, serving to expound or underscore an already established legal ruling, it is accorded evidentiary status within the Shāfi‘ī paradigm. However, exemplifications include ‘A’isha’s narration concerning breastfeeding and Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Reading on ‘oaths’ and ‘before their returning.’ On the other hand, if the *Shādh* Reading endeavours to introduce a novel legal ruling, as illustrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Reading on ‘consecutive days,’ it does not merit validation.

This doctrinal standpoint underscores a measured approach, wherein the admissibility of *Shādh* Readings hinges on their interpretative nature *vis-à-vis* established legal principles. The acceptance criteria include the Reading’s explicitness, alignment with extant legal norms, the reliability of its transmission, and the absence of contradiction from other authoritative sources.

In summation, this second perspective endeavours to strike a delicate balance, acknowledging the potential validity of *Shādh* Readings within specific conditions—when they serve a clarificatory purpose, align with established rulings, possess a credible chain of transmission, and remain uncontradicted by other authentic sources. This approach reflects the nuanced nature of legal discourse within Islamic jurisprudence, where considerations of evidentiary weight demand meticulous scrutiny and adherence to established principles.

3) **Absolute Rejection of Legal Significance**

The third doctrinal perspective, as espoused by Mālik ibn Anas, encapsulated in one of al-Shāfi‘ī’s opinions, subscribed to by select adherents, such as al-Āmidī, Ibn al-Ḥājjib, Ibn al-‘Arabī, and attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, steadfastly repudiates the tenability of employing *Shādh* Readings as credible sources of legal evidence.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: 1/388.

³⁹⁵ *al-Mustaṣfā*: 1/194. *al-Iḥkām*: 1/160. *Mukhtaṣar Ibn al-Ḥājjib*: 2/19. *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭūfī*: 46. *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*: 2/140.

Within the ambit of this doctrinal stance, the use of *Shādh* Readings for legal or evidential purposes is unequivocally deemed impermissible. Proponents of this viewpoint expound that the narrators of these Readings explicitly transmitted them as integral components of the Qurʾān. If, however, their Qurʾanic status lacks corroboration through unequivocal evidence, the Readings are summarily rejected as valid sources for legal arguments. In essence, this doctrinal position posits that unless a given Reading unequivocally attains the established status of being an authentic part of the Qurʾān, it remains bereft of the requisite authority to be recognised as a reliable narration or credible evidence within the realm of Islamic jurisprudence.

This perspective adopts a rigorous posture, underlining the imperative of incontrovertible evidence to ascertain a given Reading's Qurʾanic status. The crux of this argument resides in the insistence on explicit and unambiguous proof, emphasising that *Shādh* Readings are inherently devoid of the necessary authority for legal applications without such substantiation. The underlying principle here is the indispensable requirement of a definitive and unequivocal demonstration of a Reading's Qurʾanic pedigree to confer upon it the status of valid legal evidence. This emphasis on the rigours of evidentiary standards showcases the meticulous and rigorous nature of legal discourse within Islamic jurisprudence.

The jurisprudential position articulated by al-Nawawī represents an absolute negation of the admissibility of *Shādh* Readings as legal evidence. His argument is grounded in an unassailable principle: if a Reading is not established as Qurʾān through mass transmission [Tawātur], then it cannot be reclassified as a prophetic tradition [ḥadīth] either.

He asserts with categorical clarity:

“Our *madh-hab* maintains that *Shādh* Readings cannot be invoked as evidence, nor do they carry the status of a ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This is because their transmitters narrated them solely as Qurʾān, and the Qurʾān is only established through Tawātur and *ijmāʿ*. If a Reading's Qurʾanic status is not proven by Tawātur, then its ḥadīth status is likewise invalid.”³⁹⁶

³⁹⁶ *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 2/420.

This position rests on the consensus of scholars [*ijmā'*], leaving no scope for exception or reinterpretation. The Qur'ān is established only by mass transmission; anything falling short of this standard is inherently deficient both as a Qur'anic verse and as a report from the Prophet ﷺ. Any attempt to reclassify a *Shādh* Reading as a ḥadīth, while it was transmitted solely as Qur'ān, constitutes a direct violation of the methodological principles governing Qur'anic preservation and ḥadīth authentication.

In response to al-Nawwawī's doctrinal pronouncement, a divergence of opinion emerges, with the majority of scholars positing an alternative viewpoint. They contend that the essential requirement for a narrator to designate the Reading as a "ḥadīth" is not a *sine qua non*—without which, not. In their deliberations, they posit the possibility that the narrator may have erroneously identified the Reading as "Qur'ān," and such a mislabeling should not impinge upon its validity. Instead, they draw an analogy between *Shādh* Readings and valid solitary reports—*āḥād* ḥadīth, affording them sound foundations for legal arguments.

The crux of this scholarly discord lies in the pivotal question of whether the narrator's explicit identification of the Reading as "Qur'ān" is a prerequisite for its acceptance. While al-Nawwawī staunchly advocates for treating *Shādh* Readings akin to the Qur'ān, the counterposition adopted by the majority posits them as comparable to valid *āḥād* ḥadīths, thus rendering them admissible for legal deduction.

This divergence encapsulates the intricate debates within Islamic jurisprudence, illustrating the multifaceted nature of discussions surrounding the status and applicability of *Shādh* Readings. The nuanced perspectives articulated by these venerable scholars underscore the scholarly rigour and complexity inherent in grappling with questions of legal evidence within the Islamic legal tradition.

Opponents assert a distinctive perspective in the crucible of scholarly discourse surrounding *Shādh* Readings, contending that these Readings were not transmitted concomitantly—in a dual capacity as both Qur'anic and *khabr*. Consequently, the absence of universal acceptance [Tawātur] does not, in their view, warrant the wholesale rejection of the specific Qur'anic nature attributed to them. This divergent standpoint posits that the specific transmission regarding their Qur'anic status

necessitates independent substantiation, irrespective of the broader acknowledgement or repudiation of the Reading itself.

Moreover, proponents of this view posit the conceivable scenario wherein a Companion may have initially harboured a particular opinion, subsequently misattributed to the Qurʾān by later generations. While introducing a nuanced layer to the discussion, this line of argumentation carries implicit implications that cast aspersions upon the integrity of the Companions. It suggests, albeit implicitly, the potential for the Companions to have misrepresented their own opinions or even fabricated Qurʾanic content. Such an assertion is met with resolute scepticism, deeming it implausible and, perhaps more significantly, a grave accusation against the veracity of the Companions.

A pivotal contention in the rejection of *Shādh* Readings as legal proof arises from the assertion that a Companion may have misattributed his own view as Qurʾān, thus disqualifying the Reading from legal authority. This argument, however, is met with fierce repudiation from scholars, who categorically dismiss it as a slanderous accusation against the integrity of the Companions.

Ibn Qudāmah, one of the foremost legal authorities in the Mālikī jurisprudential school of thought, delivers a searing refutation of this claim:

“The assertion that a Companion may have mistaken his own opinion for Qurʾān is a grave falsehood, a monstrous fabrication against the noblest of men. It is an outright impossibility—an accusation that stands in direct contradiction to their unimpeachable integrity. The Companions never erred in narrating the statements of the Prophet ﷺ nor in distinguishing between revelation and personal opinion. If such an assumption were entertained, it would open the door to doubting the entirety of transmitted revelation—a notion so absurd that it collapses upon itself.”³⁹⁷

The charge that a Companion may have erred in transmitting the Qurʾān is not merely an academic misstep—it is an attack on the very credibility of the generation tasked with its preservation. The consensus of verification scholars unequivocally

³⁹⁷ *Rawḍat al-Nāṭhir*: 1/181.

rejects this claim, affirming that no Companion would falsely attribute his own understanding to the divine revelation.

Furthermore, amidst the spectrum of divergent opinions surrounding the admissibility of *Shādh* Readings as legal evidence, a consequential dispute unfolds concerning the requisite nature of consecutive fasting in the expiation of oaths [*kaffārat al-yamān*]. One faction of erudite scholars staunchly advocates for the imperative of consecutiveness in this context, substantiating their stance with the Reading attributed to Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه: **فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ مُتَّابِعَاتٍ**: “Fasting three consecutive days.” Their argumentative framework extends to invoking an analogy with the established practice of consecutive fasting in the expiation for false oaths [*kaffārat al-ṭhihār*].

Contrarily, an opposing contingent posits that the imposition of consecutiveness in the expiation of oaths lacks obligatory status, contending that no explicit evidence mandates such continuity. This group systematically rebuts the majority’s reliance on the *Shādh* Readings of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, disputing its adequacy as a substantiating proof, as expounded earlier. Moreover, they introduce a counterpoint by underscoring a narration from ‘A’ishah رضي الله عنها, which attests, “It was revealed: ‘Fasting three consecutive days,’ then the ‘consecutive’ part was abrogated.”³⁹⁸

In the exegesis of the Qura’nic verse mandating the expiation of oaths through “fasting for three consecutive days,” al-Qurṭubī articulates a scholarly discourse that mirrors the complexity inherent in juridical interpretations. He elucidates that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه recited the verse with the specification of **متتابعات** “consecutive days,” circumscribing its applicability to this particular temporal sequence. Noteworthy authorities such as Abū Ḥanīfah and Sufyān al-Thawrī subscribed to this restrictive interpretation, a viewpoint further accommodated by al-Shāfi‘ī and advocated by al-Muzanī, who posited it as an analogy to the established practice of consecutive fasting in the expiation of false oaths [*kaffārat al-dhihār*]. The corroboration of this perspective is found in the stylistic Reading of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, further fortifying its doctrinal standing.

³⁹⁸ *Muwāfaqat al-Khabr al-Khabr*: 1/52. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī meticulously chronicled this crucial narration while concurrently affirming the authenticity of its chain of transmission.

However, scholastic schism surfaces as Mālik ibn Anas and an alternative perspective within the Shāfiʿī school diverge, advocating for a more flexible application of consecutiveness in this context. This dissenting faction contends that the imposition of consecutiveness is contingent upon explicit textual injunctions or analogical deductions from unequivocal texts, criteria ostensibly unmet in the case at hand.³⁹⁹

In addition, the discerning scholarship of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī casts an illuminating gaze upon the multifaceted discourse surrounding the expiation for oath-breaking [*kaffārat al-yamīn*]. His erudition, encapsulated in *Tuḥfāt al-Muḥtāj fī Sharḥ al-Minhāj*, navigates the intricate terrain of revelation and abrogation, particularly concerning the prescription of fasting for three consecutive days. A pivotal point of contention arises as he corroborates the authentic narration from ‘A’ishah رضي الله عنها, delineating that the initial revelation specified “consecutive days.” However, he expounds that this stipulation underwent subsequent abrogation, presenting a divergence from those who ardently advocate for its stringent, seemingly explicit mandate of consecutiveness.

This elucidation echoes through the corridors of scholarly debate, where proponents of the explicit consecutiveness contend with fervour, constructing their arguments on the seemingly manifest import of the revelation. The resonance of their perspectives reverberates in scholarly circles, embodying the interpretative richness inherent in Qur’anic exegesis.

Conversely, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, cognisant of the multifaceted nature of legal hermeneutics, unveils a nuanced position. He proposes that, despite the abrogation and the divergence in scholarly interpretations, a preferential course of action in the expiation of oath-breaking is to observe consecutiveness in fasting. This preference emanates not from a rigid legal mandate but rather from a prudent precaution to mitigate potential contentions and foster clarity within the parameters of Islamic jurisprudence.

In sum, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī’s exposition intricately weaves through the tapestry of revelation, abrogation, and scholarly perspectives, underscoring the nuanced dynamics that underlie the juridical discourse on the expiation for oath-breaking. The dialogical

³⁹⁹ *Tafsīr al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*: 6/283.

engagement with divergent viewpoints and the pragmatic counsel on consecutiveness evince a pedagogical finesse that epitomises the scholarly ethos within Islamic jurisprudence.

Conclusion

The presented discourse delves into the labyrinthine realm of Islamic legal scholarship, meticulously examining the juridical nuances surrounding *Shādh* Readings and their potential analogical alignment with *khabr al-āḥād* ḥadīth traditions. A focal point of inquiry emerges through the critical scrutiny of a specific *Shādh* Reading ascribed to the esteemed Companion ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ, particularly concerning consecutive fasting. This scrutiny serves as a catalyst for a broader exploration into the role and status of *Shādh* Readings within the tapestry of Islamic jurisprudence.

The analytical journey commences with a meticulous exploration of the stringent criteria that govern the utilisation of *Shādh Readings*, meticulously paralleling their assessment with ḥadīth traditions and underscoring the paramount significance of rigorous authentication and adherence to specific conditions. The discourse intricately navigates the methodological tenets articulated by Ibn al-Jazarī, unravelling the tripartite criterion that defines the authentication of a Reading within the panorama of Qur’anic scholarship.

Subsequent segments unfold a triad of doctrinal perspectives on the admissibility of *Shādh* Readings in legal deliberations, each eloquently enunciated by eminent scholars representing diverse schools of thought. The permissibility stance, articulated by luminaries such as Mālik ibn Anas and Muḥammad Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, staunchly champions the legitimate use of *Shādh* Readings in legal deduction, invoking analogical reasoning akin to solitary reports. Conversely, the conditional permissibility perspective, expounded by al-Zarkashī, adopts a circumspect approach, permitting their use under specific conditions and interpretative contexts. Contrarily, the third perspective, categorically repudiated by scholars like Mālik ibn Anas and others, unequivocally dismisses the viability of employing *Shādh* Readings as credible sources of legal evidence.

The subsequent discourse intricately manoeuvres through the nuanced terrain of consecutiveness in the expiation of oaths, meticulously examining opposing viewpoints on the imperative of consecutive fasting. This exploration encompasses an in-depth scrutiny of the Qur’anic verse mandating such consecutiveness, the Reading

attributed to Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, and the ensuing scholarly debates on the abrogation of this requirement.

The discourse, through a dialectical engagement with luminaries such as al-Nawwawī, Ibn Qudāmah, and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, unveils the rich tapestry of perspectives within Islamic jurisprudence. These perspectives illuminate the complex nature of interpreting legal evidence through juridical lenses and by delving into broader issues such as Qur’anic transmission, the reliability of narrators, and the intricacies of legal hermeneutics.

In finality, the discourse epitomises a comprehensive exploration of the intricate controversy surrounding *Shādh* Readings and their legal implications within the expansive canvas of Islamic jurisprudence. The nuanced analysis, replete with historical and doctrinal insights, accentuates the profound complexity and depth inherent in scholarly engagements with legal evidence within the Islamic tradition. And Allah سبحانه knows best.

Intricacies of Islamic Jurisprudence: The Complex Relationship of Integrating *Shādh* Readings with *Tawātur* Readings and the Validity of Formal Prayer

In the realm of Islamic scholarship, a unanimous consensus emerges among the *qurrā'* [reciters], *muḥaddithūn* [traditionists], and the *fuqahā'* [jurists], decisively declaring the impermissibility and invalidity [تفسد/تبطل الصلاة] of exclusively rendering *Shādh* Readings within the sacred framework of *ṣalāh* [formal prayer]. This unwavering ruling holds steadfast irrespective of the context, whether the *Shādh* Readings resonate within the congregation or in solitude, whether in the realm of *farḍ* [obligatory] or *nafl* [supererogatory] *ṣalāh*, and regardless of the individual's status, whether they are *ʿāliman* [knowledgeable regarding its impermissibility] or *jāhīlan* [lacking knowledge concerning its impermissibility]. Additionally, Ibn al-Jazarī, echoing the sentiments of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, meticulously conveys the *ijmāʿ*⁴⁰⁰ [unanimous consensus] affirming the impermissibility of reciting *Shādh* Readings, be it within the formal structure of prayer or beyond its confines.

This consensus serves as an unequivocal testament to the gravity attached to the prohibition of *Shādh* Readings, underscoring its universal applicability across diverse scenarios within formal prayer. The collective stance of the scholars, spanning the domains of recitation, prophetic tradition, and jurisprudence, converges in categorically deeming the exclusive use of *Shādh* Readings incompatible with the sanctity of the *ṣalāh*. This scholarly unanimity not only elucidates the gravity attached to preserving the canonical integrity of the Qurʾanic text but also underscores the meticulous scrutiny applied to matters pertaining to ritualistic worship within the Islamic tradition.

However, within the intricate tapestry of Islamic jurisprudence, a conspicuous schism arises among legal scholars, focalised on integrating a *Shādh* Reading/s with *Tawātur* Readings within the confines of a formal prayer. This dichotomy hinges on the admissibility and ensuing repercussions of incorporating such Readings into the sacred ritual.

⁴⁰⁰ *Munjid al-Muqriʿin*: 26.

Juristic Distinctions of the Ḥanafīyyah: The Ḥanafī school, renowned for its meticulous doctrinal nuances, espouses a distinctive stance. It vehemently posits that the exclusive recitation of *Shādh* Readings during prayer serves as a doctrinal transgression, resulting in the nullification of the prayer. The doctrinal rationale behind this assertion lies in the perceived abandonment of Tawātur Readings, deemed widely transmitted, in favour of *Shādh* Readings, characterised by their Extra-Canonical or Anomalous nature.

Nevertheless, the Ḥanafīyyah introduces an intricate caveat, injecting subtlety into their doctrinal framework. If a worshipper seamlessly integrates a *Shādh* Reading with the conventional Tawātur Readings, the prayer retains its validity according to their doctrinal stance. The crux of this Ḥanafīyyah distinction lies in the acceptability of reciting verses of remembrance during prayer, contrasting with the recitation from narrative [*qīṣas*] passages, which is deemed deleterious to the prayer's sanctity and validity.

Ibn 'Ābidīn further elucidates this nuanced position, asserting that recitation is impermissible in any section devoid of remembrance or where the Qur'anic nature is not unequivocally established. The prayer is unequivocally invalidated if the recitation encompasses a story not firmly established as Qur'anic. The Ḥanafīyyah, therefore, articulates a meticulous doctrinal position where the limited scope of *Shādh* Readings, coupled with the simultaneous recitation of Tawātur Readings, ensures the prayer's validity. Conversely, exclusive reliance on *Shādh* Readings leads unequivocally to the invalidation of the prayer. This doctrinal intricacy underscores the imperative of comprehending and applying religious rulings with sagacity and discernment within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence.⁴⁰¹

In summation, the Ḥanafīyyah position on integrating *Shādh* Readings in prayer intricately revolves around the careful interplay of Readings and the presence of verses of remembrance. This elucidates a meticulous and nuanced approach within Islamic jurisprudence, underscoring the imperative of comprehending and applying religious rulings with sagacity and discernment.

⁴⁰¹ *Hāshiyat Ibn 'Ābidīn*: 2/186. *al-Baḥr al-Rā'iq*: 1/536.

Juristic Distinctions of the Mālikiyyah and Shāfi‘iyyah: Turning to the Mālikī school of thought, a resolute stance unfolds, categorically proscribing the integration of *Shādh* Readings during formal prayer.⁴⁰² However, a nuanced exception is introduced, stipulating that the prayer remains valid if the *Shādh* Reading does not deviate from the standardised ‘Uthmanic script, such as those Readings associated with ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ. Mālik bn Anas’ directive, unequivocal in its clarity, mandates repeating the prayer if one has prayed behind someone reciting in the manner of Ibn Mas‘ūd.⁴⁰³ The Mālikiyyah’s doctrinal foundation rests on preserving the concordance of reading a *Shādh* Variant with the established ‘Uthmanic codex, deeming the prayer valid if such alignment is maintained.⁴⁰⁴

In a convergence between the Shāfi‘iyyah and Mālikiyyah jurisprudential schools, both adamantly prohibit the exclusive recitation of *Shādh* Readings during formal prayer. The Shāfi‘iyyah, akin to the Mālikiyyah, contends that the prayer remains valid if an integrated *Shādh* Reading aligns with the ‘Uthmanic codex. However, a distinctive nuance emerges within the Shāfi‘iyyah perspective, emphasising that such *Shādh* Readings must not deviate from the intended meaning of any given verse.⁴⁰⁵ This nuanced stipulation, absent in the Mālikī perspective, safeguards against altering the message’s original intent. Intriguingly, this requirement is not prominently underscored within the Mālikī jurisprudential tradition, thereby highlighting the subtle divergences in doctrinal interpretation within the rich tapestry of Islamic jurisprudence.

Juristic Distinctions of the Ḥanābilah: Within the illustrious contours of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, a nuanced discourse unfolds regarding the permissibility of prayer contingent upon the alignment of *Shādh* Readings with the venerable ‘Uthmanic codex. However, when a *Shādh* Reading veers from the sacrosanct confines of the ‘Uthmanic script, the Ḥanābilah school of thought reveals a scholastic dichotomy, delineated into two discernible perspectives:

⁴⁰² *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*: 1/379. *Minaḥ al-Khalīl*: 1/217.

⁴⁰³ *al-Mudawwanat al-Kubrā bi riwāyat Saḥnūn*: 1/177. *al-Dhakhīrah*: 2/187.

⁴⁰⁴ *Aqrab al-Masālik*: 22. *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*: 1/217.

⁴⁰⁵ *al-Majmū‘*: 3/392. *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn*: 1/348. *Ghāyat al-Wuṣūl*: 36.

- The prevailing perspective, embraced with greater consensus within the Ḥanābilah, asserts the due acknowledgement and respect afforded to the given *Shādh* Reading. However, it categorically deems the act of performing prayer behind such a deviation or Reading as impermissible.
- In stark contrast, a less favoured yet extant perspective contends that the prayer's validity endures as long as the *Shādh* Readings' chain of transmission remains authentic [*ṣiḥḥat al-sanad*], irrespective of any divergence from the revered 'Uthmanic script— In more accessible terms, the prayer's validity endures as long as the *Shādh* Reading has an authentic transmission chain [*ṣiḥḥat al-sanad*], even if it contradicts the *rasm al-muṣḥaf* ['Uthmanic codices].⁴⁰⁶

This meticulous bifurcation within the Ḥanābilah tradition underscores its inherent flexibility in permitting prayer behind *Shādh* Readings that align with the hallowed 'Uthmanic script. Simultaneously, it acknowledges the existence of dissenting opinions when confronted with *Shādh* Readings that deviate from this established norm. The paramount consideration accorded to the authenticity of the transmission chain emerges as a linchpin, a pivotal determinant in the Ḥanbalī tradition's assessment of prayer validity.

⁴⁰⁶ *al-Mughnī*: 1/347. *al-Furū'*: 212. *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*: 2/133 – 134.

Harmony and Discord: Unveiling the Spectrum of Scholarly Perspectives on the Amalgamation of Qur'anic Readings in Prayer⁴⁰⁷

The Canonical Readings, universally acknowledged as Tawātur, derive their unequivocal authority from the Prophetic era. This foundational verity permeates the doctrinal framework of faith, thereby legitimising the recitation of any of these Readings with prayer—*ṣalāh*. However, integrating multiple Readings [*taghyīr*] in the context of prayer, specifically within a single unit of prayer or *raka'ah*, elicits diverse perspectives among scholars. These perspectives can be succinctly delineated into three significant perspectives.

First Perspective: Absolute Permissibility: This This particular viewpoint posits an unrestricted latitude for the amalgamation of Variant Readings, grounded in the conviction that all Readings emanate from the Divine source, Allah ﷻ. The foundational justification for this position is encapsulated in the prophetic statement: “*Whichever qirā'ah they recite, they have recited correctly.*” This hadith affirms that all recognised Readings are equally valid, without restriction, and that enforcing a singular uniform mode of recitation would be a needless imposition alien to the essence of divine revelation.

Ibn al-‘Arabī, as documented in *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, articulates this perspective with precision: “In the context where the Readings are firmly established, and Readings

⁴⁰⁷ This exploration does not delve into questioning the permissibility of Variant Readings in prayer; it accentuates the unequivocal endorsement of Tawātur Readings within this sacred ritual. However, the crux of this discourse lies in the nuanced examination of whether a reciter may seamlessly integrate multiple Variant Readings within a single *raka'ah*. It is essential to clarify that such transitions are expressly sanctioned exclusively at a *ra's al-āyah* [Verse Terminal]. Significantly, the act of combining diverse Readings within a *raka'ah* stands distinct from *jam'* [sequencing], a practice unanimously deemed strictly forbidden by scholars in both *nafl* and *farḍ* prayers.

This nuanced exploration demands a thorough understanding of the intricacies surrounding the amalgamation of Variant Readings during prayer. The unequivocal endorsement of Tawātur Readings within the prayer's framework prompts a shift in focus toward the judicious permissibility of seamlessly interweaving distinct Readings within the span of a single *raka'ah*.

The stipulation that such transitions find legitimacy solely at a *ra's al-āyah* plays a pivotal role as a safeguard, delineating a specific juncture where a reciter may navigate between Variant Readings without transgressing established norms. This strategic allowance is meticulously designed to maintain order and coherence within the prayer, showcasing the meticulous nature with which such transitions should be approached.

Crucially, the consensus among scholars against *jam'* [sequencing] emerges as an unyielding principle. Whether contextualised within *nafl* or *farḍ* prayers, sequencing Variant Readings is emphatically deemed impermissible, reflecting a unanimous stance within scholarly discourse. This categorical prohibition underscores the profound significance of preserving the sanctity and structure of prayer. Any departure from this norm is explicitly condemned, highlighting the unwavering commitment of scholars to uphold the integrity of this revered act of worship.

within them are unequivocally validated, one is neither obligated nor confined to recite exclusively in the stylistic Reading associated with a particular Eponym, such as Nāfi' or 'Āṣim. Instead, the permissibility is affirmed for the recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, with its letters pronounced in accordance with three distinct Readings⁴⁰⁸, as each [Variant Reading] is rightfully regarded as an integral manifestation of the Qur'ān."⁴⁰⁹

Ibn Taymiyyah, featured in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, responds to an inquiry about an individual leading prayer in the stylistic Readings of Abū 'Amr al-Baṣrī. The query extends to whether any sinful transgression, liturgical shortfall, or invalidation of the prayer exists when interspersed with the Readings of Warsh or Nāfi'. In his response, Ibn Taymiyyah emphatically underscores the legitimate latitude to recite portions of the Qur'ān in the stylistic modality of Abū 'Amr and other segments in the manner of Nāfi', irrespective of whether this occurs within the formal prayer or outside its liturgical confines.⁴¹⁰

Ibn al-Jazarī emphatically delineates the fundamental reality underpinning the existence of the *Aḥruf*, asserting that their divergence is one of complementation and harmony, not contradiction or inconsistency.⁴¹¹ The notion of discord within the speech of Allah is inconceivable, for divine revelation, by its very essence, is safeguarded against internal incongruity. Rather than constituting a dissonant plurality, the *Aḥruf* serve to enrich and illuminate the spectrum of recitation, reinforcing the unity of meaning while embracing the diversity of articulation.

⁴⁰⁸ In the scholarly discourse of Ibn al-'Arabī, a pivotal point of reference emerges through a hypothetical example, specifically addressing the three *farsh* [Individual/Word Variants] within *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, denoted as (الصَّارِطُ), (مَلِكُ), and (صِرَاطُ). Within the contours of this analytical framework, Ibn al-'Arabī asserts the unequivocal permissibility of reading (مَلِكُ) with *ithbāt* of the *alif* (in accordance with the readings of 'Āṣim, Kisā'i, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf), (السَّرَاطُ) with a *sin* (in accordance with the readings of Qunbul and Ruways), and (صِرَاطُ) with *ishmām* (in accordance with Khalaf). He posits that each Variant Reading is inherently legitimate, constituting an integral manifestation of the Qur'ān.

Crucially, Ibn al-'Arabī implicitly underscores that the *uṣūl* [foundational principles] must meticulously align with the Variant Reading of the *farsh* [Individual/Word Variants]. This alignment serves as a foundational requirement, ensuring not only coherence within the scholarly framework but also upholding the authenticity and integrity of these individual/word variants within the sacred text.

⁴⁰⁹ *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*: 2/613.

⁴¹⁰ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*: 22/445.

⁴¹¹ *al-Nashr*: 1/49 – 50.

The evidentiary basis for this position extends beyond scholarly consensus, drawing from authentic Prophetic traditions. The well-documented incident of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ encountering Hishām ibn Ḥakīm ﷺ reciting *Sūrat al-Furqān* in a mode distinct from that which he had received from the Prophet ﷺ is a case in point. *“I heard Hishām ibn Ḥakīm reciting Sūrat al-Furqān in a manner different from how I was taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I almost interrupted him, but I restrained myself until he completed his recitation. Then I seized him by his cloak and brought him to the Prophet ﷺ, saying: ‘O Messenger of Allah! I heard this man reciting Sūrat al-Furqān in a way different from how you taught me.’ The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Release him.’ Then he turned to Hishām and said: ‘Recite!’ Hishām recited, and the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘This is how it was revealed.’ Then he turned to me and said: ‘Recite!’ I recited, and the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘This is how it was revealed. Indeed, the Qur’ān was revealed in Seven Aḥruf. Recite whichever is easy for you.”*⁴¹²

This narration fundamentally establishes the legitimacy of reciting the Qur’ān in multiple authentic modes, both within and outside of formal prayer, and if restricting oneself to a singular Reading was imperative, the Prophet ﷺ would have clarified this obligation. Additionally, the universality embedded in the phrase *“Recite whichever is easy for you,”* underscores the inherent latitude permitted within recitation, where all authentic Readings are equally valid.

At a theological level, since the Tawātur Readings are divinely revealed and transmitted through an unbroken mass transmission chain, there exists no inherent necessity to constrain oneself to a singular form. The divine intent was never to impose uniformity but rather to facilitate accessibility and ease. If a reciter, in the course of their recitation, integrates multiple Readings, they are not introducing an extraneous element into the Qur’ān but rather engaging with its full spectrum as revealed.

