

Al-Falaq and al-Nās¹²⁹

No difference

THE DEVELOPMENT OF *QIRĀ'ĀT* BEFORE AND DURING THE ERA OF IMAM IBN 'ĀMIR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the first research objective. It begins with a discourse on the meaning of the seven *ahruf*, their differences from the seven *qirā'āt*, and their interpretation by scholars of the Qur'ān. It then continues with the historical

¹²⁹ Ibn Mujāhid, Abū Bakr. 1980. *Kitāb al-Sab'ah fī al-Qirā'āt*. Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif.

Ibn al-Jazariyy, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. n.d. *Al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. Ibn al-Jazariyy, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. 1999. *Munjid al-Muqri'in wa Murshid al-Ṭālibin*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

development of *qirā'āt* before Ibn 'Āmir, that is, the eras of the Prophet, Righteous Caliphs, and companions. The discussion then moves to Ibn 'Āmir's time, where the number of reciters in every province of the Islamic state had mushroomed and the concept of *ikhtiyār* began emerging. This section is followed by a summary of the chapter.

4.2 The Meaning of the Seven *Aḥruf* and their Differences from Seven *Qirā'āt*

The Qur'ān has allowed, since its revelation, several equally valid ways of recitations. Several hadiths, which are often quoted in support of this practice, will be discussed here to reveal how and why *Qirā'āt* exist and their implications on the Qur'ān.

The following hadith is a good indication of the existence of these *hurūf*. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Jibrīl ﷺ recited the Qur'ān to me in one *ḥarf*. Then I requested him (to read it in another *ḥarf*) and continued doing so until he ultimately recited it in seven *aḥruf*."¹³⁰

Various hadiths indicated the incidence of arguments and disagreements amongst the companions ﷺ whenever one of them found another reciting the Qur'ān in a way different from that which he had been taught. For example, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ narrated:

"I heard Hishām ibn Hākīm reciting al-Furqān during the life time of the Prophet ﷺ and I noticed that he recited in a way that the Prophet ﷺ had not taught me. I was about to jump over him during his prayer, but I controlled my temper. When he had completed his prayer, I put his upper garment around his neck and seized him by it and

¹³⁰Al-Bukhāriyy. 2012. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāriyy*. Juz' 6: pp. 481-482. kitab Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān - bab 'unzil alquran ealaa sbet 'ahraf hadith number 4992

said, ‘Who taught you this *sūrah* that I had heard you recited?’ He said, ‘The Prophet ﷺ taught it to me.’ I said, ‘You have told a lie, the Prophet ﷺ has taught it to me in a different way from yours.’ I dragged him to the Prophet ﷺ and said, ‘I heard this person reciting al-Furqān in a way that you have not taught me!’ On hearing that, the Prophet ﷺ told him to recite, and he listened. Then the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘It was revealed this way,’ and added, ‘Recite, O ‘Umar!’ I recited it as he had taught me. The Prophet ﷺ then said, ‘It was revealed this way. This Qur’ān has been revealed to be recited in seven *aḥruf*, so recite of it in whichever *ḥarf* is easier for you.’”¹³¹

It would appear from this hadith that the purpose of the revelation of the Qur’ān in seven *aḥruf* is to facilitate recitation for Muslims. In fact, there are many hadiths that support this motive, for instance:

1. “The Qur’ān was sent down in seven *aḥruf*, so recite what is easier for you therefrom.”¹³²
2. The Prophet ﷺ met Jibrīl عليه السلام and told him, “I have been sent to an illiterate nation, among them are the old woman, the elderly man, the male and female servants, and the man who has never read a book.” He then replied, “O Muhammad, the Qur’ān has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*.”¹³³
3. “Verily, this Qur’ān has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*, so recite at liberty.”¹³⁴

¹³¹Al-Bukhāriyy. 2012. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāriyy*. Juz’ 6: pp. 482-483 kitab Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān - bab ‘unzil alquran ealaa sbet ‘ahraf hadith number 4991; al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 1: pp. 24-25.

¹³²ibid.

¹³³Al-Tirmidhiyy, Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā. 2016. *Sunan al-Tirmidhiyy*. Madīnah al-Naṣr: Dār al-Ta’šīl. Juz’ 19: p. 63. Al-Tirmidhiyy commented that it is a good and sound hadith; al-Baghāwiyy, al-Ḥusayn ibn Mās’ūd. 1983. *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*. Dimashq: al-Maktab al-Islāmiyy. Juz’ 4: p. 508; al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 1: p. 35.

¹³⁴Al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 1: p. 46.

4. Jibrīl ؑ came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “Allah has commanded you to recite to your people the Quran in one *ḥarf*.” Upon this he said, “I ask for Allah’s pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it.”¹³⁵
5. “Make things easy for my people,” or, “Make affairs easy for my people.”¹³⁶
6. Many commentators point out that it was very difficult for the illiterate Arabs, whose dialects were diverse, to abandon their own dialects and ways of recitation all at once. Consequently, they tried to cling strongly to their dialects.¹³⁷

The permission to recite the Quran in seven *ahruf* was given after the migration of the Prophet ﷺ. This is clearly indicated in a hadith narrated by Ubayy ibn Ka’b ؓ. He reported that the Prophet ﷺ was near the watering place of *Banū Ghifār*¹³⁸ when Jibrīl ؑ came to him and said, “Allah has commanded you to recite to your people the Quran in one *ḥarf*. Upon this, he said, “I ask from Allah pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it.” Jibrīl then returned for a second time and said, “Allah has commanded you that you should recite the Quran to your people in two *ahruf*. Upon this he again said, “I seek pardon and forgiveness from Allah, but my people would not be able to do so.” He came for a third time and said, “Allah has commanded you to recite the Quran to your people in three *ahruf*.” Upon this he said, “I ask pardon and forgiveness from Allah. My people would not be able to do it.” He then came to him for a fourth time and said, “Allah has commanded you to recite the

¹³⁵Muslim. 2014. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Juz’ 2: p. 391.

¹³⁶ibid. p. 390.

¹³⁷Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 136; al-‘Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Fath al-Bārī*. Juz’ 10, p. 22; Ibn al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: p. 22.

¹³⁸*Ghifār* is one of the historical tribes in Arabia. Among them were the companions Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and Umaymah bint Qays al-Ghifāriyah. They lived in Makkah and Madinah.

Quran to your people in seven *aḥruf*, and in whichever they would recite, they would be right.”¹³⁹

However, this does not mean that the seven *aḥruf* were only included in the part of the Quran revealed after the migration of the Prophet ﷺ. This is evinced by the previously mentioned argument between ‘Umar ؓ and Hishām ؓ surrounding *sūrah* al-Furqān, which was revealed in Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ found such arguments to be unacceptable, and he would become angry whenever the companions did so. He therefore forbade his companions from disputing about this matter, “Verily, this Qur’ān has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*; in any *ḥarf* you recite, you are correct. So do not argue as this may lead to *kufr*.”¹⁴⁰

The hadiths about the revelation of the Qur’ān in seven *āḥruf* are so copious that Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām considered them to be *mutawātir*.¹⁴¹ Al-Suyūṭī counted 20 names of the companions ؓ who narrated these *aḥādīth*.¹⁴² This fact is supported by another hadith, where ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ asked whether those companions who were present at the Madīnah mosque had ever heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, “The Qur’ān has been revealed to be recited in seven *aḥruf*.” In response, a great number of them stood up and testified that they had heard this hadith. Consequently, ‘Uthmān ؓ himself testified with them, further strengthening the hadith.¹⁴³

¹³⁹Muslim. 2014. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Juz’ 2: p. 391; al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 1: p. 40.

¹⁴⁰Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. 1998. *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. Riyād: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyyah. Juz’ 4: pp. 169-170; al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 1: p. 44; al-‘Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Fath al-Bārī*. Juz’ 9: p. 21; Ibn Kathīr, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar. 1996. *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*. Al-Qāhirah: Maktabah Ibn Taymiyyah. p. 65.

¹⁴¹Ibn al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: p. 21; al-Suyūṭīyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 78.