A practical example that contextualises this position is an *imām* leading the congregation who commences his recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, and then transitions into the Reading of Warsh ‘an Nāfi‘ at [مَلِك]، rendering it as [مَلِك]. He then continues his recitation and upon reaching [صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ]، he swithes to Khalaf ‘an Ḥamzah,

⁴¹² *al-Bukhārī*: 4 992.

who renders it as *إِسْرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ*), with *ishmām* of the *ṣād* and a *ḍammah* on the *hā'*. Both Variant Readings are indisputably valid, this integration neither affects the validity of the prayer nor constitutes an error. Rather, it embodies the diversity that was divinely sanctioned and prophetically validated.

These perspectives coalesce to affirm the inherent flexibility and permissibility of integrating multiple Readings in the liturgical precincts of formal prayer. The implications of this position extend beyond jurisprudential discourse, illustrating the profound richness embedded within the Qur'anic revelation itself. The tradition of variant Readings is not an anomaly but a testament to the multifaceted nature of divine speech. This kaleidoscopic panorama showcases the vast and intricate dimensions of the Qur'ān, where unity is preserved not through rigid uniformity, but through an expansive and divinely intended plurality.

Second Perspective: Conditional Permissibility In the intricate discussion surrounding the harmonisation of Qur'anic Variant Readings, a discernible viewpoint emerges, delineating a nuanced dimension of permissibility. This perspective asserts that the amalgamation of Readings is acceptable, contingent upon the condition that the content/context recited in the second Variant Reading maintains an apparent disconnection from the content/context of the initial variant. al-Nawwawī unequivocally elucidates this standpoint in his meticulous commentary on *al-Muhadhdhab*, as documented in *al-Majmū'*. He elaborates, “Should a reciter opt for a particular Reading among the Seven Canonical Readings and conclude their recitation adhering to the same selected Reading, such an approach is commendable. Nevertheless, a permissibly deviating practice emerges when reciting specific verses in one Variant Reading and others from a different distinct variant—within the scope of the Seven Variant Readings or beyond, such as the remaining Three, with the stipulation that the content in the second variant remains disconnected from the first variant—such a deviation is classified as *jā'iz*—permissible.”⁴¹³

⁴¹³ *al-Majmū'* 3/392. al-Nawwawī's perspective, predating contemporary discussions, is pivotal in classifying the Seven Variant Readings as *Tawātur* and designating the remaining Three as *Shādh* [Extra-Canonical]. As outlined in the preceding article, and our articles: Beyond Boundries, Unlocking the Triad, and Unravelling Dissent, the complexities surrounding Variant Readings intricately intertwine with the perspectives, consensus, and scholarly discourse among the *qurrā'*.

To delve deeper into this perspective, we turn to the erudite insights of the masterful Ibn al-Jazarī in his opus *al-Nashr*. He cites Abū Zakariyyā al-Nawwawī’s notable work, *al-Tibyān*, affirming, “Upon the commencement of a session with a Reading from the Seven Variant Readings, it is appropriate for the reciter to continue with that Reading as long as contextual coherence endures. Once the contextual bond is disrupted, the reciter has the liberty to transition to another Variant Reading from among the Seven Canonical Readings. Nonetheless, the recommended practice is to sustain continuity with the initial Reading throughout the session.”⁴¹⁴

This nuanced perspective undergoes further exploration within the Shāfi‘ī school of thought.⁴¹⁵ Essentially, this viewpoint underscores judicious flexibility, introducing a conditional dimension to the convergence of Qur’anic Readings. This paradigm strives for equilibrium between diversity and the imperative of maintaining logical and coherent recitation practices.

Ibn al-Jazarī’s Balanced Approach

Furthermore, Ibn al-Jazarī has endorsed a specific standpoint in his work *al-Nashr*.⁴¹⁶ According to his meticulous examination, the most accurate position involves navigating a middle ground.

As a demonstrative example, he delves into the grammatical intricacies surrounding the case of *raf’* in the context of the verse [فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ]. Suppose an individual chooses to recite a Variant Reading other than that of Ibn Kathīr but intermingles it with the variant articulated by Ibn Kathīr himself as in [فَتَلَقَّى آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ]; such an endeavour is deemed not only erroneous but also invalid. Furthermore, adopting a practice that intermingles Variant Readings within the confines of *riwāyah* [transmission]—as seen in the above example, is unequivocally proscribed. The categorical impermissibility of this approach stems from *kidhb* [fabricated/spurious Readings] interjected into the very fabric of the *riwāyah*.

⁴¹⁴ *al-Nashr*. 1/18.

⁴¹⁵ *Asnā al-Maṭālib fī Sharḥ Rawḍ al-Ṭālib*. 1/63. *al-Iqnā’ fī Hall Alfāṭh Abī Shujā’*. 1/105. *Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj fī Sharḥ al-Minhāj*. 2/38. *Mughni al-Muḥtāj ilā Ma’rifat Ma’āni Alfāṭh al-Minhāj*. 1/153.

⁴¹⁶ *al-Nashr*. 1/19.

Eminently, Ibn Kathīr formulates the phrase as [فَتَلَقَّى آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ]— with *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of the *mīm* and *rafʿ* [nominative end-casing] of the *tāʾ*, whereas the remaining *qurrāʾ* render it as [فَتَلَقَّى آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ]— with *rafʿ* [nominative end-casing] of the *mīm* and *naṣb* [accusative end-casing] of the *tāʾ*. Therefore, this specific scenario precisely aligns with the cautious advisory elucidated by Ibn al-Jazarī. It is a discerning illustration of the nuanced considerations that must be heeded in the meticulous practice of the Variant Readings. The cautionary note is a reminder of the imperative to preserve the integrity and authenticity of each distinct Reading, avoiding unwarranted amalgamations or interminglings that may compromise the accuracy and fidelity of the sacred text—the Qurʾān. In essence, Ibn al-Jazarī’s counsel showcases the meticulous attention required to navigate the intricacies of the Variant Readings with due reverence and precision.

This middle-path approach is reinforced by Abū Shāmah, who states:

“As for combining multiple Readings within a single verse or passage, it is preferable to avoid it. However, if one integrates readings in a way that disrupts the syntactical or grammatical structure—such as reciting [نُفِيزُ لَكُمْ] in the plural while reading [حَطِيئَاتِكُمْ] in the nominative, or reading [إِنْ تَضَلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا] in the genitive case of the *hamzah*, then shifting [فَتَذَكَّرْ إِحْدَاهُمَا] into the accusative—this is also impermissible and falls under the ruling of prohibition.”⁴¹⁷

A central principle underpinning this conditional permissibility is that if strict uniformity were mandated upon every reciter, it would lead to undue hardship. Such an obligation would contradict the divine intent behind revealing the Qurʾān in multiple readings—a facilitative measure intended to ease the burden on the *ummah*. Therefore, this position strikes a balance between respecting the sanctity of each *riwāyah* while acknowledging the legitimate scope of variation within recitation.

Ultimately, this perspective reinforces the theological, linguistic, and juristic necessity of maintaining coherence within a recitation, while simultaneously permitting variation within reason. Ibn al-Jazarī’s guidance exemplifies the meticulous precision required in handling the sacred trust of Qurʾanic recitation, ensuring that all

⁴¹⁷ *al-Murshid al-Wajiz*: 1/185.

variations are rooted in authenticity and reverence, rather than arbitrary preference or syntactical dissonance.

Third Perspective: Absolute Impermissibility The doctrinal stance discouraging the amalgamation of Qur’anic Readings is lucidly articulated in Ibn al-Jazarī seminal work, *al-Nashr*.⁴¹⁸ With unwavering confidence, he asserts, “Hence, certain scholars forbade the intermingling of multiple Readings, considering it an error committed by the reciter in both voluntary [*nafl*] and obligatory [*fard*] prayers.”

Additionally, al-Sakhāwī emphatically underscores the inherent mistake of intermingling these Readings with one another.⁴¹⁹ Despite the transition occurring at a verse-terminal, it becomes apparent that al-Sakhāwī considers it as intermingling Variant Readings. The meticulous scrutiny these scholars apply to the intricacies of Qur’anic Readings within the expansive context of Islamic scholarship forms the bedrock of their resolute stand against the confluence of Variant Readings.

Those advocating absolute impermissibility anchor their stance in both scriptural evidence (*sunnah*) and rational inference (*ma‘qūl*), constructing a formidable argument against the fusion of Readings within a single recitation.

- 1) **Scriptural Evidence (Sunnah):** The primary proof marshalled by proponents of this position is the ḥadīth of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, wherein the Prophet ﷺ declared:

“The Qur’ān was revealed in Seven Aḥruf, so whoever recites according to one of them, let him not shift to another out of preference for it.”

Inference: This narration is invoked to establish that once a reciter embarks upon a particular Variant Reading, they are bound to complete the recitation in that mode, refraining from transitioning between variants—whether within a single *rak‘ah* or a singular recitational session.

- Any deliberate deviation, in their assessment, constitutes an unwarranted alteration in the flow of Qur’anic transmission.

⁴¹⁸ *al-Nashr*. 1/18.

⁴¹⁹ *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/525.

Counterargument:

- The validity of this inference is contested, as the cited ḥadīth suffers from *ḍaʿf* [weakness] and cannot serve as a decisive proof in the matter of Readings.
 - Furthermore, the underlying rationale of the ḥadīth pertains to avoiding the rejection of a valid Variant Reading, rather than prohibiting transitions between them.
- 2) **Rational Justification (Maʿqūl):** An additional argument advanced by proponents of absolute impermissibility is the preservation of Qurʾanic textual integrity. The claim is that:
- The Qurʾān does not exist in a composite, interwoven form of hybrid Readings.
 - If a reciter engages in a recitation that merges distinct canonical Readings, the result is a composition that does not exist in any singularly transmitted *riwāyah*.
 - This, they argue, deviates from the structure of the Qurʾān as it was revealed and documented.

Counterargument: This argument faces a formidable textual refutation in the ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah ؓ, wherein the Prophet ﷺ was instructed by Jibrīl:

“O Muhammad, recite the Qurʾān in one ḥarf.”

- The Prophet ﷺ responded, *“Increase it for me.”*
- This continued until it reached Seven *Aḥruf*, at which point the command was given:
- *“All are sufficient, so long as one does not mix a verse of punishment with a verse of mercy, or vice versa—such as saying: ‘Come’ (taʿāl) instead of ‘Approach’ (aqbil), or ‘Hasten’ (asri) instead of ‘Move quickly’ (ʿajjil).”*

Inference:

- The explicit prohibition in this narration is not against mixing Variant Readings in general, but rather against merging Readings in a manner that alters the fundamental meaning of an *āyah*—such as substituting a verse of mercy for one of punishment.
- This narration, therefore, implicitly permits the integration of Variant Readings so long as the meaning remains intact.

The absolute prohibition of interweaving Qur’anic Readings within a single rak‘ah emerges as a position underpinned by a desire to preserve textual integrity and continuity in recitation. However, its evidentiary basis—both from scriptural and rational perspectives—remains subject to legitimate scholarly contention.

- The textual evidence —ḥadīth—cited in its defence face scrutiny, either due to weakness in transmission or misapplication of legal reasoning.
- The rationale that hybrid Readings distort the Qur’an is challenged by authentic narrations that establish conditional permissibility.

Thus, while this perspective presents a rigorous argument in favour of standardisation, it is not an unassailable position, as other scholarly voices contend with its foundational claims.

Significantly, it becomes apparent that the prevailing view leans toward a discerning dichotomy:

- 1) One applicable to an individual engaged in solitary prayer,
- 2) Moreover, another to an *imām* leading a congregation.

For an individual worshipper, a certain degree of flexibility is acknowledged, allowing the integration of multiple Readings within a single prayer unit, contingent upon meeting the specified conditions articulated by authorities such as al-Nawwawī and Ibn al-Jazarī. However, this latitude undergoes a discernible shift when applied to an *imām* leading a congregation.

In the congregational setting, the scholarly view deems the practice of integrative Readings as inappropriate. The *imām* is expected to adhere to the established and familiar Readings—by no means does this imply that adhering to one variant in one *raka‘ah* and shifting to another variant is impermissible. The alluded-to application is refraining from deviations that may instigate confusion and discord among the worshippers—such as switching to a different variant at every *ra’s al-āyah* [Verse-Terminal], even though it is permissible, as alluded to by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Notably, the *imām’s* recitation during a singular unit of prayer, marked by the inclusion of more than one Reading, holds the potential to disrupt the harmonious unity among the congregants, engendering strife and contention.

Incorporating the Variant Readings in the recitation of the Qur’ān during prayer stands as a nuanced subject that has garnered considerable scholarly attention. This analysis has meticulously explored both the merits of reciting Variant Readings and the cautionary aspects associated with integrating multiple, diverse Readings within a single *raka‘ah*.

Sapient Advice and Conclusion

- 1) **Tawātur Status of Variant Readings:** The tradition of Variant Readings, deeply entrenched in the early history of Islam, emanates after the Fath [Conquest] of Makkah from the explicit sanctioning of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ for different tribes to recite the Qur’ān in their distinct dialects. This historical underpinning accentuates the inherent flexibility and diversity integral to the oral transmission of the Qur’ān. Notably, these Readings are either Tawātur, such as the Ten Variant Readings, or *Shādh*, such as the Four Transmitted Shādh Readings and beyond—*Shādh* Readings beyond the scope of transmission. Moreover, the oral transmission of the Qur’ān is preserved in these Readings.⁴²⁰ Additionally, Tawātur Readings are immune to doubt or dispute as they are impervious to reproach.

⁴²⁰ For the sake of brevity, I have confined myself to categorising the Variant Readings as either Tawātur or *Shādh*, as delving into the intricate nuances of the sub-categories that lie between them or extending beyond the *Shādh* Readings, is not within the delineated scope of this article.

- 2) **Disdain or Disapproval of Tawatur Readings:** The meticulous scrutiny of the Variant Readings within the expansive realm of Tawātur evokes a discerning and cautionary perspective. This analysis delves into the unequivocal disapproval—in certain scholarly circles or fraternities—directed towards the Variant Readings, which are classified under the esteemed designation of Tawātur—those Readings enjoying the privilege of widespread mass transmission.

At the core of this circumspect stance lies the acknowledgement that Tawātur Readings occupy a distinct echelon within the scholarly paradigm. These Readings represent a category whose veracity finds robust support in an unassailable multiplicity of narrators, bestowing upon them immunity to doubt or dispute. Consequently, any derogation aimed at these Tawātur Readings starkly contradicts firmly entrenched scholarly norms and principles.

In their perceptive evaluation, scholars consistently uphold the sanctity of Tawātur Readings, grounded in the unparalleled reliability embedded in their transmission. Having traversed the corridors of time through an unbroken chain of transmitters through successive generations, these Readings bear the weight of communal consensus as being Tawātur, thus rendering them impervious to reproach. Therefore, the repercussions or ramifications of harbouring any disdain towards Tawātur Readings unfold in an extensive and intricate panorama. Such an attitude not only contravenes the scholarly reverence traditionally accorded to these Readings but also challenges the foundations of epistemological certitude within Islamic jurisprudence.

In light of the above and within this framework of established norms and the sacrosanct nature of Tawātur Readings, scholars caution against any inclination toward disparagement, disdain such as scoffing, derogation, or disapproval [implicitly or explicitly]—whether the Tawātur Readings are recited within or outside the context of formal prayer—voluntary [*nafl*] and obligatory [*farḍ*]. Therefore, engaging in any dismissal, disapproval, displaying disdain or distaste, or even scoffing at the Tawātur Readings is not merely a matter of differing opinions; it raises serious questions about the individual's religious standing. Thus, preserving the sanctity and respect inherent in these

sacred Tawātur Readings is non-negotiable within academic and religious discourse.⁴²¹

- 3) **Disapproval or Disdain of a Sunnah Act:** Caution further extends to the disdain and disapproval of reciting the Tawātur Variant Readings during the prayer, a practice categorised as *sunnah*. Consequently, expressing disapproval, displaying disdain or distaste, or even scoffing at a *sunnah* act contradicts established scholarly norms and deviates from accepted practices within Islamic traditions. Notably, reciting the Variant Readings in the context of prayer—voluntary [*nafl*] and obligatory [*farḍ*] represents a neglected *sunnah*. This Prophetic tradition has fallen into obscurity, and a clarion call is raised for its revival.
- 4) **Linguistic Richness:** The Qur’ān’s linguistic brilliance is enriched by Variant Readings contributing to its linguistic diversity. These Readings provide nuanced meanings, synonyms, and diverse linguistic expressions, thereby enhancing the depth and aesthetic allure of the Qur’anic message.
- 5) **Flexibility in Recitation:** The allowance for Variant Readings accommodates individuals who have acquired knowledge of the Qur’ān through various transmissions—a particularly crucial aspect in a global context where Muslims hail from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- 6) **Spiritual Enrichment:** Reciting Variant Readings is deemed a *sunnah*—whether recited in or outside of prayer. Notably, these Readings profoundly deepen the spiritual experience of prayer. It prompts believers to contemplate

⁴²¹ The imperative nature of ascribing a Tawātur status to any established Variant Reading is unequivocally underscored in the provided passages, aligning it with the same level of certainty and gravitas accorded to well-established subjects or rulings within diverse scholarly domains, be it the legal rulings of Ḥadīth, jurisprudential considerations, or other scholarly realms. This pronouncement serves as an exhortation to approach Tawātur Readings with an unwavering sense of respect and sanctity, transcending the confines of both academic discourse and religious discussions.

In more accessible terms, the statement emanates a resolute message, emphasising the profound gravity attached to treating Tawātur Readings with reverence and respect, whether engaged in academic deliberations or religious dialogues. It is imperative to discern that the assertion does not in any manner – whatsoever – advocate *takfīr* [branding an individual as *kāfir*], but rather it posits that any dismissal, disapproval, or manifestation of contempt towards Tawātur Readings surpasses mere differences of opinions. Instead, it raises profound concerns regarding the religious standing of those who engage in such actions. Essentially, the statement posits that exhibiting disrespect or disdain towards these sacred Readings may cast doubt upon an individual’s commitment to foundational religious principles and values.

how diverse Qur'anic Readings can be comprehended and their formidable impact, thereby fostering a profound connection with the sacred text.

Caution Against Integrating Multiple Readings within a Single Raka'ah

- 1) **Maintaining Unity:** Integrating multiple Variant Readings within a single unit of prayer may induce confusion and disrupt the congregation's unity. Since prayer is a communal act, a uniform Reading maintains a sense of cohesion among worshippers—maintaining one *riwāyah* per *raka'ah* or rendering *al-Fātiḥah* in one *riwāyah* and the subsequent *sūrah* (after *al-Fātiḥah*) in another *riwāyah*.
- 2) **Avoiding Distraction:** Prayer, as a focused act of worship, may encounter disruption when multiple Readings are introduced within a single unit. The potential confusion in transitioning between Readings could impede the worshipper's concentration and devotion.
- 3) **Preserving Ritual Integrity:** The meticulously preserved traditional methods of prayer over centuries should be upheld. Altering the established structure without a compelling reason risks compromising the integrity of the ritual and its connection to historical practices.

In conclusion, the permissibility of incorporating Tawātur Variant Readings in prayer, recognised as a *sunnah*, finds support in the Prophetic tradition, historical precedent, linguistic depth, and its adaptability to the diverse Muslim population. Consequently, an exhaustive debate on its acceptability or permissibility in congregational prayer is redundant, given compliance with the specified conditions delineated by al-Nawwawī and Ibn al-Jazarī.

Nonetheless, a circumspect approach is advisable when contemplating the transition and integration of multiple Readings at any verse terminal within a single *raka'ah*. The paramount focus should be on maintaining unity, averting distraction, and preserving the established ritual integrity of prayer. Achieving a nuanced equilibrium between appreciating diverse Readings and ensuring a harmonious communal worship experience becomes imperative for a comprehensive approach to this intricate facet of Islamic worship. This perspective encapsulates the essence of Islamic worship, seamlessly blending diversity with ritual unity in the sacred act of prayer.

Sakt at Verse-Terminals: A Controversial Practice in Qur’anic Recitation

Recent observations within the realm of Qur’anic recitation have brought to light a recurring practice among certain reciters. Specifically, while reciting concise verses, some practitioners employ *sakt*, a form of textual constraint, at the *ra’s al-āyah* or Verse-Terminal without renewing the breath. This phenomenon prompts a scholarly investigation into the Islamic ruling on such a practice and the technical terminology employed within the domain of Qur’anic recitation to delineate this action.

Islamic Ruling on Sakt—Pausing without Renewal of the Breath: In the context of succinct or closely spaced Qur’anic verses, the reciter is presented with two permissible approaches, each imbued with its own distinctive terminology:

1) **Stopping at the end of a verse or designated point and renewing the breath:**

This procedural step is referred to as *waqf* or stopping, a recognised convention among the *qurrā’*. For instance, the recitation of [الرَّحْمٰنُ], wherein a brief stop occurs with a renewal of breath, precedes the subsequent recitation of [عَلَّمَ الْقُرْءَانَ].

2) **Connecting the concluding segment of one verse or phrase with the ensuing one while providing grammatical elucidation:**

This practice is identified as *wasl* or connection. An illustrative example would be the seamless articulation of [الرَّحْمٰنُ * عَلَّمَ الْقُرْءَانَ] in one continuous breath.

The Practice of Sakt or Silent Pause: However, a distinct practice has emerged among certain reciters, characterised by the recitation of [الرَّحْمٰنُ], followed by a pause or *sakt* without the renewal of breath, and subsequently, the recitation of [عَلَّمَ الْقُرْءَانَ]. This practice is technically denominated as *sakt* or silent pause without breath renewal. Scholars exhibit diverse opinions concerning the juridical standing of this practice:

1) **Ibn al-Jazarī’s Position:**

Ibn al-Jazarī proffers a nuanced perspective, contending that the act of *sakt* is delimited to specific junctures, as exemplified by the four renowned places of *sakt* in the narration of Ḥafṣ. *Sakt* in these four locations is contingent upon

samā' or auditory transmission of the narration and *al-naql al-ṣaḥiḥ* or authentic transmission. He, therefore, asserts that *sakt* is not confined to the Verse-Terminals.

2) **Alternative View of Ibn al-Jazarī:**

Ibn al-Jazarī, drawing upon the opinions of certain *qurrā'*, acknowledges the permissibility of *sakt* at the Verse-Terminals without imposing any restrictive conditions. This perspective is posited to elucidate that *sakt* serves the purpose of designating or indicating a Verse-Terminal. However, it is noteworthy that this stance has not achieved universal acceptance.

The practice of stopping on a specific word without renewing the breath and subsequently continuing with the following text is categorised as *sakt* or silent pause. Divergent opinions arise when such an act occurs at the Verse-Terminals, with abstention being the favoured course. However, if this practice is not observed at a designated Verse-Terminal, as exemplified in the recitation of [ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ] followed by a pause without breath renewal and then the recitation of [هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ], it is deemed impermissible. In such instances, it becomes incumbent upon the designated instructor/teacher to disapprove of the student's practice, directing them to either apply *waqf* or *waṣl* as dictated by the established norms of Qur'anic recitation. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

Note: al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl asserted that the utilisation of *waqf ikhtiyārī* [optional stop] between the letters [حم] and [عسق], even though they are written *mafṣūlah* [disjointly], is impermissible. To support his stance, he referenced the *Nashr*, which posits that *waqf* can only be employed at the end of the *al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'āt* [disjointed letters] because they are regarded as a single word, regardless of the disjointed form of [حم [عسق]. Nevertheless, he also stated that if *waqf* is indeed implemented between [حم] and [عسق], the reciter must repeat the recitation. This is also the view of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khalījī. However, he further affirms that whoever applies *waqf* between them should repeat.⁴²²

⁴²² *Hall al-Mushkilāt*: pg. 153 – 154.

Despite the afore-mentioned, both al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khalījī’s viewpoint on this matter is flawed, as the application of *waqf* between [حم] and [عسق] is considered as being *waqf tām* due to it being a verse-terminal for both Kūfī and Ḥimṣī.⁴²³

Conversely, reciting all five letters before implementing *waqf* for the remaining qurrā’ is necessary. The same principle applies to the application of *sakt* [textual constraints] between the *ḥuruf al-muqaṭṭa’āt* of [حم عسق] for Abū Ja’far. Consequently, employing *sakt* between the letters [حم] followed by *waqf*, and subsequently applying *sakt* between the remaining letters [عسق] is not only incorrect but also represents an inaccurate transmission and a discrepancy within the transmission for Abū Ja’far. In light of this, Madanī perceives the initial Verse-Terminal of the *sūrah* as occurring at [الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ]. Thus, *sakt* must be applied between each of the five letters. The reciter then has the option of either applying *sakt* after the *qāf* or *waqf*, with the latter being deemed *waqf jā’iz* [permissible stop].⁴²⁴ And Allah ﷻ knows best.

⁴²³ Notably, none of the Eponymous Fourteen Readers resorted to following the Ḥimṣī verse-terminals.

⁴²⁴ *A Simplified Study of the Three Variant Readings via the Durrah*: 19.

Dissecting Distich 37 of the Durrah: The Controversy Surrounding Sakt in Idrīs's Transmission

A contentious quandary that pervades the scholarly corridors, echoing through the inquiries of inquisitive students, graduates, and occasionally, erudite instructors, revolves around the permissibility of applying *sakt* [textual constraints] in the Readings transmitted by the Canonical Transmitter Idrīs via the *Durrah* recension. The genesis of this query is rooted in a pivotal phrase encapsulated within distich 37 of the *Durrah*: [وَحَقَّقْ هَمْزَ الْوَقْفِ وَالسَّكْتِ أَهْمَلًا], signifying “Observe *tahqīq* [affirmation] of the *hamzah*, whereas *sakt* is neglected.” This statement engenders a spectrum of opinions, ranging from staunch endorsement to categorical prohibition, thereby laying the groundwork for an intricate scholarly discourse.

The First Perspective: The vanguard of dissent, commencing with those adamantly propounding the explicit outright prohibition of this practice, finds its standard-bearer in the erudite Ibn al-Jazarī. In his meticulous exploration of the phrase, Ibn al-Jazarī resolutely dismisses the validity of applying *sakt* within the purview of Idrīs's Reading.

Alternate Viewpoint of Ibn al-Jazarī: Delineated in his opus *al-Taḥbīr al-Taysīr*, Ibn al-Jazarī introduces a nuanced viewpoint articulated by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī. Within this scholarly exposition, al-Dānī unveils a methodological approach concerning the application of *sakt* within the Readings transmitted by Khalaf via Ḥamzah. Delving into the intricacies of this approach, al-Dānī elucidates that *sakt* is delicately employed when encountering a scenario where the last letter of one word is a *sākin* letter, subsequently followed by a *hamzah* in the ensuing word. Such an application of *sakt* spans across two consecutive words, contingent upon the *sākin* letter not being a letter of *madd*.

Furthermore, al-Dānī enriches his discourse with elucidative examples, citing instances such as [مَنْ آمَنَ], [هَلْ أَتَاكَ], thereby providing tangible manifestations of this nuanced application. Additionally, al-Dānī expounds that he personally recited to Abū al-Ḥasan Ṭāhir ibn Ghalbūn, employing *sakt* on specific instances involving the words

[ال], [شئ], and [شيئاً], while abstaining from its application in scenarios in one word for Hamzah⁴²⁵—as observed in [أفئدة], [القرءان], and [مسنؤلون].

Intriguingly, while Ibn al-Jazarī meticulously imparts the wisdom elucidated by al-Dānī, a conspicuous silence ensues regarding Khalaf's transmission. Ibn al-Jazarī implicitly suggests that had Khalaf employed *sakt* within his Reading, such a noteworthy detail would have merited mention within his seminal work, *al-Taḥbīr*.

Notably, a conspicuous consensus permeates both of Ibn al-Jazarī's articulated views—a shared repudiation of *sakt* within the ambit of Idrīs's transmission.

In the first perspective, Ibn al-Jazarī's stance manifests as overt and emphatic, resonating with a definitive dismissal of any semblance of embracing *sakt* within the hallowed precincts of Idrīs's transmission. The eloquent pen of Ibn al-Jazarī crafts a narrative devoid of interpretative flexibility or contemplative latitude, unambiguously delineating the unequivocal disallowance of applying *sakt* in the meticulous domain of Idrīs's sacred rendition.

Concurrently, the second perspective unfurls a nuanced and measured tapestry characterised by an implicit yet discernible rejection of *sakt*. This approach, marked by scholarly restraint, refrains from explicit endorsement, opting for a subtlety that does not obscure the underlying message—an unequivocal lack of sanction for *sakt* within the realm of Idrīs's transmission.

In a similar vein, a cohort of esteemed scholars, including Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nuwayrī⁴²⁶, 'Uthmān ibn 'Umar al-Zabīdī⁴²⁷, Muḥammad Munayyir al-Samannūdi⁴²⁸, al-Mutawallī in his *al-Wujūh al-Musfirrah*, 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī⁴²⁹, Īhāb Fikrī⁴³⁰, Qārī' Ayyūb Ishāq, and Qārī' Muḥammad Salīm Gaibie⁴³¹, collectively converges on a resolute viewpoint.⁴³² In unison, these venerable minds espouse a

⁴²⁵ *al-Taysīr*: 48.

⁴²⁶ *Sharḥ al-Durrah li al-Nuwayrī*: 120.

⁴²⁷ *al-Īqāh li al-Zabīdī*: 140 – 141.

⁴²⁸ *Sharḥ al-Samannūdi*: 64 – 65.

⁴²⁹ *al-Īqāh*: 74.

⁴³⁰ *Ajwibat al-Qurrā' al-Fuḍalā'*: 76. *Taqrib al-Durrah*: 276 – 286.

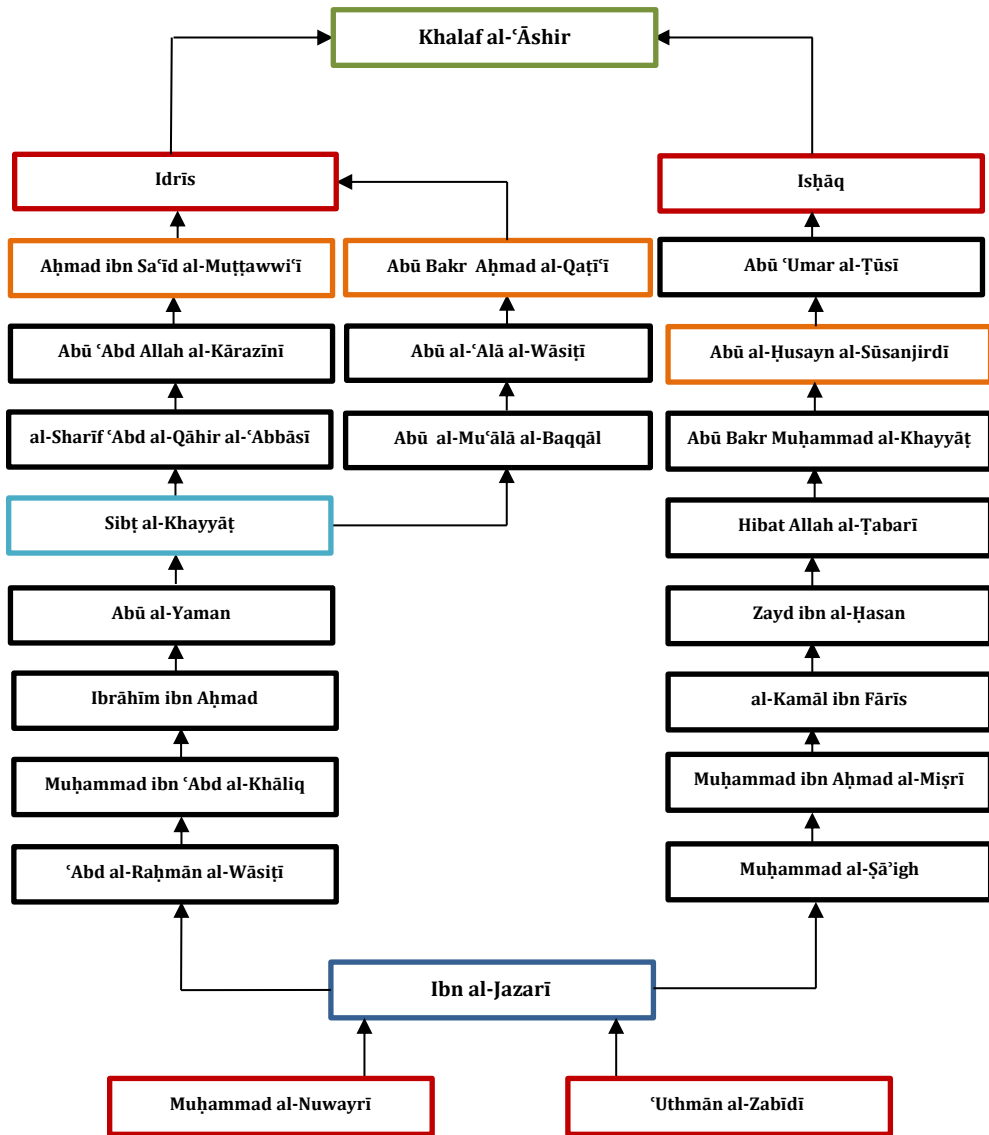
⁴³¹ *Fawā'id al-Ayyūbiyyah*: 56.

⁴³² Among the numerous instructors with whom I interacted and read to, Maḥmūd Shu'ayb 'Ali al-Sharqāwī stood as the sole advocate for reading with and without *sakt* for Khalaf al-'Ashir via the *Durrah* recension.

collective consensus—a resolute agreement that *sakt*, within the context of Idrīs’s transmission, finds no resonance within the annals of the *Durrah* recension.

The Second Perspective: In his erudite exposition, *al-Īdāh li al-Zabīdī*, ‘Abd al-Rāziq ‘Ali Mūsā ardently champions the cause for the application of *sakt*, lending his scholarly weight to a perspective that navigates the intricate *turuq* [recensions] of Idrīs’s transmission—al-Qaṭī‘ī and al-Muṭṭawwi‘ī. It is within this scholarly discourse that he articulates a crucial distinction, asserting that *‘adm al-sakt* [no *sakt*] is the prescribed reading for Idrīs via the former, al-Qaṭī‘ī. In contrast, *sakt* assumes legitimacy within the contours of the latter, al-Muṭṭawwi‘ī.

The Sanad for Khalaf al-‘Āshir:



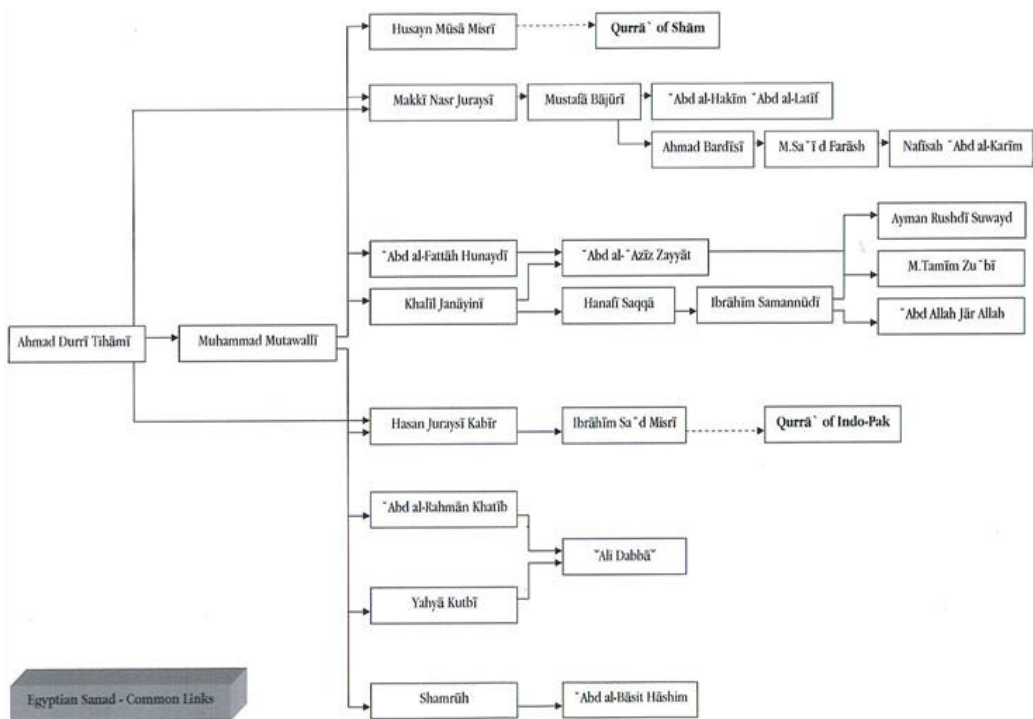
Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Rāziq ‘Ali Mūsā meticulously dissects distich 37, clarifying that its purview—*‘adm al-sakt*, is confined to the reading of al-Qaṭī‘ī and does not extend to al-Muṭṭawwi‘ī.

The scholarly resonance of this perspective extends to the insights gleaned from al-Mutawallī’s *al-Rawḍ al-Naḍīr*, wherein an emphatic advocacy for the application of

sakt via al-Muṭṭawwiʿī is discerned.⁴³³ This echoes in harmony with the views articulated by ‘Alī al-Ḍabbā’, ‘Ali Subayyi’, Hammām Quṭb, and Muḥammad Nabḥān al-Miṣrī⁴³⁴, who, in unison, endorse the legitimacy of *sakt* within the realm of Idrīs’s transmission via the al-Muṭṭawwiʿī recension.⁴³⁵

Discernably, in scrutinising the various *asānīd* [scholarly lineages] emanating from the erudite figure of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mutawallī, a palpable scholastic dichotomy comes to the fore—centring on the practice of *sakt* [textual constraints] for Idrīs via the *Durrah* recension. The discernable minority, threading a distinct path, chooses to embrace the practice of *sakt*. Contrarily, the majority within this scholarly lineage opts for ‘*adm al-sakt*, eschewing textual constraints in Idrīs’s transmission.

Diagram 1:



⁴³³ *al-Rawḍ al-Naḍīr*: 406. *al-Īḍāh li al-Zabīdī*: 140 – 142.

⁴³⁴ *‘Abīr min al-Taḥbīr*: 76.

⁴³⁵ *al-Rawḍ al-Naḍīr*: 406. *al-Īḍāh li al-Zabīdī*: 140 – 142.

Diagram 2:

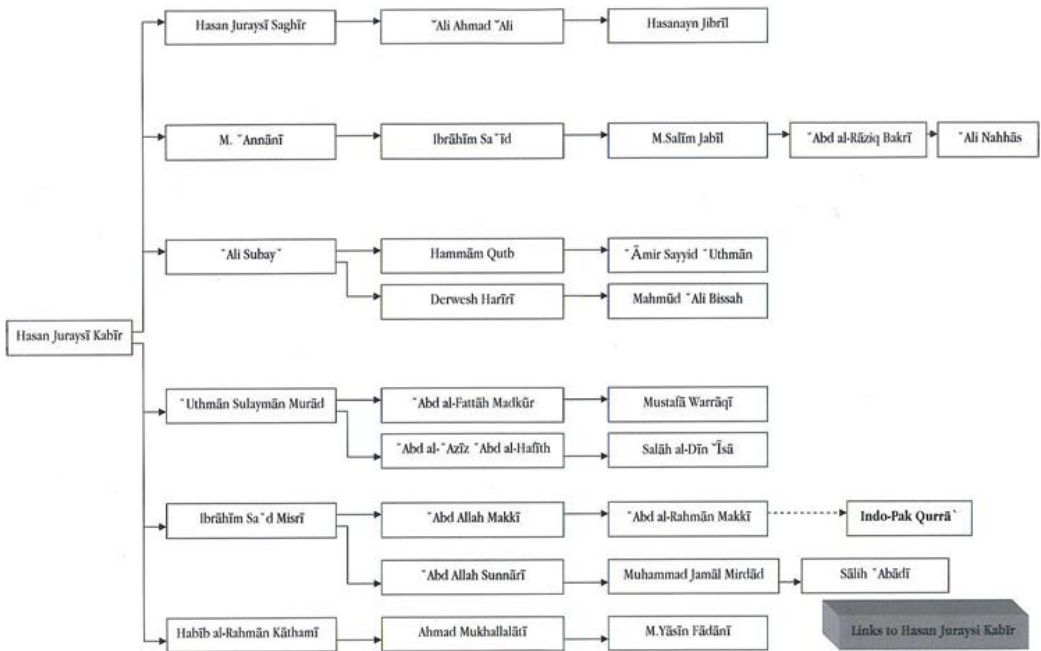


Diagram 3:

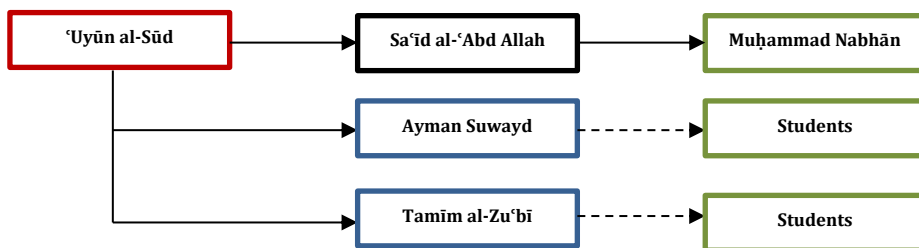


Diagram 4:



Conspicuously, a notable divergence emerges within the readings of 'Alī al-Ḍabbā', as elucidated in the initial diagram concerning his reading to 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Khaṭīb. This departure from the prevailing majority, visually depicted, serves to underscore

the distinctive positioning of ‘Alī al-Ḍabbā‘ within the broader tradition. In a parallel vein, the second diagram introduces Hammām Quṭb, who, in his rendition to ‘Ali Subayyi‘, assumes a comparable state of isolation.

Similarly, the third diagram presents Muḥammad Nabhān’s reading to Sa‘īd al-Abd Allah al-Muḥammad, who, in turn, read to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Uyūn al-Sūd. Interestingly, the direct students of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Uyūn al-Sūd, namely, Ayman Suwayd and Muḥammad Tamīm al-Zu‘bī, neither advocate nor practice this reading. Lastly, in the fourth diagram, ‘Abd al-Rāziq ‘Ali Mūsā stands in isolation, as this reading was not championed nor advocated by al-Zayyāt, as evidenced in his *Tanqīh*. Therefore, this discernible divergence, mirrored in both visual representations, signifies a distinctive inclination in their approach to practising *sakt* [textual constraints] for Idrīs, portraying them as scholarly outliers amid the larger milieu.

Crucially, it is imperative to acknowledge that the probability of Ḥasan al-Juraysī al-Kabīr aligning with this particular perspective is deemed remote. This assertion emanates from a meticulous examination of the remaining five *asānīd* traced back to him, uniformly transmitting the reading of *‘adm al-sakt* for Idrīs. A supposition arises, suggesting that the practice of *sakt*, or textual constraints, for Idrīs could have rather been an *ikhtiyār*, a personal stylistic choice, exercised by ‘Alī al-Ḍabbā‘, Hammām Quṭb, ‘Ali Subayyi‘, Muḥammad Nabhān al-Miṣrī, and ‘Abd al-Rāziq ‘Ali Mūsā. Therefore, this proposition contemplates the possibility that practising *sakt* for Idrīs via the *Durrah* recension, in this context, was not an inherited, transmitted reading via this recension but instead a deliberate personal *ikhtiyār* [stylistic choice].

Concludingly, the intellectual baton passed from Ibn al-Jazarī to his discerning disciples, al-Nuwayrī and al-Zabīdī, serves as a testament to the meticulous transmission of the *Durrah* text as well as his Readings. Their shared tutelage under Ibn al-Jazarī becomes an illuminating chapter in the narrative of Qur’anic scholarship, epitomising the transmission of the sacred text through the revered channels of master-disciple [teacher-student] relationships.

Furthermore, al-Nuwayrī and al-Zabīdī, having imbibed the teachings of the *Durrah* and having read the Three Variant Readings via the *Durrah* recension under the

tutelage of Ibn al-Jazarī, emerge as authoritative voices on the subject. Their status as direct students of Ibn al-Jazarī establishes a compelling argument against the application of *sakt* in Idrīs's Reading via the *Durrah* recension. The shared academic heritage, characterised by a meticulous adherence to transmission protocols, reinforces the resolute stance that *sakt*, within this specific context, finds no doctrinal or historical validation.

Moreover, in the nuanced examination of the application of *sakt* in Idrīs's transmission, Īhāb Fikrī emerges as a pivotal commentator, orchestrating a temporal dissection that navigates through the annals of Qur'anic scholarship. His assertion boldly underscores the discernible absence of *sakt* in Idrīs's transmission, a phenomenon he asserts was conspicuously non-existent from the era of Ibn al-Jazarī until recent decades, particularly during the epoch of al-Mutawallī.

This temporal demarcation, spanning from the historical zenith represented by Ibn al-Jazarī to the contemporary milieu marked by al-Mutawallī, serves as the chronological bookends within which the trajectory of *sakt* application for Idrīs is scrutinised. The veracity of this claim is fortified by Īhāb Fikrī's meticulous examination of the scholarly legacy predating al-Mutawallī, revealing an intriguing scholarly inertia wherein no luminary preceding al-Mutawallī is documented to have advocated for or implemented *sakt* in Idrīs's transmission via the *Durrah* recension. The weight of historical evidence marshalled by Īhāb Fikrī resoundingly tilts the scholarly scales in favour of the first perspective, consolidating the argument against the historical precedence or legitimacy of applying *sakt* in Idrīs's transmission. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

Beyond Linguistics: The Ethical Implications of Waqf Qabīḥ in Qur’anic Recitation

The discourse under consideration addresses a nuanced aspect of Qur’anic recitation, explicitly examining the concept of *waqf qabīḥ*, the unpleasant cessation. This intricate subject matter refers to the deliberate stop at a text segment where the meaning is incomplete and intrinsically connected to what ensues in both expression and import yet devoid of any substantive benefit. Notably, al-Sakhāwī defined *waqf qabīḥ* as “a cessation where one is unable to discern the intended meaning, or from which one infers a meaning other than what is intended.”⁴³⁶ Similarly, Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī observed that “it is a cessation where the intended meaning is not apparent, or it leads to ambiguity.”⁴³⁷ The gravity of applying *waqf qabīḥ* lies in its potential to introduce unintended meanings or erroneously insinuate the corruption of the intended message of a given verse. Furthermore, Ibn al-Jazarī elucidated, “It is a cessation juncture where intentional cessation [*waqf* on the *mawqūf ‘alayh*] is impermissible if it alters or diminishes the intended meaning.”⁴³⁸

Notably, within the purview of *waqf qabīḥ*, four discernible types manifest themselves:

- 1) Cessation at a juncture where meaning is incomplete or does not convey a correct meaning due to its strong connection to what follows in both wording and meaning.
 - Illustratively, stopping on a noun without its modifier, exemplified by instances such as [بِسْمِ] (in the name), [الْحَمْدُ] (all praise), and [مَلِكٍ] (master). This cessation is deemed unpleasant due to its lack of specificity for its purpose.
 - Another vivid example is observed when stopping on the subject without its predicate, as in [الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ], and stopping on the *mawṣūf* [الصِّرَاطِ] (path) without its *ṣifah* [الْمُسْتَقِيمِ] (straight) as observed in [الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ], and stopping on the *muḍāf* [عَهْدًا] (pledge) without its *mūdāf*

⁴³⁶ *Jamāl al-Qurrāʾ*: 563.

⁴³⁷ *al-Muqṣid*: 5.

⁴³⁸ *al-Tamhīd*: 108.

ilayh [الله] (Allah) as witnessed in [الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ], fall within the ambit of displeasing cessation.

- In a similar vein, stopping on a verb [يَتَقَبَّلُ] (accept) in the verse [إِنَّمَا [يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ التَّوْبَةَ], translating to “Only Allah accepts the repentance” without its doer [الله], illustrated by [إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ], connoting “Only he accepts” is similarly prohibited as it fails to complete the speech, rendering the meaning incomprehensible.

The descriptor “unpleasant” is attributed to this form of stopping owing to the inherent unsightliness resulting from an incompleteness of speech and the non-discernible meaning. This phenomenon’s undesirable nature stems from linguistic and conceptual factors, wherein attachment occurs without any substantive benefit.

However, certain texts delineate an exception to this prohibition, recognising instances where a reader may find it necessary to intentionally stop at such points, denoted as *darūrah* or *waqf iḍṭirārī*, “necessitated cessation.” In these specific cases, typically marked by compelling circumstances—such as coughing, sneezing or even an unintentional burp, or more commonly, shortness of breath—in these cases, necessitated cessation becomes permissible for the reader. This assertion aligns with the pronouncement of Ibn al-Jazarī, who underscores the impermissibility of deliberate cessations at these points unless necessitated by circumstances, in which case it is termed “necessitated cessation” and deemed permissible.⁴³⁹

وَعَيَّرُمَاتَمَّ قَيْحٌ وَأَلَهُ يُوقَفُ مُضْطَرًّا وَيُودَا قَبْلَهُ

Exploring “The Unpleasant Cessation” in Qur’anic recitation underscores the delicate balance between adherence to established norms, the aesthetic considerations of linguistic expression, and the nuanced allowances for exceptions under compelling circumstances. The thorough elucidation of this matter provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in the art of Qur’anic recitation, emphasising the multifaceted nature of its rules and exceptions.

- 2) The exploration delves further into the second type of unpleasant cessation, a classification that engenders unintended or unwarranted meanings through

⁴³⁹ *Muqaddimat al-Jazariyyah*: distich 77.

cessation at a specific text segment. This complex phenomenon involves stopping at a part of the text in a manner that implies a meaning not originally intended, as the stop is leveraged to derive a subsequent intended meaning.

- Illustratively, the elucidation draws attention to *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, verse 43, [لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ], “Do not approach prayer”. Stopping at this juncture in isolation might erroneously convey a blanket prohibition against performing prayer, which downplays one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. However, the intended meaning of the verse only becomes apparent when the subsequent part, [وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ], “while you are intoxicated”, is considered. The undesirable implication of a complete prohibition is rectified, revealing that the verse advises against approaching prayer while intoxicated. The meaning is thus incomplete without the follow-up clause. Thus, stopping solely at “Do not approach prayer” is deemed unpleasant.
- Similarly, the analysis extends to the phrase in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 222, [فَاعْتَرِلُوا النِّسَاءَ], “abstain from your womanfolk”—engaging in sexual relationships. Stopping at this segment might mislead, suggesting a blanket abstention from one’s lawful wife. Nevertheless, completing the intended meaning requires the continuation to [حَتَّىٰ] [يَطْهُرْنَ], “until they are clean”—until they have completed their menstruation cycle. This example underscores the necessity of connecting to what follows to avoid misinterpretation.
- A parallel instance is found in *Sūrat al-Insān*, verse 31, wherein stopping at the phrase [يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ], “He enters into His mercy whomsoever He desires, including the wrongdoers” could lead to a skewed understanding. However, the complete intended meaning, emphasising Divine admission to mercy for the good doers and the preparedness of a painful punishment for wrongdoers, requires the continuation of the verse, as in [يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ] [وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا], connoting “He enters into His mercy

whomsoever He desires [of the good doers]; and as for the wrongdoers, for them is a painful punishment”

The conclusion drawn is unequivocal – stopping at phrases that imply unintended meanings is inherently displeasing. The imperative lies in connecting to what follows to elucidate and complete the intended meaning, underscoring the nuanced intricacies inherent in the art of Qur’anic recitation. This nuanced examination serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of contextualisation and the meticulous consideration of subsequent verses in preserving the intended meaning of the sacred text.

3) The third type of unpleasant cessation, a form that not only suggests but embodies the corruption of meaning—an act deemed the most repugnant and is reflective of a profound lack of etiquette towards Allah ﷻ.

- A vivid example encapsulates this: [إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيَىٰ أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضًا فَمَا [فَوْقَهَا], translating to “Verily, Allah is not shy to send forth a parable of a mosquito nor anything above it [greater than a mosquito].” Hence, stopping at the phrase [إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيَىٰ], “Verily, Allah is not shy”. This type stands unequivocally impermissible. However, the permissibility is reinstated when the stop occurs at [فَوْقَهَا], “above it”.
- Even more reprehensible is the act of stopping at a negation followed by an affirmation, particularly when the affirmation pertains to Allah ﷻ or His Messenger ﷺ. Illustratively, a stop at [فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ], “so know that there is no deity” or [لَا إِلَهَ], “there is no deity” carries the perilous potential of distorting the Prophet’s ﷺ mission, as in the incomplete expression [وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ], “and We did not send you.” Failure to conclude such verses to a permissible point is more than an oversight; it constitutes a grave sin, a severe error, a breach of consensus, a blanket negation against the Tawātur status of the existence of Allah ﷻ, the Qur’ān, and Prophethood of the Prophet ﷺ as well as that of previous Messengers, and a deviation from the imperative goals of mastering recitation and perfecting Tajwīd [Elocutionary Laws].

The gravity of this matter is showcased by the intentional persistence in such acts, elevating the transgressions to the realm of a major sin and a reprehensible mistake. Such persistence further signifies a violation of consensus and a departure from the disciplined path of mastering recitation and perfecting Tajwīd. The consequences are stark, calling for a beseechment to Allah ﷻ for guidance along the straightest path, emphasising the imperative need for rectitude in the sacred endeavour of Qur’anic recitation. This nuanced exploration illuminates the profound responsibility borne by those engaged in the art of recitation, underscoring the need for meticulous attention to detail and a steadfast commitment to the sanctity of the revealed text.

4) A fourth distinctive manifestation of unpleasant cessations manifests itself through the inadvertent insertion of oaths within the sacred text.

- An illustrative example of this phenomenon unfolds in *Sūrah Luqmān*, verse 13, where the text admonishes, [وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ] وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ [وَأَنْ يَسْتَعِينِيَ وَلَا تَشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ * إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ]. Translated, this verse cautions, “And recall when Luqmān said to his son, while admonishing him: O my child, do not associate (any partners) with Allah; Indeed, associating (any partners unto Him) is surely a grave injustice.”

Crucially, the absence of a deliberate oath in this context is evident. However, an intriguing dynamic emerges when a reciter, perhaps inadvertently or intentionally, initiates the recitation from the beginning of the verse but disrupts the flow at [لَا تُشْرِكْ]. Subsequently, the recitation resumes from [بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ]. This nuanced intervention results in a translation that deviates from the original Divine intent: “And recall when Luqmān said to his son, while admonishing him: O my child, do not associate (any partners) with Allah. **By Allah**, indeed, associating (any partners unto Him) is surely a grave injustice.” It is discernible that the reciter, in this scenario, introduces an oath that was not initially intended by the Divine authorship of Allah ﷻ Himself.

This intricate interplay of recitation nuances delves into the potential ramifications of improper cessations, elucidating how a seemingly innocuous disruption can

inadvertently inject new layers of meaning into the sacred verses. The unintended introduction of oaths exemplifies the delicate balance required to preserve the sanctity and authenticity of the Qur'anic recitation.

Conclusion: The censure of reprehensible cessation in the revered tradition of the Prophet ﷺ finds its foundation in a narrated account elucidated by the masterful Ibn al-Jazarī in his seminal work *al-Tamhīd*. This historical episode is anchored in the testimony of ‘Adī ibn Ḥātim, who, in his transmission, recounts an encounter where two individuals approached the Prophet ﷺ. The first individual professed the testimony of faith, eliciting a response from the Prophet ﷺ, asserting, “He who obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed guided himself, and he who disobeys them has gone astray.” However, a pivotal moment unfolded when the declarant inexplicably halted, prompting the Prophet’s ﷺ poignant observation, “Stand up; what a wretched preacher you are!”⁴⁴⁰

The proponents of the impermissibility of reprehensible cessation contend that this narrative serves as unequivocal evidence. In this account, the Prophet ﷺ not only corrected the inappropriate halt in the declaration but also critically evaluated the individual’s preaching abilities. The crux of their argument lies in the amalgamation of both obedience and disobedience within a single scenario. The contention is that the declarant should have ceased at the phrase “for indeed, he has attained guidance,” avoiding the ensuing egregious interruption.

In parsing this nuanced scenario, scholars weigh the implications of the Prophet’s ﷺ corrective intervention. As narrated by ‘Adī ibn Ḥātim and transmitted by Ibn al-Jazarī, the incident becomes a focal point in the discourse surrounding reprehensible cessation. The multifaceted nature of this episode showcases the delicate balance between obedience to Divine directives and the potential pitfalls of inadvertent lapses in expression during the proclamation of faith. The overarching theme, therefore, emphasises the impermissibility of such interruptions and the imperative for meticulous adherence to prescribed forms of expression in the sacred realm of religious discourse. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

⁴⁴⁰ *Abū Dāwūd*: 1/252.

In the hypothetical scenario where an *imām*, during the recitation of the Qurʾān, makes an unpleasant cessation that is universally acknowledged as displeasing and implies a false belief, a nuanced discourse emerges regarding the commendability of the follower's intervention. al-Zurqānī, in his seminal work *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ʿalā Mukhtṣar Khalīl*, ventures into this intricate terrain, emphasising that while it is commendable for the follower [*maʾmūm*] to alert the *imām* to such an unpleasant cessation, there exists no categorical affirmation of the obligatory nature of this corrective action.

al-Zurqānī underscores the gravity of an unpleasant cessation, especially when it resonates with a false belief and is known to the congregation. In such instances, the follower is positioned to exercise discernment and take on the commendable role of addressing this unsettling cessation. However, the absence of an outright obligation to correct the *imām* introduces a layer of flexibility in the *maʾmūm*'s [followers/congregation's] response.⁴⁴¹

A crucial dimension introduced by al-Zurqānī pertains to the *imām*'s potential lack of proficiency in the rules of *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* in Qurʾānic recitation. This prompts an essential consideration of the *imām*'s situation—whether he is, in fact, unaware of the intricacies involved. al-Zurqānī advocates for a judicious evaluation of the *imām*'s condition, cautioning that correction may lead to confusion if the *imām* misunderstands his mistake. The possibility of the *imām* assuming he forgot a verse or attributing errors to the *maʾmūm* necessitates a measured and thoughtful approach to correction.

In navigating the intricacies of issues that may disrupt the sanctity of prayer for both the *imām* and the congregation, a profound contemplation emerges, prompting a scholarly discourse on the judicious timing of alerting the *imām* to any shortcomings. In such a scenario, where potential disruptions loom over the sacred act of prayer, the prevailing consensus suggests a preference for delaying the *imām*'s correction until after the prayer concludes. The rationale behind this approach lies in the calculated consideration that the harm incurred by interrupting the prayer far outweighs the potential inconvenience resulting from the *imām*'s inadvertent unpleasant cessation.

⁴⁴¹ *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī*: 1/426 – 427.