¹⁴²Al-Suyūṭīyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 131. Al-Suyūṭīyy studied the work of Ibn al-Jazariyy and added another two to the nineteen that the latter had already collected. See Ibn al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: p. 21.

¹⁴³Ibn al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: p. 21. Ibn al-Jazariyy stated that this hadith was related by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ya‘lā in his book *al-Musnad al-Kabīr*; al-Suyūṭīyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 131.

Since it is established that all these *aḥruf* are correct and authentic, there is little point in disputing over them. Therefore, it is forbidden to argue about the authenticity of this subject. It is also not permitted to favor one *ḥarf* over the other, as they are all sound and, as the Prophet stated, “It has been revealed this way.”¹⁴⁴

4.2.1 The Meaning of *Aḥruf* in Arabic

The word *aḥruf* is the plural of *ḥarf*. It has several meanings in the Arabic lexicon:

1. The extremity, verge, border, margin, brink, brow, side, or edge of anything, as, for instance, the side of a river and of a ship or boat.¹⁴⁵
2. A letter of the alphabet, the letters being thus called because they are the extremities of the word and the syllable.¹⁴⁶
3. As a grammatical term, it means a particle i.e. what is used to express a meaning and is neither a noun nor a verb.¹⁴⁷
4. Mode, manner, or way, as, for instance, in reciting the Qur’ān according to seven modes or manners of reading.¹⁴⁸
5. A dialect, an idiom, or mode of expression peculiar to certain Arabs. Accordingly, the hadith, “The Qur’ān has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*,” would mean, “The Qur’ān has been revealed in seven dialects of the Arabs.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴Al-Bukhāriyy. 2012. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārīyy*. Juz’ 6: p. 482: kitab Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān - bab ‘unzil alquran ealaa sbet ‘aḥraf hadith number 4991al- Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Faḥ al-Bārī*. Juz’ 9: p. 26.

¹⁴⁵Al-Fayrūzābādiyy, Muḥammad ibn Ya’qūb. 2005. *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*. Juz’ 3: p. 130.

¹⁴⁶Ibn Manzūr, Muḥammad ibn Mukarram. 2010. *Lisān al-‘Arab*. Kuwait: Dār al-Nawādir. Juz’ 9: pp. 41-42.

¹⁴⁷ibid. Juz’ 9: p. 41.

¹⁴⁸ibid.

¹⁴⁹Al-Fayrūzābādiyy. 2005. *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*. Juz’ 3: p. 131; Ibn Manzūr. 2010. *Lisān al-‘Arab*. Juz’ 9: p. 41. This interpretation is attributed to Abū ‘Ubayd, Abū al-‘Abbās, and al-Azhariyy; it is regarded

4.2.2 The Meaning of the Seven *Aḥruf* in the *Hadith*

Scholars have presented many interpretations to clarify the exact meaning of the *aḥruf* mentioned in the hadith. All these views will be discussed here, and the meaning will then be established based on available evidence. However, it is first imperative to discuss the meaning of “seven”: is it literal or metaphorical? There are at least two broad views regarding this matter.

Firstly, a group of scholars opine that the number seven mentioned in the hadith is not intended as an exact number, but rather as a symbolic term suggesting a number less than ten¹⁵⁰ or implying numerousness and facilitation.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the number seven signifies the numerousness in the units, just as 70 denotes numerousness in the tens and 700 in the hundreds. For example, the Qur’ān says, “The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: its growth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains,”¹⁵² and, “Whether thou ask for their forgiveness, or not, (their sin is unforgivable): if thou ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them.”¹⁵³ Moreover, there is also a hadith that says, “Every (good) deed the Son of Adam does will be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward.”¹⁵⁴

as the best interpretation by Ibn al-Athīr. See: Ibn al-Athīr, al-Mubārak ibn Muḥammad. 2000. *Al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Aḥar*. Al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Jawziyy. Juz’ 1: p. 369.

¹⁵⁰Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 131; al-Zarkashiyy, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh. 2006. *Al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*. Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Hadith. Juz’ 1: p. 212.

¹⁵¹Al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: pp. 25-26.

¹⁵²Al-Qur’ān. Al-Baqarah 2:261. (All Quranic translations in this writing are based on Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. 1989. *The Holy Qur’an, Text, Translation and Commentary*. Maryland: Amana Corporation. Translations from other sources will be cited accordingly).

¹⁵³Al-Qur’ān. Al-Tawbah 9:80.

¹⁵⁴Muslim. 2014. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Juz’ 2: p. 480.

Secondly, the majority of scholars maintain that the seven in the hadith means precisely the odd number seven that arithmetically follows the number six and precedes eight. They support their argument with the following verses, the numbers in which are meant to be exact, neither more nor less, “Some say they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; others say they were five, the dog being the sixth, doubtfully guessing at the unknown; yet others say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. Say thou, ‘My Lord knows best their number.’”¹⁵⁵

During the time of the Prophet, there was dispute regarding the precise number of the seven sleepers. Some Najrān Christians claimed that they were three, the fourth being the dog, while others said that they were five, their dog the sixth. Both were nonetheless mere random guesses based on nothing but supposition, as they were not present among them. This is evinced by the phrase “doubtfully guessing at the unknown”, which is attached to both assertions. It is in the accusative because it functions as a *maf'ūl li-ajlih* (accusative of purpose), signifying that the Christians claimed the two numbers based on mere supposition.

On the other hand, the believers said, “Seven, the dog being the eighth.” The sentence is part of the subject clause (*mubtada'*), whose predicate (*khobar*) is the adjectival qualification of *sab'a* (seven), namely *thāminuhum* (being the eighth), with an additional *wāw* to emphasize or indicate that the adjective is semantically attached to that which it is qualifying. The qualification of the first two sayings as being random, but not the third, is proof that the latter is the correct number, “Say thou, ‘My Lord

¹⁵⁵Al-Qur'ān. Al-Kahf 18:22.

knows best their number; it is but few that know their (real case).” Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said, “I am one of these ‘few’,” and he mentioned that they were seven.

The Qur’ān also says, “To it are seven gates: for each of those gates is a (special) class (of sinners) assigned.”¹⁵⁶ The number of gates is clearly defined in the verse, and it cannot assume any other meaning. Moreover, the hadith itself makes clear in various versions that the number seven is intended to be the exact number, neither more nor less, “And he recited it in other *ahruf*, until he ultimately recited it in seven *ahruf*.”¹⁵⁷

4.2.3 The Interpretation of Seven *Ahruf*

While the majority has agreed on the meaning of “seven”, they still differ on the interpretation of seven *ahruf*, since, as seen above, *harf* is a polyseme whose meaning can only be determined by context.¹⁵⁸ However, the context of the hadiths under discussion allows for more than one interpretation, and as a result there are differing interpretations of the hadiths as a whole.¹⁵⁹ These differing opinions, nonetheless, are repetitive and overlapping. Ibn Hibbān listed 35 of them,¹⁶⁰ while al-Suyūṭiyy claimed that there were about 40, although he did not quote all of them.¹⁶¹ These opinions are summarized below.

First, they are ambiguous, and their meaning cannot be known with certainty, as the word *harf* has different meanings: a letter of the alphabet, a word, a meaning, or a

¹⁵⁶Al-Qur’ān. Al-Hijr 15:44.

¹⁵⁷Al-Bukhāriyy. 2012. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāriyy*. Juz’ 6: p. 482.

¹⁵⁸Al-Zarqāniyy. 1943. *Manāhil al-‘Irfān*. Juz’ 1: p. 146.

¹⁵⁹Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*. Juz’ 1: p. 212.

¹⁶⁰Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: pp. 173-176; al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz’ 1: p. 212. Ibn Hibbān himself said, “These sayings resemble one another, all of them plausible. Similarly, other interpretations are also plausible.”

¹⁶¹Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: pp. 131-141.

way.¹⁶² In contrast, the meaning of some polysemes, like *‘ain* (عين), can easily be discerned from the context of the sentence.¹⁶³

Second, they may mean ways of pronunciation,¹⁶⁴ though this interpretation has been objected, since only a few words in the Quran can be read in seven ways, such as the word *uff* (أف). Even if one argues that some words can be read in one, two, three, or seven ways, there are still many words that can be read in more than seven ways.¹⁶⁵ Al-Ṭabariyy opposed this view and considered it the weakest.¹⁶⁶ However, the seven *aḥruf*, if the meaning of the word is to be taken this way, must not be regarded as being in any way connected with the seven *qirā’āt* collected for the first time by Ibn Mujāhid. These *qirā’āt*, in fact, did not exist during the lifetime of the Prophet or even in the first century.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, scholars of Qur’ānic sciences used to collect numerous *qirā’āt*, and many more *qirā’āt* than the seven of Ibn Mujāhid existed. The first scholar known to have collected readings in written form was Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, who compiled 25 recitations. Later, al-Ṭabariyy wrote *al-Jāmi‘ fī al-Qirā’āt*, which contained more than 20 recitations. This work is no longer extant, but much of the material had been included into his *Tafsīr*. Many scholars did not agree with Ibn Mujāhid’s attempt to limit the number of *qirā’āt* to seven for the precise reason that the following generations might consider them synonymous with the seven *aḥruf* mentioned by the hadīth. Indeed, a famous scholar in *qirā’āt*, Abū Shāmah, was quoted

¹⁶² Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz’ 1: p. 213; al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 131.

¹⁶³ If one says: شربت من العين ونظرت بالعين, the first *‘ain* means spring while the second water. This is made clear by the use of “I have drunk” in the first sentence and “I have seen” in the second. See al-Zarqāniyy. 1943. *Manāhil al-‘Irfān*. Juz’ 1: p. 165.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz’ 1: p. 213.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz’ 1: p. 213; al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 132.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Juz’ 1: p. 213.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*, Juz’ 1: p. 34.

as saying, “No one but the ignorant thinks that these seven *qirā’āt* are what is meant by the hadith.”¹⁶⁸

Third, seven *aḥruf* mean seven kinds of meanings. Those who subscribe to this opinion differ in their interpretations. Some say, for example, that it refers to command and prohibition, *muḥkam* (decisive verses) and *mutashābih* (ambiguous verses), and *amthāl* (parables).¹⁶⁹ A hadith related by Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī supports this view, “The Qur’ān has been revealed from seven doors in seven *aḥruf*: deterring and commanding, halal and haram, *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*, and *amthāl*.”¹⁷⁰ It is permissible to recite a verse with several *qirā’āt*, but not in a way that leads to contradiction, as would be the case with halal and haram.¹⁷¹

Fourth, seven ways of recitation in the form of synonyms, like saying, ‘*ta’āl* (تعال), *aqbil* (أقبل), *halumma* (هلم), *idhhab* (إذهب), or *isri* (اسر), all of which are synonymous. Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah, al-Ṭabariyy, and al-Ṭahāwiyy adopted this opinion based on a hadith narrated by Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه that Jibrīl عليه السلام came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and said, “O Muhammad, recite the Quran in one *ḥarf*.” Mikā’īl عليه السلام then said, “Ask for more,” until he reached seven *aḥruf*, each effective and sufficient, providing a verse of punishment is not ended with mercy or a verse of mercy with punishment.¹⁷²

Fifth, seven dialects of the Arabs. Certainly, there are more than seven Arabic dialects, but the supporters¹⁷³ of this view maintain that the seven *aḥruf* mean the seven

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*

¹⁶⁹ *ibid*. Juz’ 1: p. 138.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Ḥākim, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh. 2014. *Al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*. Madīnah Naṣr: Dār al-Ta’ṣīl. p. 2031; al-‘Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*. Juz’ 19: p. 35.

¹⁷¹ Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 234.

¹⁷² Al-Ṭahāwiyy, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. 1994. *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Risālah. Juz’ 8: p. 126.

¹⁷³ For example, Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, Tha’lab, al-Sijistāniyy, al-Qādiyy Abū Bakr, al-Azhariyy, al-Bāqillāniyy, and Ibn ‘Aṭiyyah.

most eloquent dialects.¹⁷⁴ The Arabs, with their diverse dialects, were allowed to recite the Qur'ān according to their own. They were not ordained or even asked to abandon their own dialects in favor of that of the *Quraysh* for three reasons: it was difficult to do so; people clung strongly to their dialects; and above all, for the sake of facilitating the recitation and understanding of the Qur'ān.¹⁷⁵

Sixth, seven varieties in the readings. The first scholar to make this suggestion was Ibn Qutaybah, and this opinion was followed by the succeeding generation with little or no modification. Ibn Qutaybah stated that he had studied the *qirā'āt* and found them to be different in seven ways:¹⁷⁶

1. A difference in the *i' rāb* (vowel marks) and *i' jān* (diacritical points) of a word that does not alter its consonantal outline in the orthography or its meaning.
2. A difference in the *i' rāb* and *i' jān* of a word that alters the meaning of the word but not its consonantal outline.
3. A difference in the recitation of a word but not in its *i' rāb* that alters its meaning but not its consonantal outline.
4. A difference in the word that alters the consonantal outline but not its meaning.
5. A difference in the word that alters both the consonantal outline and its meaning.
6. Different word order.
7. A difference in letters or clitics.

¹⁷⁴Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz' 1: p. 217-218; al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz' 1: p. 169.

¹⁷⁵Al-Jaziriyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz' 1: p. 22; al-'Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Fath al-Bārī*. Juz' 9: p. 22.

¹⁷⁶Al-Jaziriyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz' 1: p. 27.

4.2.4 Al-Ṭabariyy's Interpretation of the *Hurūf*

Among the topics discussed by al-Ṭabariyy in the introduction of his *al-Bayān* are the Arabic dialects in which the Qur'ān was revealed in. He wrote, "If we have managed to prove that the language of the Qur'an is entirely in Arabic, then in which of the Arabic dialects (*hurūf*) was the Qur'ān revealed in? In all of them, or in one of them?"¹⁷⁷

Dealing with this question, al-Ṭabariyy first observed that although the Arabs share a common name, their ways of expression and manners of speaking are different. This being the case; and since God has informed His servants that He made the Qur'ān Arabic and that He had sent it down in a clear Arabic tongue; and since this statement carries a general meaning (i.e. no specific dialect is mentioned); then the only way to know whether God intended a particular or general meaning for the verse is through the person to whom the proper explanation of the Qur'an was accorded: the Apostle of Allah.¹⁷⁸ It is evident here and many places elsewhere that al-Ṭabariyy accorded great importance to the hadith transmitted from the Prophet. Al-Ṭabariyy quoted several Prophetic narrations which indicate that the Qur'ān was sent down in seven dialects. It will be sufficient to mention the following hadith, in which the Prophet said, "The Qur'ān was revealed in seven *hurūf*. Whichever you recite of them, you would be correct."

Eventually, al-Ṭabariyy argued that the seven *hurūf* are seven dialectical readings for a single expression or a single word, that is, words with different verbalizations but identical meaning, like *halumma*, *aqbil*, *ta'ālā*, *iliyya*, *qaṣdī*, *naḥwī*,

¹⁷⁷Al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi' al-Bayān*. Juz' 1: p. 21.