This nuanced perspective posits that, in instances where an *imām*'s cessation appears unpleasant due to a lack of knowledge, causing an unintended distortion of meaning without a deliberate intent to corrupt or misconstrue the Divine message, the act, while unsavoury, does not bear the weight of sin. The crux of this argument lies in recognising that the *imām*, acting out of ignorance, should be shielded from unwarranted condemnation. This perspective extends further, suggesting that stopping at a point that distorts meaning, while deemed unpleasant, only becomes sinful if it involves a deliberate distortion of the Words of Allah ﷻ—an almost inconceivable transgression for a devout Muslim.

The insights of Ibn al-Jazarī further elucidate the scholarly stance on stopping at specific linguistic constructs, such as a noun without its modifier or a verb without its subject, and so forth.⁴⁴² Far from branding such cessations as forbidden, disliked, or sinful, the scholars' intent, as expounded by Ibn al-Jazarī, revolves around the endorsement of *waqf ikhtiyārī*. This optional cessation enriches the auditory experience of recitation. This deliberate choice aims to enhance the aesthetic quality of recitation, emphasising the permissibility of such cessation to render a melodious and pleasing delivery. Consequently, the scholars' pronouncements, rather than imposing restrictions, lay the groundwork for a nuanced exploration of optional stops, emphasising their role in augmenting the beauty of Qur'anic recitation.

Scholars carefully tread when addressing the issue of stopping at specific points within the text. The nuanced approach taken by these scholars hinges on the acknowledgement that the absolute prohibition of stopping at specific junctures is not the crux of the matter. Instead, their emphasis lies in fostering a recitation that is not only permissible but also enhances the beauty and fluency of the delivery.

Should readers find themselves compelled to interrupt their recitation at specific junctures due to necessities such as the need to catch their breath or for instructional purposes, scholars unanimously agree on the permissibility of such interruptions or cessations. However, the consensus is not without a caveat—resumption must occur by relying on the previous segment, seamlessly reconnecting with the ensuing

⁴⁴² Other examples include cessation of the *ḥarf al-nidā'*, without the *munādā ilayh*; the *ism al-ishārah* without the *mushār ilayh*, and the *ḥarf al-jarr* without its *majrūr*, among others.

segment of the verse. This consensus is unequivocal, barring those who intend to distort a given verse's meaning. Intentional distortion is vehemently admonished, deemed forbidden, and mandates intervention as Sharī'ah principles dictate.⁴⁴³

The complexity of this matter is further underscored by the notion that an *imām*, in his recitation, may unintentionally stop at a point perceived as unpleasant. In such scenarios, scholars propose a circumspect approach wherein the follower refrains from immediate correction during prayer. The rationale behind this approach is the potential harm caused by interruption, which may outweigh the *imām's* unintentional misstep resulting from ignorance without any deliberate intent to distort meaning.

The subsequent guidance delves into the *ma'mūm's* actions, cautioning them against hastily correcting the *imām* unless there is an unequivocal certainty that the cessation point is universally considered unpleasant. The *imām*, with potential interpretative nuances or a specific understanding of the verse, might perceive his chosen cessation as permissible.

The ensuing example serves as a paradigmatic illustration of such interpretive nuances:

In *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, verse 71, Allah ﷻ presents a narrative involving a cow, delineating specific characteristics and functionalities attributed to it. The nuanced interpretation of the verse, particularly concerning the phrase [لا ذُلُومٌ] (free from fault), introduces a realm of scholarly discourse.

Some scholars, albeit with a perceived weakness in their opinion, advocate for a permissible cessation, specifically at the mention of the cow being [لا ذُلُومٌ]. al-Qurṭubī, known for his erudition, offers insights into the interpretation, elucidating that when Allah ﷻ mentions the cow's inability to [تُثْبِرُ الْأَرْضَ] (plough the earth) and not to [تَسْقِي] (irrigate the field), a *waqf hasan* [commendable cessation] may be observed. The rationale lies in the varying interpretations of the verb [تُثْبِرُ], either as intransitive, conveying a metaphorical sense, or transitive, implying active ploughing.

⁴⁴³ *al-Nashr*. 1/230 – 231.

al-Qurṭubī supports the intransitive interpretation, arguing that the transitive usage conflicts with the subsequent phrase [وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ]. Additionally, he asserts that if the cow were actively ploughing, it would have incurred some fault [ذُلُولٌ], contrary to Allah’s ﷻ affirmation of her being free from fault. He suggests a metaphorical understanding of [تُثْبِرُ الْأَرْضَ], allowing for an intransitive reading, where the prohibition on ploughing is symbolic.⁴⁴⁴ al-Qurṭubī’s nuanced exploration of the linguistic intricacies invites contemplation on the verse’s potential figurative elements.

The scholarly discourse concludes with a reminder not to hastily rebuke an *imām* for stopping at this juncture, as there exists a valid interpretative ground among scholars.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, it underscores the subordination of the rules of recitation to the broader context of meaning. Thus, in the pursuit of understanding the Divine text, scholars advocate for a comprehensive engagement with the intricacies of language, context, and interpretation, urging caution against premature judgment in matters where legitimate differences exist. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

⁴⁴⁴ *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* 2/189 – 190.

⁴⁴⁵ It is imperative to understand that this discourse does not aim to engage with the perspectives of the various *madhāhib* [jurisprudential schools of thought]. Instead, through the provided example, the objective is to emphasise the importance of refraining from hastily rebuking an *imām* for stopping at certain junctures. Such cessations often rest on valid interpretative grounds acknowledged among scholars. By presenting this example, the intention is to illuminate the nuanced nature of interpretative practices within Islamic scholarship. Scholars possess diverse methodologies and rationales for their decisions, underscoring the necessity for measured and informed responses rather than precipitous criticism.

The Sequential Arrangement of Qur'anic Reciters: An Analysis of Methodologies, Underlying Rationale, and Justifications

The discipline of Qirā'āt, encompassing the intricate and multifaceted variant readings of the Qur'ān, occupies a revered position within Islamic scholarship. Its structure, particularly the sequential arrangement of Qur'anic reciters, is of paramount importance, not only for its impact on the preservation and transmission of the Qur'ān but also for the theological and regional dimensions it embodies. This article critically examines the methodologies, rationales, and justifications provided by eminent scholars, such as Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid, Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, and Ibn Mihrān, among others. By closely analysing these diverse variations, the study notes that there is no universally standardised method for the sequential placement of reciters. It, therefore, aims to elucidate the underlying principles guiding the sequential arrangement of reciters within the classical tradition of Qur'anic recitation.

The Sequential Arrangement of Qur'anic Reciters

The sequential arrangement of Qur'anic reciters demonstrates remarkable diversity, reflecting the complexity of Islamic intellectual history. As the erudite scholar Abū Shāmah observes, scholars engaged in Qirā'āt have historically differed in the sequence in which they present the eponyms and their canonical transmitters. This variation is not a matter of mere stylistic preference but is deeply rooted in theological orientations, regional loyalties, and the author's scholarly lineage. Abū Shāmah highlights that although most scholars who author works on Qirā'āt mention the reciters early in their works, they differ in the order in which they are presented.⁴⁴⁶ This observation highlights the tradition's inherent diversity, reflecting and responding to the varied contexts in which these scholars operated.

Despite the differences, there appears to be a general consensus regarding prioritising reciters from the Ḥijāz region, particularly those from Medina and Mecca.⁴⁴⁷ This consensus, however, does not preclude variations within this broad framework. For example, some scholars commence their sequence with Nāfi', the prominent reciter from Medina, while others begin with Ibn Kathīr from Mecca. These variations are

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī* 6.

⁴⁴⁷ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 2/72.

not arbitrary but are influenced by regional affiliations, theological considerations, and the stature of the reciter within the scholarly tradition.

Ibn Mujāhid's Sequential Order

The septulist Ibn Mujāhid, through his seminal work *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*, contributed significantly to the study of Qur'anic recitation by codifying the Seven Canonical Readings. His sequential arrangement of reciters is methodical and reflective of the religious and intellectual context of his time. Ibn Mujāhid begins his sequential order with Nāfi', the Medinan reciter, emphasising the significance of Medina, the city of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. He justifies this prioritisation by highlighting Medina as the home of the Prophet's ﷺ final teachings and the residence of many of the Companions.⁴⁴⁸ This reverence for Medina, coupled with the prioritisation of Nāfi', underscores the centrality of Medina in the Islamic tradition, particularly concerning the preservation and transmission of the Qur'ān. Moreover, it serves as a compelling reason for placing Nāfi' at the forefront of the sequential order.

Following Nāfi', Ibn Mujāhid turns to 'Abd Allah ibn Kathīr, the reciter from Mecca, the city where the Qur'anic revelation was first received. Although Ibn Mujāhid does not explicitly justify Ibn Kathīr's placement, it is reasonable to infer that the sanctity of Mecca influenced his decision. The sequence then shifts to the reciters from Kufah—'Āṣim, followed by Ḥamzah, and finally al-Kisā'ī. The precedence of Ḥamzah over al-Kisā'ī is particularly noteworthy, as it is attributed to Ḥamzah's seniority in teaching, as well as the former being the teacher of the latter, thus illustrating the role of scholarly lineage in determining the sequential arrangement of reciters.

Ibn Mujāhid concludes with the reciters of Basrah and Sham, placing Abū 'Amr al-Baṣrī as the *imām* of Basrah and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Āmir as the *imām* of Sham. His placement of the 'Iraqī reciters before the Shāmī reciter likely reflects his regional affiliation with Iraq, thus introducing a subjective element into his arrangement. Notably, while Ibn Mujāhid provides an explicit rationale for prioritising Nāfi', he does not explain the order of the remaining reciters. His statement, "These are seven men from the Ḥijāz, Iraq, and Sham," summarises his selection, reflecting both the

⁴⁴⁸ *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*: 53.

geographical diversity and the regional affiliations underpinning his sequential arrangement.

The Influence of Ibn Mujāhid's Sequential Arrangement on Subsequent Scholars

Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-Sab'ah* codified the Seven Canonical Readings and established a model for sequential arrangements of reciters that many subsequent scholars adopted. His prioritisation of Nāfi' was rooted in the sanctity of Medina, and many later scholars emulated this approach. For instance, Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, in his seminal work *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, mirrors Ibn Mujāhid's rationale, emphasising the primacy of the Medinan recitation.⁴⁴⁹ He states, "A chapter on mentioning the names of the *imāms* of recitation, their canonical transmitters, their lineages, their titles, their places of residence, their deaths, and selected aspects of their virtues and narratives. The first of them whom we should begin mentioning is the one who upheld the recitation in the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." This passage not only echoes Ibn Mujāhid's reasoning but also underscores the enduring influence of his work on subsequent scholars.

In a similar vein, Ibn Mihrān, in his work *al-Mabsūṭ*, adheres to the same Medinan precedence. He writes, "We begin by mentioning the recitation of the people of Medina [Nāfi' and Abū Ja'far], the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the abode of his migration, the land of his resurrection, and the dwelling place of the Muhājirūn and Anṣār."⁴⁵⁰ Ibn Mihrān's emphasis on the honour associated with Medina and its reciters reflects a broader consensus on the city's significance in transmitting Qur'anic recitations. This consistent prioritisation of the Medinan recitation across different scholars is not incidental but rather a deliberate homage to the city's unparalleled status. The preference for Medina, therefore, became a defining feature of the sequential arrangement of reciters, rooted in the theological and historical significance of the city as the final abode of the Prophet ﷺ and the site of the last presentation and review of the Qur'an—*al-'arḍat al-akhīrah*.

⁴⁴⁹ *Jāmi' al-Bayān*: 1/48.

⁴⁵⁰ *al-Mabsūṭ*: 5.

Divergences in the Sequential Arrangements

While many scholars followed Ibn Mujāhid's sequential arrangement, some introduced notable divergences, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of Qirā'āt scholarship. Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, for instance, while generally adhering to the Medinan precedence in his works such as *Jāmi' al-Bayān* and *al-Taysīr*, adopted a slightly different sequential arrangement in the latter. Unlike Ibn Mujāhid, al-Dānī did not always provide explicit reasoning for the order of the remaining reciters, leaving room for interpretation and scholarly debate. One of the most significant divergences came from al-Dānī's arrangement in *al-Taysīr*, which, despite its differences from Ibn Mujāhid's sequential order, became widely accepted and influential. Several other scholars, including al-Shāṭibī in his *Ḥirz al-Amānī* [Shāṭibiyyah], Ibn Sufyān in *al-Hādī*, al-Kinānī in *al-Badr*, and al-Ḥukkarī in *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, followed al-Dānī's sequential order, demonstrating the fluidity and adaptability of the scholarly tradition. However, these variations were not without justification. For example, Ibn Shurayḥ, in his work *al-Kāfi*, made slight modifications to the traditional order, such as listing Ḥamzah as the seventh reciter instead of al-Kisā'ī.

Notably, al-Ḥukkarī, in particular, provided detailed justifications for his sequential arrangement, which differed in certain respects from both Ibn Mujāhid and al-Dānī. He prioritised Nāfi' for his knowledge and the significance of his city, Medina, and placed Ibn Kathīr next, citing his recitation from 'Abd Allah ibn al-Sā'ib and his association with Mecca.⁴⁵¹ al-Ḥukkarī further highlighted the influence of Ibn Kathīr's recitation on prominent scholars such as Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, thus reinforcing the importance of scholarly endorsement in determining the sequential placement.⁴⁵² In prioritising Ḥamzah over al-Kisā'ī, al-Ḥukkarī emphasised the former's role as a teacher to the latter, illustrating the weight given to pedagogical lineage and scholarly mentorship in the tradition.⁴⁵³

While seemingly minor, these adjustments reflect deeper engagements with the criteria for sequential placement, including the reciter's scholarly credentials and regional affiliations.

⁴⁵¹ *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*: 1/141.

⁴⁵² *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*: 1/145 – 145.

⁴⁵³ *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*: 1/159.

Moreover, al-Dānī's teacher, Ṭāhir ibn Ghalbūn, adopted a similar arrangement to that of his student. He arranged the sequential order of reciters similarly in his book *al-Tadhkirah*, except for placing 'Āṣim of Kufah before Abū 'Amr of Basrah. Thus further reinforcing the influence of pedagogical lineage on the sequential arrangement of reciters. This continuity between teacher and student illustrates the enduring nature of scholarly traditions within Islamic learning, where the influence of a master's methodology can extend across generations, shaping the works of subsequent scholars.

Alternate Sequential Arrangements and their Underlying Rationales

The classical Islamic tradition of arranging Qur'anic reciters, while deeply influenced by figures like Ibn Mujāhid, also saw significant variation as scholars from different regions and backgrounds contributed their perspectives. The sequential arrangements offered by these scholars were shaped by a blend of regional loyalty, scholarly lineage, and personal preference, reflecting the rich diversity within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Ibn Siwār's Unique Sequence

One notable alternative comes from Ibn Siwār's seminal work *al-Mustanīr*, where he places Ibn Kathīr first, followed by Nāfi', Ibn 'Āmir, Abū 'Amr, 'Āṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisā'i, Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf.⁴⁵⁴ However, he does not provide an explicit rationale for this order, leaving his choices open to interpretation. For instance, placing Ibn Kathīr at the beginning of the sequential order could suggest a regional preference or an emphasis on the sanctity of Mecca, where Ibn Kathīr was based.

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib's Sequential Order

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, in his work *al-Tabṣīrah*, presents a unique sequential order that reflects his diverse connections to the reciters. He begins with Ibn Kathīr, followed by Nāfi', 'Āṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisā'i, Abū 'Amr, and ends with Ibn 'Āmir. His rationale for placing Ibn 'Āmir last is rooted in Ibn 'Āmir's seniority in age over the other reciters, as well as his direct connection to the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, notably reading to 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ﷺ and Abū Dardā' ﷺ.⁴⁵⁵ This arrangement highlights the

⁴⁵⁴ *al-Mustanīr*: 1/204.

⁴⁵⁵ *al-Tabṣīrah*: 81.

flexibility in the sequential order and the influence of personal or regional affiliations on such decisions.

Abū al-Karam al-Shahrazūrī's Arrangement

In *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Zāhirah*, Abū al-Karam al-Shahrazūrī presents another unique sequence. He commences with Nāfiʿ, followed by Abū Jaʿfar, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀmir, ʿĀṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisāʿī, Khalaf al-ʿĀshir, Abū ʿAmr al-Baṣrī, and ends with Yaʿqūb al-Khaḍramī. Shahrazūrī's reasoning is multifaceted:⁴⁵⁶

- 1) Nāfiʿ is prioritised due to his Medinan origin, in line with Ibn Mujāhid's reasoning.
- 2) Abū Jaʿfar follows, also due to his Medinan ties.
- 3) Ibn Kathīr is placed next because of the proximity of Mecca to Medina.
- 4) Ibn ʿĀmir is recognised for his connection to the Companions, having read to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ.
- 5) The sequence of ʿĀṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisāʿī, and Khalaf reflects their seniority and the chronological order of their deaths.

This methodical arrangement underscores the importance of both regional ties and scholarly credentials in determining the order of reciters.

al-ʿUmmānī's Sequential Arrangement

al-ʿUmmānī, in his work *al-Awsaṭ*, presents yet another unique order, placing Ibn Kathīr first due to the sanctity of the Kaʿbah in Mecca, followed by Nāfiʿ.⁴⁵⁷ He further notes a significant observation: the precedence of Ibn Kathīr over Nāfiʿ was *ash-hur* [most favoured] by the *jumhūr al-mashāyikh* [majority of scholars] in Iraq, despite some preferring the reverse order, i.e. Nāfiʿ over Ibn Kathīr. He then places Abū ʿAmr al-Baṣrī third, citing his grasp and deep knowledge of the Arabic language. This is followed by Ibn ʿĀmir, ʿĀṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisāʿī, and Yaʿqūb.⁴⁵⁸ This arrangement highlights the influence of regional preferences and the scholarly reputation of the reciters in shaping their placement.

⁴⁵⁶ *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Zāhirah*: 1/197 – 199.

⁴⁵⁷ *al-Awsaṭ*: 41.

⁴⁵⁸ *al-Awsaṭ*: 69 – 70

The Role of Justifications in the Sequential Arrangements

The justifications provided by scholars for their sequential arrangements often reflect a blend of theological, regional, and scholarly considerations. For instance, al-Ḥukkarī's decision to prioritise Ḥamzah over al-Kisā'ī, due to the former's role as the latter's teacher, highlights the importance of scholarly lineage in these decisions. Similarly, the discussions by al-Sakhāwī and al-Jabarī in their commentaries on the *Shāṭibiyyah* regarding the precedence of Nāfi' and Ibn Kathīr, reflect the influence of regional considerations, particularly the proximity of the reciters to the Prophet ﷺ and the reverence for their cities.

al-Fāsī provides another layer of complexity by addressing the precedence of Abū 'Amr over other reciters, attributing it to the widespread adoption of his recitation, further revealing the importance of scholarly reputation in determining placement.⁴⁵⁹ He also discusses the positioning of Ibn 'Āmir relative to Abū 'Amr, highlighting the highness of his chain of transmission [short *sanad*/scholarly lineage] and the virtue of the reciter's location.⁴⁶⁰ These explanations underscore the nuanced factors that influenced the sequential arrangement of reciters, revealing a process that was far from arbitrary.

Concludingly, the sequential arrangement of Qur'anic reciters in Qir'āt scholarship was a nuanced process shaped by a combination of regional, scholarly, and theological considerations. While a general consensus exists regarding the prioritisation of Medinan and Meccan reciters, variations in these arrangements reflect Islamic intellectual history's dynamic and evolving nature. The methodologies and justifications behind these sequences reveal a rich tapestry of scholarly thought, demonstrating that the arrangement of reciters was never arbitrary but somewhat profoundly informed by the complex interplay of historical and intellectual influences. And Allah ﷻ knows best.

⁴⁵⁹ *al-La'ālī al-Farīdah*: 1/102.

⁴⁶⁰ *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* 2/86.

Unpacking the Gāf al-‘Arab and the Jīm al-Qāhirah: A Forensic Examination of Phonetic Integrity in Qur’anic Recitation⁴⁶¹

“The Qur’ān is not merely a written text—it is a divine recitation. Change the phonetics, and you sever the chain that connects the present to the Prophet ﷺ.” — M.R.O.

The Qur’ān stands as the only divine revelation in human history that has remained impervious to corruption, safeguarded through an unbroken chain of both written documentation and oral transmission. Unlike previous scriptures—fragments of which were lost to time, others manipulated by scribes, their meanings diluted and reshaped by shifting linguistic currents—the Qur’ān was divinely protected. Not merely in script, but in sound. Its transmission was not left to the fragility of human memory or the vulnerability of ink and parchment alone; it was preserved through a meticulous system of recitation, secured in the breath of every generation. The Qur’ān itself asserts this divine preservation:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

“Indeed, it is We who have revealed the Reminder, and indeed, We will preserve it.”⁴⁶²

This preservation operates on two inseparable planes. The first is textual integrity—upheld through the meticulous recording of the ‘Uthmanic *muṣḥaf*, ensuring that no interpolation, addition, or omission corrupts its written form. The second, more fragile yet infinitely more vital, is phonetic integrity—secured through oral transmission, governed by the disciplined science of Tajwīd. Unlike ink, which is fixed upon parchment, phonetics exist only in the mouths of those who recite. They cannot be confined to script. They cannot be fossilised in dictionaries. They can only be

⁴⁶¹ I personally sat before the esteemed *muqri*, Abū ‘Ādil Khamīs ibn al-Surūr al-Ḥaḍramawī, and inquired about the dry qāf. Without hesitation, he acknowledged that he had been raised speaking with this articulation, his tongue naturally moulded to its cadence, and even now, in everyday speech, he continued to employ it. Yet when it came to the recitation of the Qur’ān, his discipline was unwavering—he recited only with the pure qāf, the transmitted articulation preserved through mass-recitation (Tawātur). He confessed that the transition had not been effortless; retraining his articulation to conform to the transmitted phonetic standard had been a rigorous undertaking, one that demanded conscious effort and meticulous correction. And then, as if sealing the principle with poetic finality, he recited a hemistich from al-Jazariyyah—[إلا رياضة امرئ بفيه]—[أوليس بينه وبين تركه]—its very cadence reinforcing the inviolability of Qur’anic phonetics. As for the *jīm al-Qāhirah*—the Cairo *jīm* pronounced as *gīm*—though it persists in speech to this very day, it has never infiltrated the domain of Qur’anic recitation. Not a single *muqri* has recited it as such, nor has any Egyptian master of Qirā’at ever sanctioned its use within the sacred transmission. It remains a dialectal peculiarity, confined to colloquial tongues, utterly absent from the phonetic precision of divine preservation.

⁴⁶² *al-Ḥijr*: 9.

preserved through the iron law of uninterrupted transmission. Once compromised, they are irretrievable. The Qurʾān was not first written—it was first spoken. It was recited, memorised, and perpetuated through sound. To alter its phonetics is not an issue of pronunciation; it is an issue of transmission. It is not an adjustment—it is a severance, a rupture that disconnects the present from the Prophetic past.

The Distinction Between the Pure Qāf and the Dry Qāf⁴⁶³

The split qāf |القاف المشقوقة| (*al-qāf al-mashqūqah*)—also known as the contracted qāf |القاف المعقودة| (*al-qāf al-maʿqūdah*)—is the original, untainted articulation of qāf, recited in its pure, classical form across the Arabic linguistic tradition. It is the qāf of preserved phonetics, the articulation that remains intact in the transmitted recitational corpus.

The dry qāf |القاف اليابسة| (*al-qāf al-yābisah*)—also misleadingly referred to as |قاف العرب| (the qāf al-ʿarab) the qāf of the Arabs or |قاف بني تميم| (the qāf of Banū Tamīm)—is a phonetic aberration, oscillating between jīm and kāf, or qāf and kāf, a dialectal intrusion that never penetrated the fortress of mass transmission (Tawātur).

And here lies the first deception: some scholars, through misidentification, have blurred the distinction between the contracted qāf and the dry qāf, confusing one for the other and inverting the classification entirely. This reversal in terminology has been left unchecked for too long—it will now be unmasked, deconstructed, and eradicated.

The renowned grammarian al-Sīrāfī, in his *Sharḥ Kitāb Sibawayh*, lays bare this phonetic deviation:

“We have observed individuals pronouncing the qāf somewhere between qāf and kāf. It resembles the sound of the kāf that lies between jīm and kāf, or the jīm that approximates the kāf.”

Ibn Durayd, in his forensic documentation of this phenomenon, exposes the underlying dialectal transformation:

“This is a widely used dialect in Yemen. For instance, instead of saying ‘Jamal’ (camel), if they are pressed to pronounce it, they say ‘gamal’, a sound that falls between jīm and kāf.”

⁴⁶³ *Ikhmād*: 11 – 16.

When dissecting the qāf of Banū Tamīm, Ibn Durayd does not merely acknowledge its presence—he surgically reveals its assimilation into the kāf, exposing its deviation from the phonetic integrity of Arabic’s original linguistic framework:

“As for Banū Tamīm, they assimilate the qāf into the kāf, making it pronounced with intense emphasis. Thus, instead of saying ‘al-qawm’ (the people), they say ‘al-gawm’—rendering the sound an intermediary between kāf and gāf.”

This phonetic shift was not an evolution—it was a transformation, a dialectal drift that was never granted legitimacy within Qur’anic recitation.

Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī reinforces this, not with theoretical argumentation, but through an unassailable poetic testimony:

The altered version **وَلَا أَقُولُ لِكَيْدِ الْكُومِ كَذَّ نَضَجَتْ - وَلَا أَقُولُ لِيَابِ الدَّرِمِ مَكْفُولًا**

vs.

The original version **وَلَا أَقُولُ لِقَدْرِ الْقَوْمِ قَدْ نَضَجَتْ - وَلَا أَقُولُ لِيَابِ الدَّرِمِ مَقْفُولًا**

“I shall not say that the coarse porridge has cooked, nor shall I say that the door is locked.”

This poetic evidence does not justify the dry qāf—it confines it to its historical reality: a regional phenomenon, not a universal standard. The dry qāf existed—but existence is not legitimacy.

The Dry Qāf: A Recognised Feature of Classical Arabic, but Not a Qur’anic Standard⁴⁶⁴

Yes, the dry qāf is a linguistic reality—but this is where most arguments derail into fatal misinterpretation. A phonetic feature may exist in eloquent Arabic speech, yet that does not grant it validity within the realm of Qur’anic recitation. The defining standard is not linguistic recognition—it is mass transmission (Tawātur).

Yet, the defenders of the dry qāf attempt to blur this line, pulling classical scholars into their narrative to lend weight to their argument. *But what do these scholars truly say?*

⁴⁶⁴ *Ikhmād.* 11 – 16.

The esteemed ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1232 A.H.) documents an undisputed historical exchange:

“I came across a manuscript written by the eminent scholar ‘Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl ibn ‘Abd Allāh Bāfaḍl, who had transcribed it from the writings of his teacher Sheikh Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī. It records the words of Sheikh Ṭāhir ibn Ibrāhīm al-Madanī, who narrated an oral transmission he received from Sheikh Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Ajimī al-Makki al-Hanafī, stating:

‘I personally heard Sheikh Ḥasan say, during one of my lessons while reading Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī with him at the Prophet’s ﷺ Mosque in the year 1113 A.H. (the year of his passing), that a contemporary Indian scholar by the name of Sheikh Ḥaywah discussed the dry qāf—specifically, the qāf spoken by the people of Yemen, Ḥaḍramawt, and much of the Arab world. He questioned Sheikh Ḥasan, saying:
“Why do you pronounce the qāf in this manner, when it is not truly Arabic?”

And here, the linchpin of the argument:

Sheikh Ḥasan responded:

“The great hadith master, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, once asked the renowned linguist, al-Majd al-Fīrūz Ābādī, about this exact pronunciation, and he confirmed that it is a legitimate and eloquent Arabic dialect.”

The scholars did not deny its existence. They did not dismiss it as an anomaly. But not a single authority declared it to be part of Qur’anic transmission.

Sheikh ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād then tightens the noose further:

“Moreover, I later found that Ibn Khaldūn, the great historian, referenced this pronunciation in his Muqaddimah (Introduction to History), affirming that it belongs to the Mudharite dialects.”

And in what could be misinterpreted as a dramatic claim, but upon closer inspection, serves only to reinforce the distinction:

“In fact, some scholars of ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet’s ﷺ family) went so far as to assert that prayer is invalid unless Qāf is pronounced in this manner!”

But this assertion does not carry weight in the realm of Tajwīd—it is a regional dialectal preference, not a transmission-based ruling.

Yet despite this unbroken tradition of rigorous preservation, a movement has emerged advocating for phonetic modification under the guise of linguistic accommodation. At the centre of this debate lies the contentious assertion that qāf قاف may be pronounced as “gāf,” a phonetic shift argued in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf*. Its proponents insist that this is not an innovation, but an overlooked feature of classical Arabic, citing its usage among Yemeni and Ḥaḍramī tribes. To lend their claim weight, they assemble linguistic references, invoking classical grammarians, historians, and Tajwīd authorities—presenting the argument as if it were rooted in scholarly legitimacy. Yet,

when subjected to forensic scrutiny, the claim collapses. It is not merely misguided, it is methodologically untenable. It is built upon a misreading of classical sources, a misapplication of linguistic documentation, and a fundamental misunderstanding of the governing principles of Qur'anic phonetics. It commits the grave error of conflating dialectal speech with Qur'anic recitation.