¹⁷⁸Al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi' al-Bayān*. Juz' 1: p. 21.

qurbī (all of them mean come), and so forth. Then, al-Ṭabariyy raised a possible objection to imply the improbability of this interpretation, “In which verses of the Book of God do we find a single expression recited in seven dialects with different verbalizations but with the same meaning?” Al-Ṭabariyy replied, “We do not claim that they are in existence at the present time, only that it has been reported to us that the meaning of what the Prophet said is as the traditions have explained, and this is what we have described. What we claim is not contrary to this for the reason we have already explained.” This led him to issue another hypothetical protest. “What,” one might query, “has happened to the other six *hurūf* no longer in existence, if the Messenger of God did indeed teach and ordain his companions to recite them, and God did send them down to His Prophet? Were they abrogated and rescinded? If so, what is the proof of this assertion? Or has the *ummah* forgotten them? But this would imply that they had caused the vanishing of something which they had been commanded to preserve. How can this be explained?” Al-Ṭabariyy’s reply was that the other six *hurūf* have neither been abrogated nor rescinded, nor did the *ummah*, commanded to preserve the revelation, has caused them to vanish. The *ummah* is commanded to preserve the Qur’ān, and Muslims are allowed to recite and preserve it in whichever of these seven *hurūf* they preferred, just as they may choose from three expiations when they break an oath: manumission of a slave, feeding the poor, or clothing the poor. Therefore, by carrying out any one of those three options, he will have fulfilled God’s ruling and discharged his duty towards God concerning his misdeed. In the same way, al-Ṭabariyy asserted, the *ummah* is ordained to preserve the Qur’an and its recitation, and Muslims are permitted to recite it in any of the seven *hurūf* that they preferred. In fact, they might decide, for practical reasons, to recite it according to a single *ḥarf* and discard the idea of reciting it according

to the remaining six *hurūf*, although they do not forbid people from reciting the Qur'an according to one or all of the permitted *hurūf*.¹⁷⁹

4.3 The Development of the Seven *Qirā'āt* before Imam Ibn 'Āmir

4.3.1 The First Phase: Era of the Prophet

The aim of the prophecy is to guide and teach people. The message of the Apostle of Allah as the last of the prophets concludes all divine messages, and the delivery of this message to mankind requires proselytization and education. The Prophet ﷺ was the first teacher of this *ummah*. He taught them the Qur'ān and its recitation and explained to them its laws, traditions, and etiquettes. Allah said, "It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom."¹⁸⁰ He also said, "Recite what is sent of the Book,"¹⁸¹ and, "(It is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages."¹⁸²

Reciting the Qur'ān was the first thing that the Prophet ﷺ commanded to anyone who embraced Islam. 'Alām al-dīn al-Sakhāwiyy said, "The Prophet ﷺ used to order a newly convert to recite the Qur'ān above all." He bore the responsibility of teaching what had been revealed to him to his companions, and he discoursed with them about the revealed Qur'ānic verses. He also taught the Qur'ān and religious duties to those who embraced the religion. Houses in the first era of the prophecy were turned into

¹⁷⁹Al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi' al-Bayān*. Juz' 1: p. 21.

¹⁸⁰Al-Qur'ān. Al-Jumu'ah 62:2.

¹⁸¹Al-Qur'ān. Al-'Ankabūt 29:45.

¹⁸²Al-Qur'ān. Al-Isrā' 17:106.

places of education, and the house of al-Arqam ibn Abī al-Arqam al-Makhzūmiyy in Makkah was the center for preaching and teaching the al-Qur’ān.¹⁸³

The need to teach the Qur’ān increased with the spread of Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ was unable to teach all those who embraced the religion, especially those living in villages and deserts outside Madinah. This task was instead entrusted to a few companions ﷺ who were distinguished in the memorization and recitation of the Qur’ān. The Prophet ﷺ used to send teachers to those distant Muslims. If a man converted to Islam, the Prophet ﷺ would say, “Help your brother to understand his religion. Recite and teach him the Qur’ān.”¹⁸⁴ Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, a scholar of Qur’ān from the companions, recalled, “The Prophet was busy, so if a *Muhājir* comes to the Prophet, he would send him to one of us to teach him the Qur’ān. The prophet ﷺ sent a man to stay at my home. I dined him with my family, and I helped him recite the Qur’ān.”¹⁸⁵ Ubayy ibn Ka’b ﷺ was one of the jurists of the companions ﷺ and the best reciter of Qur’ān, as declared by the Prophet ﷺ.¹⁸⁶ When delegations of Arab tribes came to Madinah after the conquest of Makkah, Ubayy ibn Ka’b ﷺ taught them the Qur’ān. A few narrations reported that delegations from Bahrain, *Banū Ḥanīfah*, and *Banū Ghāmid* learned the Qur’ān from Ubayy ﷺ.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³See: Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Yūsuf ibn ‘Abdillāh. 1992. *Al-Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifah al-Aṣḥāb*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Jayl. Juz’ 1: p. 131.

¹⁸⁴Al-Ṭabariyy, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr. 1967. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabariyy*. Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma‘ārif. Juz’ 2: p. 474.

¹⁸⁵Al-Sā‘ātiyy, Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. 2004. *Al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī li Tartīb Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybāniyy*. Riyāḍ: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyyah. Juz’ 18: p. 9. Al-Sā‘ātiyy said that the hadith was also documented by Abū Dawūd and Ibn Majah in their respective *Sunan*, as well as al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*. He commented, “This is an authentic hadith documented by them and endorsed by al-Dhahabiyy.

¹⁸⁶See: Ibn Sa’d, Muḥammad. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Al-Qāhirah: Maktabah al-Khānijiyy. Juz’ 2: p. 341; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. 1992. *Al-Istī‘āb*. Juz’ 1: p. 66.

¹⁸⁷See: Ibn Sa’d. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz’ 1: p. 336, 345 and Juz’ 5: p. 557.

The first teacher sent by the Prophet ﷺ to teach the Qur'ān was Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr ؓ. He was sent to Madinah before the *hijrah* and after the second *'aqabah*. He helped them to recite the Qur'ān and understand the religion, and he was known as a reciter and teacher of the Qur'ān.¹⁸⁸

Mu'ādh ibn Jabal al-Anṣāriyy ؓ was a jurist and Qur'ān scholar from the companions ؓ. Ibn Sa'd wrote that the Prophet ﷺ, as he made way to Ṭā'if, placed Mu'ādh ibn Jabal in Makkah to teach its people the religion and Qur'ān.¹⁸⁹ After the Yemenis embraced Islam, the Prophet ﷺ sent him there to teach the Qur'ān and the laws of Islam. He also sent Abū Mūsā al-Ash'āriyy ؓ to other parts of Yemen for the same purpose.

Consequently, a few companions ؓ during the times of the Prophet became famous for their reliable memorization and proficient recitation of the Qur'ān. The Prophet ﷺ urged other companions ؓ to learn the Qur'ān from them, "Learn the Qur'ān from four: 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, Sālim Mawlā Abū Ḥudhayfah, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b."¹⁹⁰ Some of them maintained their roles as teachers of the Qur'ān after the passing of the Prophet.

4.3.2 The Second Phase: Era of the Righteous Caliphs

The Prophet ﷺ placed great attention to teaching the recitation of the Qur'ān to Muslims. His efforts were continued by the Righteous Caliphs ؓ after him, as various

¹⁸⁸Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik. 2009. *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*. Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Ḥazm. p. 434; al-'Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*. Juz' 8: p. 699; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. 1992. *Al-Istī'āb*. Juz' 4: p. 1473.

¹⁸⁹Ibn Sa'd. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz' 2: p. 348; al-Khuzā'iyy, 'Alī ibn Aḥmad. 1985. *Takhrīj al-Dalālat al-Sam'iyyah*. Bayrūt: Dār al-'Arab al-Islāmiyy. p. 81.

¹⁹⁰Al-'Asqalāniyy. 2013. *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*. Juz' 9: p. 46; al-Tirmidhiyy. 2016. *Sunan al-Tirmidhiyy*. Juz' 5: p. 632.

historical events would testify. The Qur’ān was compiled into a *muṣḥaf* after the death of many Qur’ān reciters in the battle of *al-Yamāmah* during the rule of Abū Bakr ﷺ. Following vast conquests under the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ, the need to teach the Qur’ān had doubled. ‘Umar ﷺ endeavored to meet the demands of Muslims in the new regions by appointing governors who could teach them. He said in one of his speeches, “O God, I swear on Your Name on the governors of the provinces, that I have sent them to teach people their religion and the *sunnah* of their Prophet ﷺ.”¹⁹¹ He appointed Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘āriyy ﷺ as a governor of Basra¹⁹² to teach its people the Qur’ān.¹⁹³

‘Umar ﷺ sent ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ﷺ to Kufa. He wrote to the Kufans, “I have sent you ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir as a governor and ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd as a teacher and minister. Both are noble companions of the Prophet ﷺ and participants of the battle of *Badr*, so take them as role models and obey their words. I have preferred ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd to be with you above myself.”¹⁹⁴ ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ taught the Qur’ān at the mosque, as his student Masrūq ibn al-Ajda‘ recalled, “‘Abdullāh made us recite the Qur’ān in the mosque, after which we would sit and correct other people’s readings.”¹⁹⁵ Ibn Mujāhid commented, “The people of Kufa used to learn the *qirā’ah* of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ because ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ had sent him to teach them.”