The Qur'ān has been recited identically across continents, from the mosques of Africa to the madrassahs of India, from the minarets of Cairo to the prayer halls of Indonesia. This uniformity is unparalleled in any religious tradition. The moment phonetic flexibility is granted without the safeguard of Tawātur (mass transmission), the Qur'ān ceases to be a singular, unified oral tradition—it becomes fragmented, unstable, and exposed to inevitable degradation.

This is not a matter of linguistic preference; it is a matter of theological necessity. A phonetic shift that lacks transmission in the Tawātur Readings is not an alternative—it is an anomaly. The Qur'ān is not merely a text to be understood; it is a divine recitation to be preserved exactly as it was transmitted. Its phonetics are sacrosanct, and any attempt to alter them—no matter how well-intentioned, no matter how scholarly the justification—constitutes an impermissible deviation. Tajwīd was not codified as a decorative art; it was established as a defensive fortress against precisely this kind of corruption. To tamper with phonetics is to tamper with revelation itself. This debate is not an issue of theoretical scholarship; it is an issue of faith, jurisprudence, and the very survival of divine transmission.

This study will systematically dismantle the claims presented in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf*, demonstrating that the phonetic shift from qāf to “gāf” is not merely a linguistic anomaly, but an unlawful alteration of divine transmission. Through linguistic, theological, and jurisprudential analysis, it will be established beyond doubt that this phonetic modification stands in direct violation of Tajwīd, Tawātur, and scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*). The phonetics of the Qur'ān are not subject to linguistic evolution. They are immutable. They are inviolable. And they are divinely protected.

The Core Arguments for the Legitimacy of the “Dry Qāf” – A Systematic Forensic Dismantling

At the centre of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* lies a methodological deception masquerading as scholarly permissibility: the argument that if a phonetic variation is attested in historical Arabic dialects, it is automatically valid in Qur’anic recitation. This is a foundational error, a category mistake of the highest order—mistaking linguistic documentation for recitational legitimacy, conflating historical possibility with canonical transmission, and disregarding the sacrosanct mechanism of Tawātur, which remains the sole determinant of phonetic authenticity in Qur’anic recitation. The Qur’ān is not a linguistic text that conforms to the broader evolution of Arabic dialects; it is an orally transmitted revelation that exists only in the form in which it was preserved through an uninterrupted mass-recited transmission. Linguistic variation does not dictate Qur’anic recitation—Tawātur does.

The author of *Ikhmād* attempts to legitimise the dry qāf—the pronunciation of qāf (ق) as “gāf”—by constructing an argument built upon four key claims:

First, it asserts that classical scholars, including *Sheikh al-Islām* Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, recognised and permitted this phonetic variation, implying that it falls within the acceptable parameters of Tajwīd and that reciters should not be restricted to a single articulation.

Second, it cites historical linguistic sources, including Sībawayh, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s interaction with al-Fīrūz Ābādī, and Ibn Khaldūn, arguing that the dry qāf was an established phonetic feature within Muḍarī Arabic dialects and thus should not be dismissed as a modern corruption or an unrecognised articulation.

Third, it appeals to the juridical precedent of Ḥaḍramī and Yemeni scholars, claiming that since some jurists have led prayers while reciting with this pronunciation, its legitimacy cannot be denied, since errors in recitation invalidate prayer, and if such an error had existed, it would have been widely condemned.

Lastly, it speculates that the dry qāf may have been accommodated within the Aḥruf Sab‘ah—the Seven Aḥruf in which the Qur’ān was initially revealed—suggesting that its exclusion from standard recitation was not a result of its invalidity but rather the process of standardisation.

Each of these claims hinges on a fundamental epistemological and methodological failure: the assumption that phonetic legitimacy in Qur'anic recitation is determined by linguistic documentation rather than the conditions of Tawātur. Phonetic shifts, even if linguistically recognised, cannot be introduced into recitation unless they have been transmitted through an uninterrupted chain of reciters stretching back to the Prophet ﷺ. This is not a matter of linguistic preference; it is a matter of theological necessity. The Qur'ān is not safeguarded by what was once possible in Arabic speech—it is preserved only by what was actually transmitted in mass recitation. It is not recited according to linguistic findings but by a divinely ordained phonetic standard—one that does not waver, does not adapt, and does not accommodate phonetic drift.

The author of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* attempts to legitimise the dry qāf by citing its documented presence in regional dialects, yet this argument is built upon a fatal epistemological misalignment—what is historically attested does not equate to what is canonically transmitted. Arabic dialects have always exhibited phonetic diversity, yet none of these variations were permitted into the Qur'anic recitation unless secured by Tawātur. al-Zabīdī explicitly states:⁴⁶⁵

“The qāf is pronounced with a blended articulation of kāf and qāf, followed by a sukūn (a non-vowelled consonant). Our teacher, [Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Fāsī (d. 1170 A.H.)], clarified that this is the qāf referred to as al-ma'qūdah (contracted qāf), which is in fact the same as the dry qāf (القاف اليابسة), as previously noted. This is a widely recognised dialect among the people of Yemen.”

Yet documentation is not validation. al-Zabīdī does not claim that this articulation is preserved within the transmitted Qur'anic recitation—he merely acknowledges its dialectal existence. If phonetic legitimacy were dictated by linguistic findings rather than recitational transmission, then every dialectal variation historically recorded would demand inclusion. But the Qur'ān does not inherit linguistic diversity—it exists solely within the boundaries of divine preservation.

The fundamental assumption underlying the argument in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is that the presence of phonetic shifts within Arabic speech establishes a precedent for phonetic accommodation in Qur'anic recitation. This is a critical miscalculation, one that ignores the unbroken scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*) that phonetic preservation in

⁴⁶⁵ *Tāj al-'Urūs*: 6/207.

the Qur'ān is not a secondary concern but an obligation. There exists no precedent in Qur'anic history where a non-Tawātur pronunciation has been later introduced into the transmitted recitational corpus. If linguistic documentation were a legitimate criterion for phonetic modification, the very foundation of Tajwīd would collapse, as every historically recorded pronunciation could be reintroduced at will, rendering the Qur'anic phonetic structure fluid, unstable, and susceptible to subjective interpretation.

This is where the argument collapses. The Qur'ān has never been preserved through linguistic analysis or dialectal studies—it has been safeguarded through the science of recitation, a discipline that has rigidly maintained its phonetic integrity through mass transmission (Tawātur). The fact that the dry qāf is absent from every single transmitted Variant Reading is not a mere historical coincidence—it is an undeniable indication that this pronunciation was never part of the Qur'ān's recitational heritage—the oral tradition. The author of *Ikhmād* mistakes historical existence for Qur'anic legitimacy, failing to distinguish between phonetic documentation and recitational transmission. Linguistic documentation is not validation. The Qur'ān was not preserved by linguistic historians—it was preserved through uninterrupted oral transmission.

The Limits of Juridical Authority in Phonetic Matters

A fundamental flaw in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is the misplacement of juridical authority over phonetic verification. The book assumes that because certain jurists in Yemen and Ḥadramawt may have led prayers using the dry qāf, this establishes a legal precedent for its validity. However, this argument collapses upon closer scrutiny of the disciplinary structure of Islamic scholarship.

Islamic knowledge is divided into specialised fields, each governed by its own domain of expertise. No scholar, regardless of their scholarly standing in one discipline, has the authority to overrule the established consensus in another.

Ibn al-Jazarī asserts:

ولا شك عند كل ذي لب: أنّ من تكلم في علم - ولو كان إماما فيه - وكان العلم يتعلق به علم آخر، وهو غير متقن لما يتعلق به، داخله الوهم والغلط عند حاجته إليه

“There is no doubt, to anyone of sound intellect, that when a person speaks on a particular field of knowledge—no matter how eminent they may be in it—yet that field is intrinsically connected to another discipline in which they lack mastery, errors and misconceptions will inevitably creep into their discourse whenever they find themselves in need of that related knowledge.”⁴⁶⁶

This statement annihilates the methodological foundation upon which *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* builds its argument—namely, the assumption that jurists possess the authority to determine phonetic legitimacy in Qur’anic recitation. Ibn al-Jazarī’s warning is unambiguous: scholars who lack expertise in a related field will inevitably commit errors whenever they venture beyond their domain.

It follows, therefore, that a *faqīh* (jurist) may be an undisputed master in jurisprudence but is incapable of overriding the consensus of the *qurrā’*, just as a *muhaddith* (ḥadīth specialist) cannot independently rule on legal verdicts, and a *mufassir* (exegete) cannot authenticate ḥadīth transmissions.

⁴⁶⁶ *Munjid al-Muqri’in*: 7. Mastery in one field is no safeguard against catastrophe in another—on the contrary, it is the very illusion of expertise that blinds the scholar to his impending fall. A man who rules over one domain will assume he may trespass into another, speaking with confidence, oblivious to the fatal cracks beneath his feet. This is the scholar’s greatest miscalculation: to mistake familiarity for command, to mistake knowledge for jurisdiction. He believes he is constructing an argument, but in reality, he is sealing his own intellectual ruin—his conclusions tainted, his authority fractured at the moment he needs it most. And worse still: the scholar who ventures beyond his expertise does not merely err—he misleads. He drags others into his misjudgment, his confidence intoxicating, his error spreading like rot. By the time he realises his mistake, it is too late. The foundation has crumbled beneath him, and his authority is irretrievable

This reality necessitates the strict division of authority in Islamic scholarship, ensuring that no discipline infringes upon another’s domain.

To illustrate:⁴⁶⁷

Field of Study	Scholarly Responsibility	Cannot Overrule
Muḥaddith	Authenticating ḥadīth	Qur’anic exegesis, Jurisprudential rulings, Variant Readings
Faqīh	Deriving legal rulings	Qur’anic exegesis, Authenticating ḥadīth, Variant Readings
Mufassir	Interpreting the Qur’ān	Authenticating ḥadīth, Jurisprudential rulings, Variant Readings
Muqri’	Verifying Readings and phonetic transmission	Qur’anic exegesis, Jurisprudential rulings, Authenticating ḥadīth

A ḥadīth specialist cannot alter *fiqh* rulings, just as a jurist cannot overrule the *qurrā’* by endorsing a phonetic shift that contradicts the Tawātur Readings. A jurist may rule on the validity of prayer—but he cannot dictate the phonetics of revelation. The moment he does, scholarship becomes fabrication. The phonetics of the Qur’ān were not preserved by jurists—they were meticulously transmitted by the *qurrā’*, and only those with an unbroken chain of transmission (*sanad*) in Qirā’āt have the authority to verify valid pronunciations.

The argument in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* falls apart because it erroneously assigns jurists authority over phonetic verification, disregarding the unbroken consensus of the *qurrā’*. No amount of juristic endorsement can validate a

⁴⁶⁷ This relates to an individual who has mastered a specific discipline—one who operates within the confines of a specialised tradition, where authority is defined by expertise and transmission rather than subjective interpretation. It reflects the reality that in highly codified sciences such as Qirā’āt, phonetics are not an open field for linguistic theorists or jurists to reshape based on external considerations. Mastery in one domain does not grant authority in another. A jurist cannot override a *muqri’* in phonetic matters, just as a linguist cannot dictate the parameters of legal rulings.

This reinforces a broader principle in Islamic scholarship: disciplines are not interchangeable, and authority is bound by specialisation. The science of Tajwīd and Qirā’āt is self-contained, governed by rules that cannot be overruled by juristic reasoning or historical observations. The misapplication of expertise—where scholars of one field attempt to impose their interpretations on another—creates distortions that undermine the very structure of traditional knowledge.

The conclusion, therefore, is not just a refutation of the dry qāf argument but a reaffirmation of the hierarchy of knowledge itself. Those who speak on a subject must be those who have mastered it, transmitted it, and upheld its integrity—not those who seek to reinterpret it from an external vantage point.

pronunciation that lacks Tawātur. Just as a jurist cannot modify the Arabic script of the Qurʾān, they cannot modify its phonetics based on regional dialectical usage.⁴⁶⁸

The reliance on figures such as Ibn Khaldūn and al-Fīrūz Ābādī further exposes the methodological weakness of the argument. Their documentation confirms the tribal existence of the dry qāf, yet it remains purely historical—an observation of linguistic variance, not an attestation of recitational transmission.

The Mirage of Ibn Masʿūd's ﷺ Readings: A Manufactured Loophole⁴⁶⁹

The argument is cunning, seductive in its misdirection. Ibn Masʿūd ﷺ—one of the earliest and most revered transmitters of the Qurʾān—recited qāf as kāf in certain instances, and kāf as qāf in others. In his rendition of *Sūrat al-Duḥā*⁴⁷⁰, he recited فَلَا تَنْهَرُ with a kāf, instead of the standard فَلَا تَنْهَرُ, shifting the qāf to a softened articulation oscillating between a kāf and qāf, as in gāf. Yet in other instances, such as in *Sūrat al-Takwīr*⁴⁷¹, he recited كُثِطَتْ with a qāf instead of the expected كُثِطَتْ, in alignment with the dialect of Banū Tamīm. Similarly, in *Sūrat al-Insān*⁴⁷², he rendered كَافُورًا as كَافُورًا. At first glance, this oscillation in phonetics suggests a malleability in articulation—a precedent for phonetic shifts within Qurʾanic recitation. But beneath its surface lies a fatal contradiction, an epistemic sleight of hand that collapses under the weight of forensic scrutiny.

Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn states:

ففي ضوء هذا النص يمكن القول بأن ابن مسعود لم يكن ينطق في هذه الأمثلة قافاً ولا كافاً، بل صوتاً بين القاف والكاف، على طريقة تميم

“In light of this text, it can be concluded that Ibn Masʿūd was not pronouncing these examples with either a qāf or a kāf, but rather with a sound that falls between the two—following the phonetic tendency of the Banū Tamīm dialect.”

The invocation of Ibn Masʿūd's ﷺ phonetic tendencies as a precedent for recitational variation is not merely incorrect—it is a category error. His articulation, fluctuating

⁴⁶⁸ **The Undeniable Truth:** Observe carefully those who degrade, mock, or question the rigour of the *qurrāʾ* and the discipline of Qirāʾāt. Inevitably, beneath their surface-level critiques simmers a deeper psychological tension—often a suppressed anxiety born from their own insufficient mastery of Tajwīd or a veiled loyalty to teachers whose flaws they dare not openly admit. **Understand:** Their critique is not truth—it is confession.

⁴⁶⁹ *Tarikh al-Qurʾān*: 174.

⁴⁷⁰ *al-Duḥā*: 9.

⁴⁷¹ *al-Takwīr*: 11.

⁴⁷² *al-Insān*: 5.

between qāf and kāf, was not a matter of Qur’anic recitation but a dialectal imprint, an incidental linguistic feature of Banū Tamīm. To elevate this into an argument for phonetic legitimacy is to mistake regional articulation for divine transmission, as though the mechanics of a tribe’s speech could dictate the immutable rules of Tajwīd and the oral tradition.

The Qur’ān is not an evolving linguistic construct—it is a recitation preserved not by what was possible, but by what was transmitted with precision. The assumption that phonetic shifts in spoken Arabic grant them a place in Tajwīd is a dangerous simplification, a failure to distinguish between documented linguistic tendencies and the ironclad constraints of Qur’anic preservation. The moment phonetic articulation is treated as fluid, the very principles of transmission collapse, and the distinction between what is preserved and what is reconstructed disappears.

Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷻ phonetic shift is neither evidence of flexibility nor a hidden permission for phonetic alteration—it is proof that even the speech of a masterful *qāri’* did not override the strict barriers of transmission. His articulation existed, yet it was never formalised into the standard Readings. This was not an omission—it was an exclusion. The structure of Qur’anic recitation was never dictated by dialects, tribal phonetics, or linguistic evolution. It was dictated by Tawātur, the unbreakable chain of mass transmission that does not accommodate deviations, no matter how historically attested they may be.

Those who cite Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷻ phonetic habits as a justification for recitational variation must confront an unavoidable truth: a linguistic occurrence does not create recitational precedent. If his articulation had any weight in Tajwīd, it would have entered the transmitted Readings. It did not. That silence is not incidental—it is final.

The proponents of the dry qāf attempt to bypass the ironclad rules of Tajwīd by invoking history rather than transmission, possibility rather than preservation. They mistake linguistic documentation for recitational authority, claiming that because a phonetic shift existed in Arabic dialects, it must therefore be acceptable in Qur’anic recitation. But the Qur’ān is not dictated by linguistic trends. It is not preserved by the possibility of articulation, nor does it accommodate phonetic variance for the sake of convenience. The Qur’ān is an oral transmission, bound by Tawātur—the mass

recitation of an unbroken chain, repeated with unwavering precision across centuries. If a phonetic shift does not exist within that chain, it is not merely discouraged—it is non-existent, an aberration with no recitational legitimacy.

Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ phonetic tendencies, regardless of their historical occurrence, are conspicuously absent from the transmitted Variant Readings. This is not an oversight, nor is it a matter of scholarly debate. His recitation, in all its nuances, was deliberately excluded from the ‘Uthmanic standardisation. His lexical variants, his phonetic adaptations—none were retained within the final corpus of mass transmission. This exclusion was not an act of suppression, but of divine filtration. The Tawātur-approved Readings were not selected arbitrarily; they were preserved through an uninterrupted oral lineage/tradition, safeguarded against intrusion. What did not pass through that lineage was discarded, not as a matter of historical curiosity, but as a verdict on its ineligibility.

If the proponents of the dry qāf wish to claim Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ phonetic shifts as legitimate, they must answer a question they dare not face: *why stop at the dry qāf?* If phonetic modification is permissible on the basis of isolated historical readings, then *what prevents the reintroduction of every abandoned linguistic variation? What stops the revival of every undocumented tribal articulation?* The moment phonetic legitimacy is divorced from Tawātur, the floodgates are thrown open, and the sanctity of Qur’anic recitation is reduced to a linguistic experiment, an evolving dialectal construct rather than a fixed divine transmission.

This argument is not an expansion of phonetic legitimacy—it is its disintegration. The Qur’ān’s preservation is built upon rejection as much as it is upon inclusion. What is not recited in Tawātur is not an alternative—it is an anomaly, a deviation that holds no authority. Not a single master of Qirā’āt has ruled that Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ phonetic tendencies justify phonetic substitution in Tajwīd. Not one. His linguistic habits, though recorded, were never adopted into the recitational tradition. The silence of the *qurrā’* on this matter is not passive—it is decisive. It is the final proof that his phonetic shifts hold no weight in Qur’anic preservation.

The proponents may believe they have found a crack in the structure, a precedent that permits phonetic modification. But their argument does not expand the field of

legitimate pronunciation—it obliterates it. If Readings are governed by linguistic documentation rather than oral transmission, then there is no longer any barrier between what is preserved and what is reconstructed. The Qurʾān is no longer safeguarded by divine decree, but subject to the whims of linguistic historians, phonetic theorists, and those who seek to reshape revelation to fit their own dialectal inclinations.

Ibn Masʿūd’s ﷺ phonetic shifts are not a precedent. They are an exclusion. His Readings are not proof of phonetic flexibility—they are proof that absolute phonetic flexibility was never permitted. The Qurʾān is not recited based on what was once possible, but on what was divinely preserved and transmitted. And that preservation is absolute.

The dry qāf proponents may attempt to pull legitimacy from the sands of history, but they hold in their hands nothing but dust. Their argument is a mirage—illusory, insubstantial, dissolving the moment it is exposed to the unbreakable weight of transmission.

The Fatal Error of Citing Ibn Masʿūd’s ﷺ Variant: A Misinterpretation of Prophetic Endorsement

Even if the proponents of the dry qāf may persist in their attempt to manufacture legitimacy where none exists. They cite the well-known ḥadīth, “*Whoever wants to recite the Qurʾān fresh, then let him recite with the recitation of Ibn Umm ʿAbd,*”⁴⁷³ as if it were an open endorsement of Ibn Masʿūd’s ﷺ recitation, phonetic deviations included. They attempt to extend this ḥadīth beyond its intended meaning, portraying it as a validation of every articulation, every phonetic distinction, and every *ḥarf* attributed to Ibn Masʿūd ﷺ.

But their argument is built on a foundation of deliberate omission—the omission of how classical scholars actually understood this ḥadīth, and the rejection of any reading that deviated from the ʿUthmanic standard.

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 437 A.H) dismantles this misconception with devastating clarity. He explains that when the Prophet ﷺ praised the recitation of Ibn Masʿūd ﷺ,

⁴⁷³ *Kitāb Sharḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (al-Rajihī): 8/22.

it was not an endorsement of his *ḥarf* or any reading that conflicted with the standardised text—it was an endorsement of his *tartīl* (measured, deliberate recitation).⁴⁷⁴ The Prophet ﷺ was urging his followers to recite with the same slow, rhythmic mastery that Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ demonstrated—not to adopt any phonetic irregularities attributed to him.

The evidence is explicit: “*Whoever wants to hear Allah’s speech fresh, just as it was sent down, then let him listen to Ibn Umm ‘Abd.*” al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Ju‘fī clarifies the intent behind this statement—it is not a reference to a unique phonetic style, nor is it an endorsement of a variant reading that differs from the Qur’anic standard. It is a call to *tartīl*, an encouragement to uphold the divine command:

وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً ۝

“...and recite the Qur’ān in a slow and measured recitation.”⁴⁷⁵

To twist this ḥadīth into a justification for phonetic modification is to distort its meaning entirely. It is an act of selective reading, stripping the ḥadīth from its context and repurposing it to suit an agenda that the earliest scholars never upheld.

The Verdict on Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Recitation: Rejected from the Qur’anic Standard

There is an even more decisive factor that crushes the argument before it can even stand: the Reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ was deliberately abandoned. Mālik ibn Anas and other leading authorities explicitly ruled against reciting with his Readings, a position rooted in the principles of *Tawātur* and *ijmā‘*. Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Readings, as revered as he was, were never included in the standardised Qur’ān. They failed to meet the three non-negotiable conditions of an accepted Variant Reading:

- 1) **Mass transmission (Tawātur)** – The recitation must have been transmitted by an unbroken chain of reliable transmitters, in a manner ensuring absolute certainty. Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Readings, including any phonetic shifts, lacked this essential transmission.

⁴⁷⁴ *al-Ibānah*: 96.

⁴⁷⁵ *al-Muzzammil*: 4.

- 2) **Conformity to the ‘Uthmānic Script**— A Variant Reading must align with the *muṣḥaf ‘Uthmānī*, the divinely protected written form of the Qur’ān. Any variant deviating from it was categorically abandoned.
- 3) **Adherence to Arabic Linguistic Standards**— While phonetic variations existed among Arab tribes, only those that conformed to recognised grammatical structures were preserved in Qur’anic recitation.

These principles are not arbitrary restrictions—they are the guardrails that have preserved the Qur’ān from corruption for over fourteen centuries. The exclusion of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Readings was not an act of marginalisation; it was an act of divine preservation.

Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib affirms this with absolute clarity:

“We do not deny the readings of Ibn Mas‘ūd, but we do not recite with them, because they fall outside the ijma‘ (consensus), and were transmitted through āḥād reports rather than Tawātur.”⁴⁷⁶

His wording is not neutral. It is not an academic footnote. It is a final ruling, a verdict that leaves no room for reinterpretation. The Reading contradicts *ijmā‘*. It does not merely fail to meet recitational standards—it stands outside of them, an outlier to be recorded in historical texts but never revived in recitation.

This statement is an intellectual deathblow to the dry qāf proponents. It exposes the fundamental distinction between historical documentation and recitational transmission. Just because a phonetic or lexical variation was once recorded does not mean it is recitationally valid. To suggest otherwise is to dismantle the entire structure of Qur’anic preservation and its oral tradition—an act of erosion masquerading as scholarship.

The Selective Citation of Ibn Mas‘ūd: A Misleading Strategy

Even more revealing is the way classical scholars referred to Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Readings. Mālik ibn Anas and others did not say “*the recitation of Ibn Mas‘ūd* ﷺ”—they said “*the recitation attributed to Ibn Mas‘ūd* ﷺ”. This distinction is not trivial. It reflects a deep skepticism among early scholars about whether all these readings were authentically his.

⁴⁷⁶ *al-Ībānah*: 98.

The consequence is clear: when a phonetic or lexical reading lacks a mass-transmitted basis, it is relegated to an historical footnote—not a valid recitation. Ismā‘īl al-Qaḍī reinforces this point:

“It is not appropriate for anyone today to recite with whatever is transmitted from Ibn Mas‘ūd or others—if it differs from the ‘Uthmānic script—because we do not have certainty that it was truly his recitation.”⁴⁷⁷

This is where the dry qāf argument collapses entirely. If scholars of the highest caliber refused to validate these readings because they lacked certainty, *how can modern proponents claim legitimacy for an isolated phonetic variant? What authority do they possess that outweighs the consensus of the earliest generations?*

The proponents of the dry qāf may attempt to drown this reality in linguistic speculation, but no amount of theorising can override the ultimate ruling: no phonetic articulation outside of Tawātur is acceptable in Qur’anic recitation.

The Final Verdict: Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Phonetics Hold No Authority

When examined under the unforgiving light of transmission, the *dry qāf* argument does not merely weaken—it implodes.

- 1) The ḥadīth praising Ibn Mas‘ūd’s ﷺ Readings was never about phonetics—it was about *tartīl*. To claim otherwise is a distortion.
- 2) His recitation was abandoned because it failed the Tawātur test. If phonetic modifications were permitted, his qirā’ah would have been preserved—but it was not.
- 3) The earliest scholars questioned the authenticity of many Readings attributed to him. To base phonetic legitimacy on uncertain attributions is a methodological fallacy.
- 4) Not a single recitation authority (*qurrā’*) has ever ruled that his phonetic tendencies justify modern phonetic shifts. The silence of the *qurrā’* on this matter is not an accident—it is a verdict.

The dry qāf proponents believe they have found a linguistic loophole, a way to introduce phonetic modification under the guise of scholarly precedent. But their

⁴⁷⁷ *al-Ibānah*: 98.

argument is not an expansion of Qur'anic preservation—it is an attempt to dismantle it. If phonetic legitimacy is based on historical possibility rather than recitational transmission, then there is no Qur'ān left to preserve.

Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ phonetic tendencies were recorded. But they were *not* transmitted. The difference is everything. To mistake one for the other is not just an academic error—it is an epistemological catastrophe.

The Qur'ān is recited as it was transmitted. It does not evolve. It does not accommodate. It is not subject to revision. And no phonetic shift—no matter how cleverly framed—will ever breach the unbreakable fortress of Tawātur.

The Qur'ān was never dictated by dialectal prevalence; it was safeguarded by phonetic preservation.

The argument for the dry qāf hinges upon a linguistic fallacy—the assumption that phonetic shifts that existed in classical Arabic dialects must therefore be legitimate in Qur'anic recitation. This is a methodological failure of the highest order. Arabic phonetics, like all linguistic phenomena, exhibited regional variations, yet the Qur'ān was preserved not through the breadth of linguistic documentation, but through the rigidity of unbroken transmission.

Even Ibn Khaldūn acknowledged the tribal origin of this pronunciation, stating in his *Muqaddimah*:⁴⁷⁸

“It (the dry qāf) belongs to the Muḍarite dialects.”

Yet, phonetic inheritance is not dictated by tribal dialects—it is dictated by divine filtration. The Qur'ān's recitation was not entrusted to regional phonetic habits, but to a mass-transmitted oral tradition that actively negated phonetic anomalies. The mere fact that a pronunciation existed within Muḍarite tribes does not establish its legitimacy—it establishes its exclusion. Had it been part of the divinely transmitted recitation, it would have survived within the Tawātur Variant Readings. But it did not. And its absence is its own refutation.

Linguistic documentation is not equivalent to recitational legitimacy.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ikhmād*: 13.

The distinction is crucial: many phonetic variations existed in early Arabic, yet they were never incorporated into the transmitted Variant Readings. The exclusion of the dry qāf from Tawātur Readings is a conclusive negation of its legitimacy, a deliberate omission that cannot be overturned by historical speculation. The Qurʾān does not belong to the realm of linguistic possibility—it belongs to the realm of divine preservation.

At its core, the argument in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is built on a fundamental misalignment between linguistic documentation and recitational transmission. The phonetics of the Qurʾān are not governed by the historical diversity of Arabic dialects; they are bound by the conditions of Tawātur. The moment phonetic legitimacy is detached from transmission, the entire framework of Qurʾanic preservation collapses. The introduction of unverified pronunciations is not an expansion of recitational diversity—it is the first step toward the erosion of the Qurʾān’s phonetic sanctity.

Phonetic accommodation in Qurʾanic recitation is not merely an error in reasoning—it is a direct threat to the system that has protected the Qurʾān for over fourteen centuries. The Qurʾān is not an open linguistic artefact—it is a divinely preserved recitation. It is not dictated by historical phonetic shifts but by the absolute certainty of recitational transmission. The dry qāf was not forgotten; it was deliberately excluded from the divine transmission of revelation. To reintroduce it now is not an act of scholarly revival but an act of phonetic transgression. The unbroken chain of transmission stands as the final, immovable barrier against any attempt to alter the phonetics of the Qurʾān.

And that barrier will not be breached: The attempt to conflate linguistic documentation with Qurʾanic transmission, as evidenced in *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf*, is not simply a methodological error but a deliberate misframing designed to shift the criteria of legitimacy from divine preservation to historical possibility. This misalignment in epistemological foundations reveals the underlying strategy: to replace the unbroken phonetic transmission of the Qurʾān with a speculative reconstruction of what might have once been linguistically attested. This is not an oversight—it is a textual and theological intervention that seeks to justify phonetic modification under the guise of historical authenticity. The essential failure of this

argument, however, is its inability to engage with the unyielding principle that governs Qur'anic preservation: Tawātur is the sole determinant of recitational legitimacy. The moment recitation is detached from uninterrupted transmission, the entire structure of Qur'anic phonetic preservation collapses, reducing divine revelation to a fluid linguistic phenomenon rather than a preserved sacred recitation.