The governors of the provinces also paid great attention to this matter. After the conquest of *al-Shām* (the Levante), Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān, its governor, wrote a letter

¹⁹¹ Al-Ṭabariyy. 1967. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabariyy*. Juz’ 4: p. 204.

¹⁹² Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. 1992. *Al-Isṭī‘āb*. Juz’ 3: p. 1763.

¹⁹³ Ibn Sa‘d. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz’ 2: p. 345.

¹⁹⁴ Ibn Sa‘d. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz’ 6: p. 7, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. 1992. *Al-Isṭī‘āb*. Juz’ 3: p. 992.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Mujahid. 1980. *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*. p. 68; Ibn al-Jazariyy. 2006. *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah*. Juz’ 1: p. 459.

to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, “The people of *al-Shām* have grown and crowded its cities, and they need someone who can teach them the Qur’ān and the religion. O leader of the believers, help me by sending some men to teach them.” ‘Umar ؓ then summoned five companions—Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal, ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, Abū Dardā’, and Abū Ayyūb—and told them, “Your brothers in *al-Shām* have requested my help. They want someone who can teach them the Qur’ān and help them understand the religion. So, help me [to choose] any three of you. If you agree, then draw lots, and if three of you have been selected, let them travel.” They replied, “We do not have to draw lots, for Abū Ayyūb is old and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b ailing.” Mu‘ādh, ‘Ubādah, and Abū al-Dardā’ were then selected. ‘Umar ؓ instructed them, “Start with Homs. There, you will find people reading the Qur’ān in different ways. Among them is someone who can teach. If you find such a person, direct the people to learn from him. If you have become satisfied with their ability, let one of you remain there, while another should go to Damascus and the other to Palestine.” They arrived at Homs and remained there until they were satisfied with the people’s recitation and knowledge. ‘Ubādah then remained, while Abū al-Dardā’ went to Damascus and Mu‘ādh to Palestine. After the latter passed from the plague of Emmaus, ‘Ubādah travelled to Palestine, while Abū al-Dardā’ settled in Damascus until his death.¹⁹⁶

During the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ؓ, the Qur’ān was compiled into a unifying *muṣḥaf*, and its copies were then sent to the provinces, each accompanied by an appointed teacher. Al-Ja‘bariyy reported that ‘Uthmān ؓ ordered Zayd ibn Thābit ؓ to teach *al-Muṣḥaf al-Madaniyy*. He also sent ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Sā’ib with *al-Muṣḥaf al-*

¹⁹⁶Ibn Sa‘d. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz’ 2: p. 356; al-Dhahabiyy, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. 2004. *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*. ‘Ammān: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyyah. Juz’ 2: p. 248.

Makkiyy, Mughīrah ibn Abī Shihāb with *al-Muṣḥaf al-Shāmiyy*, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān with *al-Muṣḥaf al-Kūfiyy*, and ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abd al-Qays with *al-Muṣḥaf al-Baṣriyy*.¹⁹⁷

The efforts of the early companions ﷺ to teach the Qur’ān, and the continuation of these endeavors by other companions and the successors, had formed the largest campaign known to humanity in teaching recitation. As a result, millions of people became attached to the Qur’ān night and day. These efforts had also laid the foundations for schools of *qirā’ah* in the provinces of Islam, especially the five large cities of Makkah, Madinah, Kufa, Basra, and Damascus, where students of the companions ﷺ continued teaching the Qur’ān.

4.3.3 The Third Phase: Emergence of the Features of *Qirā’āt* Schools

The features of *qirā’āt* schools had clearly emerged in the Islamic provinces during the era of the companions ﷺ and successors ﷺ. The etiquettes of learning and reciting the Qur’ān had likewise been established. In the time of the Prophet, preaching must be quick and mobile, capitalizing on all opportunities. Some companions ﷺ taught in homes and mosques, while others move from a country to another. Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal ﷺ, for example, left Madinah and taught in Makkah. He then went to Yemen and returned to Madinah, before once more departing for *al-Shām*. However, the teaching of recitation after the Prophet took the form of organized education, both in location and method. The teachers had also become sedentary, allowing the development from

¹⁹⁷Al-Ja‘bariyy, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar. 2017. *Jamīlah Arbāb al-Marāṣid fī Sharḥ ‘Aqliyyah Atrāb al-Qaṣā’id*. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah: Barnāmij al-Karāsiyy al-Baḥṭhiyyah bi Jāmi‘ah al-Tayyib. p. 67; see also: al-Mārghaniyy, Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad. 2011. *Dalīl al-Ḥayrān ‘alā Mawrid al-Zam’ān fī Rasm wa Dabṭ al-Qur’ān*. Kuwait: Markaz al-Qirā’āt al-Qur’āniyyah. p. 17.

each teacher a school of recitation whose distinctiveness would influence future narrations and teaching of *qirā'āt*.

Abū al-Dardā' رضي الله عنه, judge of Damascus and its master of reciters, used to sit people in groups of ten, each supervised by a teacher, when they came to study after the morning prayer. In total, more than a thousand pupils studied the Qur'ān under him. Abū al-Dardā' used to stand at the prayer niche (*mihrāb*) while observing the groups, and from time to time he would roam around. If someone had mastered the recitation, he would go to Abū Dardā' and recite before him. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Āmir was one of the teachers of the groups, and he succeeded Abū al-Dardā' upon his passing.¹⁹⁸ Abū al-Dardā' was the one who initiated the custom of the *ḥalaqah* (circle) to teach recitation.¹⁹⁹

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'āriyy taught the Qur'ān in the mosque of Basra. He would instruct his pupils to sit in circles and taught them five verses at a time.²⁰⁰

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salmiyy came to Kufa along with the Qur'ān sent by 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه to its people. He would sit in the largest mosque to teach the Qur'ān, and he remained in Kufa for 40 years.²⁰¹ He recited to his pupils 20 verses in the morning and 20 verses in the evening, five verses at a time.²⁰² Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān began with people from the market so as to not impede their livelihood. 'Āṣim followed the same method,²⁰³ while Hamzah began with the erudite knowledge seekers first.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸Al-Sakhāwiyy, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad. 1987. *Jamāl al-Qurrā' wa Kamāl al-Iqrā'*. Makkah al-Mukarramah: Maktabah al-Turāth. Juz' 2: p. 454.

¹⁹⁹Al-Dhahabiyy. 2004. *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*. Juz' 2: p. 249.

²⁰⁰Ibn al-Jazariyy. 2006. *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah*. Juz' 1: p. 604.

²⁰¹Ibn Mujaḥid. 1980. *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*. p. 68.

²⁰²Ibn Sa'd. 2001. *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Juz' 6: p. 172; Al-Dhahabiyy, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. 1998. *Ma'rifaḥ al-Qurrā' al-Kibār 'alā al-Ṭabaqāt wa al-A'sār*. Bayrūt: Mu'assasah al-Risālah. Juz' 1: p. 46.

²⁰³Ibn al-Jazariyy. 2006. *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah*. Juz' 1: p. 347.

²⁰⁴Ibn al-Jazariyy. 1999. *Munjid al-Muqri'in*. p. 8.

While there is no doubt that the number of successors that learned the Qur'ān from the companions ﷺ was innumerable, those who specialized in *qirā'āt* and succeeded the companions ﷺ in teaching the Qur'ān were limited in quantity. There was, in each province, a group of *qirā'āt* scholars who taught the successors of the successors (*tābi' al-tābi'in*) to recite the Qur'ān, who then succeeded their teachers. Among these students were the seven famous reciters.

The five provinces of Makkah, Madinah, Kufa, Basra, and *al-Shām* were the centers of Islamic sciences during the times of the companions ﷺ and successors ﷺ. The *qirā'āt* scholars among the successors had replaced the companions ﷺ in teaching the Qur'ān to not only the populace of those provinces but also of other regions that had been enlightened by the expanding wave of proselytization. Their students continued to carry out this duty—an undertaking that has endured through multiple generations of the *ummah*. The *qirā'āt* is, after all, a lasting tradition passed from the progenitor to the progeny.