The entire premise of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is built on a false equivalence—namely, that if a phonetic feature existed in Arabic dialects, it must have been part of the Qur'ān's oral transmission. This assumption collapses under scrutiny because phonetic variation in a language does not dictate Qur'anic recitation. The Qur'ān was not entrusted to linguistic historians—it was entrusted to the qurrā', whose duty was to preserve the recitation exactly as it was revealed. This is why the claim that Ibn Khaldūn, al-Fīrūz Ābādī, or al-Suyūfī acknowledged the existence of the dry qāf in Arabic dialects is completely irrelevant to its validity in Qur'anic recitation. These scholars were documenting linguistic phenomena, not transmitting an authorised Qur'anic pronunciation. This is a categorical distinction that *Ikhmād* deliberately blurs to manufacture a justification for phonetic substitution where none exists. The absence of the dry qāf from every single Tawātur Reading is not an accident—it is an explicit rejection of its validity in recitation, a historical and theological verdict that overrides all linguistic speculation.

This is where the argument for the dry qāf collapses entirely. It fails to engage with the disciplinary separation between linguistic historiography and Qur'anic transmission, assuming that phonetic features documented in linguistic texts can retroactively be inserted into the recitational tradition. This is not how Variant Readings function. The recitation of the Qur'ān is not governed by what is theoretically possible in Arabic speech—it is fixed by transmission, and transmission alone. The absence of the dry qāf from all canonical Variant Readings is the conclusive proof of its illegitimacy. If it had been a valid Qur'anic pronunciation, it would have been preserved within the transmitted readings. The fact that it was not means that its introduction today is not a restoration—it is a phonetic innovation, a clear departure from the principle of Qur'anic preservation.

Moreover, *Ikhmād* attempts to further justify the inclusion of the dry qāf by invoking juristic precedent, suggesting that since some jurists in Ḥadramawt and Yemen have led prayers using this pronunciation, it must be valid. This argument fails for multiple reasons. First, it assumes that the act of leading prayer with a particular recitation equates to its validity, ignoring the strict criteria of Variant Readings transmission. The validity of a pronunciation in Qurʾanic recitation is not determined by how frequently it has been used but by whether it has been transmitted through an unbroken chain of reciters. This is the absolute and non-negotiable standard that governs the science of Tajwīd. Second, it misplaces the authority to verify phonetic legitimacy in the hands of jurists, rather than the Qurʾanic recitation scholars (*qurrāʾ*). This is a category error. A jurist is an authority in fiqh, but he does not dictate Qurʾanic phonetics, just as a ḥadīth scholar does not issue independent legal rulings. Qurʾanic recitation is the exclusive domain of those who have mastered and transmitted it through an unbroken sanad. This is why not a single *qārīʾ* or *muqriʾ* has ever used the rulings of jurists to justify phonetic modifications in Qurʾanic recitation. The argument collapses upon itself, exposing its reliance on extra-disciplinary justifications that have no bearing on the strict criteria of Qirāʾāt.

This leads to the final and most decisive flaw in *Ikhmād*—its failure to engage with the unbroken scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*) on phonetic precision in Qurʾanic recitation. The entire discipline of Tajwīd is founded on the principle that the Qurʾān’s phonetics are immutable. This is not a modern imposition, nor is it a matter of scholarly interpretation—it is a binding consensus that has been upheld without interruption. The *qurrāʾ* have ruled with absolute finality that no phonetic shift can be introduced into Qurʾanic recitation unless it is authenticated by Tawātur. The dry qāf has never met this criterion, and as a result, no amount of historical documentation, juristic precedent, or linguistic argumentation can grant it legitimacy.

The Qurʾān was not preserved by linguistic historians—it was preserved through rigorously controlled oral transmission.

Some may invoke the early flexibility of the Seven Aḥruf as a precedent, but this is a fatal misreading—standardisation under ʿUthmān was a divine filtration, not a linguistic compromise.

The phonetic articulation of every letter was fixed by divine protection, not by linguistic trends or dialectal shifts. The moment this standard is compromised, the Qur'ān ceases to be an immutable revelation and becomes a subject of phonetic negotiation. The acceptance of the dry qāf is not merely a technical error—it is a direct violation of Qur'anic preservation, an encroachment upon the very system that has protected divine revelation for over fourteen centuries.

Thus, the final verdict is inescapable. The absence of the dry qāf from the transmitted Qur'anic recitations is its ultimate disqualification. No matter how many linguistic sources attest to its existence, no matter how many jurists have led prayers using it, and no matter how much historical speculation is applied to reconstruct its usage, the fact remains that it was never transmitted as part of the Qur'ān's phonetic structure. And that exclusion is absolute. The Qur'ān's phonetics are divinely preserved, beyond scholarly debate, beyond linguistic accommodation, and beyond reinterpretation. Any attempt to introduce an unverified phonetic shift into its recitation is not an act of preservation—it is an act of deliberate distortion.

The Deliberate Misrepresentation of Anṣārī's Ruling

The invocation of *Sheikh al-Islām* Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī's statement as evidence for phonetic modification is not merely a misinterpretation—it is a calculated distortion designed to create a loophole where none exists. By selectively quoting Anṣārī's words while amputating the surrounding context, the author of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* manufactures an illusion of scholarly endorsement. Yet, forensic scrutiny reveals an entirely different reality: al-Anṣārī's actual ruling does not legitimise dialectical pronunciation in Qur'anic recitation—it explicitly forbids it.

At the core of al-Anṣārī's position lies an uncompromising principle: phonetic preservation in Qur'anic recitation is not an optional refinement—it is an obligatory condition. The author of *Ikhmād* knowingly isolates a single sentence, severing it from the surrounding prohibitive context, and presents it as a blanket justification for phonetic modification.

«ولو نطق بقاف العرب المترددة بين القاف والكاف صحت كما جزم به الروياني وغيره»

“and if one were to pronounce the wavering qāf of the Arabs—oscillating between qāf and kāf—his recitation would still be valid, as affirmed decisively by al-Ruyānī and others.”

The intended deception is clear: if a classical scholar acknowledged the existence of a phonetic variant, then, according to this fabricated reasoning, its permissibility in Qur'anic recitation follows by default. Yet, when examined in its full context, the very statement used to support this claim categorically negates it.

al-Anṣārī's Explicit Prohibition of Phonetic Modification

The passage in question begins not with linguistic accommodation, but with an unambiguous ruling:⁴⁷⁹

«ويجب رعاية حروفها» *“It is obligatory to preserve its letters.”*

This is not a neutral observation; it is a categorical legal obligation. Before any discussion of dialectical pronunciation even arises, al-Anṣārī establishes the non-negotiable foundation: phonetic integrity must be maintained—it is obligatory, mandatory. No modification, no substitution, no dialectical accommodation is permitted where the correct pronunciation can be upheld.

⁴⁷⁹ *Fatḥ al-Wah-hāb*: 1/72.

Yet, the author of *Ikhmād* deliberately amputates this prefatory ruling, extracting only the fragment that acknowledges a phonetic shift without including its legal implications. This is not an error—it is a strategic manipulation, an attempt to weaponise selective citation to fabricate an endorsement that does not exist.

The true finality of al-Anṣārī’s ruling becomes even clearer in the passage that follows:

فلو أتى قادر أو من أمكنه التعلم بدل حرف منها بآخر لم تصح قراءته لتلك الكلمة لتغييره النظم

“If a person who is capable, or one who has the ability to learn, substitutes one letter for another, his recitation of that word is not valid because it alters the structure.”

Here, all ambiguity is annihilated. Any phonetic substitution—where the correct pronunciation is possible—renders the recitation invalid. There is no juristic loophole, no linguistic accommodation, no dialectal exemption. The Qur’ān’s phonetic integrity is fixed, immutable, and protected.

The Fatal Blow: al-Anṣārī’s Ruling as a Forensic Proof Against the Dry Qāf

With this ruling, the entire argument for phonetic substitution collapses. al-Anṣārī’s words do not legitimise phonetic shifts—they criminalise them. His statement is not a precedent for recitational flexibility—it is an ironclad prohibition against phonetic tampering.

This ruling establishes two irrefutable realities:

1) Phonetic Preservation is a Binding Obligation

- If a person can pronounce a letter correctly, they must do so.
- The argument for dialectical accommodation is invalid because Qur’anic recitation is not dictated by regional speech patterns but by the transmitted standard of Tajwīd.
- The dry qāf is not a necessity for those who use it—it is a dialectical preference. Since the correct pronunciation of qāf is accessible and teachable, there is no justification for deviation.

Understand: The Qur’ān was not revealed as an open linguistic field where phonetic accommodations can be made at will. It was revealed with an inviolable phonetic

form, and any alteration—no matter how seemingly minor—constitutes an unauthorised modification.

2) **Phonetic Substitutions Render Recitation Invalid**

- The phrase **التغييره النظم** (because it changes the structure) is devastating to the argument for dialectical flexibility.
- Qur'anic recitation is not merely about conveying meaning—it is about preserving the exact phonetic articulation of divine revelation.
- The Qur'ān was not revealed as an open linguistic field where phonetic accommodations can be made at will. It was revealed with an inviolable phonetic form, and any alteration—no matter how seemingly minor—constitutes an unauthorised modification.

Understand: By this standard, the argument for pronouncing qāf as “gāf” is obliterated. It is neither a necessity nor a transmitted feature of Qur'anic recitation. Anṣārī's ruling does not legitimise phonetic shifts—it annihilates them when correct pronunciation is possible.

The Deceptive Framing of Dialectical Pronunciation

One of the most subtle yet insidious aspects of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is its attempt to frame the dry qāf not as an alteration, but as a recognised feature. By citing al-Anṣārī's acknowledgment of the oscillating articulation of qāf in Arabic dialects, the book attempts to legitimise its use in Qur'anic recitation.

This argument is built upon a fundamental fallacy—that the existence of a phonetic variation in Arabic speech equates to its permissibility in Qur'anic recitation. Yet, phonetic preservation is not governed by linguistic existence—it is dictated by transmission.

Consider this:

- Arabic historically contained numerous dialectical variations in phonetics.
- Yet, none of these variations were introduced into Qur'anic recitation unless transmitted through Tawātur.

- The absence of a phonetic articulation in the Ten Tawātur Readings is not a neutral fact—it is an active negation.

al-Anṣārī's statement does not permit the dry qāf—it records its existence in Arabic dialects. But documentation is not validation.

If the mere existence of a phonetic shift were sufficient for its legitimacy in Qur'anic recitation, then every phonetic variation historically attested would have an equal claim to legitimacy. This is the very epistemological error that leads to the erosion of Qur'anic phonetic integrity.

The Immutable Finality of Anṣārī's Ruling

By the time al-Anṣārī's full statement is examined, the argument for phonetic modification is reduced to nothing more than selective misquotation and deliberate omission.

His ruling is a fortification against phonetic alteration, not an allowance for it.

His acknowledgment of a fluctuating qāf in dialects does not override his categorical obligation to preserve Qur'anic phonetics.

If his ruling had indeed permitted dialectical pronunciations in Tajwīd, it would have sparked a precedent—yet, no such precedent exists.

There is no record of any *muqri'* or *qāri'* using al-Anṣārī's ruling as a justification for phonetic modification in the Qur'ān.

The silence of the Qur'anic scholarly tradition on this matter is not an oversight—it is the loudest confirmation that such an interpretation is untenable.

In reality, the selective citation of al-Anṣārī's statement reveals a deeper strategy—to create the illusion of scholarly legitimacy where none exists. Thus, by amputating Anṣārī's prefatory obligation to preserve phonetics and omitting his conclusive prohibition of substitution, the author of *Ikhmād* fabricates an endorsement that Anṣārī never issued.

This is not an intellectual oversight—it is a textual manipulation.

The Invalidity of Phonetic Substitution in Qur'anic Recitation

If the author of *Ikhmād* sought to establish the dry qāf as a recognised feature of Arabic phonetics, it was necessary for it to misrepresent the scholarly tradition that has safeguarded the phonetic precision of Qur'anic recitation. The previous section exposed the deceptive framing used to imply that the dry qāf was not an intrusion but an alternative articulation within a legitimate tradition. However, even if one were to momentarily concede that phonetic variation existed in Arabic speech, the next crucial layer of analysis renders the argument untenable—phonetic substitutions are categorically invalid in recitation. This is not merely a theoretical construct—it is a legally binding principle in the science of Qirā'āt, reinforced by the highest authorities in Tajwīd.

This section extends the forensic dismantling further, demonstrating that the Qur'ān is not recited according to what was possible in Arabic phonology but by what was divinely transmitted without deviation. The fundamental question is not whether the dry qāf existed in dialects, but whether it was ever permitted as an alternative phonetic form in Qur'anic recitation. The answer, decisively, is no. This is not a matter of academic opinion—it is an *immutable theological and legal reality*.

The Explicit Legal Prohibition of Phonetic Substitutions

At this juncture, the discussion turns to a forensic deconstruction of one of the most damning pieces of evidence against the argument for phonetic accommodation: al-Anṣārī's explicit prohibition against phonetic alteration in Qur'anic recitation. The previous section demonstrated how *Ikhmād* selectively amputated al-Anṣārī's statement to create a mirage of legitimacy where none existed. Here, the focus shifts to his actual ruling, which does not merely discourage phonetic substitution—it renders the recitation invalid when an alternative articulation is used in place of the transmitted phonetics.

al-Anṣārī's ruling is unambiguous and unassailable:

فلو أتى قادر أو من أمكنه التعلم بدل حرف منها بآخر لم تصح قراءته لتلك الكلمة لتغييره النظم

"If a person who is capable, or one who has the ability to learn, substitutes one letter for another, his recitation of that word is not valid because it alters the structure."

There are several critical forensic conclusions embedded within this ruling:

- 1) **Phonetic precision is obligatory where possible**—the argument that the dry qāf can be accommodated because it is regionally spoken collapses immediately. If a person is capable of reciting the transmitted phonetic articulation, they are obligated to do so. Phonetic accommodation is only considered in cases of extreme inability, and even then, it does not apply to modifications that replace one phoneme with another. The dry qāf is not a necessary phonetic articulation—it is a regional preference. As such, it holds no weight in Qur’anic recitation.
- 2) **Any phonetic replacement nullifies recitation**—the phrase ﴿بَدَلَ حَرْفٍ مِنْهَا بِآخَرَ﴾ (“substitutes one letter for another”) does not allow for any exception or interpretative flexibility. The author attempts to portray phonetic substitution as a minor variance, yet this ruling annihilates the claim that phonetic legitimacy is determined by dialectal use. This is not a subjective stylistic choice—it is an objective invalidation.
- 3) **The reasoning behind the ruling is structural, not preferential**—the phrase ﴿تَغْيِيرُهُ النِّظْمَ﴾ (because it changes the structure) is the ultimate negation of any argument for phonetic flexibility. Qur’anic recitation is not a fluid phonetic field—it is a divinely standardised transmission. The very notion that phonetic articulation can be dictated by regional speech patterns is a direct contradiction to the system of Tajwīd that has preserved the Qur’ān unaltered since its revelation.

This ruling alone is devastating to the entire premise of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf*. The book relies on linguistic reconstruction as an alternative justification for phonetic legitimacy. However, al-Anṣārī’s ruling eliminates any possibility of phonetic substitution, even if an articulation is linguistically attested in Arabic history. This ruling is not an isolated legal opinion—it reflects the unbroken legal consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the qurrā’ on the non-negotiability of phonetic precision in recitation.

The Qur'ān's Phonetic Structure: An Inviolable Transmission

What the author of *Ikhmād* fails to grasp is that phonetic legitimacy in Qur'anic recitation is defined by Tawātur transmissions, not by linguistic documentation. The Qur'ān is not a historical phonetic artefact that accommodates linguistic diversity—it is a fixed and untouchable recitation that operates exclusively within the framework of Tawātur. The exclusion of the dry qāf from all transmitted Variant Readings is not a historical omission—it is an active negation of its legitimacy.

This leads to an irrefutable theological and legal reality:

- If the dry qāf were a valid phonetic feature, it would have been preserved through Tawātur.
- If phonetic shifts were accommodated in Tajwīd, recitational transmission would be in a state of perpetual instability.
- The absence of a phonetic articulation in the transmitted Variant Readings is not a passive reality—it is an authoritative rejection.

This is why the dry qāf cannot be introduced into Qur'anic recitation—not because it lacks historical presence, but because it lacks recitational transmission. The Qur'ān was not revealed as a linguistic experiment—it was preserved through a divinely ordained mechanism of recitation that cannot be tampered with, no matter how robust the linguistic argumentation may appear.

The Fatal Error of Equating Linguistic Recognition with Qur'anic Transmission

This leads to the next crucial forensic breakdown—the fundamental miscalculation in *Ikhmād's* argument: the assumption that the mere existence of a phonetic variation in Arabic history confers legitimacy upon it in Qur'anic recitation—the golden standard of Tawātur. This is not only methodologically defective, but it is the very epistemological error that leads to the collapse of Qur'anic phonetic integrity.

Understand this:

- Historical phonetic shifts are a reality of language evolution—but the Qur'ān does not conform to linguistic evolution.

- Tajwīd is not a descriptive science of Arabic phonetics—it is a prescriptive system of phonetic preservation of the Qur’ān.
- If linguistic documentation could override Tawātur, then phonetic instability in recitation would be unavoidable.

The Qur’ān does not accommodate phonetic modification based on linguistic precedent—it rejects phonetic modification unless it is grounded in uninterrupted mass transmission—Tawātur.

Final Verdict: The Dry Qāf is an Invalid Phonetic Substitution

At this stage, the argument for the dry qāf has collapsed beyond recovery. The legal ruling against phonetic substitution is absolute. The principle of phonetic precision in Tajwīd is immutable. The Qur’ān’s phonetic articulation is untouchable. Any attempt to introduce an unverified phonetic modification is not a recitational expansion—it is a direct act of phonetic transgression.

The unbroken conclusion is as follows:

- 1) Deliberate phonetic substitution is categorically prohibited in Qur’anic recitation.
- 2) al-Anṣārī’s ruling does not allow for phonetic accommodation—it criminalises it.
- 3) The absence of the dry qāf from the Tawātur Readings is an explicit negation of its validity.
- 4) Recitational legitimacy is determined by Tawātur—not by linguistic documentation.
- 5) The Qur’ān’s phonetics are non-negotiable—any attempt to alter them is a violation of divine transmission.

The Qur’ān was never left to scholars to reconstruct—it was preserved by Allah ﷻ to remain untouched.

The Deceptive Invocation of *Ijmā'*: The Unbroken Consensus on Phonetic Integrity

The preservation of the Qur'ān is not merely a matter of textual accuracy but extends to its precise phonetic articulation, an obligation that is not the product of scholarly preference or juristic flexibility, but a divine imperative upheld by the unbroken scholarly consensus of the Qur'anic recitation authorities. The phonetics of the Qur'ān are not open to adaptation, negotiation, or speculative linguistic accommodation—they are fixed, immovable, and preserved through *ijmā'*, the binding agreement of the *qurrā'* across centuries, ensuring that no phonetic shift infiltrates the recitational transmission.

At the heart of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is an attempt to circumvent this absolute scholarly consensus by invoking linguistic documentation, historical phonetic variations, and juristic precedent as if they carry any authority in recitational legitimacy. This is an irredeemable miscalculation—one that collapses the moment it is measured against the inviolable principle that governs Qur'anic preservation: Tawātur alone determines phonetic authenticity, and the dry *qāf* was never part of this transmission. No amount of linguistic attestation can revive what was never recitationally preserved.

The methodology of the *qurrā'* has always been unyielding in its insistence that phonetic precision in Qur'anic recitation is not an aesthetic refinement, nor an issue of scholarly difference—it is an obligation upon the entire *ummah*. This is not an arbitrary restriction but a matter of divine preservation. Any attempt to introduce a non-Tawātur pronunciation—no matter how linguistically documented or regionally popular—is an act of recitational deviation, not scholarly expansion.

The *qurrā'* have safeguarded the Qur'ān through an unbroken chain of mass transmission that dictates precisely how every letter is to be articulated. Among the undisputed authorities who have upheld this principle is 'Alī al-Gharnāṭī (Ibn al-Bādhishh d. 540/1145), who established that phonetic precision in Qur'anic recitation is a binding obligation.

Ibn al-Bādhish unequivocally states:⁴⁸⁰

اعلم أن القراء مجتمعون على التزام التجويد، وهو إقامة مخارج الحروف وصفاتها

“Know that the reciters are in unanimous agreement (ijmā‘) on adhering to Tajwīd, which entails the correct articulation and attributes of letters.”

This is echoed by ‘Aṭṭīyah Qābil Naṣr, who categorically states that the scholarly consensus on the necessity of Tajwīd is absolute—any pronunciation that deviates from the transmitted phonetic structure is an infringement on the Qur’ān’s preservation.

Aṭṭīyah Qābil Naṣr reinforces this by affirming:⁴⁸¹

الإجماع منعقد على وجوب التجويد في القراءة

“There is an established consensus on the obligation of Tajwīd in recitation.”

This *ijmā‘* renders any argument for dialectal accommodation dead on arrival.

Yet, the author of *Ikhmād* attempts to construct an alternative route, seeking to manufacture a loophole where none exists by conflating linguistic documentation with phonetic validity. It seizes upon the fact that the dry qāf was recorded as an eloquent articulation among certain tribes, treating this as an argument for its recitational legitimacy. This, however, is a methodological distortion, one that ignores the fundamental distinction between Arabic as a linguistic entity and the Qur’ān as a divinely preserved revelation.

Arabic has always contained a vast spectrum of phonetic variations—documented, studied, and categorised by scholars such as Sībawayh, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Fīrūz Ābādī. Yet, the existence of a phonetic feature in the linguistic heritage of Arabic does not grant it legitimacy in Qur’anic recitation. The Qur’ān does not inherit linguistic diversity—it is divinely filtered through transmission, preserving only what has been mass-recited without interruption from the Prophet ﷺ to the present. Thus, the absence of the dry qāf from every single Variant Reading is not an accident—it is an active exclusion, a deliberate omission that cannot be overturned by speculative reasoning.

⁴⁸⁰ *al-Iqnā‘ fi al-Qirā‘at al-Sab‘*: 275.

⁴⁸¹ *Ghāyat al-Murīd*: 35.

By refusing to recognise the unbridgeable gap between linguistic documentation and recitational legitimacy, the author of *Ikhmād* commits an error that is not only academic but theological: mistaking historical phonetic possibility for divinely sanctioned transmission. If the mere documentation of phonetic shifts in Arabic speech were a sufficient basis for Qur'anic recitation, then every dialectal variation ever recorded would have an equal claim to legitimacy. This would reduce Qur'anic phonetics to a fluid, evolving phenomenon—an open dialectal marketplace rather than a divinely sealed recitational structure.

The Qur'ān's revelation was not a linguistic free-market, where multiple dialects were granted equal legitimacy. It was revealed in a singular, fixed phonetic standard, safeguarded through divine decree. The claim that the dry qāf can be retroactively inserted into recitational transmission contradicts a fundamental reality of Qur'anic revelation—that it was restricted to the dialect of *Muḍar*.

al-Suyūṭī affirms:⁴⁸²

"It has been said that the Qur'ān was revealed exclusively in the language of Muḍar, based on the statement of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ "The Qur'ān was revealed in the language of Muḍar."

This revelation was not a linguistic compromise—it was a divinely ordained phonetic standard. The moment phonetic legitimacy is detached from this reality, the Qur'ān ceases to be a singularly preserved recitation and instead becomes a malleable linguistic construct. But the Qur'ān was never preserved through historical dialectology—it was safeguarded through an unbroken oral transmission that allowed no intrusion, no deviation, and no dialectal exception.

The Qur'ān has never been preserved through linguistic analysis. It has been safeguarded through uninterrupted oral transmission, in which every phoneme, every articulation, and every phonetic feature has been meticulously preserved through *Tawātur*. The fact that the dry qāf is missing from this transmission is its own refutation. It was never part of the oral tradition of Qur'anic recitation, and no historical documentation can retroactively insert it where it never existed.

⁴⁸² *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*: 1/134.

Yet, in a final act of rhetorical evasion, *Ikhmād* shifts from linguistic analysis to juristic precedent, suggesting that since some scholars in Ḥaḍramawt and Yemen have led prayers using the dry qāf, this constitutes a form of scholarly approval. Here, the book commits an even greater methodological violation—placing the authority to verify Qur’anic recitation in the hands of *fuqahā’* (jurists) and *muḥaddihūn* (traditionists) rather than the *qurrā’*.

Islamic scholarship operates within defined disciplines, each governed by its own domain of expertise. Just as a *faqīh* (jurist) cannot authenticate ḥadīth, a *muḥaddith* (traditionist) cannot issue legal verdicts, and a *mufasssīr* (exegete) cannot override Tajwīd rulings, a jurist has no authority over the phonetic transmission of the Qur’ān. The science of Qirā’āt exists independently of *fiqh*—jurists legislate on acts of worship, but the precision of Qur’anic phonetics is determined solely by the *qurrā’*, whose entire discipline is structured around verifying transmitted recitation.

By attempting to grant jurists the ability to legitimise phonetic shifts, the author of *Ikhmād* not only misplaces scholarly authority but creates a dangerous precedent—one in which Qur’anic phonetics become subject to regional adaptation rather than divine transmission. The Qur’ān was never meant to accommodate phonetic drift. It was revealed, transmitted, and recited in an unbroken form, unchanged by dialectal influence or juristic approval.

The fact that some Ḥaḍramī and Yemeni scholars have recited with this pronunciation is not proof of its validity—it is proof that linguistic habits, if left unchecked, can infiltrate recitation. The standard of Qur’anic preservation is not dictated by regional practice but by mass transmission, and no recitation that lacks Tawātur can be accepted, regardless of how widespread it may become.

This is where the argument in *Ikhmād* collapses entirely:

- 1) The recitation of the Qur’ān is not subject to linguistic variation.
- 2) The phonetics of the Qur’ān were fixed through divine transmission, not evolving linguistic trends.

- 3) The jurists nor the traditionists do not hold the authority to override the *qurrā'*—recitational precision is determined solely by those who safeguard transmission.
- 4) The absence of the dry qāf from all Tawātur Readings is an absolute negation of its validity.

The dry qāf was never forgotten—it was deliberately excluded. Its reintroduction is not an act of scholarly revival, but an act of phonetic transgression. The unbroken chain of transmission stands as the final, immovable barrier against any attempt to alter the phonetics of the Qur'ān.

The Unbreakable Barrier of Tawātur: The Immutable Standard of Qur’anic Phonetic Legitimacy

At the foundation of Qur’anic preservation lies a principle so absolute that no linguistic analysis, no juristic ruling, and no historical speculation can override it—the requirement of Tawātur. Every phonetic articulation in the Qur’ān exists within an uninterrupted, mass-transmitted chain of recitation that traces back, without deviation, to the Prophet ﷺ. The sanctity of this transmission is what has safeguarded the Qur’ān from the phonetic corruptions that altered previous scriptures. It is the defining standard that determines what is legitimate in recitation and what is an innovation. This is the unbreachable wall that renders the argument for the dry qāf null and void.

The methodology of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* fundamentally collapses upon the immovable reality of Tawātur. No phonetic articulation can enter Qur’anic recitation unless it has been preserved through this unbroken transmission. The absence of the dry qāf from the transmitted Tawātur Variant Readings is not merely a neutral omission—it is an active rejection. It is a conclusive negation, a direct proof that this pronunciation was never a part of the Qur’ān’s recitational legacy. The moment a phonetic articulation is not found in any of the canonical Ten Variant Readings, its legitimacy is not just in doubt—it is entirely non-existent. There is no pathway for its inclusion, no mechanism through which it can be justified, no academic reasoning that can override the divine system of transmission. The Qur’ān is not safeguarded by linguistic documentation—it is protected by its uninterrupted phonetic preservation.

If phonetic legitimacy were determined by the existence of an articulation in historical Arabic dialects, the entire framework of Tajwīd would disintegrate. The Qur’ān would become a shifting linguistic text, malleable to regional pronunciations rather than fixed by the inviolable standard of transmission. This is precisely the error upon which the author of *Ikhmād* constructs its case, mistaking the presence of a pronunciation in Arabic linguistic records for its legitimacy in recitation. The transmission of the Qur’ān has never been dependent on linguistic scholarship—it has always been governed by the discipline of Qirā’āt, which ensures that only what has been recited in an unbroken chain reaches the ummah. To suggest that a pronunciation absent from Tawātur can be introduced based on historical linguistic

findings is not merely an academic oversight—it is a methodological violation, an epistemological rupture, and an attack on the very structure of Qur’anic preservation.

The assertion that the dry qāf was once a feature of early Arabic dialects is irrelevant to its legitimacy in recitation. The Arabic language has always contained phonetic diversity, yet the Qur’ān did not accommodate every variation—it preserved only what was necessary for its divine transmission. The elimination of phonetic variants from the transmitted Qirā’āt was not a historical accident but a deliberate filtration. The Qur’ān was not left open to the evolving landscape of Arabic phonetics; it was fixed in its recitational form, ensuring that no regional articulation could ever intrude upon its transmitted structure. The absence of the dry qāf from the preserved Readings is not a matter of lost historical pronunciation—it is a divine negation of its validity. The phonetic integrity of the Qur’ān is non-negotiable, and Tawātur is the mechanism that ensures its inviolability.