4.4 The Development of the Seven *Qirā'āt* during the Lifetime of Imam Ibn 'Āmir

The main features and trends of *qirā'āt* were defined and formed in the era of the successors and their successors. These were based on the *qirā'āt* of the companions ﷺ, who were honored with the company of and had received the Qur'ān from the Prophet ﷺ, and to whom Allah had favored with the concession of facilitating recitation.

Qirā'āt in the first century were attributed to either the companions ﷺ or to the cities that they inhabited. Therefore, one may say “the *qirā'ah* of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd”, “the *qirā'ah* of the Kufans”, “the *qirā'ah* of Zayd ibn Thābit”, or “the *qirā'ah* of the Madinans”, and so on. After the era of the companions ﷺ, *qirā'āt* were attributed

to the scholars from among the successors and their successors. This was not because they abandoned the *qirā'āt* of the companions ﷺ and invented new ones, but because these reciters had chosen a *qirā'ah* from the entirety of what they had studied under their teachers. They then read and taught this selected *qirā'ah* in various provinces. These *qirā'āt* still derived their elements from those of the companions ﷺ, even if they were attributed to the reciters who had chosen them. The seven readers were among such reciters.

4.4.1 The Emergence of *Ikhtiyār* in *Qirā'āt*

Madinah was the capital of the first Islamic state, and the *qirā'ah* of the Qur'ān there was known as *qirā'ah al- 'āmmah* (recitation of the public),²⁰⁵ *qirā'ah al-jamā'ah* (recitation of the group),²⁰⁶ or sometimes *qirā'ah* of Zayd ibn Thābit,²⁰⁷ as he was the teacher of the Madinans. Quoting Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Salmiyy, Abū Shāmah wrote, “The *qirā'āt* of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Zayd ibn Thābit, the *Muhājirīn*, and the *Anṣār* were identical. They recited *qirā'ah al- 'āmmah*, similar to the one recited twice by the Prophet ﷺ before Jibrīl ﷺ in the year of his passing. 'Alī ﷺ, through his life, recited from 'Uthmān's ﷺ Qur'ān and considered it the *imām*.”²⁰⁸

Besides the *qirā'āt* of this group of companions ﷺ, there were also *qirā'āt* attributed to other companions ﷺ. However, after the Qur'ān was sent to the provinces during the caliphate of Uthman ﷺ, the people of each province “continued reciting their

²⁰⁵Al-Zarkashiyy. 2006. *Al-Burhān*. Juz' 1: p. 237.

²⁰⁶Al-Bāqillāniyy, Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib. 2008. *Nukat al-Intiṣār li Naql al-Qur'ān*. Iskandariyyah: Mansha'ah al-Ma'ārif. p. 147.

²⁰⁷Abū Shāmah. 2003. *Al-Murshid al-Wajīz*. p. 69.

²⁰⁸ibid. p. 68.

qirā'āt if they were consistent with the text of the *muṣḥaf*, and abandoned those that contradicted it".²⁰⁹

The *qirā'ah* of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, or the *qirā'ah* of early Kufans, was the most famous reading after *qirā'ah al-jamā'ah*. Ibn Mujāhid commented:

"The majority of early Kufans recited according to the *qirā'ah* of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, as 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ had sent him to teach them. His *qirā'ah* had been accepted before 'Uthmān ؓ gathered the people on one common Qur'ān. People, after that, studied under some of his pupils ؓ, such as 'Alqamah, al-Aswad ibn al-Yazīd, Masrūq ibn al-Ajda', Zirr ibn al-Ḥubaysh, Abū Wā'il, Abū 'Amr al-Shaibāniyy, 'Abīdah al-Salmāniyy, and others. Therefore, the Kufans were still only familiar with the *qirā'ah* of 'Abdullāh ؓ. The first to teach in Kufa the recitation that 'Uthmān ؓ had gathered the people on was Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥabīb al-Salmiyy. He sat in the largest mosque and taught the Qur'ān for 40 years".²¹⁰

The Madinan *qirā'ah* eventually reached Kufa, especially after Imam 'Alī ؓ moved there. Nevertheless, the Kufans did not immediately abandon *qirā'ah Ibn Mas'ūd*; they still adhered to parts of it that were congruent with the *muṣḥaf* text. In fact, when Sa'īd ibn Jubayr led the night prayer in Ramadan, he used to alternate between *qirā'ah Ibn Mas'ūd* and *qirā'ah Zayd ibn Thābit* from a night to another. Still, *qirā'ah Ibn Mas'ūd* was slowly vanishing, as Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A'mash recalled, "I arrived at Kufa and found *qirā'ah Zayd* to be like *qirā'ah 'Abdullah* among you today: only one or two still recite it."²¹¹

²⁰⁹Al-Qaysiyy. 1977. *Al-Ibānah*. p. 29.

²¹⁰Ibn Mujāhid. *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*. p. 66.

²¹¹ibid. p. 67.

While the *qirā'ah* of Ibn Mas'ūd had disappeared in the early second Hijri, its elements, especially those congruent with the text of the *muṣḥaf*, had been incorporated into several *qirā'āt* of famous reciters. The *qirā'ah* was one of the references of *qirā'ah* 'Āṣim, who said, "I learned only a *ḥarf* [i.e. *qirā'ah*] from Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salmiyy, who had studied under 'Alī رضي الله عنه. After I finished studying under him, I recited before Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh, who had learned from 'Abdullāh."²¹² *Qirā'ah* 'Āṣim was therefore derived from the *qirā'āt* of his *tabi'in* teachers.

Such synthesis of *qirā'ah* is known as *ikhtiyār* (choosing, selecting). In the first century of Hijri, the imams chose a *qirā'ah* from several *qirā'āt* that they had narrated from their teachers. They then taught this chosen *qirā'ah* to their pupils. This is an old tradition that can be traced back to the times of the companions رضي الله عنهم. Ibn al-Jazariyy reported that Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه "recited according to *qirā'ah* Zayd ibn Thābit except for 18 *aḥruf* [i.e. variations] that he had taken from *qirā'ah* Ibn Mas'ūd".²¹³

The attribution of a *qirā'ah* to its reciter was not due to the fact that he had invented that *qirā'ah*; rather, it was because he had chosen, persisted with, and taught it. Al-Dānīyy explained, "The reason for attributing Allah's revelation to one of the companions رضي الله عنهم, such as Ubayy, 'Abdullāh, Zayd, and others, is the fact that he had mastered, recited, taught, persisted with, and demonstration his proclivity to the *qirā'ah*, nothing more. The reciter or imam that has chosen a certain *qirā'ah* and *wajh*²¹⁴, preferring it above others and persevering with it until he became renowned for it, so that people meet him to learn it from him: these are why the *qirā'ah* is attributed to him

²¹²ibid. p. 70.

²¹³Ibn al-Jazariyy. 2006. *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah*. Juz' 1: p. 426.

²¹⁴Choices or selections narrated from the *imām* from one of his *rāwi*.

and no one else. This attribution, then, is of *ikhtiyār*, persistence, and continuance, not of invention, opinion, or *ijtihād*.”²¹⁵

Most *qirā’āt* scholars of the second century of Hijri exercised *ikhtiyār* in *qirā’āt*. Nafi’ ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Imam of the Madinans, said, “I studied under 70 successors,”²¹⁶ and continued, “I observed and took the parts in which two scholars agreed, and I abandoned the *shādhah* narrated by only a scholar, until I managed to compose this *qirā’ah* in these *hurūf*.”²¹⁷

‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā’iyy, an expert in Arabic, had recited before Ḥamzah and observed the different *wujūh* of *qirā’āt*. He selected from *qirā’ah* *Hamzah* and other moderate *qirā’āt* that were still within the traditions of past imams. He was also the imam of *qirā’āt* in his time.²¹⁸ Ibn al-Nadīm said, “Al-Kisā’iyy was one of the reciters of Baghdad. He first recited with *qirā’ah* *Hamzah*. He then chose a *qirā’ah* for himself and taught it to the people during the caliphate of Hārūn.”