The invocation of Seven Aḥruf as a justification for phonetic flexibility is equally untenable. The revelation of the Qur’ān in multiple Aḥruf was a concession to facilitate recitation among early Arab tribes, not an open-ended license for phonetic modification. The moment the Qur’ān was codified under the ‘Uthmanic standardisation, the preservation of recitation became dependent on transmission alone. Even if the dry qāf had once been part of an earlier dialectical accommodation within the Aḥruf, its exclusion from the final transmitted readings renders it permanently invalid. The argument that a pronunciation “may have existed” in an earlier phase of Qur’anic recitation does not establish its legitimacy in the present—it confirms its elimination through divine standardisation. The absence of a pronunciation in Tawātur is not a deficiency—it is a proof of its exclusion from the divine transmission of revelation.

The concept of Qur’anic preservation is not restricted to its textual integrity but extends to its precise phonetic articulation. The Qur’ān is not a linguistic document to be reinterpreted through historical findings—it is a divinely protected recitation that is recited exactly as it was transmitted. The idea that phonetic modifications can be justified based on linguistic records rather than uninterrupted recitational transmission is an epistemic disaster, opening the doors to endless alterations in the

name of historical recovery. The moment phonetic legitimacy is detached from Tawātur, the entire preservation of the Qurʾān collapses, as every dialectal shift that ever existed could claim a right to reintroduction. This is not an argument for phonetic inclusion—it is an argument for the gradual dismantling of Qurʾanic phonetic integrity.

To accept the dry qāf as a valid pronunciation is to accept a precedent that renders the entire discipline of Tajwīd meaningless. If a non-Tawātur (beyond *Shādh* Readings) articulation can enter Qurʾanic recitation, then the doors are open for every phonetic shift to demand inclusion. There would no longer be any fixed standard, no universal recitational structure, no phonetic inviolability. The uniformity of Qurʾanic recitation that has been preserved across centuries, from the east to the west, would become susceptible to subjective reinterpretation. This is why the principle of Tawātur is the final, unbreachable barrier—it is not a scholarly preference but the divine safeguard against phonetic corruption.

The error of *Ikhmād Nār Fitnat al-Khilāf* is not merely in its misrepresentation of linguistic evidence or its manipulation of juristic rulings—it is in its failure to recognise that Qurʾanic phonetics are preserved through transmission, not through historical reconstruction. The dry qāf is not a lost pronunciation—it is a deliberately excluded articulation that was never carried into the recitational tradition. The attempt to reintroduce it is not an expansion of recitational legitimacy—it is a violation of Qurʾanic preservation. The transmission of the Qurʾān is absolute—if a pronunciation lacks Tawātur, it is by definition invalid. There is no exception to this rule, no scholarly opinion that can override it, no juristic endorsement that can bypass it. The phonetics of the Qurʾān were not preserved by historical research but by divine decree, transmitted through mass recitation, and safeguarded against all intrusions. The dry qāf is not merely an incorrect pronunciation—it is an unauthorised phonetic intrusion that contradicts the very system that has preserved the Qurʾān for over fourteen centuries.

At this stage, the argument for the dry qāf has been neutralised at every level—methodologically, jurisprudentially, recitationally, and theologically. The only remaining question is this: *if the author of Ikhmād cannot produce a single*

uninterrupted mass transmission (Tawātur) of the dry qāf in the Variant Readings, what foundation remains for its claim? The answer is clear—none. The Qurʾān does not conform to speculative phonetics—it is a divinely preserved revelation that exists solely in its transmitted form. The phonetics of revelation are immutable, inviolable, and untouchable. The argument for the dry qāf has now collapsed in its entirety.

The Peril of Phonetic Instability: The Slippery Precedent of Linguistic Accommodation

A single compromise is never just a compromise—it is a precedent. The moment phonetic flexibility is granted without the iron-clad foundation of Tawātur, the floodgates are thrown open, and the integrity of Qurʾanic recitation ceases to be an objective reality. It becomes a shifting phenomenon, a linguistic free market where phonetic legitimacy is dictated not by divine transmission, but by historical speculation. This is the slippery slope of linguistic accommodation, an insidious force that, once permitted, knows no containment. The argument for the dry qāf is not just an argument for a single phonetic shift—it is the first crack in a structure that has remained unshaken for fourteen centuries. And cracks, once permitted, do not remain confined. They spread.

To fully grasp the catastrophic implications of this precedent, one must dissect the underlying deception—the dialectical fallacy at the core of linguistic accommodation. The defenders of the dry qāf argue that its presence in early Arabic dialects grants it legitimacy in recitation. But this is a category mistake of monumental proportions. The Qurʾān is not governed by the evolutionary shifts of Arabic speech—it is bound by a phonetic transmission that is impervious to dialectal trends. Arabic, like every living language, has witnessed phonetic divergence across regions and historical periods. Some tribes softened consonants; others hardened them. Some altered articulation points; others fused phonemes. Yet not a single dialectal variation has ever been retroactively introduced into Qurʾanic recitation. The Qurʾān is not a linguistic fossil—it is a divinely preserved recitation, and its phonetics are not subject to regional convenience.

Here lies the great fallacy of linguistic accommodation: it assumes that historical presence equals recitational legitimacy. If that were true, then every phonetic divergence in classical Arabic could demand inclusion. The moment the precedent is

established, *where does the line get drawn? If the dry qāf is permitted on the basis of linguistic documentation, then why not the other regional phonetic shifts that have been recorded by Sībawayh, al-Fīrūz Ābādī, and Ibn Khaldūn? Why should one phonetic accommodation be granted while others are excluded?* The answer is simple: it is not about scholarly oversight—it is about recitational transmission. The absence of these phonetic variations in Tawātur is not an accident—it is an active exclusion, a deliberate filtration that was divinely preserved.

This is the peril of phonetic instability. If linguistic accommodation is permitted in one instance, there is no logical mechanism that prevents it from being exploited in others. And once the Qurʾān becomes susceptible to phonetic negotiation, its uniformity dissolves. It ceases to be a singular recitation, transmitted without deviation, and instead becomes a phonetic patchwork where precedent overrides preservation. The dry qāf is not merely an isolated pronunciation—it is the trojan horse that, once admitted, destroys the very mechanism that has safeguarded the Qurʾān’s phonetic form.

The Qurʾān’s recitation has remained fixed—not because scholars were unaware of linguistic shifts, but because they recognised the fundamental principle: phonetic transmission is not dictated by theoretical possibility, but by divinely sanctioned continuity. The argument for linguistic accommodation is not an expansion of recitational legitimacy—it is the first step toward phonetic relativism. If phonetic substitution can be justified by historical documentation rather than uninterrupted recitation, then the entire edifice of Tajwīd collapses. The Qurʾān would no longer be a unified oral tradition—it would become a shifting linguistic construct.

This is why the argument for phonetic accommodation is not merely incorrect—it is existentially dangerous. It places the preservation of divine revelation in the hands of linguistic reconstructionists rather than the *qurrāʾ*, who have safeguarded its phonetic precision for over a millennium. The Qurʾān is not a linguistic relic—it is a living recitation, and the only authority on its phonetics is Tawātur, not dialectal documentation. The dry qāf is not just an incorrect pronunciation—it is a breach of the principle that has preserved the Qurʾān against phonetic corruption.

The precedent must be annihilated before it spreads. And it will be.

The Devastating Legal and Theological Implications of Accepting the Dry Qāf— Finalising the ‘Uthmanic Filtration and Qur’anic Inviolability

There is no such thing as an innocuous phonetic modification in Qur’anic recitation. Every alteration—no matter how minor it may seem—is not merely a linguistic shift; it is a legal rupture, a theological violation, a breach in divine preservation. The attempt to legitimise the dry qāf is not an expansion of scholarly discussion—it is an assault on the most fundamental principle of Qur’anic preservation.

The Qur’ān was never left vulnerable to linguistic drift or phonetic elasticity. It was safeguarded through ‘Uthmanic standardisation, divine filtration, and an unbreakable consensus on phonetic transmission. This is why the dry qāf is not just an alternative articulation—it is a direct contradiction to the Qur’ān’s inviolability. The moment it is accepted, the Qur’ān ceases to be an untouchable divine recitation and becomes susceptible to phonetic negotiation. And once phonetic legitimacy becomes a matter of scholarly interpretation rather than transmitted preservation, the entire system collapses.

To fully comprehend the legal and theological devastation at stake, one must understand the ‘Uthmanic standardisation for what it truly was—a divine filtration, an active exclusion of phonetic anomalies that were never part of the prophetic recitation. The dry qāf is not a forgotten articulation—it was deliberately omitted from the ‘Uthmanic standard, the Variant Readings, and the Tawātur transmissions. This is not an oversight; it is a divine negation of its validity. The Qur’ān is not an evolving linguistic construct—it is a preserved revelation, and its phonetics are not subject to scholarly speculation but to unbroken mass transmission.

This is where the argument for the dry qāf collapses—not merely as an academic miscalculation, but as a blatant violation of Qur’anic jurisprudence. Every single legal ruling on Tajwīd, from the earliest scholars to the present, has upheld one absolute principle:

Any phonetic substitution that alters the transmitted articulation renders the recitation invalid.

This ruling is not open to debate. It is not a difference of opinion. It is a finality, a legal immutability that cannot be circumvented. The ‘Uthmanic filtration was not just a textual standardisation—it was a legal preservation of phonetic precision. The dry qāf does not merely lack evidence of Tawātur—it lacks legal validity entirely.

The theological devastation is even greater. The Qur’ān is not just a book of meanings—it is a divinely ordained recitation, revealed and transmitted exactly as it was recited by the Prophet ﷺ. The moment phonetic modifications are introduced, the chain of divine preservation is severed. The Qur’ān ceases to be a fixed, inviolable revelation and becomes a subject of phonetic revisionism. This is the gateway to fragmentation—not only of recitation, but of belief itself.

Understand this: The dry qāf is not a linguistic feature that was lost—it was a phonetic aberration that was deliberately excluded. If it had been a legitimate feature of recitation, it would have survived the ‘Uthmanic standardisation, the mass transmission of Variant Readings, and the legal rulings of Tajwīd. The fact that it did not is its own refutation. The Qur’ān’s preservation is not dictated by what was linguistically possible—it is dictated by what was divinely transmitted. And the dry qāf was never part of that transmission.

There is no theological loophole. No legal accommodation. No scholarly reinterpretation that can override divine preservation. The Qur’ān was not preserved through linguistic speculation—it was safeguarded through an unbreakable phonetic chain. And that chain cannot be altered, not by historical findings, not by dialectal records, not by legal reinterpretation.

The dry qāf is not a restoration—it is a violation. And the Qur’ān is inviolable.

The Inescapable Verdict: The Dry Qāf as an Unauthorised Phonetic Intrusion— Reinforcing Ijmā‘ and Phonetic Immutability

The moment phonetic legitimacy is separated from Tawātur, the moment historical speculation is granted the authority to override unbroken transmission, the moment linguistic documentation is treated as recitational evidence—the entire system of Qur’anic preservation collapses. What remains is no longer divine revelation, but a phonetic artefact open to revision, adaptation, and destruction.

This is why the dry qāf is not merely an alternative articulation—it is an unauthorised intrusion, a phonetic anomaly that stands outside the divine transmission. The verdict is now inescapable:

- 1) The dry qāf has no presence in any of the Ten Tawātur Readings—an absence that is not passive, but an active rejection.
- 2) There exists no unbroken Tawātur chain of reciters who have transmitted it—meaning its recitational legitimacy is non-existent.
- 3) *Ijmā‘* (scholarly consensus) has ruled with absolute finality that phonetic precision in Qur’anic recitation is obligatory—and the dry qāf does not meet this standard.
- 4) Linguistic documentation does not override recitational transmission—the Qur’ān is not preserved through dialectal history, but through divinely protected phonetic immutability.

The Absolute Authority of Ijmā‘: The Final Nail in the Coffin

The concept of *ijmā‘* (scholarly consensus) is not a secondary validation—it is the epistemological backbone that ensures no deviation, no uncertainty, no alteration infiltrates Qur’anic recitation. The *qurrā’*, without exception, have upheld a singular, immovable decree:

No phonetic articulation that lacks Tawātur can ever be introduced into Qur’anic recitation.

This ruling is absolute. It is unchallenged. It is unbreakable. And it is devastating to the case for the dry qāf. The Qur’ān was never left to the fragility of academic

speculation. Its phonetics were preserved through an iron law of uninterrupted transmission, fortified by *ijmā'* that remains unshaken across centuries.

Among the indisputable authorities who have ruled categorically against phonetic modification:

- 1) **Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 437/1045)** issues a decisive verdict on the dry qāf:

"We do not deny the readings of Ibn Mas'ūd, but we do not recite with them, because they fall outside the ijmā' (consensus), and were transmitted through āḥād reports rather than Tawātur."

The ruling is unambiguous. What falls outside of *ijmā'* is not recited—it is discarded.

- 2) **Ibn al-Bādhish (d. 540/1145)** unequivocally states:

"The reciters are in unanimous agreement (ijmā') on adhering to Tajwīd, which entails the correct articulation and attributes of letters."

Tajwīd is not an embellishment—it is an obligation. Deviation is not tolerated—it is rejected.

- 3) **'Atṭīyyah Qābil Naṣr** further solidifies this ruling:

"There is an established consensus on the obligation of Tajwīd in recitation."

This is not an academic debate. It is not an area of discretionary variance. The obligation is absolute.

This *ijmā'* alone annihilates the case for phonetic substitution. The dry qāf does not merely lack evidence—it stands in direct defiance of the entire legal and recitational framework of Qur'anic preservation. To alter phonetics is not to preserve—it is to corrupt.

Understand this inescapable reality:

- The *ijmā'* of the *qurrā'* is equal to the *ijmā'* of the *fuqahā'*—yet the *fuqahā'* do not hold the *ijmā'* of the *qurrā'* as equal to their own. If they did, their *ijmā'* would shift. If they do not, their weight is arbitrary.
- The weight of all weights—the *ijmā'* of the *qurrā'*—equals the weight of the *ijmā'* of the *muḥaddithūn*, yet the *muḥaddithūn* do not weigh themselves

against those whose consensus is the very measure of theirs. *What is a ḥadīth if its transmitter is trivial?*

- The Prophet ﷺ's closest circle was not the *fuqahā'* or the *muḥaddithūn*, but those whose *ijmā'* was the foundation of both—the *ahl al-Qur'ān*. Yet today, those who rest upon that foundation do not recognise the ground beneath their feet.
- The Prophet ﷺ did not place the *fuqahā'* or the *muḥaddithūn* at the forefront—he placed those without whom neither could exist—the *ahl al-Qur'ān*. *So how do the inheritors of what was secondary make what was primary seem insignificant?*
- The *fuqahā'* judge by the Qur'ān, the *muḥaddithūn* record prophetic sayings of what was said about the Qur'ān—yet both depend on those who preserve the Qur'ān. If their authority stands upon that preservation, *how can they look down upon those who uphold it?*

Each paradox tightens like a noose—there is no dignified escape. The *fuqahā'* and *muḥaddithūn* are left with a brutal choice: either they recognise the *qurrā's* authority as equal to their own, or they expose their *ijmā'* as a construct of expediency—binding when it elevates them, discarded when it does not. The final contradiction is not just damning; it is fatal. To undermine the *ahl al-Qur'ān* is to erode their own foundation. Their authority exists because the *qurrā'* upheld what they now wield. To dismiss those who preserve the Qur'ān is not a mere oversight—it is sabotage, the slow collapse of the very structure they depend on, yet refuse to acknowledge.

The Qur'ān's Phonetic Immutability: The Unbreakable Barrier of Tawātur

At the heart of Qur'anic preservation lies a principle so absolute that no linguistic analysis, no juristic ruling, and no historical speculation can override it—the requirement of Tawātur. Every phonetic articulation in the Qur'ān exists within an uninterrupted, mass-transmitted chain of recitation that traces back, without deviation, to the Prophet ﷺ.

This is why the dry qāf is not merely invalid—it is impossible to justify. If it had been a legitimate recitational feature, it would have been carried into Tawātur, preserved within the transmitted Variant Readings, and upheld through an unbroken chain of reciters.

But it is absent.

Not from one Variant Reading.

Not from two.

From every single recitational transmission in existence—*Shādh* Readings included.

This is not a neutral omission—it is a deliberate exclusion, a divinely enforced filtration that has safeguarded the Qur'ān from phonetic corruption. The fact that the dry qāf is missing from Tawātur is not just an argument against its validity—it is the final, inescapable proof of its complete illegitimacy.

If phonetic legitimacy were dictated by historical documentation rather than recitational transmission, then the Qur'ān would be an unstable, ever-shifting linguistic text, not a preserved revelation. But this is precisely the fatal miscalculation upon which the argument for the dry qāf is built. The Qur'ān does not conform to linguistic drift—it is protected by phonetic immutability.

The dry qāf was never part of divine transmission. And that transmission is untouchable.

The phonetics of the Qur'ān were not preserved by jurists—they were meticulously transmitted by the *qurrā'*, and only those with an unbroken chain of transmission (*sanad*) in Variant Readings have the authority to verify valid pronunciations.

The Final Verdict: The Dry Qāf is a Phonetic Trespass

There is no legal, theological, or scholarly basis upon which the dry qāf can be inserted into Qur'anic recitation. Every forensic deconstruction has led to the same unbreakable conclusion:

- 1) It has no presence in the transmitted recitational corpus.
- 2) It lacks a single instance of Tawātur validation.
- 3) It contradicts the unbroken scholarly consensus on phonetic precision.
- 4) It stands outside the divine system of Qur'anic preservation.

The Qur'ān was not preserved through linguistic speculation. It was safeguarded through an untouchable phonetic transmission. And that transmission cannot be breached.

The final reality is this: The dry qāf is not a restoration. It is not a scholarly rediscovery. It is not a lost feature of Qur'anic recitation.

It is an unauthorised phonetic intrusion.

It was never forgotten. It was never lost. It was deliberately excluded.

And that exclusion is absolute.

The Phonetic Siege: A History of Attempts to Alter Qur'anic Pronunciation

The need to substitute the pure qāf with the phonetic modification of the dry qāf is not something new.

History is filled with those who attempted to alter the Qur'ān in various ways—some through outright textual manipulation, others through more insidious phonetic distortions. Yet, across time, every attempt has crashed against an immovable force: an oral tradition so unyielding, so rigorously safeguarded, that even the slightest phonetic deviation is detected, rejected, and buried before it can take root. The Qur'ān is not merely a book to be read—it is a divine recitation, preserved not only in ink but in breath. And because its transmission rests upon the precision of sound, any alteration—no matter how subtle—is not an adjustment, but a rupture in the chain that connects the present to the Prophet ﷺ.

It is a fundamental mistake to assume that phonetic shifts are harmless, that they can creep into the recitation without consequence. The Qur'ān was revealed in a precise articulation, preserved through an ironclad oral system that does not yield to linguistic drift. Those who have sought to modify its phonetics—whether driven by theology, linguistic struggle, colonial agendas, or modernist simplifications—have all failed. Their efforts have collapsed under the weight of Tawātur, the mass-transmitted verification system that stands as an impenetrable wall against corruption.

This is not a matter of linguistic preference, nor of scholarly interpretation. It is an existential struggle over the very integrity of divine revelation.

1) Sectarian Efforts: The Sectarian War on Phonetics: How Theological Agendas Sought to Corrupt the Divine Sound

The first assault on the Qur'ān's phonetics did not come from foreign invaders, colonial administrators, or misguided reformists—it came from within. It was not a physical battle waged on the frontiers of the Islamic empire, but a war over sound, over breath, over the very articulation of the divine message. In the early centuries of Islam, sectarian movements sought to manipulate the Qur'ān's phonetic integrity—not by challenging its verses directly, but by subtly altering their pronunciation to reinforce theological ideologies. They understood that to control the phonetics of the Qur'ān was to control its interpretation.

Among the most audacious of these groups was the Mu‘tazilite movement (8th–10th century CE). Rationalists by philosophy and adversaries of traditionalist theology, the Mu‘tazilites sought to remould the Qur’ān through a phonetic distortion of its core theological pronouncements. *Their primary target?* The attributes of Allah ﷻ. The Qur’ān speaks in unflinching clarity of divine attributes—of His hearing (*sam‘*), His seeing (*baṣar*), His speech (*kalām*). But to the Mu‘tazilites, these were dangerous affirmations. To declare that Allah ﷻ “speaks” in the conventional sense was, in their view, to liken Him to creation, to impose upon Him the limitations of human faculties. And so, in their theological circles, a phonetic softening began—a subtle shift, a quiet manipulation of how the divine attributes were recited.

Certain Mu‘tazilite scholars began pronouncing these verses with a deliberate detachment, muting the emphatic qualities that carried power, affirmation, and absolute certainty. The verbal inflections that gave weight to the declaration of Allah’s ﷻ speech were softened in private recitation, a quiet rebellion against the traditionalist reciters—the *qurrā’* who preserved the weight and intensity of classical phonetics. This was not mere pronunciation; this was an ideological battle in disguise—a linguistic coup staged within the confines of phonetic articulation. They understood that if they could subtly alter the sound, they could control the doctrine.

But the Qur’anic scholars of the era were neither blind nor complacent. In Baghdad, Kufa, and beyond, master reciters began pushing back. The septilist, Ibn Mujāhid (d. 936 CE), the architect of the canonised Seven Variant Readings, saw through the phonetic deviations being planted into the fabric of recitation. He knew that allowing even the smallest deviation in phonetics was a gateway to theological corruption. With ruthless precision, he codified and formalised the Seven Authentic Modes of Recitation, ensuring that every syllable, every inflection, every point of articulation was locked into a rigid, unbreakable oral tradition. His work did more than merely document the Variant Readings—it shut the door on those who sought to wield phonetics as a weapon of ideological manipulation.

The Mu‘tazilites were not the only ones. The early extremist Shī‘a factions, the Ghālī, also sought to distort phonetics to enforce a theological agenda. *Their battleground?* Verses relating to ‘Alī ؑ and the concept of divinely mandated leadership (*wilāyah*).

Among the most infamous distortions was their fabricated phonetic recitation of *Sūrat al-Inshirāh* (94:7). Where the Qurʾān classically reads:

﴿فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ﴾ “*Fa-idhā faraghta fa-nṣab*”

(So when you have finished, devote yourself to worship).

They inserted phonetic manipulations, falsely reciting it as:

﴿فَاجْعَلْ وَلايَةَ عَلِيٍّ فَرَضًا﴾ “*Fa-ajʿal wilāyat ʿAlī farḍā*”

(So make ʿAlī’s authority obligatory).

This was not an innocent mispronunciation. It was a deliberate phonetic and textual corruption, an attempt to insert a theological doctrine into the very oral structure of the Qurʾān itself. Had this phonetic deviation gone unchallenged, it could have formed the basis for a fabricated recitation tradition, rewriting Islamic theology through mere adjustments in sound.

But once again, the chain of transmission stood as an impenetrable fortress. The traditionalists—those who traced their *sanad* (scholaly lineage and transmission chain) directly back to the Prophet ﷺ—immediately identified the phonetic forgery. The attempt was crushed before it could spread. No matter how deeply sectarian movements sought to embed phonetic alterations into the oral fabric of the Qurʾān, they faced an unbreakable reality: no variant recitation could be accepted unless it was transmitted with an unbroken isnād, with phonetic precision validated by multiple generations of reciters. The Qurʾān had been safeguarded, not just in ink, but in breath, in the voices of the *qurrāʾ* who carried it forward.

This was the first great war over phonetics—a war not waged with weapons, but with the articulation of divine speech. And in every instance, those who sought to manipulate phonetics for sectarian gain were defeated by the very system that had preserved the Qurʾān from the moment it was revealed: the unbroken chain of oral transmission.

Phonetics had been weaponised, but the Qurʾān remained invincible.

2) **The Linguistic Struggles of Non-Arabs: How Persian and Turkish Scholars Clashed with Qur'anic Phonetics**

The Qur'ān descended in the purest Arabic—a language of deep resonance, sharp articulation, and measured cadence. Its phonetics were precise, its letters formed in the depths of the throat, at the edges of the lips, in the spaces where breath met intention. But as Islam expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula, it encountered civilizations whose tongues were shaped by different phonetic structures, different cadences, different linguistic instincts. And with this expansion came an inevitable tension: how does a language as exacting as Qur'anic Arabic survive in the mouths of those who have never spoken it?

It was a battle between preservation and adaptation, between the guardians of the Qur'ān's phonetic integrity and the linguistic realities of Persian, Turkish, and other non-Arab reciters. It was not an open challenge to the Qur'ān, but something far more insidious—a creeping erosion, a slow deformation of phonetic purity. If left unchecked, it could have fragmented the oral transmission, leading to regionalized distortions that would have rewritten not the script, but the very sound of revelation.

The first major phonetic struggles arose in Persia (10th–13th century CE), where the native tongue lacked several fundamental Arabic sounds. The most crucial of these were:

- 'Ayn [ع] – A sound produced in the middle of the throat, nonexistent in Persian phonetics.
- Ḥā' [ح] – A sound produced in the middle of the throat with no Persian equivalent.
- Qāf [ق] – A extreme, back-of-the-throat sound, but softened in Persian articulation.

Persian reciters, struggling with these sounds, began softening them—turning 'Ayn into a weak 'a', flattening ḥā' into a mere 'h', and pronouncing qāf like a Persian 'g' (gāf). In the privacy of informal recitation, these phonetic modifications spread—not as acts of defiance, but as pragmatic adaptations by those whose tongues simply could not grasp the depth and intensity of Arabic articulation. And yet, this was precisely

the danger: what began as minor pronunciation difficulties could, if not corrected, evolve into an entirely new phonetic system, a Persianised Qurʾān, distinct in sound from the one that had been transmitted since the Prophet ﷺ.

But the masters of Tajwīd saw what was happening long before it could become an irreversible linguistic mutation. Among them, the legendary al-Jazarī (d. 1429), a towering authority in Qurʾanic phonetics, dedicated his life to systematising Tajwīd into a codified science, ensuring that every articulation was preserved with exacting precision. He did not just teach the rules—he waged war on linguistic erosion. In his magnum opus, *al-Nashr fi al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*, he meticulously documented the origins of every Qurʾanic phoneme, their exact points of articulation (*makhārij*), and the correct method of preservation. His influence was so absolute that no variant phonetic tradition outside the canonical Qirāʾāt survived beyond isolated circles.

And yet, the battle was not over.

During the Ottoman era (15th–17th century), a new challenge emerged—this time from Turkish reciters who found themselves grappling with a fundamentally different set of phonetic obstacles. Turkish, unlike Arabic, lacked the same depth of emphatic letters and instead relied on softer, more fluid sounds. The most striking differences were:

- The pronunciation of ṭhāʾ [ظ], ḍād [ض], and dhāl [ذ] – Arabic distinguishes these through precise articulation, but Turkish reciters collapsed them into softer approximations, losing the crisp phonetic distinctions crucial to Qurʾanic recitation.
- The Ottoman inclination toward phonetic fluidity – Ottoman Turkish developed a musicality that conflicted with the rigid phonetics of Qurʾanic Tajwīd, leading some reciters to introduce elongations and rhythmical modifications that, while aesthetically pleasing, threatened to dilute the phonetic integrity of Qurʾanic Arabic.

For a time, these distortions took hold among certain Ottoman scholars and recitation circles, particularly in courtly settings where aesthetic performance sometimes overshadowed strict phonetic accuracy. The danger here was not outright corruption

but gradual phonetic drift—a recitation that, over time, would begin to resemble Turkish-influenced Arabic rather than the original Qur’anic phonetics.

But once again, the guardians of the Qur’ān moved to extinguish the threat before it could spread. The elite Qur’anic institutions of Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo began retraining Ottoman reciters, reintroducing phonetic rigor, forcing realignment with the canonical rules of Tajwīd. The reciters of the Sulṭān Aḥmad Mosque in Istanbul, in particular, clamped down on phonetic liberties, ensuring that Qur’anic articulation was not subordinated to the phonetic tendencies of Turkish recitation culture.

By the 17th century, the phonetic integrity of the Qur’ān had once again been secured. The Tajwīd system, now deeply entrenched, ensured that no matter how foreign tongues struggled, no matter how linguistic drift threatened to soften articulation, the Qur’ān would always return to its precise, original phonetics.

This was not just about pronunciation. It was about preservation.

Had the Persian and Ottoman phonetic shifts gone unchecked, the oral transmission of the Qur’ān could have fractured into regionalised pronunciations, creating distortions that, over generations, might have rewritten the very sound of divine revelation.

But the guardians of Tajwīd understood something fundamental: to lose phonetic precision was to lose the very foundation of Qur’anic authenticity.

And so, the phonetic battle against linguistic drift was fought—and won.

The Qur’ān remained unyielding, its phonetics untouched, its recitation preserved in its original, unaltered form.

3) **The Colonial Assault on Qur’anic Phonetics: How Western Powers Tried to Undermine Recitation**

The war on the Qur’ān did not always arrive with swords and armies. Sometimes, it came in the form of ink, of policies, of subtle distortions disguised as modernisation. It came through the hands of colonial administrators, Orientalist scholars, and missionary-backed linguistic reformers—all of whom recognised a simple but devastating truth: the Qur’ān’s phonetics were its unbreakable defence.

They understood that to destroy Islam, they could not simply ban the Qurʾān—they had to dismantle the oral fortress that had protected it for over a millennium. They had to alter its sound—to replace the crisp, calculated articulation of its verses with something looser, more malleable, more vulnerable to distortion. Because if the phonetics changed, the meaning would follow.