The word *ikhtiyār* then became synonymous with *qirā’ah*. Therefore, if one said “*ikhtiyār* *Hamzah*”, he was referring to his *qirā’ah*. But the term “*ikhtiyār*” was never used for the *qirā’āt* of the companions ﷺ, so one would always say “*qirā’ah* *Ibn Mas’ūd*”, “*qirā’ah* *Zayd*”, and so on. Ibn al-Jazariyy mentioned dozens of reciters’ *ikhtiyār* in *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah ft Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā’*. Excluding the seven reciters, some of them were *ikhtiyār* *Khalaf ibn Hishām*,²¹⁹ *ikhtiyār* *Yahyā ibn Mubārak al-Yazīdiyy*,²²⁰ *ikhtiyār* *Abī Ḥatīm al-Sijistāniyy*,²²¹ and *ikhtiyār* *Abī ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām*.²²²

²¹⁵ Al-Ṭabariyy. 1994. *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*. Juz’ 5: p. 9; Ibn al-Jazariyy. n.d. *Al-Nashr*. Juz’ 1: p. 52.

²¹⁶ Ibn Mujaḥid. 1980. *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*. p. 62.

²¹⁷ *ibid*; Al-Qaysiyy. 1977. *Al-Ibānah*. p. 17.

²¹⁸ Ibn Mujaḥid. 1980. *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*. p. 78.

²¹⁹ Ibn al-Jazariyy. 2006. *Ghāyah al-Nihāyah*. Juz’ 1: p. 154, Juz’ 2: p. 49.

²²⁰ *ibid*. Juz’ 2: p. 376.

²²¹ *ibid*. Juz’ 1: p. 146, 148, 429.

²²² *ibid*. Juz’ 1: p. 188, Juz’ 2: p. 347.

Some reciters had two *ikhtiyār*, such as Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā al-Aṣbahāniyy.²²³ However, the use of *ikhtiyār* did not continue beyond the third century. Ibn Mujāhid explained, “To strive and preserve the efforts of past imams is a greater imperative than choosing a *ḥarf* to be recited by those after us.”²²⁴

If *ikhtiyār* was no longer practiced at the time of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 AH), it would mean that the numerous *qirā’āt* attributed to scholars only emerged in the second century of Hijri. It also suggests the disappearance of the *qirā’āt* of the companions ﷺ, such as *qirā’āt Zayd* or *qirā’āt Ibn Mas‘ūd* (or what was known as Madinan *qirā’ah* or Kufan *qirā’ah*), because their elements had been incorporated into the *ikhtiyār* of the *qirā’āt* scholars. The clearest example of this is ‘Āṣim’s *qirā’ah*, which integrated some elements of *qirā’ah Zayd ibn Thābit* through Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salmiyy and *qirā’ah Ibn Mas‘ūd* through Zirr ibn Hubaysh. *Ikhtiyār* was the reason for the disappearance of those *qirā’āt* in its original form and its subsequent appearance in the *qirā’āt* of the reciters from among the successors of the successors.

Some of the reciters in Madīnah were: Ibn Musayyib, ‘Urwah, Sālim, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Sulayman ibn Yasār, Aṭā’ ibn Yasār, Mu‘ādh ibn Ḥārith, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Hurmūz al-A‘raj, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhriyy, Muslim ibn Jundib, and Zayd ibn Aslam; in Makkah: ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāh, Ṭāwus, Mujāhid, ‘Ikrimah, and Ibn Abī Mulaikah; in Kufa: ‘Alqamah, Masrūq, ‘Ubaydah, ‘Amr ibn Shuraḥbīl, Ḥārith ibn Qais, ‘Amr ibn Maimūn, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salamiyy, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr, Nakha‘iyy, and al-Sha‘bī; in Basra: Abū al-‘Āliyah, Abū Rajā’, Naṣr ibn ‘Āṣim, Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘mar, al-Ḥasan, Ibn Sīrīn, and Qatādah; in *al-Shām*: Mughīrah ibn

²²³ibid. Juz’ 1: p. 9, Juz’ 2: p. 61, 197, 223.

²²⁴Al-Dhahabiyy. 1998. *Ma‘rifah al-Qurrā’*. Juz’ 1: p. 217.

Abī Shihāb al-Makhzūmiyy, the narrator of ‘Uthmān ؓ, and Khalīfah ibn Sa‘d, the narrator of Abū al-Dardā’ ؓ.

In the early first century, a group of scholars among the successors dedicated themselves to verify the accuracy of *qirā’ah*, an urgently pressing need at the time. They established it as a science, equivalent to other Islamic sciences, and they became the imams that were followed and travelled to. The most eminent among them and those after were the seven imams to whom the *qirā’āt* are attributed hitherto. Some of those reciters in Madinah were Abū Ja‘far Yazīd ibn al-Qa‘qā’ and Nāfi‘ ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān; in Makkah ‘Abdullāh ibn Kathīr and Ḥumayd ibn Qays al-A‘raj; in Kufa ‘Āṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd, Sulaymān al-A‘mash, Ḥamzah, and al-Kisā’iyy; in Basra ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Ishāq, ‘Isā ibn ‘Amr, Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, ‘Āṣim al-Jaḥdariyy, and Ya‘qūb al-Ḥaḍramiyy; in *al-Shām* ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Muhājir, Yaḥyā ibn Ḥārith, and Shuraiḥ ibn Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramiyy. Of these, the seven imams famous across the lands were Abū ‘Amr, Nāfi‘, ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisā’iyy, Ibn ‘Āmir, and Ibn Kathīr.²²⁵

Qirā’āt and the seven *ahruf*, according to the most correct opinion, are not one and the same, even though both amount to seven. The *qirā’āt* are the schools of the imams, and they are still recited by Muslims until now. They stemmed from the differences in dialects and pronunciation, as well as manners of articulating *tafkhīm*²²⁶,

²²⁵ Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. Juz’ 1: p. 72-73.

²²⁶ Giving a letter the quality of heaviness by elevating the tongue.

*tarqīq*²²⁷, *imālah*²²⁸, *idghām*²²⁹, *izhār*²³⁰, *ishbā*²³¹, *madd*²³², *qaṣr*²³³, *tashdid*²³⁴, *takhfīf*²³⁵, and so forth. All of these *qirā'āt* are based only on the *ḥarf* of Quraish.

The meanings of the seven *aḥruf* have been discussed earlier in the chapter. They have vanished along with the expansion of the Islamic state. As there was concern that the controversies surrounding the *aḥruf* might bring ruin upon the *ummah*, the companions took it upon themselves during 'Uṯmān's caliphate to gather Muslims on a common *ḥarf*, thus the Qur'ān was written in the Quraysh *ḥarf*.

4.4.2 Justification to Restrict *Qirā'āt* to Seven

Scholars agreed on the authenticity of the seven *qirā'āt*. They then added another three *qirā'āt* that are valid and *mutawātir* to form an even 10: Abū Ja'far Yazīd ibn al-Qa'qā' al-Madaniyy, Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramiyy, and Khalaf ibn Hishām. Other *qirā'āt*, on the other hand, are considered as *shawādh* (irregulars), such as those of al-Yazīdiyy, al-Ḥasan, al-A'mash, Ibn Jubayr, and others. Nonetheless, it does not mean that the 10 *qirā'āt* themselves are free from *shādh*, since these appear in many forms.

The selection of the seven reciters was in fact the endeavor of scholars in the late third century of Hijri. In reality, there were still many other scholars whose knowledge was trustworthy. In the early second century, for instance, the Basrans still

²²⁷ Giving a letter the quality of lightness by lowering the tongue.

²²⁸ "Slanting" an open vowel so that it is articulated in an open-mid or close-mid vowel.

²²⁹ Merging a vowelless consonant into the following letter.

²³⁰ Pronouncing a letter clearly without any indication of merging with the preceding or following letter.

²³¹ The addition of vowel letters. Nonetheless, it has multiple other meanings.

²³² Lengthening the sound of long vowels.

²³³ Pronouncing the long vowel according to its natural length.

²³⁴ A word that contains merged letters.

²³⁵ A word that does not contain merged letters.

subscribed to the recitations of Ibn ‘Amr and Ya‘qūb; the Kufans to those of Ḥamzah and ‘Āṣim; the Levantines to Ibn ‘Āmir; the Makkans to Ibn Kathīr; and the Madinans to Nāfi‘. Altogether, there are seven reciters. At the turn of the third century, Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid added al-Kisā’iyy and removed Ya‘qūb.

Al-Suyūfī commented, “The earliest authors of *qirā’āt* were Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, Aḥmad ibn Jubayr al-Kūfiyy, Ismā‘īl ibn Ishāq al-Mālikiyy, the narrator of Qālūn, Abū Ja‘far ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabariyy, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Dajūniyy, and Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid. The contemporaries and successors of Ibn Mujāhid then began to write on the types of *qirā’āt*, either focusing on one or many, briefly or lengthily. The imams of *qirā’āt* are innumerable, and their levels (*tabaqāt*) have been compiled by *Ḥāfiẓ al-Islām* Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Dhahabiyy, then by *Ḥafīẓ al-Qurrā’* Abū al-Khayr ibn al-Jazariyy.²³⁶

Imām Ibn al-Jazariyy stated in *al-Nashr* that the first distinguished imam to compile various *qirā’āt* into a book was Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām. He recorded 25 reciters, including the famous seven, and he passed in 224 AH. He was then followed by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn al-‘Abbās ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 AH), the first to narrow the *qirā’āt* to seven. Ibn al-Jazariyy then extensively discussed the subject of *qirā’āt* compilation, before stating, “I elaborated this subject comprehensively as I had heard from the unenlightened that the authentic *qirā’āt* are only these seven ... in fact, the ignorant is convinced that the authentic *qirā’āt* are only those included in *al-Shāṭibiyyah* and *al-Taysīr*.”

²³⁶Al-Suyūfīyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. p. 73.

The reason to limit them to seven, despite the presence of a great many imams of equal if not superior competence, was that the narrators of those seven imams were innumerable. When their passion had waned, seekers of *qirā'āt* focused on *qirā'āt* that were consistent with the *muṣḥaf* text, since it facilitated memorization and correct reading. And so, they observed the imams known for their trustworthiness and integrity; lifetime of attachment to *qirā'ah*; and a consensus from the people to learn their *qirā'ah*. With these criteria in mind, they distinguished an imam from each province. Even so, they still narrated and recited the *qirā'āt* of other imams, such as those of Ya'qūb al-Ḥaḍramiyy, Abū Ja'far al-Madaniyy, Shaybah ibn Naṣṣā', and others.

The authors of *qirā'āt* also contributed to reducing the quantity of *qirā'āt*. They presented only a certain number of *qirā'āt* imams in their books, which ostensibly appeared to be testaments for their popularity, even though there were other reciters with superior proficiency. Readers of those books thus presumed that these recorded names were the only recognized imams of *qirā'āt*.

Ibn Jabar al-Makkiyy authored a book on *qirā'āt*, narrowing only to five reciters, each from a province, on grounds that 'Uthmān sent five *maṣāḥif* to these provinces. Some said that there were seven *maṣāḥif*: those five, one in Yemen, and another in Bahrain. No news was ever heard of the latter two copies, but because Ibn Mujāhid and other scholars wanted to preserve the total number of *muṣḥaf*, they substituted them with two imams. For this reason, some scholars have argued that the adherence to only the seven *qirā'āt* is founded on neither *athar* (traditions of the successors) nor *sunnah* (traditions of the Prophet), but merely the compilations of later scholars that have become prevalent. If Ibn Mujāhid had included, for instance, scholars other than these seven, they would have become famous. Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabiyy

said, “The reduction of *qirā’āt* into these seven does not imply that they are the only permissible *qirā’āt*, and that other readings, such as of Abū Ja‘far, Shaibah, al-A‘mash, and others, are forbidden. [In fact,] they are equal, if not better, than those seven.” This opinion is echoed by many other *qirā’āt* scholars. Abū Hayyān stated, “The popular *qirā’āt* mentioned in the books of Ibn Mujāhid and his followers are but an insignificant few. Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, for example, had 17 famous narrators who propagated the *qirā’ah* further. Yet, Ibn Mujāhid’s book narrowed them to only al-Yazīdiyy, who had 10 famous students. So how, then, that he reduced these 10 to only al-Sūsiyy and al-Dūriyy, who were not more exceptional than the others, even though all of them collectively ensured the correctness and accuracy of the *qirā’ah* and learned it?” He added, “I am unaware of any other reason for this reduction other than it was the product of one who lacks knowledge.”²³⁷

4.4.3 Types of *Qirā’āt*

Scholars have summarized *qirā’āt* into six types:

1. *Mutawātir*: a *qirā’ah* relayed by a group, whose conspiracy to lie is virtually impossible, to another similar group until the end of the chain. This is the most common type in *qirā’āt*.
2. *Mashhūr*: a *qirā’ah* whose *sanad* is authentic but has not reached the level of *mutawātir*; it is consistent with the rules of Arabic and *muṣḥaf*; it is famous

²³⁷Al-Suyūṭiyy. 2005. *Al-Itqān*. p. 80-81.

among reciters, and they do not consider it erroneous or irregular. Scholars view its recitation as permissible.

3. *Āḥād*: a *qirā'ah* with an authentic *sanad* but it either contradicts the Qur'ānic orthography or Arabic grammatical rules, or is not known among scholars. Its recitation is not permitted. For example, it was narrated from Abū Bakrah that the Prophet read عَلَى رَفَارْفِ خُضِرٍ وَعَبَّاقِرِيِّ جِسَانٍ.²³⁸ Another example was narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, who recited لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ with a *fathah fā*.²³⁹
4. *Shādhah*: a *qirā'ah* with an inauthentic *sanad*, such as the recitation مَلِكٌ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ.
5. *Maudū'*: a fabricated *qirā'ah*; no basis at all.
6. *Mudraj*: a *qirā'at* inserted with an interpretation, such as the recitation of Ibn 'Abbās, “It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord (during pilgrimage). Then when ye pour down from (Mount) Arafat...”²⁴⁰ The phrase “during pilgrimage” is an interpretation inserted into the verse.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the interpretations of seven *aḥruf* and the development of the science of *qirā'at* before and during the lifetime of Ibn 'Āmir. Scholars have differing opinions on the meaning of seven *aḥruf*—pronunciations, meanings, synonymous words, or dialects. Al-Ṭabariyy himself regarded them as the

²³⁸ Al-Ḥakim. 2014 *Al-Mustadrak*.; al-Qur'ān. Al-Raḥmān 55:76.

²³⁹ Al-Ḥakim. 2014 *Al-Mustadrak*. al-Qur'ān. Al-Tawbah 9:128.

²⁴⁰ Al-Bukhāriyy. 2012. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāriyy* kitab Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān - bab 'unzil alquran ealaa sbet 'ahraf hadith number 4991. al-Qur'ān. Al-Baqarah 2:198.

seven dialects in which the Qur'ān was revealed to facilitate its recitation and comprehension. The Prophet had learned these recitations from Jibrīl, and he then taught his companions different variants. Those who were proficient in recitation were delegated to newly expanded Islamic provinces. There, the students, and subsequently their students' pupils, continued the chain of recitation. However, they combined the *qirā'ah* with elements of other *qirā'āt* that they had learned from their teachers, a method known as *ikhtiyār*. The number of reciters and *qirā'āt* flourished, but it slowly dwindled as the seekers of reciters have shifted their focus on preserving the previous *qirrat*²⁴¹. Some scholars also included only certain imams in their manuscripts, leaving the impression that those were the only authentic *qirā'āt*. One of them, Ibn Mujāhid compiled the seven most eminent imams in each province who had prodigious students, effectively reducing the countless *qirā'āt* to merely seven. While his efforts do not escape criticisms from his contemporaries and successors, they remain useful for the documentation of *mutawātir* variants of recitation.

In the next chapter, the concept of *tawātur* according to hadith and *qirā'āt* scholars, especially Ibn Mujāhid and al-Ṭabariyy, will be elaborated in more detail.

²⁴¹ ²⁴¹ Al-Dāniyy, 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd. 2015. *Al-Taysīr fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*. Ḥā'il: Dār al-Andalus. p. 108