And so, under the guise of education reform, linguistic accessibility, and “modernisation”, they launched one of the most insidious attacks in history: the colonial war on Qurʾanic recitation.

The British Offensive: The Attempted Simplification of Qurʾanic Phonetics in India

In 19th-century British-controlled India, Christian missionaries such as William Muir and Karl Pfander developed a sinister strategy: promote transliterations of the Qurʾān that stripped away its phonetic distinctions. Another systematic attempt was made to undermine Qurʾanic phonetics through state-controlled education. The British understood that outright banning the Qurʾān would provoke rebellion, so instead, they tried to redefine how it was recited.

- **“Simplified” Arabic Transliterations:** British colonial administrators, working with missionary groups, encouraged Qurʾanic recitation in Romanised transliteration, claiming that Arabic script was too complex for native Indian Muslims.
- **Eliminating the Sounds of Tajwīd:** Qurʾanic Arabic contains distinct phonetic elements—*ghunnah* (nasalisation), *qalqalah* (vibration), and *tafkhīm* (emphatic emphasis on heavy letters). The British-backed education reforms sought to remove these, replacing the phonetics with a flat, monotone recitation that erased the rhythmic majesty and precise articulation that made the Qurʾān unique.
- **Reducing the Makharij (Points of Articulation):** Arabic phonetics rely on precision—sounds formed in the throat, the tongue, the lips. British-influenced linguistic curricula collapsed these distinctions, encouraging a pronunciation that blurred the difference between letters like *dād* (ض) and *ṭhāʾ* (ظ), *ʿayn* (ع) and *alif* (ا).

The goal was clear: to replace Qur’anic Arabic with a diluted, anglicised version of its phonetics, stripping the Qur’ān of its linguistic authority and rendering its oral transmission weak, regionalized, and easily manipulated.

But the scholars of India saw through the deception.

Figures like Shāh Waliyy Allah al-Dehlawī (d. 1762 CE) and his successors launched counter-initiatives, founding madāris (Islamic schools) that revived traditional Tajwīd instruction. Qur’ān were trained in the classical phonetics, and the attempt to weaken Qur’anic pronunciation was crushed before it could gain traction.

The French Strategy in North Africa: The Latinisation of Qur’anic Recitation

The French colonial occupation of Algeria (1830–1962) and Tunisia (1881–1956) introduced another linguistic assault—this time through forced Latinisation. French administrators declared Arabic a “foreign language”, pushing for the Qur’ān to be taught in Latin script rather than its original Arabic phonetics.

- **Erasing Arabic’s Emphatic Letters:** French linguistic policies encouraged a phonetic shift where Arabic’s deep, powerful letters were softened to fit French pronunciation.
- **Replacing Recitation with Reading:** Qur’anic education in Algeria and Tunisia was restructured so that students “read” the Qur’ān in a diluted, French-influenced Arabic rather than reciting it with Tajwīd.
- **State-Controlled Qur’ān Schools:** The colonial government introduced French-supervised Qur’anic schools, where recitation was stripped of its traditional phonetics, forcing students to recite in a stiff, unnatural manner that weakened the beauty and depth of the revelation.

But the qurrā’ and scholars of Algeria fought back.

Under Sheikh ‘Abd al-Hamīd ibn Bādīs (d. 1940), Algerian Qur’anic scholars launched a movement of Tajwīd revival. Secret study circles emerged, teaching classical phonetics underground. Qur’anic recitation became a symbol of resistance, and those caught teaching authentic phonetics were imprisoned or exiled by the French regime.

And yet, the colonialists failed.

Today, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia remain powerhouses of Tajwīd, producing some of the greatest reciters of the Qur’ān, a direct legacy of the scholars who refused to let its phonetics be rewritten.

The Orientalist Agenda: Twisting the Phonetics of the Qur’ān Through “Linguistic Research”

Beyond the colonial governments, a more intellectual attack was waged by Western Orientalists—scholars who claimed to study the Qur’ān academically but sought to undermine its phonetic consistency.

- 1) Christoph Luxenberg’s “Syro-Aramaic Hypothesis” argued that the Qur’ān’s phonetics were originally Syriac-Aramaic, not Arabic.
- 2) Arthur Jeffery’s “Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān” (1937) claimed that Qur’anic phonetics had evolved significantly, and therefore, could continue evolving—implying that classical Tajwīd was unnecessary and outdated.
- 3) German and Dutch Orientalists introduced alternative phonetic theories that suggested that early Arabs pronounced the Qur’ān differently, subtly attempting to break the idea of phonetic continuity from the Prophet’s ﷺ time.

Yet, none of their theories stood against the evidence of the unbroken chain of Qur’anic recitation and its oral tradition.

For every Orientalist distortion, the masters of Tajwīd responded with clarity. The Qur’ān’s phonetics are not an academic theory—they are a living, breathing tradition, preserved in the voices of those who recite it daily, precisely as it was revealed.

The Failure of the Colonial Assault on Qur'anic Phonetics

Every colonial strategy—whether through transliteration, forced Latinisation, state-controlled Tajwīd dilution, or Orientalist phonetic revisions—collapsed under the weight of the Qur'ān's oral transmission.

Why?

Because no matter how many governments, universities, or colonial forces tried to redefine Qur'anic phonetics, they were up against an unbroken chain of living reciters.

Every phonetic distortion was identified. Every linguistic modification was rejected. Every attempt to erode Qur'anic recitation was met with an unshakable wall of resistance.

The Qur'ān survived. Its phonetics remained untouched. Its reciters, from Africa to Asia, from the deserts of Arabia to the heart of Europe, still pronounce it exactly as it was revealed.

The colonial war on phonetics ended in total failure.

4) The Secular Reformists and the Attempt to “Modernise” Qur'anic Pronunciation

For centuries, the Qur'ān's phonetics had withstood the force of sectarian manipulation, the struggles of non-Arab tongues, and the linguistic warfare of colonial powers. But in the 20th century, a new threat emerged—not from external forces, but from within the Muslim world itself.

This was not an attempt to distort meaning through subtle phonetic shifts, nor a foreign invasion of the sacred sound of revelation. It was something far more dangerous: an ideological movement that sought to erase the past, to disconnect Muslims from their own linguistic heritage, and to “modernise” the Qur'ān's recitation to fit the secular ideals of the new age.

This was the secularist assault on Qur'anic phonetics—waged by governments and intellectuals who no longer saw Tajwīd as a sacred science, but as an obstacle to progress.

And at the centre of it all stood Turkey and Egypt—the battlegrounds where the war on Qur’anic phonetics reached its peak.

Atatürk’s Latinisation of the Qur’ān (1928): The Turkish War on Tajwīd

Muṣṭafā Kamāl Atatürk, the architect of modern Turkey, was determined to erase the Arabic script from Turkish identity. To him, Arabic was a relic of the past, a chain binding the Turkish people to an Islamic heritage he wanted them to abandon. And so, in 1928, he abolished the Arabic script entirely, replacing it with a Latinised alphabet.

But it did not stop there. Atatürk did not merely want to change the way Turkish was written—he wanted to alter the way the Qur’ān itself was recited.

- **Latinising the Qur’ān:** The Turkish government promoted a Latin-script Qur’ān, with recitation in a simplified Turkish phonetic system rather than classical Arabic. This meant that the rich phonetic depth of the Qur’ān—the *ghunnah*, the *tafkhīm*, the precise *makhārij*—was eliminated, replaced with a flat, artificial pronunciation.
- **Reciting in Turkish, Not Arabic:** Atatürk’s regime attempted to push Qur’anic recitation in Turkish rather than Arabic, arguing that Arabic phonetics were too foreign for the new, secular Turkish state. This would have severed Turkish Muslims from the chain of oral transmission, effectively replacing centuries of precise Qur’anic recitation with an artificial, modernist alternative.
- **Banning Traditional Tajwīd Schools:** Qur’ān recitation schools were systematically shut down, and state-approved recitation guides were introduced, promoting a phonetically weakened version of the Qur’ān that was easier for Turkish speakers to pronounce but entirely detached from its original phonetics.

Had Atatürk’s reforms succeeded, the entire phonetic legacy of Qur’anic recitation in Turkey would have been erased—replaced with a Latinised, secularised distortion of revelation.

But the Turkish people resisted.

- **Underground Madāris:** Secret Qurʾān schools emerged, where traditional recitation was preserved, taught by elderly reciters who had memorised the classical phonetics before Atatürk’s reforms.
- **The Resilience of the Ḥuffāṭh:** Even as state-backed reciters adopted Latinised pronunciations, the *qurrāʾ* continued reciting with their *sanad* intact, ensuring that phonetic corruption never gained traction.
- **The Revival of Tajwīd:** When Turkey relaxed its restrictions on religious education in later years, the traditional phonetics of the Qurʾān were revived in full. The Latinisation effort, though devastating, was ultimately defeated.

Today, Turkey remains one of the greatest centres of Qurʾanic Tajwīd and Qirāʾāt, producing some of the finest reciters of the modern era—a testament to the failure of secular phonetic corruption.

Egypt’s Secular Linguists and the Phonetic “Simplification” of the Qurʾān

While Turkey attempted to Latinise the Qurʾān, Egyptian secularists took a different route. Their argument was not that Arabic should be abandoned, but that Tajwīd should be simplified—stripped of its “complex” phonetic rules to make the Qurʾān more “accessible” to the masses.

- **Abolishing Complex Tajwīd Rules:** Secular reformists in Egypt argued that the *ghunnah* (nasalisation), *idghām* (assimilation), and *madd* (elongation) rules of Tajwīd made Qurʾanic recitation unnecessarily difficult. They pushed for a more monotone, phonetically “flat” recitation, which would have made it easier for casual learners—but at the cost of erasing the unique phonetic depth of the Qurʾān.
- **State-Approved Recitation Models:** Some Egyptian reformers proposed a new phonetic model for Qurʾanic recitation, where certain emphatic letters were softened, removing the distinction between heavy and light articulation. This would have turned Qurʾanic recitation into something closer to everyday spoken Arabic, stripping it of the divine cadence that had been preserved for centuries.

- **The Push for “Regionalised” Recitation:** Some modernist scholars suggested that Egyptians should recite the Qur’ān in an “Egyptianised” phonetic form, adjusting pronunciations to match native Egyptian Arabic rather than adhering to the strict rules of Tajwīd.

But Egypt’s *qurrā’* fought back.

And at the forefront of this battle stood Sheikh Maḥmūd Khalīl al-Ḥuṣārī (d. 1980)—the greatest defender of Qur’anic phonetics in the modern era.

- **The Standardisation of Proper Tajwīd:** al-Ḥuṣārī’s recordings of Qur’anic recitation—meticulously pronounced with perfect phonetics—became the global standard for proper Tajwīd, erasing any attempts to introduce phonetic simplifications.
- **al-Azhar’s Reinforcement of Classical Recitation:** Scholars at the al-Azhar University publicly rejected the phonetic simplification movement, insisting that Tajwīd was not an ornament—it was the sacred mechanism of Qur’anic preservation.
- **Public Tajwīd Instruction:** al-Ḥuṣārī’s led nationwide efforts to revive classical Tajwīd, ensuring that even the uneducated could learn the correct phonetics, preserving the Qur’ān’s divine articulation.

By the end of the 20th century, secular phonetic simplification had been decisively crushed. Egypt, far from becoming a centre for phonetic “modernisation,” became the global reference point for the highest standard of Tajwīd recitation.

The Secularists' Failure: Why the Qur'ān's Phonetics Remain Unbroken

The secular reformists believed that by altering the Qur'ān's phonetics, they could sever modern Muslims from their linguistic past. They thought they could weaken the Qur'ān's connection to its original revelation, reshape it into something contemporary, something more malleable, something that fit their vision of a "modern" Muslim identity.

But they underestimated the power of the oral tradition.

For every attempt to simplify or distort Qur'anic phonetics, there were reciters, scholars, and institutions that stood firm, ensuring that the divine articulation remained untouched.

- Atatürk's Latinisation of the Qur'ān collapsed.
- Egypt's phonetic simplification movement was dismantled.
- Traditional Tajwīd remained victorious in both regions.

And so, the secularist attempt to "modernise" Qur'anic pronunciation ended in total failure.

The Qur'ān's phonetics had survived sectarian manipulation, linguistic erosion, colonial attacks, and secular distortions.

And now, only one question remained:

Was there anything left that could challenge the phonetic fortress of revelation?

Why Every Attempt to Change the Qurʾān’s Phonetics Has Failed—and Always Will

Every empire that has rewritten history has done so by rewriting language. The Romans understood it, the colonialists mastered it, the modernists wielded it like a scalpel—shaping nations by shaping the very way people spoke, thought, and remembered. The simplest way to sever a people from their past is to alter their phonetics, to change the sound of their prayers, to rewrite their tongues until they no longer remember how their ancestors once spoke. If a civilisation forgets its original phonetics, it forgets itself.⁴⁸³

Whoever dictates the phonetics of a language dictates its thought. The Qurʾān’s enemies knew this—erasing the text was impossible, so they sought to weaken its sound, to break its articulation, to hollow out its divine cadence until it could be rewritten in whispers. They failed.

But the Qurʾān stands as the unbreakable exception. It is not merely a book of words; it is a book of sound. Its meaning is locked within its recitation, its phonetics are as sacred as its script. It is a text that refuses to be diluted, refuses to be translated into ambiguity, refuses to be reshaped by time, politics, or empire. And every force in history that has tried to alter it has met the same fate: irrelevance, collapse, and total erasure from history.

⁴⁸³ Examples of this are widespread, each one a case study in linguistic erasure, a calculated demolition of phonetic identity carried out over generations. Consider the Philippines. Colonised by the Spanish, its native tongues, once thriving, were systematically strangled. Over centuries, Spanish phonetics infiltrated and consumed the linguistic fabric of the islands. By the time independence arrived, the damage was irreversible. Today, the Philippines does not speak its native tongue—it speaks the language of its conquerors. What was once a distinct phonetic identity was gutted, replaced, overwritten. The native tongues did not fade away naturally. They were engineered into extinction.

Look beyond the Pacific and see the same strategy replicated across Central and South America. From Mexico to Argentina, entire nations once spoke languages alien to Spanish. The Aztecs spoke *Nahuatl*, the Incas *Quechua*, the indigenous tribes of Brazil *Tupi-Guarani*. Today? These languages exist only as artifacts, echoes of a past deliberately buried. Spanish reigns supreme—not by chance, not by organic linguistic evolution, but by systematic colonial design. The Spanish Crown understood that to rule absolutely, it had to eradicate native phonetics, to replace the very sound of a people’s identity with the sounds of their subjugators.

Only one country resisted—Paraguay. There, against all odds, the native tongue of Guarani still breathes. Though Spanish dominates government and education, Guarani survives, spoken in homes, in markets, in the streets. It is a rare anomaly, a nation that did not fully surrender its phonetic heritage. But even here, the battle was not without casualties. Spanish remains the dominant force, encroaching with each generation, threatening to do what it has done to the rest of the continent—to silence the last traces of indigenous phonetics and leave behind only the echoes of its own colonial tongue.

This is the unspoken truth of linguistic erasure: it does not happen overnight. It is not a war fought with guns and cannons, but with slow, methodical erosion—substituting phonetics, infiltrating tongues, dissolving identities. And when the process is complete, the conquered do not even realise what they have lost. They simply wake up one day speaking the language of their oppressors, unable to recall the sound of their own forefathers’ speech.

The Torah was rewritten.⁴⁸⁴ The Bible was retranslated.⁴⁸⁵ Civilisations lost their original scriptures to scribes, kings, and conquerors who replaced one phonetic system

⁴⁸⁴ The Torah has been rewritten, revised, and reconstructed, with its original form lost beyond recovery. The Bible was shaped by councils, edited by rulers, and rewritten to serve theological and political interests. Buddhist and Hindu scriptures suffered from the same flaw—left to fragile oral transmission, only to be distorted when finally recorded. Even the Library of Alexandria, once the pinnacle of knowledge, was reduced to ashes, erasing entire philosophies in a single moment. This was not chance. It was inevitability. Knowledge that is not secured through a forensic system of preservation is already lost before the first word is forgotten.

The Torah: A Text Reconstructed from Fragments (6th century BCE – Present)

The Torah is not the same text that was revealed to Moses. Even within Jewish scholarship, there is full recognition that large portions of the original Torah were lost when the First Temple was destroyed in 586 BCE. The Babylonian conquest scattered the Jewish people, and with them, the textual integrity of their scripture. The Torah is not merely altered—it is reconstructed history, a text pieced together from memory, tradition, and human intervention.

- **The Jewish Talmud:** The Talmud itself concedes the loss. It acknowledges that entire portions of divine law were forgotten—obliterated by war, exile, and the passage of time. Rabbi Abbahu records a striking admission: *“Three thousand halakhot were forgotten during the days of mourning for Moses.”*

What followed was not divine preservation—it was human reconstruction. Othniel, son of Kenaz, is credited with retrieving the lost teachings. *But how much was recovered? How much was permanently erased?* The Talmudic sages do not claim to possess the unbroken Torah of Moses. They recognise the fractures, the gaps, the centuries of oral transmission that reshaped the text over time. Reish Lakish states outright: *“At first, the Torah was forgotten by Israel; Ezra came from Babylon and established it.”* What Ezra “established” was not the Torah in its pure, original form—it was a reconstruction, a version cobbled together after the Babylonian exile. The law had been shattered, and what remained was an attempt at restoration, not preservation.

- **The Documentary Hypothesis:** Modern scholarship does not just suggest that the Torah was altered—it proves it. The Documentary Hypothesis dismantles the illusion of a singular, untouchable revelation.

The Torah is not one text; it is four competing sources that were later woven together:

- ❖ **J (Jahwist)** – A source from Judah, where God is called YHWH, filled with earthly, humanised narratives.
- ❖ **E (Elohist)** – A source from Israel, where God is called Elohim, detached and transcendent.
- ❖ **D (Deuteronomist)** – A later addition, modifying the laws and theological focus.
- ❖ **P (Priestly)** – A source obsessed with rituals, sacrifices, and genealogy, inserted to establish priestly dominance.

These sources (J, E, D, and P) do not align perfectly. They contradict each other, overlap, and sometimes present different versions of the same event. Redactors over centuries fused them together, smoothing over inconsistencies but failing to hide the seams. *The result? A composite text, engineered to appear whole, yet fragmented upon closer scrutiny.*

- **The Dead Sea Scrolls—The Evidence That Destroys the Illusion:** In 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were unearthed in the caves of Qumran—a discovery that shattered centuries of belief in a singular, unaltered Torah. These ancient manuscripts, dating as early as the third century BCE, contained pre-Masoretic versions of biblical texts—versions different from the Torah that exists today. The implications were immediate and devastating. The Masoretic Text, considered the standard Hebrew Bible, was not the sole preserved scripture. Multiple versions of biblical texts had circulated, each carrying variations, omissions, and additions.
 - ❖ **The Great Isaiah Scroll** contained entire verses that differ from the Masoretic version of Isaiah.
 - ❖ **The Book of Samuel in the Dead Sea Scrolls** conflicted with the standard biblical version in both content and structure.
 - ❖ Certain Psalms appeared in an alternate order—a clear sign that the text had not remained fixed over time.

These were not minor spelling errors or scribal mistakes. They were textual fractures that proved a fundamental truth: ***The Torah did not survive history. It was rewritten into history.***

Contrast this with the Qur’an, a revelation that has not suffered reconstruction, revision, or human engineering. Not a single letter has been lost, altered, or reconstructed.

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with another, until nothing remained of their first revelation but ink on a page—mute, lifeless, unable to be recited as it was once spoken. But the Qur'an was never left to paper alone. It was never entrusted to a single scribe, a single nation, or a

Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, 2012. James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, 2012. Ryan Schaffner, *The Bible through a Qur'anic Filter: Scripture Falsification (Tahrif) in 8th- and 9th-Century Muslim Disputational Literature*. The Ohio State University. 2016. Ṭabarī: *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*. For further reading: *The Torah was partially reconstructed from memory, leading to irreconcilable textual variations*. judaism.stackexchange.com

⁴⁸⁵ **The Bible: A Scripture Edited by Rulers, Not Preserved by Revelation (1st century CE – 4th century CE)**

The Bible has never existed in a singular, untouchable form. The versions that exist today are the result of centuries of revisions, debates, and political manipulation.

The Council of Nicaea (325 CE) was not a sacred assembly—it was an imperial tribunal, where doctrine was not discovered but dictated. The Roman Emperor Constantine I (272–337 CE) summoned over 300 bishops, not to preserve scripture but to reshape it in service of the empire. Christianity, fractured by theological disputes, had become a threat to imperial stability. The solution? A single doctrine, a single truth, a single authority. But this truth would not be decided by revelation—it would be constructed by committee.

At the centre of the conflict stood the Arian controversy—a battle over the nature of “Jesus Christ”. Arius (256–336 CE), a priest from Alexandria, declared that Jesus was not eternal, not equal to God, but a created being. His opponents, led by Alexander of Alexandria (d. 328 CE) and his fierce disciple Athanasius (296–373 CE), branded this heresy. *Their position?* Christ was not created—He was of the same divine substance as God Himself. This was no mere theological dispute—it was a power struggle over the very essence of Christianity. If Christ was created, He was subordinate. If He was divine, He was supreme. The future of Christian worship, the structure of church authority, and the foundations of Western religion were at stake.

Constantine, the self-proclaimed defender of the faith, presided over the council not as a theologian, but as a ruler. He had only recently converted to Christianity, yet he was now the empire's ultimate arbiter of doctrine. The assembled bishops debated, argued, and accused each other of heresy, but Constantine's concern was not truth, but unity. A fractured church was a liability. A unified faith was an instrument of rule. And so, he steered the council toward the outcome that best served the empire. Arianism was condemned, the Nicene Creed was established, and orthodoxy was no longer a matter of belief—it was imperial law. But this was only the beginning. The council was not just about defining Christ's nature—it was about controlling scripture itself. The Gospel of Barnabas, which denied Christ's divinity, was suppressed. Other texts, deemed incompatible with the new doctrine, were discarded, erased, and buried in the shadows of history. The Bible did not emerge from Nicaea as a preserved revelation—it was a curated selection, a theological reconstruction designed to align with political objectives. The church had not only defeated Arianism—it had engineered the foundations of Christian scripture.

Even Pope Sylvester I (r. 314–335 CE), the supposed head of Christendom, was largely absent. Too frail to attend, he sent two legates, Vito and Vincentius, whose role was ceremonial, not decisive. The real power lay with Constantine and his chosen bishops, men who understood that scripture could be shaped, doctrine could be legislated, and belief could be manufactured.

Had the Qur'an undergone this same process, it would not exist in its original form today. It would have passed through the hands of rulers, councils, and political elites, each shaping it to serve their agenda. It would have been debated, reworded, and restructured until its divine origin was unrecognisable.

But unlike the Bible, the Qur'an was never subject to the ambitions of emperors. From the first day of its revelation, it was preserved not by councils, but by divine decree, locked into an unbreakable system of oral and written transmission.

No emperor has altered it. No ruler has redefined it. No political body has debated its authenticity. And this is why it remains untouched—the only scripture in history that has never been reconstructed, revised, or politically engineered.

- **The Gospel of Barnabas**, which contradicts the divinity of Jesus, was suppressed and removed.

Over **400,000** textual differences exist among New Testament manuscripts, proving that the Bible was altered over time.

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single institution. It was entrusted to voices, to memory, to the hearts and tongues of an unbroken chain of reciters whose *sanad* stretches back, link by link, breath by breath, to the Prophet ﷺ himself.

Manuscripts burn, empires fall, alphabets are replaced—but an unbroken chain of voices cannot be silenced. The Qur’ān exists outside of paper, outside of ink, carried in the hearts of generations who recite it exactly as it was revealed, immune to distortion, impervious to time.

You can corrupt a text that is preserved in ink. You cannot corrupt a text that is preserved in a billion living, breathing voices. Every language in human history has evolved, phonetics shifting over centuries until a modern speaker can no longer understand the pronunciation of his ancestors. But the Qur’ān has not changed. A South African child recites it the same way as a scholar from Medina. An elderly *imām* in Cairo chants it with the same phonetics as a young boy in Bangladesh. The tongue of revelation is not regionalised, not diluted, not lost in the evolution of dialects—it remains, against all linguistic precedent, utterly unaltered.

This is why every attempt to change it has failed with mathematical precision. The Mu‘tazilites, in their arrogance, believed they could soften Qur’anic phonetics to erase its divine attributes, as if adjusting the sound could adjust the meaning. They were crushed before their movement could gain ground.

The colonialists Latinised the script to sever it from its origins—now their alphabets decay while the Qur’ān’s phonetics remain.

Secularists tried to modernise its sounds—modernity itself is already outdated, while the Qur’ān’s recitation is still untouched. The Persian and Ottoman reciters, with all their linguistic struggles, found their tongues corrected before their phonetic modifications could take hold.

The British and French colonisers, armed with entire bureaucracies dedicated to rewriting Islamic education, found themselves powerless against a single Qur’anic institute where a child, sitting in the dirt, could recite a revelation they could never distort.

Atatürk, a man who forced an entire nation to abandon its alphabet, who bent history to his will, who reshaped Turkish identity with dictatorial precision, could not even alter a single phoneme of the Qurʾān.

The British reshaped half the world but could not shift a single recited syllable. The French obliterated North Africa's Arabic institutions but could not erase a single letter from Tajwīd.

The Qurʾān has witnessed entire civilisations rise and collapse around it, remaining exactly as it was, unchanged while those who opposed it have turned to dust.

It is a paradox that has repeated itself over and over again. Empires collapse, but the Qurʾān remains. Governments rewrite history, but the Qurʾān's phonetics do not shift.

Every secularist, every modernist, every colonial official who has tried to change its sound has disappeared into the obscurity of the past, while the Qurʾān is still recited in the exact same tone, cadence, and breath as it was fourteen centuries ago.

This is not just a book. It is the only text in human history that was never meant to be left to human preservation alone. It carries with it a divine certainty, a guarantee that exists outside of time, a preservation that is not a theory but an observable fact—a fact that has survived invasions, betrayals, genocides, empires, and the rise and fall of entire civilisations.

Every challenger of Qurʾānic phonetics has met the same fate: irrelevance, decay, disappearance into the background noise of history. They came with power, they came with strategy, they came with force—and yet, the Qurʾān's phonetics remain untouched, pronounced the same way by a billion voices, its cadence unbroken, its rhythm eternal.

Every force that has ever sought to change it, from the palaces of Muʿtazilite Baghdad to the colonial offices of London and Paris, has failed in the face of a single, undeniable truth:

“The Qurʾān does not bend to history. History bends to the Qurʾān.

The mightiest rulers bend reality to their will, but the Qurʾān bends for no one.”—M.R.O

Every force that has ever tried to erase it is now extinct. The Qurʾān has buried its enemies. And it will bury the next ones too.

You can outlaw its recitation, you can burn its pages, you can execute its reciters—but you cannot erase a billion living voices articulating every phoneme and every phonetic syllable exactly as it was revealed.

No text has ever remained unchanged for nearly a thousand five hundred years. That should be impossible. *But the Qurʾān?* It does not follow human logic. It follows divine preservation:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

*“Indeed, it is We who have revealed the Reminder, and indeed, We will preserve it.”*⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ *al-Hijr. 9.*

إجازة الكتاب

الحمد لله رب العالمين ، وأصلي وأسلم على صفوة الأنبياء والمرسلين ، سيّد القراء وإمام المجوّدين ،

محمد بن عبد الله الصادق الأمين ، وعلى آله وأصحابه ومن تبعهم إلى يوم الدين ،

أما بعد : فيقول العبد الفقير إلى الهادي ، المحتاج إلى رحمة الباري

محمد رياض بن أمّشاد بن إبراهيم بن إسماعيل بن يوسف أبامرّني:

فقد رغب إليّ الأخ الفاضل / رغبته إليّ الأخت الفاضلة:

فقد دَرَسَ / دَرَسْتُ الكتاب: **مَجْمُوعَةُ الرَّسَائِلِ الذَّهَبِيَّةِ فِي مَسَائِلِ الْقُرْآنِيَّةِ** -- فأجزته/ فأجزتها
بالكتاب.

فَدَحُصَّتِ الْأُمَّةُ بِالْإِسْتِادِ وَهِيَ مِنَ الدِّينِ بِلَا تُرْكَادِ

إِلَهُهُ سِثْرًا جَمِيلًا شَامِلًا
مُصَلِّيًا عَلَى الَّذِي هُوَ دَانَا
وَالِهِ وَصَاحِبِهِ الْأَعْيَانِ
بِعَوْنِ رَبِّنَا مَفِيضِ التَّعَمُّنَةِ
نَاطِمَهُ وَأَغْفِرْ لَهُ الْقَبَائِحَ
وَالِهِ وَصَاحِبِهِ الْأُمَاجِدِ

قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ رِيَّاضُ سَائِلًا
حَمْدًا لِمَنْ يَفْضُلُهُ وَالْآنَا
مُحَمَّدٍ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْقُرْآنِ
أَلَا هُنَّ تَمَامُ الشُّحْفَةِ
فَاقْبَلْهُ يَا إِلَهَنَا وَسَامِعِ
وَصَلِّ دَائِمًا عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

وقال محمد مرياض بن أمشاد:

عَلَيَّ أَنَّهُ تَبَقَى وَتَفَنَى أَنَامِلِي
لِكَاتِبَيْهَا الْمَدْفُونُونَ تَحْتَ الْجَنَادِلِ

سَتَبَقَى خُطُوبِي مُدَّةَ بَعْدِ مَوْتِي
فَيَا نَاطِرًا فِيهَا سَلِ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً