

Tafsir al-Qurtubi

The General Virtues of the Qur'an and encouragement to study it

This topic is vast and scholars have written many books on it. We will mention some points which point out the excellence of the Qur'an and what Allah has prepared for its people when they are sincere for His sake and act by it. The first aspect of the excellence of the Qur'an that the believer should be aware of is that it is from the Lord of the worlds and is uncreated. It consists of unparalleled words and has a quality which has no equivalent or like. It comes from the light of Allah's Essence. Recitation is the voices of the reciters and their tunes. It is their acquisition, and they are commanded to do it as an obligation in certain acts of worship and it is recommended at many times. They are forbidden to recite it when they are in a state of major impurity, and are rewarded for doing it and punished for abandoning it. This is part of what the Muslims, the people of the Truth, agree on. Traditions state that and well-known reports prove it.

Reward and punishment are only connected to what is part of what people earn, as will be explained. Were it not that Allah had placed in the hearts of His slaves the strength to bear it so that they can reflect on it, study it and remember what it contains of His obedience, worship and performing his duties and obligations, they would be too weak and would collapse under its weight or perish. How could they bear it when Allah says, "*Had We sent down this Qur'an onto a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, crushed to pieces out of fear of Allah*" (59:21)? What is the strength of hearts compared to that of the mountains? But Allah provided His slaves with the strength to bear what He wishes as a favour and mercy from Him.

As for traditions about this topic, the first is what at-Tirmidhi transmitted from Abu Sa'id that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The blessed and exalted Lord said, 'If anyone is distracted from asking Me by the Qur'an and remembering Me, I will give him better than what I give the askers.'" He also said, "The excellence of the words of Allah over all other words is like the excellence of Allah over His creation." (*hasan gharib hadith*) As-Samarqandi reported in his *Musnad* that 'Abdullah said, "The seven long *suras* are like the Torah. The *suras* with a hundred ayats are like the Gospel. and the Mathani is like the Zabur. The rest of the Qur'an is excellent."

In at-Tirmidhi, 'Ali reported, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, 'There will be trials like patches of dark night.' I asked, 'Messenger of Allah, how can one escape them?' He replied, 'The Book of Allah, Blessed and exalted, contains your history, information about what came before you, news about what will come after you and correct judgement between you. It is decisive, not a jest. Allah will crush any tyrant who abandons it and Allah will misguide whoever seeks guidance from other than it. It is the Firm Rope of Allah, His Clear Light and the Wise Reminder. It is the Straight Path. Passions are not misguided by it, the tongues do not become sated with it, and the godfearing do not become bored by it. It does not wear out when it is recited a

lot and its wonders do not cease. It is that which the jinn did not leave once they had heard it. They said, "*We heard a wonderful Qur'an which guides to right guidance.*" (72:1-2) Whoever knows it has knowledge which takes precedence. Whoever utters it speaks the truth. Whoever judges by it is just. Whoever acts by it is rewarded. Whoever calls to it is guided to a straight path. Take it, one-eyed."¹

[1. Referring to Ibrahim an-Nakha'i, who had one eye.]

Al-Anbari says in his book, *The Refutation of the One who Opposes the Recension of 'Uthman*, transmitting from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "This Qur'an is the Banquet of Allah. Learn as much as you can from His banquet. This Qur'an is the Rope of Allah, and it is the Clear Light and Useful Healing. It is a protection for the one who clings to it and a rescue for the one who follows it. It is not crooked and so puts things straight. It does not deviate so as to be blamed. Its wonders do not cease. It does not wear out with much repetition. So recite it. Allah will reward you with ten good deeds for every letter of its recitation. I do not say that *Alif-Lam-MÆm* is a letter nor two *alifs*, one placing its foot on the other. You should not stop reciting *Surat al-Baqara*. Shaytan flees from a house in which *Surat al-Baqara* is recited. The house most devoid of good is a house empty of the Book of Allah." In *Gharib* Abu 'Ubayd quotes 'Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud): "This Qur'an is the Banquet of Allah. Whoever enters it is safe." He said, "The interpretation of the hadith is that it is a metaphor. The Qur'an is likened to something Allah has prepared for people. They have good and benefits in it. Then He invited them to it."

Al-Bukhari transmits from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it." Muslim transmitted from Abu Musa that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The metaphor of a believer who recites the Qur'an is that of a citron – its scent is fragrant and its taste is good. The metaphor of a believer who does not recite the Qur'an is that of a date – it has no scent but its taste is sweet. The metaphor of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'an is that of basil - its scent is fragrant but its taste is bitter. The metaphor of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'an is that of colocynth - it has no scent and its taste is bitter."

Abu Bakr al-Anbari mentioned that when someone finished the Qur'an, Abu 'Abdu'r-Rahman as-Sulami would sit him before him and put his hand on his head and say to him, "You! Fear Allah! I do not know of anyone better than you if you act by what you know." Ad-Darimi reported that Wahb ad-Dhimari said, "If Allah gives someone the Qur'an and he stands reciting it at the ends of the night and the ends of the day and acts by what is in it and dies in obedience, on the Day of Rising Allah will raise him up with the angels and Prophets."

Muslim related that 'A'isha reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Someone who recites the Qur'an and is fluent in it is with the noble pious angels. Someone who recites the Qur'an and stammers in it has two rewards as it is difficult for him." He will have one reward for the recitation and one reward for

the difficulty. The levels of the fluent reciter are all above that because the Qur'an was difficult for him and then he rose beyond that to be like the angels. Allah knows best.

At-Tirmidhi reports from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever recites a letter of the Book of Allah earns a good deed, and each good deed is worth ten like it. I do not say that '*Alif-lam-mim*' is one letter, but that alif is a letter, lam is a letter, and *mim* is a letter." (*hasan sahih gharib*)

Muslim reported that 'Uqba ibn 'Amir said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came out to us while we were in the Suffa and asked, 'Which of you would like to go every day to Buthan or to al-'Aqiq and bring two large-humped she-camels from it without wrongdoing?' We said, 'Messenger of Allah, all of us would like that!' He said, 'Does not one of you go to the mosque and teach or recite two ayats from the Book of Allah? That is better for him than two camels, and three verses are better for him than three camels, four verses are better than four camels, and so on regarding the number of camels.'"

Abu Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah will relieve anyone who relieves a believer of one of the afflictions of this world of one of the afflictions of the Day of Rising. Allah will give ease in this world and the Next to anyone who eases the hardship of another. Allah will veil anyone who veils another Muslim in this world and the Next. Allah will help His slave as long as His slave is helping his brother. Whoever travels a path on which he seeks knowledge, Allah will make the path to the Garden easy for him. People do not meet in one of the houses of Allah to recite the Book of Allah and study it together without tranquillity descending on them, mercy covering them, angels encircling them and Allah mentioning them to those who are with Him."

Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, ad-DarimÆ, and at-Tirmidhi reported that 'Uqba ibn 'Amir heard the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "The one who recites the Qur'an publicly is like the person who gives his *sadaqa* publicly. The one who recites the Qur'an secretly is like the person who conceals his *sadaqa*." (*hasan gharib*) At-Tirmidhi reported from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The Qur'an will come on the Day of Rising and say, 'O Lord, robe him!' and he will put on him the crown of nobility.' It will say, 'O Lord, more!' and he will put on him the robe of honour. Then it will say, 'O Lord, be pleased with him!' and He will be pleased with him. It will be said, 'Recite and ascend,' and he will be increased with a good deed for every *ayat*." (*sahih*)

Abu Dawud reported from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Those who know the Qur'an will be told, 'Recite and ascend. Recite slowly as you did in the world below. Your station will be at the last verse you recite.'" Ibn Majah transmits it from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri who reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The one who knows the Qur'an will be told, 'Recite and ascend.' He will recite and rise a degree by every *ayat* until he reaches the last thing he has."

Al-Anbari transmitted from Umm Umama al-Himsi that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever is given a third of the Qur'an has been given a third of Prophethood. Whoever is given two-thirds of the Qur'an has been given two-thirds of Prophethood. Whoever recites all of the Qur'an has been given all of Prophethood although he has not received any revelation. On the Day of Rising he will be told, 'Recite and ascend.' He will recite an *ayat* and rise a degree until he finishes what he knows of the Qur'an. Then he will be told, 'Take,' and he will take. Then he will be asked, 'Do you know what is in your hands? Eternity is in your right hand and bliss in your left.'"

Al-Marwazi reported from 'Ali that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone reads the Qur'an, recites it and memorises it, Allah will admit him to the Garden and let him intercede for all the people of his family for whom the Fire is mandatory." Umm ad-Darda' said, "I visited 'A'isha and asked her, 'What is the excellence of the one who recites the Qur'an over the one who does not recite it among those who enter the Garden?' 'A'isha replied, 'The number of the *ayats* of the Qur'an is according to the number of degrees of the Garden. No one will enter the Garden better than the one who recites the Qur'an." Abu Muhammad Makki mentioned it. Ibn 'Abbas said, "If anyone recites the Qur'an and follows what is in it, Allah has guided him from misguidance and will protect him on the Day of Rising from an evil reckoning. That is because Allah says, '*All those who follow My guidance will not go astray and will not be miserable.*' (20:121)" Ibn 'Abbas said, "Allah has guaranteed that the one who follows the Qur'an will not go astray in this world nor be wretched in the Next." Makki also mentioned that. Al-Layth said, "It was said that mercy does not come quicker to anyone than to the one who listens to the Qur'an according to the words of the Almighty, '*When the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and be silent so that hopefully you will gain mercy.*' (7:204)" The word "hopefully" makes it mandatory for Allah.

In the *Musnad* of Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi, it is reported from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Anyone who stands [in prayer] for ten *ayats* will not be written among the heedless. Anyone who stands for a hundred *ayats* will be written among the obedient. Anyone who stands for a thousand *ayats* will be written among those with heaps [qintars] of reward." There are many traditions about this, and what we have mentioned is adequate. Allah is the One who grants success.

How to recite the Book of Allah and what is disliked and forbidden in it

Al-Bukhari transmitted that Qatada said, "I asked Anas about the recitation of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he said, 'He would lengthen syllables when he recited, 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful.' He would extend the name 'Allah', extend '*ar-Rahman*' (the All-Merciful) and extend '*ar-Rahim*' (the Most Merciful).

At-Tirmidhi reported that Umm Salama said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to put stops in his recitation. He would say, 'Praise be to

Allah, the Lord of the worlds,' and stop, 'the All-Merciful, Most Merciful,' and stop. Then he would recite, 'Master of the Day of Repayment.'" (*gharib*, Abu Dawud transmitted a similar hadith.)

It is related that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The person with the best voice is the one that I see fears Allah Almighty when he recites." It is related that Ziyad an-Numayri came with the reciters to Anas ibn Malik and was told to recite. He raised his voice and intoned. He had a loud voice and Anas uncovered his face, as he had a black cloth over it, and said, "You! what is this you are doing?" When he saw something he objected to, he would remove the cloth from his face.

It is related that Qays ibn 'Ubbad said, "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah used to dislike raising the voice in *dhikr*." Those who disliked raising the voice in recitation of the Qur'an included Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, al-Hasan, Ibn Sirin, an-Nakha'i and others. Malik ibn Anas and Ahmad ibn Hanbal also disliked it. All of them disliked raising the voice with the Qur'an and intoning it. It is related that Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab heard 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz leading the people and he intoned in his recitation. Sa'id sent a message to him saying, "May Allah put you right! Imams should not recite like that." So 'Umar stopped singing. Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad said, "A man recited in the mosque of the Prophet and intoned and al-Qasim objected to that. He said, Allah Almighty says, '*Truly it is a Mighty Book. Falsehood cannot reach it from before it or behind it.*' (41:40-41)" Malik related that he was asked about *nabr* (raising the voice) when reciting the Qur'an in the prayer and he disliked that strongly and objected to the raising of the voice in recitation. Ibn al-Qasim related from him that he was asked about melody in the prayer and he said, "I do not like it." He said, "It is a kind of singing which they do and for which they are paid money."

One group permit raising the voice in the Qur'an and intoning it. That is because, when someone beautifies his voice in it, it settles more deeply in the selves and the hearts listen more to it. They find evidence in the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Adorn the Qur'an with your voices." Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib transmitted it as did Abu Dawud and an-Nasa'i. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "He who does not sing the Qur'an is not one of us." (Muslim). There is also what Abu Musa told the Prophet: "If I had known that you listened to my recitation, I would have beautified it for you." 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal said, "In a journey in the year of the Conquest, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, recited *Surat al-Fath* on his mount and he used a quavering tone in his recitation." Some of those who believed this were Abu Hanifa and his people, ash-Shafi'i, Ibn al-Mubarak and an-Nadr ibn Shumayl. It is the choice of at-Tabari, Abu'l-Hasan ibn Battal, Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi and others.

The first position is sounder because of what we already mentioned and will mention. As for using the first *hadith* as evidence, it is not apparent. It is an example of the reversal of the normal order and in fact means, "Adorn your voices with the Qur'an." Al-Khattabi said, "That is how more than one of the Imams of *hadith* have explained it, saying it is reversal."

Al-Khattabi related from al-Bara' that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Adorn the Qur'an with your voices." He said, "It means be melodious in the recitation and employ your voices to do it and take it as a sign and adornment. It is said that it means to encourage people to recite the Qur'an and persist in it. It is related from Abu Hurayra that he heard the Messenger of Allah say, "Adorn your voices with the Qur'an." It is related that 'Umar said, "Make your voices good with the Qur'an."

It is to this sense that the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, refer when he said, "The one who does not sing the Qur'an is not one of us," meaning "the one who does not make his voice good with the Qur'an is not one of us." That is how 'Abdullah ibn Abi Mulayka interpreted it. 'Abdu'l-Jabbar ibn al-Wird said that he heard Ibn Abi Mulayka say that 'Abdullah ibn Abi Yazid said, "Abü Lubaba passed us and we followed him until he went into his house. He was a man of shabby appearance. I heard him say, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "He who does not sing the Qur'an is not one of us.'" 'Abdu'l-Jabbar said, "I asked Ibn Abi Mulayka, 'Abu Muhammad, what do you think of the one who does not have a good voice?' He replied, 'He makes it as good as he can.'" (Abu Dawud)

This is also the meaning of Abu Musa's words to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "If I had known that you were listening to my recitation, I would have made my voice good in the Qur'an, adorned it and used *tartil* (slow recitation)." This indicates that he was quick in his recitation with a good natural voice. If he had known that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was listening, he would have extended his recitation and used *tartil* as he usually did when he recited to the Messenger of Allah. He used to do that in order to increase the beauty of his voice when reciting.

We seek refuge with Allah from interpreting what the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said as meaning that the Qur'an is adorned by voices or anything else! Whoever interprets it in this way has committed something terrible in saying that the Qur'an is in need of someone to adorn it. It is Light, Illumination, and the Highest Adornment for the one who wears its splendour and is illuminated by its light. It is said that the command to adorn means to learn the readings and to adorn them with our voices. That implies: "adorn the recitation with your voices," since "*qur'an*" means recitation as Allah says, "*The recitation (qur'an) of dawn.*" (17:78) According to this interpretation, it is valid that it simply means "to recite" as we made clear.

It is said that the word understood as "singing" (*yataghanna*) comes from *istighna*, "not having any need", not from *ghina'* (singing). This was the interpretation adopted by Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna and Waki' ibn al-Jarrah. Sufyan related that from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas. Another point is also related from Sufyan which Ishaq ibn Rahawayh mentioned, which is that it means "to be enriched and without need of other words". This is the interpretation preferred by al-Bukhari when he dealt with the verse, "*Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them?*" (29:51) What is meant by being enriched by the Qur'an is not being in need of the history of nations. Interpreters have said that.

It is said that "*yataghanna*" means to display sorrow. In other words sorrow should appear in the reciter when he reads and recites, and it does not come from "*ghunya*" (being able to dispense with) because a different form of the verb would have been used for that. A group of scholars believed that, including Imam Ibn Hibban al-Busti. Their evidence was what Mutarrif ibn 'Abdullah ibn ash-Shikhhir related from his father: "I came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, while he was praying and his chest was heaving like a cauldron from weeping." They said, "This report makes it clear that what is meant is displaying sorrow. This is also supported by what the Imams related from 'Abdullah: "The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Recite to me.' So I recited *Surat an-Nisa'* to him until I reached the *ayat*, '*How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you as a witness against them?*' (4:41) I saw his eyes overflowing with tears."

These are four interpretations and none of them indicate that recitation is done with tunes or quavering voices. Abu Sa'id al-A'rabi said about "He who does not sing the Qur'an is not one of us": "The Arabs were keen on singing and using verse in most of what they said. When the Qur'an was revealed, they wanted to use the Qur'an as their chant instead of singing, and the Prophet said this."

The fifth interpretation is what some claim as evidence for quavering and singing. 'Umar ibn Shayba said, "I told Abu 'Asim about Ibn 'Uyayna's interpretation regarding 'singing' meaning 'beyond need' and he said, 'Ibn 'Uyayna did not do well.'" Ash-Shafi'i was asked about the interpretation of Ibn 'Uyayna and said, "I know better than this. If the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had meant not having need, he would have said it. He said, 'singing' and so we know that he meant singing." At-Tabari said, "What is known in our view is that *taghannin* is singing in the language of the Arabs, which is using a good voice with quavering." As for those who claim that it means 'being without need', that is not part of the language and poems of the Arabs. We do not know any of the people of knowledge who said that.

In respect of what at-Tabari claimed about *taghanna* not meaning *istighna* in Arabic, al-Jawhari stated what we mentioned as did al-Harawi. There is nothing to prevent it meaning *istighna*, as it is indeed more appropriate to accept that which is it related from a great Companion as Sufyan reported. Ibn Wahb said about Sufyan, "I have not seen anyone with better knowledge of the interpretation of *ahadith* than Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna."

A sixth interpretation is what has come in the form of an addition in *Sahih* Muslim which is that Abu Hurayra heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "Allah does not listen to anything so gladly as He listens to a Prophet with a good voice chanting the Qur'an aloud." At-Tabari said, "If it had been as Ibn 'Uyayna said, there would be no point in mentioning a good voice and aloud." The word "aloud", can be part of the words of the Prophet, Abu Hurayra or someone else. If it is the first, which is unlikely, it is evidence of lack of warbling (*tatrib*) and quavering because he did not say that. He said, "aloud", meaning so that he and those around him can hear him as the Prophet said to someone he heard raising his voice in the *shahada*, "O mankind! Be kind to yourselves. You are not calling out to someone dead or absent." So there is no

evidence for what they claim. Some of our scholars preferred this interpretation, saying that it is the most likely because the Arabs use the term translated as "singing out" for the one who raises his voice and directs it to someone absent even if it had no tune. He said, "This is the explanation of the Companion, and he knows their manner of speaking far better."

Abu'l-Hasan ibn Battal argues for the school of ash-Shafi'i and says, "The removal of the difficulty in this question is found in what Ibn Abi Shayba reported É from 'Uqba ibn 'Amir who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Learn the Qur'an, sing it and write it. By the One who has my soul in His hand, it is more likely to escape than a camel from the hobble." Our scholars said, "Even if this *hadith* has a sound *isnad*, what is known absolutely and definitively refutes it: the recitation of the Qur'an has reached us *mutawatir* from many shaykhs, generation after generation back to the noble era and to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and there was no making of tunes or intoning (*tatrib*) related by them while they go into depth regarding the pronunciation of the letters, *madda*, *idgham*, *izhar* and other types of recitation.

Furthermore, in quavering and intoning, there is putting a *hamza* on what does not have a *hamza* and a lengthening of what should not be lengthened. So the single *alif* will be made into two *alifs* and one *waw* into two. That leads to an increase in the Qur'an which is forbidden. If that occurs in a place where there is *hamza*, they make several *hamzas*. It may be said that 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal said that Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, recited on his camel in the Year of the Conquest of Makka (8/630) and quavered, which al-Bukhari mentioned. He said, describing it, "a' a' a'" three times. That may mean *ishba'* which is lengthening the vowel of the *madda* in its proper place.

It is also possible that the story of his voice has to do with the rocking of his camel, as it happens to someone in a loud voice when he is riding and his voice tightens and is cut because of the rocking of the camel. Since this is possible, then there is no evidence in it. 'Abdu'l-Ghani ibn Sa'id transmitted from the *hadith* of Qatada from 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr who reported that his father said, "The recitation of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was extended (*madd*) but there was no quavering (*tarji*)." Ibn Jurayj reported that Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah had a *mu'adhdhin* who intoned. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The *adhan* should be easy and smooth (i.e. without trilling). If your *adhan* is not easy and smooth, then do not give the *adhan*." (ad-Daraqutni) If the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade it in the *adhan*, it is more likely that he would not permit in the Qur'an which the All-Merciful preserves as Allah says, "*It is We who have sent down the Reminder and We will preserve it.*" (15:9)

This disagreement regarding recitation is a result of the meaning of the Qur'an not being understood due to the repetition of voices and the great amount of quavering. If the matter goes further so that the meaning cannot be understood, then that is agreed to be forbidden. This is done by reciters in the towns of Egypt who recite before kings and at

funerals and receive wages and stipends for doing so. Their effort is misguided and their work is ruined. By so doing they allow the alteration of the Book of Allah and it makes it easy for them to be bold against Allah by adding to His revelation what was not in it out of ignorance in their *deen*, deviation from the *Sunna* of their Prophet, rejecting the course of the righteous Salaf in respect of that matter, and longing for what shaytan has made seem attractive in what they do. They "suppose that they are doing good" while they repeat their error and play with the Book of Allah. We are returning to Allah, but the Truthful One, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, reported that that would happen and so it is as he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, reported it would be.

Imam Razin and at-Tirmidhi al-Hakim in *Nawadir al-Usul* reported the *hadith* transmitted by Hudhayfa in which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Recite the Qur'an with the tunes and voices of the Arabs and beware of the tunes of the people of passionate love and the tunes of the People of the two Books [meaning the Torah and Gospel]. After you will come a people who quaver their voices while reciting the Qur'an, as is done in singing and wailing. That will not go beyond their throats. Their hearts are tempted and attracting the hearts of those who admire them are what really concerns them." "Tunes" refers to intoning, quavering the voice and being good in recitation, poetry and singing.

Our scholars state that this is like those of the reciters of our time who do that before prayers and in gatherings, using foreign tunes which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade. Quavering (*tarji'*) in recitation is to repeat the letters like the Christians do. *Tartil* in reciting the Qur'an is to recite slowly and deliberately, and to make the letters and vowels clear. It is like the petals of the daisy. It is desirable when reciting the Qur'an. Allah says, "*Recite the Qur'an distinctly.*" (73:4) Umm Salama was asked about the recitation and prayer of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and she said, "What do you have to do with his prayer! He prayed and then slept the amount he prayed. Then he prayed the amount he slept and then he slept the amount he prayed until morning." Then she described his recitation, which was an explanatory recitation, letter by letter. An-Nasa'i, Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi transmitted it as being *hasan sahih gharib*.

Cautioning the people of the Qur'an and scholars against showing off

Allah Almighty says, "*Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him*" (4:36) and the Almighty also says, "*So let him who hopes to meet his Lord act rightly and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.*" (18:105). Muslim reported from Abu Hurayra that he heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "The first of people to be judged on the Day of Rising will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought forward and will be informed of the blessings he had and will acknowledge them. Allah will ask, 'What did you do with them?' He will say, 'I fought for You until I was martyred.' Allah will say, 'You lie. Rather you fought so it would be said, 'A bold man!' And so it was said.' Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire.

"There will also be a man who studied knowledge and taught it and recited the Qur'an. He will be brought and informed of his blessings which he will acknowledge. Allah will say, 'What did you do with them?' He will reply, 'I studied knowledge and taught it and I recited the Qur'an for You.' Allah will say, 'You lie. Rather you studied so that it would be said, "A scholar!" and you recited so that it would be said, "He is a reciter!" And so it was said.' Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire.

"There will also be a man to whom Allah gave a lot of wealth and all sorts of property. He will be brought and informed of his blessings which he will acknowledge. Allah will ask, 'What did you do with them?' He will answer, 'There was no path in which You like spending to be done but that I spent in it for You.' Allah will say, 'You lie. Rather you did it so that it would be said, "He is generous." and so it was said.' Then the command will be given and he will be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire."

In the *Raqa'iq*, Ibn al-Mubarak transmitted from al-'Abbas ibn 'Abdu'l-Muttalib that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "This *deen* will be victorious until it passes the sea and until you plunge into the sea with horses in the Way of Allah Almighty. Then there will come a people who recite the Qur'an. When they recite it, they will say, 'Who reads more than us? Who knows more than us?'" Then he turned to his Companions and said, "Do you think that there will be any good in those?" "No," they replied. He said, "Those are from you and those are from this Community and those are the fuel of the Fire." Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi transmitted that the Messenger of Allah said, "Anyone who learns knowledge which should be learned for the sake of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, only to obtain by it goods of this world, will not experience the scent of the Garden on the Day of Rising." At-Tirmidhi said it is a *hasan hadith*.

It is reported that Abu Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Seek refuge with Allah from the Pit of Sorrow." They asked, "Messenger of Allah, what is the Pit of Sorrow?" He replied, "It is a valley in Hell from which Hell seeks refuge a hundred times a day." He was asked, "Messenger of Allah, who will enter it?" He replied, "Those who recite to show off their actions." (*gharib*) In the book of Asad ibn Musa it is reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is a valley in Hell, and Hell seeks refuge from the evil of that valley seven times a day. In that valley is a pit, and Hell and that valley seek refuge from the evil of that pit. In that pit is a serpent and Hell, the valley and the pit seek refuge with Allah from the evil of that serpent seven times. Allah has prepared it for the wretched among those who know the Qur'an and disobey Allah."

So the one who knows the Qur'an and seeks knowledge should fear Allah regarding himself and act sincerely for Allah. If he does anything which is disliked, he should hasten to repent and begin to show sincerity in his goal and his actions. The one who knows the Qur'an must guard himself more carefully than others, as he has a wage which others do not have. At-Tirmidhi transmitted that Abu'd-Darda' reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah revealed in

one of the Books to one of the Prophets, 'Warn those who seek understanding for other than the *deen* and learn for other than action and seek this world by the deeds of the Next world. They will wear sheep-skins in front of people to give the impression of meekness while their hearts are like the hearts of wolves. Their tongues are sweeter than honey while their hearts are more bitter than aloes. They will try to deceive Me and will make light of Me. I will send them trials which will leave even the forbearing bewildered.'

At-Tabari transmitted in *Adab an-Nufus* that one of the Companions of the Prophet said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do not try to deceive Allah. If anyone tries to deceive Allah, Allah will deceive him. It is his own self which is deceived if he were only aware." They asked, "Messenger of Allah, how can someone try to deceive Allah?" He replied, "By doing what Allah has commanded you while you seek other than Him by it. Fear showing-off. It is *shirk*. The one who shows off will be summoned before witnesses on the Day of Rising by four names which he is called: 'O unbeliever! O loser! O perfidious! O deviant! Your actions are lost and your reward is nullified. You have no share today. Seek your reward from those you acted for, O impostor!'"

It is reported from 'Alqama that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "How will you feel when you are enveloped by a trial in which children grow old and the old become senile and people will act according to an innovated *sunna*? When any of it is changed, it will be said, 'The *sunna* has been changed.'" He was asked, "When will that be, Abu 'Abdu'r-Rahman?" He replied, "When your reciters are many and your *fuqaha*' are few, and your leaders are many and your trusted ones are few, and this world is sought by the actions of the Next World and people learn *fiqh* for other than the *deen*." Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna said, "I heard that Ibn 'Abbas said, "If those who know the Qur'an had taken it as it should be taken and in the way that is proper, Allah would love them. But they seek this world by it and so Allah hates them and they are indulgent with people." It is related from Muhammad ibn 'Ali about the words of the Almighty, "*They will be bundled headfirst into it, they and the misled*" (26:94), "This refers to people who describe the truth and justice with their tongues and then oppose it by espousing something other than that."

What the one who knows the Qur'an must do and not neglect to do

The first thing is to be sincere in seeking it for Allah as we mentioned. You should make yourself recite the Qur'an night and day, in the prayer or outside the prayer, so that you do not forget it. Muslim transmitted from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The example of the one who knows the Qur'an is like the one who has hobbled camels. If he takes care of them, he will keep them. If he releases them, they will go off. When the one who knows the Qur'an stands and recites it night and day, he remembers it. If he does not do that, he forgets it." So someone who knows Qur'an must praise Allah, be thankful for His blessing, remember Him, rely on Him, seek His help, desire Him and cling to Him. He must remember death and prepare for it. He should fear his wrong actions and hope for his Lord's pardon. His fear when his health is good should be stronger since he does not know what his seal will be. When he is close to dying, his hope should be stronger in himself because of his good

opinion of Allah. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "None of you should die except with a good opinion of Allah." This means you should think that He will have mercy on you and forgive you.

He should know the people of his time, preserve himself from the ruler, and strive to save himself and save his life, having to hand what he can of the goods of this world, striving for himself in that as much as he can. His greatest concern should be scrupulousness in his deen, fearfulness of Allah and watchful awareness of Him in what He commands and forbids. Ibn Mas'ud said, "The one who recites the Qur'an should be known by his nights when people are asleep and his days when people are awake, his weeping when people laugh, his silence when people delve into improper matters, his humility when they are arrogant and his sorrow when they are happy." 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar said, "The one who knows the Qur'an should not delve with those who delve, nor be ignorant with the ignorant, but he should pardon and overlook by the right of the Qur'an because inside of him are the words of Allah Almighty. He must protect himself from doubtful paths and laugh little and speak little in the gatherings of Qur'an and elsewhere concerning anything in which there is no benefit. He must be forbearing and grave.

He should be humble to the poor and avoid arrogance and vanity. He should withdraw from this world and its people if he fears temptation for himself, and should abandon argumentation and dispute. He should make an effort to be kind and show proper *adab*. He should be with those from whose evil he is safe, whose good he hopes for and from whose injury he is safe. He should not listen to those who slander in his presence and should keep the company of those who lead him to what is good and direct him to truthfulness and noble character, those who adorn him and do not sully him.

He must learn the rulings of the Qur'an and understand what Allah means and what He obliges. Then he will benefit from what he reads and act by what he recites. How vile is the one who knows the Qur'an and recites its obligations and rulings by heart but does not understand what he recites. How can the one who does not understand what it means act? How ugly it is that he is asked about the *fiqh* of what he recites but does not know it. The example of someone with a state like this is only like "*a donkey who carries volumes*" (62:5).

He should know the Makkan from the Madinan *suras* so that by that he can distinguish between what Allah told His slaves at the beginning of Islam and what was recommended for them at the end, what He obliged on them at the beginning of Islam and those obligations He added to it at the end. The Madinan abrogates the Makkan in most of the Qur'an. It is not possible for the Makkan to abrogate the Madinan because the abrogated was revealed before the abrogating. Part of his perfection is to know the *i'rab* (inflection/grammar) and the unusual. That is part of what will make it easy for him to know what he reads and will remove doubt from him in what he recites.

At-Tabari said, "I heard al-Jarmi say, "For thirty years, I have been giving people *fatwas* in *fiqh* taken from the book of Sibawayh [i.e. based on grammar]." Muhammad ibn Yazid said, "That was because Abu 'Umar al-Jarmi knew *ahadith*. When he learned the book of

Sibuwayh, he learned *fiqh* in *hadith* since it is from the book of Sibuwayh that he learned investigation and *tafsir*. Then he looked into the sunnas which are firmly transmitted from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is by means of them that the seeker reaches what Allah means in His Book and that opens up for him the judgements of the Qur'an. Ad-Dahhak said about the words of the Almighty, '*Be people of the Lord because of your knowledge of the Book.*' (3:79), 'It is a duty for whoever learns the Qur'an to be a faqih.'"

Ibn Abi'l-Hawari mentioned, "A group of us went to Fu'ayl ibn 'Iyad in 185 AH and stopped at his door, but he did not give us permission to enter. One of the people said, 'If he comes out for anything, he will come out to recitation of the Qur'an.' So we ordered a reciter to recite and he appeared to us from a window. We said, 'Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah.' He said, 'And peace upon you.' We asked, 'How are you, Abu 'Ali?' He replied, 'I am in well-being from Allah and harm from you. What you are doing is something new in Islam. We belong to Allah and are returning to Him! This is not how we seek knowledge! We used to go to the shaykhs and would not see ourselves worthy of sitting with them. We sat below them and eavesdropped. When a *hadith* was given, we would ask them to repeat it and we would retain it. You seek knowledge with ignorance. You waste the Book of Allah. If you had sought the Book of Allah, you would have found in it healing for what you want.' We said, 'We have studied the Qur'an.' He said, 'Your study of the Qur'an is work enough for your lives and the lives of your children!' We asked, 'How, Abu 'Ali?' He replied, 'You will not learn the Qur'an until you know its *i'rab*, its *muhkam* from its *mutashabih*, and its abrogating from its abrogated. When you know that, then you will have no need of the words of Fudayl and Ibn 'Uyayna.' Then he said, 'I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing from the Accursed Shaytan. In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. "*O mankind! An admonition has come to you from your Lord and also healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers. Say: 'It is the favour of Allah and His mercy that should be the cause of their rejoicing. That is better than anything they accumulate.*"' (10:57-58)"

When the reader of the Qur'an obtains these ranks, he will be fluent in the Qur'an and know the Discrimination. He will be close to the one who brings him close to it. He will not benefit from any of what we have mentioned until he has a sincere intention for Allah when he seeks it, or continues to have a sincere intention after learning it, as was already stated. A seeker of knowledge may begin by desiring reputation and honour in the *deen*. Then his understanding of knowledge continues until it is clear to him that he has erred in his belief, and so he repents of that and makes his intention sincere for Allah. He benefits from that and improves his state. Al-Hasan said, "We used to seek knowledge for this world and it dragged us to the Next World." Sufyan ath-Thawri said that. Habib ibn Abi Thabit said, "We sought this matter and we had no intention in it. The intention came afterwards."

The syntax of the Qur'an, learning it and studying it and the reward for the one who recites the Qur'an with proper inflections

Al-Anbari said, "The Prophet, his Companions and their Followers all mention the excellence of proper understanding of the syntax of the Qur'an and the encouragement to learn it and censure and dislike poor grammatical understanding. This obliges the reciters of the Qur'an to strive to learn it.

"One aspect of that is in what is related from Abu Hurayra who reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Use the proper syntax in the Arabic of the Qur'an and search out its unusual words." It is reported from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone recites the Qur'an without its correct grammar, an angel is entrusted to him to write for him, as is revealed, ten good deeds for every letter. When he uses correct grammar for some of it and fails to do so for some of it, two angels are entrusted who write down every letter with twenty good deeds. If he inflects it correctly, four angels are entrusted to him to write down seventy good deeds for every letter." Ad-Dahhak reported that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "Recite the Qur'an well and adorn it with your voices and employ its correct syntax. It is Arabic and Allah loves the correct syntax to be employed." Mujahid reported that Ibn 'Umar said, "Use correct syntax in the Qur'an."

Abu Bakr and 'Umar said, "We prefer some syntax of the Qur'an to simply memorising its letters." Ash-Sha'bi reported that 'Umar said, "Anyone who recites the Qur'an with its syntax has the reward of a martyr with Allah." Makhul said, "We were told that anyone who recites with correct syntax has double the reward of someone who recites without it.' Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Love the Arabs for three reasons: because I am an Arab, the Qur'an is in Arabic and the language of the people of the Garden will be Arabic." Abu Æamza said, "Al-Hasan was asked about people studying Arabic and he said, 'They do well. They learn the language of their Prophet.'" Al-Æasan was told, "We have an imam who uses ungrammatical Arabic." He said, "Dismiss him."

Ibn Abi Mulayka said, "A bedouin arrived in Madina in the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and asked, 'Who will recite some of what was revealed to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace?' A man recited *Surat at-Tawba* to him. He said, 'Allah is free of the idolaters and His Messenger' using the genitive for Messenger (*rasulih*).' The bedouin said, 'Allah is free of His Messenger? If Allah is free of His Messenger, we are more free of him.' 'Umar heard what the bedouin had said so he summoned him and said, 'Bedouin, are you free of the Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'Amir al-Mu'minin, I came to Madina with no knowledge of the Qur'an. I asked someone to recite it to me and he recited this *Sura at-Tawba* and said, "Allah is free of the idolaters and His Messenger." So I said, "Allah is free of His Messenger? If Allah is free of His Messenger, we are more free of him.'" 'Umar said, 'That is not how it is, bedouin.' He said, 'How is it then, Amir al-Mu'minin?' He said, 'Allah is free of the idolaters, as is His Messenger (*rasuluh*).' The bedouin said, 'We, by Allah, are more free of what Allah and His Messenger are free of!' So 'Umar ibn al-Khattab commanded that only those who knew proper grammar should recite to people and he commanded Abu'l-Aswad to set out the grammar."

'Ali ibn al-Ja'd reported that he heard Shu'ba say, "The metaphor of someone who knows the *hadith* but does not know Arabic is that of a donkey which has a nosebag with no fodder in it." Hammad ibn Salama said, "The one who seeks *hadith* and does not learn grammar – or Arabic – is like a donkey who has a nosebag in which there is no barley." Ibn 'Atiyya said, "The syntax of the Qur'an is a basic principle in the Shari'a because it is that by which its meanings, which are the Shari'a, are established."

Ibn al-Anbari said, "The Companions of the Prophet and their Followers provide evidence for using language and poetry to explain unusual and problematic words in the Qur'an and that demonstrates the soundness of the school of the grammarians respecting that and the falsity of those who deny that. It is reported from 'Ikrima that Ibn 'Abbas said, "When you ask me about the unusual words of Allah, look for them in poetry. Poetry is the lexicon of the Arabs." Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Yusuf ibn Mihran were heard to mention that they heard Ibn 'Abbas being asked about something in the Qur'an and he replied. "It means such and such. Have you not heard the poet say such-and-such?"

What is reported about the excellence of *tafsir* of the Qur'an and those who do it

Our scholars say that part of what is transmitted from the Companions and Followers about the excellence of *tafsir* is that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib mentioned Jabir ibn 'Abdullah and described him as having knowledge. A man said to him, "May I be your ransom! You describe Jabir as having knowledge when you are who are you are!" He said, "He knew the *tafsir* of the words of Allah, *'He who has imposed the Qur'an upon you will most certainly bring you back home again.'* (28:85)" Mujahid said, "The dearest of creatures to Allah Almighty is the one who has the most knowledge of what is revealed." Al-Hasan said, "Allah has not revealed an ayat but that He wants people to know about what it was revealed for and what it means." Ash-Sha'bi said, "Masruq travelled to Basra for the *tafsir* of an *ayat* and was told that the one who could explain it had travelled to Syria. So he made preparations and travelled to Syria to learn its *tafsir*."

'Ikrima said about the words of the Almighty, *"If anyone leaves his home, making hijra to Allah and His Messenger"* (4:99), "I sought for the name of this man 'who left his home, emigrating for Allah and His Messenger' for fourteen years until I found him." Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said that it was Damra ibn Habib. Ibn 'Abbas said, "I remained for two years wanting to ask 'Umar about the two women who helped each other against the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and only awe of him prevented me from asking. Finally I asked him and he replied that it was Hafsa and 'A'isha." Iyas ibn Mu'awiya said, "The metaphor of those who recite the Qur'an without knowing its *tafsir* is that of some people to whom a letter comes from their king at night when they have no lamp. They are alarmed, not knowing what the letter contains. The metaphor of the one who knows the *tafsir* is that of a man who brings them a lamp so that they can read what the letter says."

What is reported about the one who is a bearer of the Qur'an, who he is and those who are hostile to him

Abu 'Umar said, "It is related by various paths that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Part of esteem for Allah is honouring three: a just ruler, a Muslim with white hair and a bearer of the Qur'an who is neither excessive in it nor turns away from it.'" Abu 'Umar said that the bearers of the Qur'an are those who know its rulings, its lawful and unlawful and act by what it contains. Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The Qur'an is better than everything. Whoever respects the Qur'an has respected Allah. Whoever makes light of the Qur'an has made light of the right of Allah Almighty. The bearers of the Qur'an are those who are encircled by the mercy of Allah, exalting the Word of Allah, touched by the light of Allah. Allah befriends whoever befriends them and Allah is hostile to whoever is hostile to them. Such people have made light of the right of Allah."

The respect and esteem for the Qur'an which is mandatory for someone who recites and bears the Qur'an

In *Nawadir al-Usul*, at-Tirmidhi al-Hakim said, "Part of respect for the Qur'an is to only touch it when pure. Part of respect for it is to recite it in a state of purity. Part of respect for it is to use the tooth-stick (*siwak*), clean between the teeth and make the mouth clean as the mouth is its pathway. Yazid ibn Abi Malik said, 'Your mouths are the pathways of the Qur'an, so purify and clean them as much as you can.'

"Part of respect for it is to dress as you would dress to visit the amir because you are speaking privately. Part of respect for it is to face *qibla* to recite it. When Abu'l-'Aliyya recited he would put on a turban, dress, wear a mantle and face *qibla*. Part of respect for it is to rinse your mouth when you spit. Shu'ba reported from Abu Hamza from Ibn 'Abbas that he had a spittoon in front of him and when he spat, he would rinse his mouth and then begin recitation. Whenever he spat, he rinsed. Part of respect for it is that when you yawn, you should stop reciting, because when one recites, one is addressing and conversing with the Lord. Yawning is from Shaytan. Mujahid said, 'When you yawn while reciting the Qur'an, stop reciting out of respect until you stop yawning.' Ikrima said, 'By that he meant to respect the Qur'an.'

"Part of respect for it is to seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan when starting to recite it. You should say 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful' when beginning to recite it from the first sura or from wherever you start. Part of respect for it is that, when you begin to recite it, you should not stop for a time to speak to people without need. Part of respect for it is that you should not stop reciting it when someone interrupts you by speaking to you and mix recitation with your reply. That is because when you do that, you remove the effectiveness of the formula of seeking refuge which you uttered at the beginning. Part of respect for it is to recite it deliberately, slowly and carefully.

"Part of respect for it is to deploy your mind and intelligence in understanding what is addressed to you. Part of respect for it is to stop at an *ayat* of promise and have hope in Allah and ask Him for His bounty, and to stop at an *ayat* of warning and seek refuge with Allah from the threat. Part of respect for it is to stop at its metaphors and visualise them.

Part of respect for it is to investigate its unusual words. Part of respect for it is to give every letter its due so that the words are fully articulated and then you will receive ten good deeds for every letter.

"Part of respect for it is to end its recitation by proclaiming the truthfulness of its Lord and testifying to its delivery by His Messenger and testifying that that is true. You say, 'Our Lord has spoken the Truth and His Messengers conveyed it and we testify to that. O Allah, make us among the witnesses to the Truth, establishing justice.' Then you make supplication.

"Part of respect for it is that when you recite, you do not take *ayats* piecemeal from each *sura* and recite them. It is related to us that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, passed by Bilal who was reciting a little from each *sura* and he commanded him to recite the entire *sura*.

"Part of respect for it is that when you put down a copy of the Qur'an, you do not leave it open and do you not put any other book on top of it. It should always be on top of any other books, be they books of knowledge or other books. Part of respect for it is that when you recite, you put it in your lap or on top of something in front of you and do not put it on the ground. Part of respect for it is not to erase the board it is written on with spit, but rather use water. Part of respect for it is that when it is washed with water you avoid impurities from various places and in the places where it is put. That washing is respect. Some of the Salaf before us used to use that water to heal themselves. Part of respect for it is to not take a page when it is worn out and brittle out of fear for the writing. That is great coarseness. It should be erased with water.

"Part of respect for it is to not let a day pass without looking at least once at the Qur'an. Abu Musa used to say, 'I am ashamed not to look once a day at the contract of my Lord.' Part of respect for it to give the eyes their share of it. The eye leads to the self. Between the self and the breast is a veil and the Qur'an is in the breast. When you recite it by heart the ear listens and conveys it to the self. When you look at its writing, the eye and the ear both convey it. That is more likely to achieve the conveyance. Then the eye has its share just as the ear does. Zayd ibn Aslam reported from 'Ata' ibn Yasar from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Give the eyes their portion of worship.' They asked, 'Messenger of Allah, what is their portion of worship?' He replied, 'To look at the Qur'an and reflect on it and study its wonders.' Makhul reported from 'Ubada ibn as-Samit that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'The best worship of my community is to read the Qur'an with the eyes.'

"Part of respect for it is not to resort to it when offered worldly goods. It is reported É that Ibrahim [an-Nakha'i] used to dislike to resort to any of the Qur'an when he was offered worldly goods. That is like saying to a man who comes to you, '*You have arrived at the pre-ordained time, Musa,*' (20:40) and like saying, '*Eat and drink with relish for what you did before in days gone by*' (69:24) when food is served, and other such things. Part of respect for it is not to say *Surat an-Nahl*, *Surat al-Baqara* and *Surat an-Nisa'*, but

to say, 'The *sura* in which such-and-such is mentioned.' (This, however, is contrary to the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "If anyone recites the two *ayats* from the end of *Surat al-Baqara* at night, they will be enough for him.") (al-Bukhari and Muslim from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud)

"Part of respect for it is to not invert it as some teachers of children do in order to show off cleverness and fluency. That is opposition to Allah. Part of respect for it is to not deepen its recitation as if done by those obstinate innovators who intensify the pronunciation of the *hamza* and pronounce words with affectation. That is an innovation which Shaytan suggested to them which they accepted. Part of respect for it is not to recite it using musical tunes like the tunes of the people of depravity nor with the quavering of the Christians nor chanting of the monks. All of that is deviation.

"Part of respect for it is to make its letters bold. Abu Hukayma reported that he used to copy out Qur'an in Kufa. 'Ali passed by him, inspected his writing and ordered, 'Make your pen thicker.' 'So I took the pen and cut off part of it and then wrote while 'Ali was standing and looking at my writing. He said, 'Like that. Give light to it as Allah gave it light.'"

"Part of respect for it is not to compete in loudness in recitation so that it becomes spoiled for him and he hates what he hears and it becomes like a contest. Part of respect for it is not to argue or quarrel about its recitations or say to a person, 'It is not like that.' Perhaps that recitation is a sound and permitted one and then you would be denying the Book of Allah.

"Part of respect for it is not to recite it in the market or in places of clamour, worthless talk, and the places where fools congregate. Do you not see that Allah Almighty mentioned the slaves of the All-Merciful and praised them because, when they pass by worthless talk, they pass by it with dignity? (cf. 25:72) This is about simply passing by those engaged in worthless talk. So how could they recite the Qur'an in the midst of worthless talk and a gathering of fools?

"Part of respect for it is not to use it as pillow or lean on it or throw it to someone when he wants it to be passed to him.

"Part of respect for it is not to make it small. É It is reported that 'Ali said, 'Do not make the Qur'an small.' It is related that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab saw a small Qur'an in the hand of a man and asked, 'Who wrote it?' 'I did,' he replied, and then 'Umar struck him with his whip and said, 'Esteem the Qur'an.' It is related that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade people to say, 'a little mosque or a little Qur'an' (using the diminutive).

"Part of respect for it is not to adorn it with gold or write it in gold so that it is mixed with the adornment of this world. Mughira related that Ibrahim disliked adorning the Qur'an or writing it with gold or putting marks at the beginning of *ayats* or making it small. It is related from Abu'd-Darda' that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant

him peace, said, 'When you adorn your mosque and decorate your Qur'an, then ruin is upon you.' When Ibn 'Abbas saw a Qur'an adorned with silver he said, 'You tempt the thief with it. Its adornment is inside it.'

"Part of respect for it is that it should not be written on the ground or on a wall as is done in modern mosques.É It is reported that 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, passed by some writing on the ground and said to a lad of the tribe of Hudhayl, 'What is this?' He replied, 'It is from the Book of Allah. A Jew wrote it.' He said, 'May Allah curse the one who did this. Only put the Book of Allah in its proper place.' Muhammad ibn az-Zubayr said that 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Aziz saw a son of his writing the Qur'an on a wall and beat him.

"Part of respect for it is that when its writing is washed for treating an illness, it should not be poured on a rubbish heap or in a place of impurity or in a place where people walk, but in a place where people do not walk, or a hole should be dug in a pure place so that it can be poured into it, or it can be poured into a large river.

"Part of respect for it is that, whenever someone completes the recitation of the entire Qur'an, he recites some of the beginning so that it does not have the form of something abandoned. That is why when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, finished reciting, he would recite about five ayats from the beginning so that it would not be in an abandoned form. Ibn 'Abbas said that a man came and asked, 'Messenger of Allah, which action is best?' He replied, 'You must have the embarking state.' 'What is the embarking state?' he asked. He replied, "The one with the Qur'an who starts from its beginning until he reaches its end and then starts at the beginning. Whenever he alights, he immediately travels on.'

It is recommended to gather your family when you finish the Qur'an. Al-Anbari reported É from Qatada that when Anas ibn Malik finished reciting the Qur'an, he would gather his family and make supplication. It is reported that when Mujahid, 'Abda ibn Abi Lubaba and various people were about to complete the recitation, they would summon people since mercy descends at the conclusion of the Qur'an. It is reported that Ibrahim at-Taymi said, "When someone finishes the Qur'an at the beginning of the day, the angels bless him until evening. When someone finishes the Qur'an at the beginning of the night, the angels bless him until morning." He said, "They recommended that it should be finished at the beginning of the night or at the beginning of the day."

"Part of respect for it is that you should not write the refuge *suras* from it and then enter the lavatory unless they are inside a covering of leather or silver or something else. Then it is as if it were inside his breast.

"Part of respect for it is that when you write it out [for medicinal purposes] and then drink it, you should say the Name of Allah for every breath and have a very strong intention. Allah will give to you according to your intention. Mujahid said, 'There is no harm in writing out the Qur'an and then having a sick person drink it.' Abu Ja'far said, 'If someone has hardness in his heart, he should write '*Yasin*' on a goblet with saffron and drink it.'

"Part of respect for it is not to say, 'What a short *sura*!' Abu'l-'Aliyya disliked saying 'what a short or large *sura*'. When he heard someone say that, he would retort, 'You are smaller than it. All of the Qur'an is immense.'" Abu Dawud related the contrary of this from the *hadith* of 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his grandfather which states that one can use those terms. 'Amr said, "No small or large *sura* is part of the *Mufasssal*."

What is reported regarding threats against engaging in *tafsir* of the Qur'an by means of opinion (*ra'y*) or being bold in that, and the ranks of the commentators

It is related that 'A'isha said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not explain the Book of Allah except for some *ayats* which Jibril taught him." Ibn 'Atiyya said, "The meaning of this *hadith* is that it is about the unseen things of the Qur'an, explaining what is ambivalent (*mujmal*) and the like to which there is no way to uncover except with Allah's help. Part of that are those unseen matters which Allah has not made known, like the time of the Rising and the number of blasts on the Trumpet and the order of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

At-Tirmidhi reported from Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Fear attributing words to me which you do not know. Anyone who deliberately tells a lie regarding me will take his seat in the Fire. Anyone who speaks about the Qur'an by own opinion, should take his seat in the Fire." It is also reported from Jundub that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Anyone who speaks on the Qur'an by his own opinion and is right is still wrong." This is a *gharib hadith* in Abu Dawud and one of its transmitters is questionable. Razin added, "Whoever speaks by his opinion and errs has disbelieved."

Al-Anbari said in the *Kitab ar-Radd*, "There are two interpretations of the *hadith* of Ibn 'Abbas. One is that someone who speaks on problematic things (*mushkil*) in the Qur'an by what he does not know, differing from the position of the first Companions and Followers, exposes himself to the anger of Allah. The second, which is the firmer and sounder of the two, is that when someone says something about the Qur'an knowing the truth to be different, he should take his seat in the Fire."

Regarding the *hadith* of Jundub, some of the people of knowledge say that "opinion" here means "whim". Whoever speaks about the Qur'an according to his own whims and does not take from the Imams of the Salaf and happens to be right is still wrong since he has judged the Qur'an by something whose basis is not recognised and is not based on the position of those with expertise in traditions and transmission. Ibn 'Atiyya says, "The meaning of this is that a man is asked about a meaning of the Book of Allah and hurries to explain it by his own opinion without looking at what the scholars have said and what the rules of knowledge like syntax and usual demand." Not included is the explanation of grammarians and linguists of its grammar and the *fuqaha'* of its meaning where each speaks by his *ijtihad* based on the rules of his own branch of knowledge and investigation."

This is sound and more than one scholar prefers it. The one who speaks according to what pops into his imagination and occurs to his mind without seeking evidence for it in the fundamental principles errs. Anyone who derives its meanings by basing himself on the fundamental principles which are agreed upon is praised.

Some scholars said that tafsir is dependant on oral transmission since Allah says, "*If you have a dispute about something, refer it back to Allah and His Messenger.*" (4:59) This is false because the prohibition against explaining the Qur'an is either that what is desired is to confine oneself to transmission and not investigate, or it is something else. It is false that what is meant is that no one should say anything about the Qur'an other than what he has heard. The Companions recited the Qur'an and differed about its interpretation in some cases. Not all of what they said was what they heard from the Prophet. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made supplication for Ibn 'Abbas and said, "O Allah, give him understanding in the deen and teach him interpretation." If interpretation is confined to Revelation and Prophetic reports, what is the point of singling him out for that? This is clear and undoubted.

The prohibition against *tafsir* applies to two instances. The first is when the interpreter has opinion about something on the basis of his nature and passion and, therefore, interprets the Qur'an according to his opinion and passion in an effort to justify his position. If it had not been for that opinion and passion, that meaning about the Qur'an would not have occurred to him. This can sometimes be conscious, as in the case of someone who uses some *ayats* of the Qur'an to prove the validity of an innovation, when he knows that that is not what is meant by the *ayat*, *but* his aim is to confuse his opponent. Sometimes it is done in ignorance which may happen when an *ayat* can be applied in various ways and his understanding inclines to the meaning which coincides with his position. He prefers that interpretation because of his opinion and passion and so he interprets it according to his own opinion. If it had not been for his opinion, he would not preferred that meaning.

Sometimes someone has a sound purpose and seeks evidence for it in the Qur'an and uses what he knows of it as evidence for what he wants, like the one who calls people to strive against a hard heart. Allah says, "*Go to Pharaoh. He has overstepped the bounds.*" (20:23) He points to his heart and suggests that that is what is meant by 'Pharaoh' in this *ayat*. This kind of interpretation is used by some preachers with good motives to make their words effective and encourage their listeners. This is forbidden because it is unacceptable linguistic analogy and is not permissible. The esoterists use the same method to false purposes with the goal of deluding people and calling them to their false beliefs. They use the Qur'an according to their opinion and position in matters that they absolutely know are not meant. This is one of the aspects of tafsir that is forbidden.

The second instance is when an interpreter hastens to explain the Qur'an according to the literal meaning of the Arabic without the help of transmission about what the unusual words of the Qur'an mean and what has been passed down about the ambiguous and interchangeable words, conciseness, elision, concealment and reversal of order it contains. Someone who does not have a firm grasp of the literal *tafsir* and then sets out to

derive meanings by simple understanding of Arabic often errs and joins the company of those who interpret the Qur'an according to their own opinions.

Transmission is necessary first of all in the primary *tafsir* so that one avoids error, and then after that one employs understanding and deduction to expand on it. The unusual words which are only understood via transmission are numerous, and one cannot hope to reach the inward before having a firm grasp of the outward. Do you not see that the Almighty says, "*We gave Thamud the camel as a visible sign (mubsira) and then they mistreated her*" (17:59)? It means a visible sign and they wronged themselves by killing it. Someone who looks at the literal Arabic might think that it means that the camel could see (*mubsira*) and therefore not know what they did wrong and how they wronged others and themselves. This is part of elision and concealment. There are many such examples in the Qur'an. In cases other than these two, there is no prohibition against interpretation, and Allah knows best.

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "Most of the righteous Salaf like Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, 'Amir ash-Sha'bi and others used to be overawed at the prospect of making interpretation of the Qur'an and would refrain from it out of scrupulousness and cautiousness for themselves in spite of their perfection and precedence." Al-Anbari said, "The imams of the Salaf were too scrupulous to explain the problematic parts of the Qur'an. One supposed that his *tafsir* might not coincide with what Allah meant and so refrained from speaking. Another feared that he would become an imam in *tafsir* and people might follow his method, when he might hesitate to explain a single letter according to his own opinion or to err about it and then his follower might say, 'My imam in the *tafsir* of the Qur'an by opinion is so-and-so, the imam of the Salaf.' Ibn Abi Mulayka said, 'Abu Bakr as-Siddiq was asked about the *tafsir* of a letter of the Qur'an and said, "Which heaven will cover me and which earth will bear me? Where will I go? What will I do if I say about a letter of the Book of Allah other than what Allah Almighty meant?"

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "Several of the Salaf used to explain the Qur'an and made the Muslims continue in that. As for the beginning of the commentators on whom they relied, there was 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, and he was followed by 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, who devoted himself to the subject and perfected it. He was followed by scholars like Mujahid, Sa'id ibn Jubayr and others. More is transmitted from him in that than is retained from 'Ali. Ibn 'Abbas said, 'What I took of *tafsir* of the Qur'an was from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.' 'Ali used to praise the *tafsir* of Ibn 'Abbas and encouraged people to take it from him. Ibn 'Abbas used to say about himself, 'An excellent translator of the Qur'an is 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas.' 'Ali said about him, 'It is as if Ibn 'Abbas looks at the unseen through a fine curtain.'"

He was followed by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thabit, and 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As. All that is taken from the Companions has excellent preference because they witnessed the revelation and its descent in their language. 'Amir ibn Wathila said, "I saw 'Ali ibn Abi Talib speaking. I heard him say in his *khutba*, 'Ask me. By Allah, you will not ask me about anything that will happen until the Day of Rising but that I will tell you about it. Ask me about the Book of Allah. By Allah, there is

no ayat but that I know whether it was revealed at night or in the day, revealed on flat ground or on a mountain." Ibn al-Kawwa' rose and asked about *Surat adh-Dhariyat* (51).

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "If I knew of anyone with more knowledge of the Book of Allah than me, who could be reached by mounts, I would go to him." A man asked him, "Have you not met 'Ali ibn Abi Talib?" "Yes," he replied, "I have met him." Masruq said, "I found some of the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, like pools which water one person, some like pools which water two, and some such that if all people had come to it, it would satisfy them. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was one those pools."

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The most merciful to my community is Abu Bakr, the strongest in the *deen* of Allah is 'Umar, the most truly modest is 'Uthman, the one with the most knowledge of judgement is 'Ali, and the one with most knowledge of the shares of inheritance is Zayd. The one with the most recitation of the Book of Allah is Ubayy ibn Ka'b. The one with the most knowledge of the lawful and unlawful is Mu'adh ibn Jabal. The trustworthy representative of this community is Abu 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah. Abu Hurayra is a vessel of knowledge and Salman is a sea of knowledge which is not perceived. Vegetation has not shaded nor has the earth supported anyone with a more truthful tongue than Abu Dharr."

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "The prominent Followers (Tabi'un) included al-Hasan al-Basri, Mujahid, Sa'id ibn Jubayr and 'Alqama. Mujahid studied recitation with Ibn 'Abbas coupled with understanding the meaning, stopping at every ayat. 'Ikrima and ad-Dahhak followed them. Even if ad-Dahhak did not meet Ibn 'Abbas, he studied with Ibn Jubayr. As for as-Suddi, 'Æmir ash-Sha'bi attacked him and Abu Salih because he thought that they fell short in investigation."

Then the *tafsir* was transmitted by just men of every generation, as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "This knowledge will be carried by just men of every generation, discarding from it the deviation of the excessive, the ascriptions of the falsifiers and the interpretation of the ignorant." (Abu 'Umar and others related it). Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi said, "This testimony from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, shows that Qur'anic interpreters are scholars of the *deen* and imams of the Muslims because they guard the Shari'a against deviation and the ascription of falsehood and refute the interpretation of ignorant fools. One must consult them and rely on them in the business of the *deen*."

The Book being explained by the Sunna, and what has been transmitted about that

Allah says, "*And We have sent down the Reminder to you so that you can make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them*" (16:44), and "*Those who oppose his command should beware of a testing trial coming to them or a painful punishment striking them*" (24:59) and "*Truly you are guiding to a Straight Path.*" (42:49) It is made

obligatory to obey the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in more than one *ayat* of the Book and that is connected to obeying Allah, Allah says, "*Whatever the Messenger gives you you should accept and whatever He forbids you you should forgo.*" (59:7) Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr mentioned that 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn Yazid saw a muhrim wearing his ordinary clothes and he forbade him to do that. The man said to him, "Bring me an *ayat* from the Book of Allah which removes my clothes." He recited to him, "*Whatever the Messenger gives you you should accept and whatever He forbids you you should forgo.*" (59:7) Hisham ibn Hujayr said, "Tawus prayed two *rak'ats* after 'Asr and Ibn 'Abbas said, 'Stop performing them." He said, 'It is only forbidden to take them as a sunna.' Ibn 'Abbas said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade praying after 'Asr. I do not know whether you will be punished or rewarded for them because Allah says, "*When Allah and His Messenger have decided a thing it is not for any believing man or believing woman to have a choice about it.*" (33:36)"

Abu Dawud related from al-Miqdam ibn Ma'dikarib that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "I was given the Book and its like with it. It will not be long before a satiated man on his throne declares, 'This Qur'an is all you need. Make lawful whatever you find lawful in it and make unlawful whatever you find unlawful in it.' But domestic donkeys are not lawful for you nor is eating any beast of prey with fangs nor is something dropped by someone who has a treaty with you until its owner declares himself free of it. If someone stops off with some people, they must give him hospitality. If they do not, he can legally pursue them for the equivalent cost of his due hospitality."

Al-Khattabi said that the words, "I was given the Book and its like with it," can be interpreted in two ways. One is that it means he was given hidden revelation which is not recited in the same way that he was given the outward recited part. The second is that he was given the Book as recited revelation and was given clarification like it, meaning permission to explain what was in the Book, making it general and specific, adding to it and legislating what is in it. Therefore it is mandatory to act by that and to accept it like the outward recited Qur'an. The *hadith* is a warning against opposing those established *sunan* which are not in the Qur'an, as was done by the Kharijites and Rafidites. They attached themselves to the literal text of the Qur'an and abandoned the *sunnas* which contain the clarification of the Book. This *hadith* contains evidence that there is no need to compare the *hadith* with the Book. Whatever is confirmed as being from the Prophet is evidence in itself. As for what some relate, "When a *hadith* comes to you, compare it with the Book. If it agrees with it, take it. Otherwise, discard it," it is a baseless false *hadith*.

The clarification is of two types: a general clarification of the Book, like clarifying the five prayers, their times, prostration, *ruku'* and all their rulings, the amount and time of *zakat* and the types of property from which it is taken, and the details the practices of hajj. When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, performed the hajj with the people, he said, "Take your practices from me," and he said, "Pray as you saw me praying." (al-Bukhari) 'Imran ibn Husayn said to a man, "You stupid man! Do you find *Dhuhr* in the Book of Allah as four *rak'ats* in which recitation is not aloud!" Then he

enumerated for him the prayer, *zakat* and the like and then said, "Do you find this explained in the Book of Allah? The Book of Allah Almighty did not define this while the *Sunna* explains it!"

Al-Awza'i reported that Hassan ibn 'Atiyya said, "Revelation descended on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and Jibril brought him the Sunna which explains that." É Al-Awza'i also reported that Makhul said, "The Qur'an is more in need of the Sunna than the Sunna is of the Qur'an." Yahya ibn Abi Kathir said, "The Sunna judges the Book and the Book does not judge the Sunna." Al-Fudayl ibn Ziyad said that he heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal being asked about this *hadith* and he said, "I am not so bold as to say it, but I say the Sunna explains and clarifies the Book."

How to learn and understand the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet. It is reported that it used to be easier to act by it than to memorise it

In the *Kitab al-Bayan*, ad-Dani reports from 'Uthman, Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to recite ten *ayats* to them, and they did not go on to another ten until they knew what action was connected to those *ayats*. So we should learn the Qur'an and how to act by it at the same time. It is reported that as-Sulami said, "When we learned ten *ayats* of the Qur'an, we did not learn the ten after them until we knew what they contained of the *halal* and *haram*, of prohibitions and commands." In the *Muwatta'*, Malik reported that he heard that 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar spent eight years learning *Surat al-Baqara*. In his book, *The Names of Those who Transmitted from Malik*, Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Thabit mentions that Nafi' transmitted that Ibn 'Umar said, "'Umar learned al-Baqara over twelve years. When he finished, he slaughtered a camel." Al-Anbari reports that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "It was difficult for us to memorise the words of the Qur'an, but easy for us to act by them. After us will be people for whom it is easy to memorise the Qur'an, but hard to act by it."

It is reported that Ibn 'Umar said, "The best of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, at the beginning of this Community only memorised a sura or two of the Qur'an. They were given the gift of acting by the Qur'an. The last of this community will recite the Qur'an – children and blind – and will not be given the gift of acting by it." Khalaf ibn Hisham al-Bazzar was heard to say, "I only think that the Qur'an our hands has been denuded [of action]. That is because we were told that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab memorised *Surat al-Baqara* over the course of about ten years. When he had memorised it, he slaughtered a camel to thank Allah. In our time, a boy sits before me and recites a third of the Qur'an without missing out a single letter. I only reckon that the Qur'an is denuded in our hands."

The meaning of the words of the Prophet, "The Qur'an was revealed in seven *ahruf* (dialects/modes)."

In the Sahih of Muslim, Ubayy ibn Ka'b reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, was with the Banu Ghifar when Jibril came to him and said, "Allah commands you to

recite the Qur'an to your Community in one mode." He said, "I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness. My Community will not be able to do that." Then he came a second time and said, "Allah commands you to recite the Qur'an to your Community in two modes." He said, "I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness. My Community will not be able to do that." He came a third time and said, "Allah commands you to recite the Qur'an to your Community in three modes." He replied, "I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness. My Community will not be able to do that." He came a fourth time and said, "Allah commands you to recite the Qur'an to your community in seven modes. Whichever mode they recite, it is correct." At-Tirmidhi reported that Ubayy said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, met Jibril and said, 'Jibril, I was sent to an illiterate community. Some of them are old women and old men, boys and girls, and men who do not read at all.' He said to him, 'Muhammad, the Qur'an was revealed in seven modes.'" (*sahih*) This story is confirmed in the main authorities: al-Bukhari, Muslim, the *Muwatta'*, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i and other books in the form of the story about Hisham ibn Hakim with 'Umar which we will mention later.

Scholars disagree about what is meant by the seven modes, and there are thirty-five things mentioned by al-Busti. We will mention five of them here:

-This is the position of most of the people of knowledge, such as Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna, 'Abdullah ibn Wahb, at-Tabari, at-Tahawi and others. What is meant are the seven manners of synonyms with different expressions, like *aqbala*, *ta'ala* and *halluma* (all of which mean "come here"). At-Tahawi said, "The clearest elucidation of that is what is mentioned in the *hadith* of Abu Bakra, 'Jibril came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said, "Recite in one mode." Mika'il said, "Increase it." He said, "Recite it in two modes." Mika'il said, "Increase it," until it was seven modes. He said, "Recite it. Each is adequate unless you confuse an *ayat* of mercy for an *ayat* of punishment or an *ayat* of punishment with an *ayat* of mercy." That is like *halluma*, *ta'ala*, *aqbala*, *adhaba*, *asra'a* and *'ajjala*. It is related from Ibn 'Abbas that Ubayy ibn Ka'b used to recite "wait for us" (57:13) "*undhuruna*" as "umhuluna", "*akhkhiruna*", and "*arqubuna*". With the same *isnad*, it is reported that Ubayy recited in 2:19 "*marru*" instead of "*mashaw*" and "*sa'aw*" (they walk). In al-Bukhari, az-Zuhri said, "These modes are about the same matter. They do not differ in respect of the *halal* and *haram*."

At-Tahawi said, "There was scope for people in the letters since they were unable to take the Qur'an in other than their dialects because they were illiterate and only a few of them could write. It was hard for someone with a dialect to change to another. If he wanted to do that, it would have entailed great hardship and so they were given scope regarding different expressions as long as the meaning was the same. They remained like that until many of them could write and the dialects reverted to that of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Then they were able to memorise those words and they no longer had the allowance to recite differently." Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said, "It is clear that scope for the seven modes was at a particular time out of necessity. When that necessity was removed, the ruling of the seven was removed, and the Qur'an was recited in one mode."

- Some people say that the seven dialects in the Qur'an are the seven dialects of all the Arabs, both Yamani and Nizar, because the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was not ignorant of any of them. He was "given all the words". It does not mean that the one mode has seven aspects, but these seven dialects are in different parts of the Qur'an. Some of it is in the dialect of Quraysh, some in that of Hudhayl, some in Hawazin, and some in Yamani. Al-Khattabi said, "That is how the Qur'an is recited in seven ways." This is the meaning of the Qur'an being revealed in seven modes. Al-Qasim ibn Sallam believed that and Ibn 'Atiyya preferred it. Some tribes used writing more than others. Anas mentioned that when 'Uthman told them copy out the Qur'an, he said, "When you and Zayd differ, then write in the dialect of Quraysh. It was revealed in their dialect." (al-Bukhari)

Qadi Ibn at-Tayyib [al-Baqillani] said, "The meaning of 'Uthman's words that it was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh, means most of it. It is not a definitive proof that it is all in the dialect of Quraysh since there are words and letters which differ from the dialect of Quraysh. This indicates that it was revealed in all the language of the Arabs, and no one can say that it was just Quraysh or one part of the Arabs rather than others. Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said that this meant that most of it was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh because other than the dialect of Quraysh exists in sound readings with the use of the *hamzas* and the like. Quraysh did not use the *hamza*. Ibn 'Atiyya said that the meaning of the "seven modes" is that the expressions of the seven tribes are in it.

- These seven dialects are all from the tribes of Mudar. Some people said that. They used as evidence what 'Uthman said, "The Qur'an was revealed in the language of Mudar." They said, "It is possible that part of it is that of Quraysh, part Kinana, part Asad, part Hudhayl, part Taym, part Daba, and part Qays. They said these tribes of Mudar contain the seven dialects in these ranks. Ibn Mas'ud used to like those who copied out the Qur'ans to be from Mudar. Others objected to the idea that it was all from Mudar and said that there are rare usages in Mudar with which it is not permitted to write the Qur'an.

- What is related from some scholars is exemplified by Qadi Ibn at-Tayyib who said, "I have reflected on the aspects of the differences in recitation and have found them to be seven. Some involve changes of vowelings while the meaning and form remain, like *atharu* and *athara* in 11:78; some do not change their form but change their meaning through inflection, as in 36:19, reading *ba'id* or *ba'ida*; some retain their form and change their meaning with different letters; some change the form while the meaning remains as in 101:5 where both *'ahn* and *suf* mean wool; some change their form and meaning; some entail a change of order; and some consist of addition or reduction.

- What is meant by the seven modes are meanings in the Book of Allah: command and prohibition, promise and threat, stories, arguments and parables. Ibn 'Atiyya says that this is weak because that is not called *ahruf*. Furthermore there is consensus that it does not occur in making the lawful lawful or changing any of the meanings. Qadi Ibn at-Tayyib mentioned a *hadith* along these lines from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and then said, "This is not part of what it is allowed for them to recite." *Harf* in this means 'manner' as Allah says, '*one who worships Allah on an edge.*' (22:11). That

is the meaning of the *hadith* about the seven means of allowing and forbidding and the like.

It is also said that what is meant by the seven *ahruf* are the seven readings that we have because all of that is sound as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stated. This, however, is not correct, as we will now explain.

Section on the seven readings

Most scholars, like ad-Dawudi, Ibn Abi Sufra and others said that these seven readings which are ascribed to the seven readers are not the seven *ahruf* for which the Companions had allowance to recite. They refer merely to one harf of those seven, which is what 'Uthman collected in the copy of the Qur'an which he authorised. Ibn an-Nahhas and others mentioned that. These seven famous readings (*qira'at*) are the selections of those Imams of recitation. That is because each of them chose what he related and the aspect he knew of the recitations which he considered to be the best and most appropriate. Each held to a path, related and recited it, and became famous for it. He is known for it and it is ascribed to him, like the mode of Nafi' and the mode of Ibn Kathir. One of them did not forbid choosing another nor object to it. He allowed it. Each of those seven has two or more choices related from him. All are sound.

Muslims at this time have agreed to rely on what is sound from these imams. That which they related of the readings and wrote in books. The consensus remains that they are correct, and the preservation of the Book which Allah promised has been secured. This is the position of the earlier imams and excellent reliable men like Qadi Abu Bakr ibn at-Tayyib, at-Tabari and others. Ibn 'Atiyya said, "These seven readings have lasted through different times and places and the prayer is performed using them as their soundness is established by consensus. As for the rare (*shadhdh*) readings, the prayer is not performed using them because there is no consensus on that. As for what is related from the Companions and the Followers about that, it can only be believed that they transmitted that. As for what is related from Abu's-Sammal and those connected to him, one does not rely on it."

Someone else said, "As for the rare (*shadhdh*) readings of the copies of the transmitted Qur'an, they are not considered to be the Qur'an, and are not acted on as if they were part of it. It is most probable that they are clarification of the interpretation of the position of the one to whom they are ascribed, like the reading of Ibn Mas'ud. If the transmitter is explicit about having heard it from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then scholars have two positions about acting on it: negative or positive. The negative position is based on the fact that the transmitter did not relate it as a *hadith*, but as Qur'an, and it is not affirmed as such and so is not confirmed. The positive position is that even if it is not affirmed as Qur'an, it is affirmed as *sunna*, and that obliges action, just as the case with all single *ahadith*.

Section: The *hadith* of 'Umar and Hisham

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "Allah allowed these seven modes to His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and Jibril brought them to him in a way which ensured inimitability and precise cohesion. His words, '*Recite what is easy of it,*' did not permit any of the Companions to change any expression in one of these dialects as he wished. If that had been the case, then the Qur'an would not have been inimitable, as people would have changed this and that and then it would have become other than what was revealed from Allah. The permission was for the seven modes of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in order to give ample scope to his Community. Once he recited to Ubayy what Jibril brought him, and once to Ibn Mas'ud what had been presented to him.

This was the crux of the difference between 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's reading of Surat al-Furqan and that of Hisham ibn Hakim. Otherwise how was it proper for the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to say about the recitation of each of them which differed, 'That was how Jibril recited it to me.' Was it only that he recited it once like that and once like this? This is the meaning of what Anas said when he recited '*aswab*' instead of '*aqwam*' in *Surat al-Muzzammil* (73:5) meaning "more conducive". He was told, 'We recite it "*aqwam*".' He replied, "'*Aswab*", "*aqwam*" and "*ahya*" are all the same." This is the sense of what is reported from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. If anyone had been permitted to do that, that would have invalidated the words of Allah, '*It is We who have sent down the Reminder and We will preserve it.*' (15:9)."

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others related that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "I heard Hisham ibn Hakim reciting *Surat al-Furqan* in a different way from how I read it, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, himself had recited it to me. I almost grabbed him, but I waited until he had finished. Then I got him by his cloak and took him to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. I said, 'Messenger of Allah, I heard this one reciting *Surat al-Furqan* differently to how you recited it to me!' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Let him recite.' He recited it as I had heard him recite it. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'That is how it was revealed.' Then he told me, 'Recite.' I recited it and he said, 'That is how it was revealed. This Qur'an was revealed in seven modes, so recite whatever you find easy of it.'"

Similar to this hadith is what Muslim transmitted from Ubayy ibn Ka'b. He said, "I was in the mosque when a man came in to pray. He recited a reading to which I objected. Then another man entered and recited a different recitation to that of his companion. When they finished the prayer, we all went to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and I said, 'This one recited a reading to which I objected and the other entered and used a different recitation to that of his companion.' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, commanded them to recite, and the Prophet commended what they done. Then doubt entered my heart such as had not even affected me in the *Jahiliyya*. When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saw what had overpowered me, he struck my chest and I started to sweat, feeling alarm as if I had been looking at Allah. He said to me, 'Ubayy, I was sent a message to recite the Qur'an in one mode and I replied that I wanted it to be made easy for my community. A second message commanded me to recite it in two modes, and I replied that I wanted it to be

made easy for my community. Then I was told the third time, "Recite it in seven modes. You can ask for something for each time you returned to ask." I said, "O Allah, forgive my Community! O Allah, forgive my Community!" I delayed the third until a Day when all creation even Ibrahim, peace be upon him, will ask of me."

Ubayy meant that he felt confusion and astonishment, in other words he had an impulse from Shaytan which sullied his state and muddied his mind at that moment. The difference of the readings seemed terrible to him while it was not in itself terrible. Otherwise what would entail denial of the difference in the recitations, when that is not necessary? Praise be to Allah who abrogated what is greater than a reading! When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saw the thought that occurred to him, he woke him up by striking his chest. The result of that was the expansion of his breast and inward illumination so that the unveiling and expansion took him to a state of vision. When the ugliness of that thought was clear to him, he feared Allah and sweated profusely out of shame before Allah. This thought is the type of thing about which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, spoke when they said to him, "We find things in ourselves which one of us finds too terrible to speak about." He asked, "Do you experience that?" "Yes," they replied. He said, "That is clear faith." (Muslim from Abu Hurayra)

The collection of the Qur'an and the reason 'Uthman had copies of the Qur'an copied out and burned the rest. The memorisation of the Qur'an by the Companions in the time of the Prophet

In the time of the Prophet, the Qur'an was scattered in the breasts of men. People wrote some of it in on pages, on skins and on white stones and flat stones, scraps and other things. Then a great number of the reciters were killed in Battle of Yamama in the time of Abu Bakr. Something like 700 of them were killed in a single day and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab suggested to Abu Bakr to collect the Qur'an out of fear that the shaykhs of the reciters such as Ubayy, Ibn Mas'ud and Zayd would all die. Zayd ibn Thabit recommended that, and so after great effort. he collected it together without putting the *suras* in order.

Al-Bukhari reports that Zayd ibn Thabit said, "After the slaughter in the war of Yamama, Abu Bakr sent for me, and 'Umar was with him. Abu Bakr said, "Umar has come to me and said, "Many people were killed in the Battle of Yamama, and I fear that many Qur'an reciters will be killed in other places and so much of the Qur'an will be lost unless you collect it. I think that you should collect the Qur'an together." Abu Bakr said, 'I said to 'Umar, "How can I do something which the Messenger of Allah did not do?" 'Umar said, "By Allah, it is better." 'Umar kept on at me about it until Allah opened my breast to it. I think what 'Umar thinks.'" Zayd ibn Thabit continued, "'Umar was sitting with him, not speaking. Abu Bakr said, 'You are an intelligent young man and we have no doubts about you. You used to write down the revelation for the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Therefore you are to search out the Qur'an and collect it.' By Allah, if he had obliged me to move one of the mountains, that would not have been weightier for me than his command to me to collect together the Qur'an. I replied, 'How

can the two of you do something which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not do?' Abu Bakr said, 'By Allah, it is better.' He continued to keep on at me until Allah opened my breast to that which Allah had opened the breasts of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So I began to search out the Qur'an and collect it from the parchments, shoulder-blades, palm fronds and the breasts of men until I found two ayats of *Surat at-Tawba* with Khuzayma al-Ansari that I did not find with anyone else: '*A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves...*' (9:128) The copy of the Qur'an in which the Qur'an was collected remained in the possession of Abu Bakr until Allah took him, and then it was with 'Umar until Allah took him, and then it was with Hafsa bint 'Umar."

If it is asked what was the point of 'Uthman unifying people under a single copy of the Qur'an when Abu Bakr had already achieved that, then the response is that the aim of 'Uthman was not to gather people in order to compile the Qur'an. Do you not see that he sent to Hafsa to ask her to give him the copy of the Qur'an so that it could be copied out and then returned to her? 'Uthman did that because people were disagreeing about the various recitations owing to the fact that the Companions had spread to different areas and had begun to strongly disagree, such as the conflict which took place between the people of Iraq and the people of Syria according to Hudhayfa.

They joined an expedition to Armenia and each group recited what had been transmitted to them. They disagreed and quarrelled and some of them called the others unbelievers, renouncing them completely, cursing one another. Hudhayfa was alarmed at what he saw. As soon as he arrived back to Madina, according to al-Bukhari and at-Tirmidhi, before returning to his house he went to 'Uthman and said, "This Community has reached the stage where it will be destroyed!" "Why?" asked 'Uthman. He said, "It is about the Book of Allah. I was on this expedition and some of the people of Iraq, Syria and the Hijaz came together." Then he described what had happened and said, "I fear that they will differ about their Book as the Jews and Christians differed."

This is evidence of the falseness of those who say that the seven *ahruf* are the seven present readings because there is no disagreement about them. Suwayd ibn Ghafala reported from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib that 'Uthman said, "What do you think about the copies of the Qur'an? The people have disagreed about the reciters until a man says, 'My reading is better than your reading. My reading is more excellent than your reading.' This is equivalent to disbelief." He replied, "What is your view, Amir al-Mu'minin?" He said, 'I think that we people should agree on one reading. If you differ today, those after you will disagree more strongly.' 'Ali said, "The correct opinion is yours, Amir al-Mu'minin." So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the pages in your possession and we will copy them and then return them to you." She sent them to him and he ordered Zayd ibn Thabit, 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, Sa'id ibn al-'As, and 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn al-Harith ibn Hisham to make copies of them. 'Uthman told the group of Qurayshis, "When you and Zayd ibn Thabit disagree about any of the Qur'an, write it in the dialect of Quraysh. It was revealed in their language." They did that. When they had copied it out, 'Uthman returned the pages to Hafsa and he sent a copy of what they had copied out to every region and commanded that every sheet or copy which had any other form of the Qur'an should be burned. 'Uthman did this after gathering the Muhajirun and Ansar and a group

of Muslims and consulting them about it. They agreed to collect what was sound and firm of the well-known readings from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and discard anything else. They thought that what he decided was right and correct. May Allah have mercy on him and all of them."

Ibn Shihab said that he was told by 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abdullah that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud disliked Zayd ibn Thabit copying out the Qur'an and said, "Company of Muslims, withdraw from making copies and entrusting it to one man. By Allah, I became Muslim while he was in the loins of an unbelieving father!" meaning Zayd ibn Thabit. That is why 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "People of Iraq, conceal the copies of the Qur'an you have and conceal them. Allah says, *'Those who misappropriate will arrive on the Day of Rising with what they have misappropriated.'* (3:161). Meet Allah with the copies of the Qur'an." (at-Tirmidhi)

Abu Bakr al-Anbari said, "The fact that Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman chose Zayd in the matter of collecting the Qur'an does not mean that they were putting him over 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. 'Abdullah was better than Zayd, older in Islam, had attended more battles and possessed more virtues. Zayd, however, knew more of the Qur'an than 'Abdullah since he had memorised it all during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whereas 'Abdullah had only memorised about seventy suras while the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was alive and learned the rest after his death. The one who knew the entire Qur'an and memorised it while the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was alive was more entitled to compile the Qur'an and to be preferred and chosen to do so. No ignorant person should suppose that this is an attack on 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud since the fact that Zayd had the better memory of the Qur'an of the two does not mean that he should be preferred to him in general terms because Zayd also knew more Qur'an than Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and he was certainly not better than them or equal to them in virtue."

Abu Bakr al-Anbari said, "The objection which 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud made was done in anger and is not acted upon or accepted. There is no doubt that once he was no longer angry he was satisfied with the excellence of the decision of 'Uthman and the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and concurred with their agreement and abandoned his opposition to them."

One scholar said that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud died before learning all the Qur'an. Yazid ibn Harun said, "The two *suras* of refuge have the same status as *al-Baqara* and *Al 'Imran*. Anyone who claims that they are not part of the Qur'an has rejected Allah Almighty." He was asked, "What about what 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud says about them?" He replied, "There is no disagreement among the Muslims that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud died before memorising all of the Qur'an." This requires some investigation, as will come.

Hammad said – I think quoting Anas ibn Malik – "They disagreed about an ayat and would say, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, recited it to so-and-so.' He might be three days from Madina and he would be sent for and would be asked, 'How did the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace,

recite such-and-such an ayat to you?' and they would write it as he said." Ibn Shihab said, "One day they disagreed about *tabut*. Zayd said *tabuh*. Ibn az-Zubayr and Sa'id ibn al-'As said, *tabut*. The disagreement was taken to 'Uthman who said, 'Write it with *ta*'. It was revealed in the language of Quraysh." (al-Bukhari and at-Tirmidhi)

'Uthman had several copies of the Qur'an made. Some say there were seven while the majority say that there were four. They were sent to various areas. Matrix copies were sent to Iraq, Syria and Egypt, and the reciters of the cities relied on them and none of them differed from the original copy in the manner in which it was conveyed. There is not found among the seven reciters any real difference in the words, neither more nor less. That is because they all relied on what was conveyed in 'Uthman's copy.

Al-Anbari quoted Suwayd ibn Ghafala in *Kitab ar-Radd*, "I heard 'Ali ibn Abi Talib say, 'Company of people! Fear Allah and beware of excess about 'Uthman and calling him "The burner of Qur'ans". By Allah, he only burned them on the basis of the advice of a council of us, the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.'" It is also reported that 'Ali said, "If I had been ruler at the time of 'Uthman, I would have done to the copies of the Qur'an the same thing that 'Uthman did."

Section

Our scholars say that what 'Uthman did refutes the Hululis and Hashwites who say that the letters and sounds are eternal and that recitation and reading are eternal and that faith is eternal and the *ruh* is eternal. The Community and all groups of the Christians, Jews and Brahmans believe – and indeed, every theist and unitarian – that that which is eternal is unaffected by any event, and no one's power can affect it by any aspect or means. Non-existence is not possible for the eternal and the eternal does not become temporal and the temporal does not become eternal. As for the eternal, there is no beginning to its existence whereas the temporal is that which exists after it was not.

Section

The Rafidites attack the Qur'an and say, "One person is sufficient to confirm the transmission of an ayat and mode just as you have done. You confirmed the statement of a single man, Khuzayma ibn Thabit, in reporting about the end of Surat al-Tawba and the *ayat* in *Surat al-Ahzab* 'Among the believers are menÉ' (33:23)." The reply to them is that when Khuzayma mentioned these words, many of the Companions remembered them and Zayd himself recognised them. That is why he said, "The last two *ayats* of *Surat at-Tawba* were missing." If he had not already known them, he would not have known that anything was missing. So the *ayat* was in fact established by consensus, not by Khuzayma alone. The second answer is that it was established by the testimony of Khuzayma alone and the evidence of its soundness is found in the description of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and so has no need for another witness, which is not the case of the *ayat* in *al-Ahzab*. That is established by the testimony of Zayd and Abu Khuzayma who heard it from the Prophet. It is mentioned that Abu Khuzayma is not the same Khuzayma with whom the *ayat* of *at-Tawba* found

and he was known among the Ansar. Anas knew him. The one with whom the *ayat* of *al-Ahzab* was found was Khuzayma ibn Thabit. There is no confusion in the story.

In Muslim and al-Bukhari, Anas ibn Malik said, "The Qur'an was gathered together in the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by four, all of whom were from the Ansar: Ubayy, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Abu Zayd." Anas was asked, "Who is Abu Zayd?" and he replied, "One of my paternal uncles." Also in al-Bukhari, Anas said, "When the Prophet died, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, only four knew all the Qur'an: Abu'd-Darda', Mu'adh, ibn Jabal, Zayd and Abu Zayd."

Ibn at-Tayyib said, "These traditions do not indicate that the Qur'an was not memorised in the time of the Prophet and that only four of the Ansar knew it by heart as Anas stated. It is confirmed by multiple paths of transmission that the entire Qur'an was also known by 'Uthman, 'Ali, Tamim ad-Dari, 'Ubada ibn as-Samit, and 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As." Anas' words mean that only these four took it directly from the mouth of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Most of them learned it from one another.

The Qadi did not mention 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and Salim, the client of Abu Hudhayfa, although they were among those who knew the entire Qur'an. It is reported that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "I was with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and with him were Abu Bakr and whomever Allah wished. We passed 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud who was praying. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, asked, 'Who is reciting the Qur'an?' He was told, 'Abdullah ibn Umm 'Abd.' He said, 'Abdullah recites the Qur'an fresh as it was revealed.'"

One scholar said that this meant that he recited the first *harf* in which the Qur'an was revealed rather than the other seven which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was allowed after the Messenger of Allah, Jibril, recited the Qur'an to him in Ramadan. It is related that Abu A'ubyan said, "'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas asked me, 'Which of the recitations do you recite?' I replied, 'The first recitation, that of Ibn Umm 'Abd.' He told me, 'Rather it was the last. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to present the Qur'an to Jibril once a year. In the year that he died, the Messenger of Allah read it to him twice. 'Abdullah was present and knew what was abrogated and changed in that.'" In Muslim, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr stated that he heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "Take the Qur'an from four: Ibn Umm 'Abd – and he began with him – Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Salim, the client of Abu Hudhayfa."

These reports indicate that 'Abdullah knew all the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, contrary to what was said, and Allah knows best. In *Kitab ar-Radd*, al-Anbari transmitted that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "I learned 72 (or 73) *suras* from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and I read to him from *al-Baqara* as far as '*Allah loves those who repent*' (2:222)." Abu Ishaq says that he learned the rest of the Qur'an from Mujammi' ibn Jariya al-Ansari. If this is true, the consensus which Yazid ibn Harun mentioned is true and that is why Qadi Ibn at-Tayyib did not

mention him among those who knew the Qur'an by heart in the time of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Allah knows best.

Part of what will indicate the soundness of Ibn Mas'ud's knowledge of the Qur'an is that the people with the readings among the people of the Hijaz, Syria and Iraq all traced their readings which they chose back to one of the Companions who read it to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. 'Asim traced his reading to 'Ali and Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn Kathir to Ubayy as did Abu 'Amr ibn al-'Ala', and 'Abdullah ibn 'Amir traced his to 'Uthman. All of them said that they had read it to the Messenger of Allah. The isnads of these readings are continuous and the transmitters are reliable, as al-Khattabi stated.

What has come about the order of the *suras* and *ayats* of the Qur'an, its vowelings and dots, its *hizbs* and tens, the number of its letters, *juz's*, words and *ayats*

Ibn at-Tayyib said, "Some say that the Salaf differed about the order of the *suras* of the Qur'an and some of them wrote the *suras* in the order that they were revealed and put the Makkan before the Madinan, and some put *al-Hamd* (*Fatiha*) at the beginning, and others put *al-'Alaq* at the beginning.' This was the case in the first copy of 'Ali. As for the copy of Ibn Mas'ud, it begins with '*Master of the Day of the Deen*' (1:4) and then *al-Baqara*, and then *an-Nisa'* with a different order. The copy of Ubayy began with *al-Hamd*, then *an-Nisa'*, then *Al 'Imran*, then *al-An'am*, then *al-A'raf*, then *al-Ma'ida*. There were significant differences."

Ibn at-Tayyib's answer is that it is possible that the order of the *suras* as we have today in the Qur'an is by *ijtihad* on the part of the Companions. Makki mentioned this in the *tafsir* of *Surat at-Tawba*. He mentioned the order of the *ayats* in the *sura* and that the placing the *basmala* at the beginnings of them was from the Prophet, peace be upon him. Since he did not command that for *Surat at-Tawba*, it was left without a *basmala*. This is the soundest of what is said about it.

In the *Jami'*, Ibn Wahb stated that Sulayman ibn Bilal heard Rabi'a being asked why *al-Baqara* and *Al 'Imran* were put first when there were about eighty *suras* revealed before them and they were revealed in Madina. Rabi'a said, "They were put first and the Qur'an was arranged according to the knowledge of those who arranged it and had knowledge of that. This is what we ended up with and we do not ask about it." It is reported from Qatada that Ibn Mas'ud said, "Whoever of you seeks a model, should model himself on the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. They have the best hearts of this community, the deepest knowledge, least artifice, straightest guidance and the best state. Allah chose them to be the Companions of His Prophet and to establish His *deen*. So acknowledge their excellence and follow in their footsteps. They followed straight guidance."

Some scholars say that the arrangement of the *suras* of the Qur'an which we find in our copies of the Qur'an was at the instruction of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. What is related about the differences between the copies of Ubayy, 'Ali and

'Abdullah was before the final presentation. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, arranged those *suras* for them after they had done that. It is reported from Ibn Wahb that he heard Malik say, "The Qur'an was arranged according to what they heard from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

Al-Anbari mentioned in *Kitab ar-Radd*, "Allah Almighty revealed the Qur'an all at once to the lowest heaven, and then it came down in parts to the Prophet over twenty years. A *sura* would be revealed about a matter which happened and an *ayat* would answer an inquiry. Jibril would give the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the place of the *sura* and the *ayat*. So the *suras* are in order as the *ayats* and letters are in order. All of it is from Muhammad, the Seal of the Messengers, peace be upon him, from the Lord of the Worlds. Whoever changes the order of the *suras* is like someone who invalidates the order of the *ayats* and changes the letters and the words. There is no argument against the people who possess the truth in putting *al-Baqara* before *al-An'am* when *al-An'am* was revealed before *al-Baqara* because the order is taken from the Messenger of Allah. He said, "Put this *sura* in such-and-such a place."

Al-Bara' said, "The last of the Qur'an to be revealed was, "*They will ask you for a fatwa. Say: "Allah gives you a fatwa about people who die without direct heirs."*" (4:175). Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash said, "Abu Ishaq erred because it is reported from Ibn 'Abbas that the last part of the Qur'an to be revealed was, '*Show fear of a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every self will be paid in full for what it earned. They will not be wronged*' (2:281). Jibril told the Prophet, peace be upon both of them, 'Muhammad, put it at the beginning of 281 of *al-Baqara*.'"

Ibn Battal said, "Whoever says this, does not say that the recitation of the Qur'an in the prayer and lessons must be in the order that it is in copies of the Qur'an. Rather it is only mandatory to put the *suras* in order when writing them down, and it is not known that any of them said that the same order is mandatory in the prayer, in recitation of the Qur'an and study or that it is not lawful for someone to learn *al-Kahf* before *al-Baqara* or *al-Hajj* before *al-Kahf*. Do you not see that 'A'isha told the person who asked about this, 'There is nothing wrong in whichever you recite first. The Prophet used to recite one *sura* in a *rak'at* and then would recite in the next *rak'at* a different *sura* than the one that follows it.'

As for what is reported from Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Umar about it being disliked to recite the Qur'an out of order, claiming that it upsets the heart, what they meant by that was reciting the *sura* out of order and beginning from its end and then working backwards, because that is forbidden. Some people do this with the Qur'an and poetry to subject the tongue to that and facilitate memorisation. Allah forbade doing this in the Qur'an because it disorders His *suras* and is counter to what He meant by it."

Part of what indicates that it is not obliged to use the chronological order of revelation in copies of the Qur'an is that it is confirmed that certain *ayats* were revealed in Madina and then placed in Makkan *suras*. 'A'isha said, "*Surat al-Baqara* and *Surat an-Nisa'* were revealed when I was with him (i.e. in Madina), but they come in the copies of the Qur'an before earlier *suras* of the Qur'an revealed in Makka."

Section

As for the vowelling of the Qur'an and its dots, it is reported that 'Abdu'l-Malik ibn Marwan commanded them to be added, and that was undertaken by al-Hajjaj in Wasit. He worked on the task and added its hizbs. He commanded the governor of Iraq, al-Hasan, and Yahya ibn Ya'mur to do that. After that he wrote a book in Wasit on the readings in which he compiled what was related about the disagreement of people in relation to the script. People used that book for a long time until Ibn Mujahid wrote his book on the readings. In *Kitab at-Tabaqat az-Zubaydi* quotes al-Mubarrad as saying that the first person to use dots in the Qur'an was Abu'l-Aswad ad-Du'ali. Ibn Sirin also mentioned that he had a copy of the Qur'an in which Yahya ibn Ya'mur had put the dots.

Section

As for the position regarding the division of the Qur'an into groups of ten *ayats*, Ibn 'Atiyya said, "In one of the histories I read that the 'Abbasid al-Ma'mun commanded that to be done. It is also said that al-Hajjaj did it." In the *Kitab al-Bayan*, ad-Dani said that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud disliked the marking of tens in the copies of the Qur'an and that he erased them. Mujahid is reported to have disliked the tenths in copies of the Qur'an.

Ashhab said, "I heard Malik being asked about the tens which are in the Qur'an in red and other colours and he disliked that, saying, "There is nothing wrong in marking the tens with [normal] ink." He was asked about copies of the Qur'an in which the ends of *suras* were written along with the number of *ayats* in every *sura*. He said, 'I dislike for anything [additional] to be written or vowelled in the master copies. As for those copies by which children learn, I see no harm in doing that.'" Ashhab said, "Then he produced for us a copy of the Qur'an which had belonged to his grandfather. He had written it when 'Uthman had the Qur'an copied out. We saw the ends were written in ink in something resembling a chain which extended for an entire line and I saw that the *ayats* had diacritical marks in ink."

Qatada said, "They began with the dots, then with marking the division of the fives and then the tens." Yahya ibn Abi Kathir said, "The Qur'an was bare in the original copies and the first thing that they did was to put dots on the *ba'*, *ta'* and *tha'*. They said, "There is nothing wrong in it. It makes it clearer." Then they put dots at the ends of *ayats* and then they put openings and ends of *suras*."

Abu Hamza said, "Ibrahim an-Nakha'i noticed in my copy of the Qur'an the opening of such-and-such a *sura*. He said to me, 'Erase it. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "Do not mix with the Book of Allah something which is not part of it.'" Abu Bakr as-Sarraj said, "I asked Abu Razin, 'Do I write '*Sura* such-and-such' in my copy of the Qur'an?' He replied, 'I fear that people will come who do not know it and think that those words are part of the Qur'an.'"

Ad-Dani said, "All these reports which allow the marking of tenths and fives and beginnings of *suras* and the beginnings of *ayats* say that it was done by the Companions

whose *ijtihad* led them to that. I think that those of them who objected to that objected to the use of colours like red, yellow and so forth, although the Muslims in other areas agreed on their use in the master copies and other copies, and prohibition and error were removed from them in what they agreed upon, Allah willing.

Section

As for the number of its letters and *juz*'s, Sallam al-Himani said, "Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf gathered the reciters, *huffaz* and scribes and said, 'Tell me how many letters are in the entire Qur'an.' I was one of that group. We calculated and agreed that the Qur'an had three hundred and forty thousand, seven hundred and forty (340,740) letters. Then he said, 'Tell me which letter ends half of the Qur'an.' It was in *al-Kahf*, on the *fa'* of *wa layatalattaf* [18:19, "*he should go about with caution.*"] He said, 'Tell me the thirds.' The first third was found to be at the beginning of 9:100 and at the second at the beginning of 26:100 or 101. The last third was the rest of the Qur'an. He said, 'Tell me the sevenths of the letters.' We did so."

Sallam, Abu Muhammad, stated, "We did that over four months. Every night al-Hajjaj would read a fourth. The end of the first fourth was at the end of *al-An'am*, the second in *al-Kahf*, the third at the end of *az-Zumar* and the fourth consisted of the rest. This is contrary to what is mentioned by ad-Dani in *Kitab al-Bayan*.

Section

As for the number of the *ayats* of the Qur'an in the first Madinan copy, Muhammad ibn 'Isa said, "The number of the *ayats* of the Qur'an in the first Madinan copy was six thousand." Abu 'Amr said, "It is the number related by the people of Kufa from the people of Madina, and they did not name anyone specifically on whom they relied in that."

As for the final Madinan copy, according to Isma'il ibn Ja'far, it has six thousand two hundred and fourteen (6214) *ayats*. Al-Fadl said, "The number of the *ayats* of the Qur'an according to the Makkans was six thousand two hundred and nineteen (6219). That is the number related by Salim and al-Kisa'i from Hamza. Al-Kisa'i attributed it to 'Ali. Muhammad said, "The number of the *ayats* of the Qur'an according to the Basrans was six thousand two hundred and four (6204), which is the number which their Salaf passed down. As for the number of the people of Syria, Yahya ibn al-Harith adh-Dhamari said it was six thousand two hundred and twenty-six (6226). One transmission has six thousand two hundred and twenty-five (6225)." Ibn Dhakwan said, "I think that Yahya did not count the *basmala*."

As for the number of its words, al-Fadl ibn Shadhan said, "The total number of the words of the Qur'an according to 'Ata' ibn Yasar is seventy-seven thousand four hundred and thirty-nine (77,439) and its letters are three hundred and twenty-three thousand, and fifteen (323,015)." This differs from what al-Himani said. Ibn Kathir reported that Mujahid said, "This is what we counted of the Qur'an: it has three hundred and twenty-

one thousand, one hundred and eighty (321,180) letters. This also differs from what al-Himani mentioned.

The meaning of the words *sura*, *ayat*, *kalima* (word) and *harf* (letter)

The word "*sura*" which means chapter, wall or fence in Arabic is used in the Qur'an to make each chapter clear and distinct from every other *sura*. The chapters are called that because in them one ascends from one degree to the next. It is said that they are called that because of their honour and elevation, as is said of walls which are raised up in the land. It is said that they are called that because the one who reads them looks forward at what lies ahead, like the walls of a building. All these are without *hamza*. It is said that they are called that because they are cut out from the Qur'an on their own, as the Arabs call a leftover *su'r*. In that case the word would have a *hamza* which was replaced with a *waw*. It is said that they are called that because of their completion and perfection as this word is used for a fine camel.

An *aya[t]* is a sign. It is a sign since it is separate and distinct from the words before it and the words after it; it is clear from other signs and is on its own. It can mean a proof or token. It is said that it is called that because it is a collection of letters of the Qur'an, as one says, "The people went forth with their full company (*aya*)." It is said that it is called *aya* because it is a wonder which people are unable to imitate.

Grammarians disagree about the root of *aya*. Sibawayh said that it is *ayaya* and because the *ya'* is vowelised and has a *fatha* before it, it becomes *alif* and so it is *aya*. Al-Kisa'i said that its root is *ayaya* and the *ya'* accepts the *alif* with a *fatha* before it and is elided because they are similar. Al-Farra' says that its root is *ayyaya* and it accepts the *alif* out of dislike of the doubling and becomes *aya*.

As for the word *kalima*, it is a composite structure which is made up of a mixture of letters. The longest words in the Book of Allah are eleven letters long, like "*la-yastakhlifannahum*" (24:55) and "*a-nulzimukumuha*" (11:28) and the like. As for "*fa-asqaynakumuhu*" (15:22), it is ten in writing and eleven in articulation. The shortest have two letters, like *ma*, *la*, *laka*, *lahu*, and the like. Some words are just one letter, such as the interrogative *hamza* and the conjunctive *waw*, but are not spoken alone.

Sometimes a complete *ayat* is comprised of a single word, as in "*wa'l-fajr*", "*wa'd-duha*", and "*wa'l-asr*". That is also the case in "*alif-lam-mim*", "*alif-lam-mim-sad*", "*ta-ha*", "*ya-sin*", and "*ha-mim*" according to the Kufans. That occurs at the beginnings of *suras*, but not inside them. Abu 'Amr ad-Dani said, "I do not know of any word which on its own is an *ayat* except for '*mudhammatan*' in *Surat ar-Rahman* (55:64)." Two words may become connected and be two *ayats*, as in "*ha-mim. 'ayn-sin-qaf*" according to the Kufans.

It is possible that elsewhere a single word may stand for a complete and self-sustaining *ayat*. Allah says, "*The most excellent Word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Tribe of Israel for their steadfastness.*" (7:136-137) It is said that "word" here refers to Allah's words: "*We desired to show kindness to those who were oppressed in the land.*" (28:4-5)

The Almighty says, "*He bound them to godfearing self-restraint (lit. word of taqwa)*" (48:26). Mujahid said that the "word" is: "There is no god but Allah." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Two words are light on the tongue, heavy in the balance, beloved to the Al-Merciful: 'Glory be to Allah and by His praise. Glory be to Allah, the Immense.'" The Arabs sometimes call an entire ode and story a "word".

The word *harf* (letter) is the shape which stands alone in a word of which it is made up. A letter can be called a word and a word a letter as we made clear. Abu 'Amr ad-Dani said, "Are the letters of the alphabet at the beginnings of *suras*, such as *sad*, *qaf*, and *nun* letters or words?" I say that they are words, not letters. That is because a letter is not unvowelled nor is it alone in a *sura* nor separate from what is mixed with it. But these are unvowelled, alone, separate, like words which are distinct."

Does the Qur'an contain words which are not Arabic?

There is no disagreement among the Arabs that the Qur'an contains words composed in a non-Arabic mode and names of people which are not Arabic, like Isra'il, Jibril, 'Imran, Nuh and Lut. They disagree about whether there are words other than proper names which are non-Arabic. Qadi Ibn at-Tayyib, at-Tabari and others believe that there are no non-Arabic words in it and the Qur'an is pure Arabic, and whatever words which are found in it ascribed to other languages happen to be common to both, and so the Arabs, Persians, Abyssinians and others used them. Some claim that non-Arabic words exist in the Qur'an but that since they are so few that does not preclude the Qur'an being pure Arabic and the Prophet from speaking the language of his people. *Mishkat* (24:35) is a niche, *nasha'a* means "to rise in the night" as in "*nashi'ata'l-layl*" (73:6), *qaswara* (74:51) is a lion and *kiflatayn* (57:28) means "double". These are found in Abyssinian. *Ghassaq* (38:57) means "foul" in Turkish. *Qistas* (17:35; 26:182) means "*balance*" in Greek. *Sijjil* (21:104; 15:74; 105:4) means "stones" in Persian. *Tur* (2:63; 2:93, etc.) is a mountain and *yamm* (7:136. etc.) means sea in Syriac. *Tannur* (11:40; 23:27) is the surface of the earth in Persian.

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "The truth about the expression of these words is that their origin is foreign, but the Arabs used them and Arabicised them and so they are Arabic. When the Qur'an was revealed in their language, the Arabs had mixed with other languages via trade and travel." And Allah knows best.

Points about the inimitability of the Qur'an, preconditions of the miracle and its reality

A miracle (*mu'jiza*) is the evidence of the Prophets which indicates their truthfulness. It is called that [the verb means "to be unable to do"] because no human being is able to do the like of it. It has five preconditions. If one of them is missing, it is not a miracle.

- It must be something which only Allah can do. This precondition is necessary because if someone comes at a time in which it is possible for there to be Messengers and claims to be a Messenger and makes his miracle consist of moving and being still, standing and

sitting, that is not a miracle nor evidence of his truthfulness since another creature can do that. Miracles consist of things like splitting the sea, splitting the moon and other such things.

- It must break normal patterns. If someone comes at night and his sign is that the night will come after the day or the sun rise in the east in the morning, that is not a miracle because it is something which only Allah can do and it was not done for his sake. Things which break normal patterns are like turning a staff into a snake, the rock splitting and the she-camel emerging, or water springing from fingers like a spring.

- It must be claimed to testify to the Message.

- It must occur in order to support this claim against those who challenge him as when he says, "I am a Prophet and my sign is that this she-camel will speak."

- It must be that no one successfully comes up with the like of what he is challenged to do.

It is not said that the miracle with the five preconditions is limited to the truthful, because the Dajjal, as our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, will have immense matters appear at his hands. The difference is that one claims to be a Messenger and the other to be a Lord, and there is a great difference between the blind and the seeing.

Section

If you affirm this, know that there are two types of miracle. The first is that which is famous and whose time ended at the death of the Prophet, and the second are those transmitted by multiple traditions as being sound and confirmed and hence must be known. The precondition is that many people transmitted it and have knowledge of what they transmit and the whole chain is reliable so that it is impossible that there be any falsehood in it. This is the case with the Qur'an which has been transmitted from large numbers of people continuously and has gone to many lands. The Qur'an will remain a miracle until the Day of Rising whereas the miracles of other Prophets ended with their death. The Qur'an will not be changed or altered as happened with the Torah and Gospel.

There are ten aspects to the inimitability of the Qur'an.

- Its wondrous composition differs from every usual order in Arabic and other languages because its arrangement is not poetry at all, as Allah says, "*We did not teach him poetry nor would it be right for him.*" (36:68) In the Sahih Collection of Muslim, it is reported that Unays, the brother of Abu Dharr, told Abu Dharr, "In Makka I met a man who claims that Allah sent him." He asked, "What do people say about him?" He replied, "They say: he is a poet, a soothsayer and a sorcerer." Unays was a poet and said, "I have heard the words of the soothsayers and this is not like their words. I compared him with the reciters of poetry and it was not like them. No one after me should err and say he was

a poet. He is truthful and they are liars." When 'Utba ibn Rabi'a heard the Qur'an, he affirmed that it was not sorcery or poetry and that he had never heard anything like it.

- Its style differs from all the styles of the Arabs.

- It has a lucid, eloquent style which could never come from a creature at all. Reflect on that in *Surat Qaf* (50) and *Surat as-Zumar* (39) and you will clearly see its eloquence which a creature could not possibly originate.

Ibn al-Hassar said, "These three – arrangement, style and lucid eloquence are found in every *sura*, indeed, in every *ayat*, and the combination of these three distinguishes what is heard of every *ayat* and every *sura* from the words of ordinary humans. By this there is a challenge [to opponents] and inimitability. Every *sura* has these three, although other aspects of the ten may be ascribed to it as well. *Surat al-Kawthar* (108) consists of only three short *ayats*, being the shortest *sura* in the Qur'an, and it contains reports about the unseen matters: about Kawthar and its immensity and abundance which indicates that the Prophet will have the greatest number of Followers. The second is about al-Walid ibn al-Mughira, who was a wealthy man with many children when this was revealed, and then later he was destroyed.

- The Arabic usage used in it is beyond what any Arab could master and they all agree that it is correct.

- It talks of matters which occurred from the beginning of the world until the time of its revelations, all this issuing from the mouth of someone illiterate who could neither read nor write. It reports about the stories of Prophets with their communities and past generations as well as those matters the People of the Book asked about when they challenged him about the People of the Cave, al-Khidr and Musa, and Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Qadi ibn at-Tayyib points out that we know that there was no way for him to learn this because he did not have contact with people with knowledge of history or frequent a teacher so that he could take from them, and so it is known that it could only have come by way of revelation.

- There is the fulfilment of Allah's promises which were visually perceived in all that He promised in the Qur'an. That is divided into general reports, like promising His Messenger, peace be upon him, victory and expelling those who expelled him, and promises which have preconditions like, "*If someone trusts in Allah, He is enough for him.*" (65:3)

- There are reports about unseen matters in the future which could only be known by revelation. Part of that is Allah's promise to His Prophet that his *din* would overcome all other *dins*, as happened. When Abu Bakr sent his armies on expeditions, he would inform them of Allah's promise to make His *din* victorious so that they would be confident of victory and certain of success. 'Umar also did that, and the conquests continued in the east and west. Allah says, "*Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right*

actions that He will make them the successors in the land as He made those before them the successors." (24:55)

-There is the knowledge that the Qur'an contains, which is the basis for all people regarding the lawful and unlawful and other rulings.

-There are eloquent expressions of wisdom which do not normally issue from a human being.

- The perfect symmetry of the entire Qur'an, outward and inward without disparity or inconsistency, is a final factor. Allah says, "*If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found many inconsistencies in it.*" (4:82)

These are ten points and an eleventh, mentioned by an-Nazzam and some Qadaris, is that the meaning of inimitability is the impossibility of opposition and being prevented from undertaking to meet the challenge. They said that the prohibition and diverting people from attempting to do that are the miracle rather than the Qur'an itself. That is because Allah directed their aspirations away from undertaking the challenge to bring a sura like it. This is false because the consensus of the community without any disagreement is that Qur'an itself is the miracle, not the diversion and prohibition because its eloquence and lucidity are beyond normal patterns. If there had been any words like it, it would not be the case.

Information about *ahadith* forged about the excellence of the *suras* of the Qur'an and other matters

One does not pay any attention to what forgers devise and opponents create of false *ahadith* and baseless reports about the excellence of the suras of the Qur'an and other virtuous actions. Many people do this, and their goals and aims vary. Some of them are *zindiqs*, like al-Mughira ibn Sa'id al-Kufi and Muhammad ibn Sa'id ash-Shami. They forged *ahadith* and used to create doubt in the hearts of people. Part of that is what Muhammad ibn Sa'id related from Anas ibn Malik about the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "I am the seal of the Prophets and there will be no Prophet after me except as Allah wishes." He added the exception and that is heresy on his part. This is mentioned by Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr in the *Kitab at-Tamhid*.

Some forged *ahadith* to support a sect to which they called people. One of the Kharijites said after he repented, "These *ahadith* are the *deen*. So look to whom you take your *deen*. When we desire something, we make up a *hadith* about it."

A group forged *ahadith* about rewards, calling people to virtuous actions, as related from Nuh ibn Maryam al-Marwazi, Muhammad ibn 'Ukkasha al-Kirmani, Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah al-Juwaybari and others. He was asked, "Where did you get what you have from 'Ikrima from Ibn 'Abbas about the virtue of certain suras?" He replied, "I saw that people turned from the Qur'an and busied themselves with the *fiqh* of Abu Hanifa and the expeditions of Muhammad ibn Ishaq and so I made up this *hadith* about rewards." There

are other examples like this, like the long *hadith* reported from Ubayy about the virtues of each *sura* of the Qur'an.

Some beggars who stand in markets and mosques forge *ahadith* with isnads from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which they have memorised. They mention these forged *ahadith* along with their isnads. At-Tayalasi said, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'in prayed in the Rusafa mosque and a storyteller stood before them and said, 'Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'in related to me from 'Abdu'r-Razzaq from Ma'mar from Qatada from Anas that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'If anyone says, "There is no god but Allah," a bird is created from every word whose beak is of gold and feathers of coral.' He began a story which would cover about twenty pages. Ahmad looked at Yahya and Yahya looked at Ahmad. He asked, 'Did you say this?' He said, 'By Allah, I only just heard it at this moment.'

"They remained silent until he finished his story. Then Yahya asked him, 'Who told you this *hadith*?' 'Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'in,' he replied. He said, 'I am Ibn Ma'in and this is Ahmad ibn Hanbal and we have not heard this at all in the *ahadith* of the Messenger of Allah. This must be a lie.' 'You are Yahya ibn Ma'in?' he asked. 'Yes,' he replied. He said, 'I had not heard that Yahya ibn Ma'in was a fool and I did not know it until this moment!' Yahya asked, 'And why do you say that I am a fool?' He replied, 'It is not as if there was no Yahya ibn Ma'in and Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the world but you two! I have written from seventeen Ahmad ibn Hanbals other than this.' Ahmad hid his face in his sleeve and said, 'Let him go.' He went as if he was mocking them." These groups lie about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

If they had confined themselves to what is established in the *Sahih* collections and *Musnads* and other books made by scholars related by the imams, they would have had enough. They abandoned his warning, "Fear Allah when reporting from other than those you know. Whoever deliberately lies about me should take his seat in the Fire." So he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned his Community about lying, indicating that he knew that it would happen. His warning was about what is forged by the enemies of Islam and the *zindiqs* in encouragement and warning and other things. Those who do the greatest harm are those who ascribed asceticism to themselves and forged *ahadith* about rewards that they claim. People accepted their forgeries and relied on them, and so they were misguided and misguided others.

What has come on the refutation of those who attack the Qur'an and oppose the text of 'Uthman by adding to it or removing some of it

There is no disagreement in the Community between the Imams of the Sunna that the Qur'an is the name used to designate the Words of Allah which Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought as a miracle, as we have said. It is preserved in the hearts, recited on the tongues, written in the copies of the Qur'an, and known by necessity in *suras* and *ayats*. It is free of any addition or increase in words and letters. There is no need for a definition to define it nor number to contain it. Anyone who claims

increase or decrease in it has declared the consensus false and such an action astonishes people. We read what Allah said about what the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought of the Qur'an revealed to him, "*Say: 'If both men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce anything like it, even if they backed each other up.'*" (17:88). That is an attempt to invalidate the Sign of the Messenger because if it had been something someone was capable of doing, it would not be a proof or a sign and therefore not a miracle.

Those who say that there is addition and decrease in the Qur'an reject the Book of Allah and what the Messenger has brought. It is like someone who states that the obligatory prayers are fifty, one can marry nine women and that Allah obliged extra days to be fasted together with the days of Ramadan, and so forth. As all of that is refuted by consensus, so consensus about the Qur'an is more binding and necessary.

Seeking Refuge with Allah from Shaytan

Allah orders people to seek refuge at the beginning of every recitation, when He says, "*Whenever you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Shaytan.*" (16:98) This command is a recommendation according to the position of the majority for every time of recitation other than the prayer. There is disagreement where the prayer is concerned. An-Naqqash reported from 'Ata' that seeking refuge is mandatory in it. Ibn Sirin, Ibrahim an-Nakha'i and some other people sought refuge in the prayer in every *rak'at* and treated the command of Allah to seek refuge as applying in every case. Abu Hanifa and ash-Shafi'i sought refuge in the first *rak'at* of the prayer and considered all the recitation during the prayer to constitute a single act of recitation. Malik did not think that there was any need to seek refuge in the obligatory prayers but thought it should be done in night prayers in Ramadan.

Scholars agree that the formula of seeking refuge is not part of the Qur'an nor an *ayat* of it. It is the words of the reciter, "*A'udhu bi'llahi min ash-shaytani'r-rajim* (I seek refuge with Allah from the Accursed Shaytan')." This formula is that on which the majority of scholars agree because it concurs with the expression in the Book of Allah. It is related that Ibn Mas'ud said, "I say, 'I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing from the accursed Shaytan.'" The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to him, "Ibn Umm 'Abd, I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan as Jibril read it to me from the Preserved Tablet from the Pen."

Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah related in their *Sunan* collections that Jubayr ibn Mut'im saw the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, praying. ('Amr said, 'I do not know which prayer it was.') He said, 'Allah is very much greater. Allah is very much greater (three times). Praise be to Allah abundantly. Praise be to Allah abundantly (three times) Glory be to Allah morning and evening (three times). I seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan and his blowing, spitting and spurring.' Spurring is madness, spitting is poetry and blowing is pride.

Abu Dawud also related that Abu Sa'id al-Khudri said that when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, rose at night, he would say the *takbir* and then say, "Glory be to You, O Allah, and by your praise. Blessed is Your Name and exalted are You. There is no god but You." Then he said, "There is no god but Allah" three times, "Allah is very great" three times, and "I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, all-Knowing from the Accursed Shaytan from his spurring, blowing and spitting." Then he would recite.

Sulayman ibn Salim related from Ibn al-Qasim that the refuge formula is: "I seek refuge with Allah, the Immense from the Accursed Shaytan. Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful." Ibn 'Atiyya stated, "Those who recite often change the attribute of the Name of Allah and that of the other, as when one says 'I seek refuge with Allah the Glorious from the rebellious Shaytan,' and the like. I do not say that this is a good innovation nor that it is not permitted."

Al-Mahdawi said, "The reciters agree about reciting the refuge formula at the beginning of the *Fatiha* except for Hamza who does it silently. As-Suddi related that the people of Madina used to begin recitation with the *basmala*. As-Samarqandi related from some of the commentators that seeking refuge is an obligation. When the reciter forgets it and then remembers at some point in his recitation, he stops and seeks refuge and then begins from the beginning again. One of them said that he seeks refuge and then returns to where he stopped. The first is the position of the authorities of the Hijaz and Iraq and the second is that of the authorities of Syria and Egypt.

Az-Zahrawi said, "The *ayat* was revealed about the prayer, and it was recommended to seek refuge outside the prayer, but it is not obligation." Another said, "It was an obligation only for the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and we emulate him."

It is related from Abu Hurayra that the refuge formula should be recited after recitation. Da'ud said that. Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said, "Not knowing the correct way led people to say that when the reciter finishes reciting the Qur'an, he should seek refuge with Allah from the Accursed Shaytan." Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to seek refuge in the prayer before the recitation. This is a confirmed text.

If it is asked, "What is the benefit of seeking refuge from the Accursed Shaytan at the time of recitation?" the reply is that the benefit lies in obeying the command. The only benefit of prescribed matters lies in obeying them if they are commands or avoiding them if they are prohibitions. It is said that its benefit is to obey the command to seek refuge from the whispering of Shaytan in recitation as Allah says, "*We did not send any Messenger or any Prophet before you without Shaytan insinuating something into his recitation while he was reciting.*" (22:50).

Ibn al-'Arabi said, "Very strange is what we find of the words of Malik in the Collection regarding the *tafsir* of this *ayat*, '*Whenever you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah*

from the cursed Shaytan' (16:98) when he says, 'That is after the recitation of the Umm al-Qur'an for the one who recites in the prayer.' This position has no effect and investigation does not support it. If it is as some people say about seeking refuge being after the recitation, it specifies that that is after the *Fatiha* in the prayer. That is a vast claim and does not resemble the basic principle or understanding of Malik. Allah best knows the secret of this transmission."

Regarding the excellence of seeking refuge, Muslim related that Sulayman ibn Surad said, "Two men were quarrelling in the presence of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. One of them became angry and his face turned red and his veins stood out. The Prophet looked at him and said, 'I know a statement which, if you say it, will remove what you feel: I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan.'" A man who had heard the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, went to the man and said, 'Do you know what the Messenger of Allah said? He said, "I know a statement which, if you say it, will remove what you feel: I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan.'" The man said to him, 'Do you think I am mad?'" (al-Bukhari)

Muslim reported that 'Uthman ibn Abi'l-'As said, "I went to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said, 'Messenger of Allah, Shaytan comes between me and my prayer and recitation and confuses me.' He said, "That is a Shaytan called Khinzab. When you feel that, seek refuge in Allah from him and spit to your left three times.' I did that and Allah removed it from me."

Abu Dawud reported that Ibn 'Umar said, "When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, travelled, and night was coming he said, 'O earth, my Lord and your Lord is Allah. I seek refuge with Allah from your evil and the evil of what He creates in you, from the evil of what crawls on you, from the lion and the black scorpion, from snakes and scorpions and the dwellers of the land, and the parent and what he begets."

Khawla bint Hakim reported that she heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "If anyone makes camp and then says, 'I seek refuge with the complete words of Allah from the evil of what He created,' he will not be harmed by anything until he sets out again." (*Muwatta'*, Muslim and at-Tirmidhi)

The refuge formula (*isti'adha*) in Arabic is seeking protection in something so that it will guard a person against what he dislikes.

The name "*Shaytan*" comes from a root which means to be far from good. *Shatun* is a deep well. *Shatan* is a rope. It is called that because its ends are far from one other. The Arabs describe a refractory horse as a shaytan. Shaytan himself is called that because he is far from the truth and is rebellious; and the word is used for every rebellious one among the jinn and animals. It is said that "shaytan" is derived from *shata* which is a word used for someone who is destroyed or burned. *Ar-rajim* (accursed) means to be far from good and humiliated. Its root means "stoning". "Stoning" is a metaphor for killing, cursing, exile and abuse.

It is reported from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, "I saw the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, at Safa, facing an individual in the form of an elephant whom he was cursing. I asked, 'Who are you cursing, Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'This is the accursed shaytan.' I said, 'Enemy of Allah, by Allah, I will kill you and relieve the Community of you!' He said, 'This is not my repayment from you.' I asked, 'And what is your repayment from me, enemy of Allah?' He said, 'By Allah, no one will hate you at all unless I had a share of him with his father in his mother's womb.'"

The Basmala

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

Scholars say that "*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*" is an oath from our Lord which He revealed at the beginning of every sura. By it, He swears to His slaves, "What I have laid down for you, My slaves, in this sura is true. I will fulfil for you all that I guarantee in this *sura* of My promise, kindness and gentleness." "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful" is part of what Allah revealed in His Book, and this is special for this Community after Sulayman. Some scholars say that "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful" contains all the Shari'a because it indicates the Essence and the Attributes.

Sa'id ibn Abi Sakina said that he heard that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib looked at a man who had written, "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful," and told him, "Do it well. If a man does it well, he will be forgiven." Sa'id said, "I heard that a man looked at a parchment on which was written 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful,' and kissed it and placed it on his eyes and was forgiven on account of that." There is a similar story from Bishr al-Hafi. When he picked up a rag on which was "the Name of Allah" and perfumed it, his own name became honoured. Al-Qushayri mentioned that.

An-Nasa'i reports from Abu'l-Malih about a man who rode behind the Messenger of Allah that he mentioned that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "When your animal stumbles with you, do not say, 'Shaytan has made it stumble!' because that puffs him up until he becomes like a house and says with strength, 'I have done it.' Rather say, 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful' and Shaytan will become small until he is like a fly."

'Ali ibn al-Hasan said about the words of the Almighty, "*When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in flight*" (17:46), "That refers to when you say, 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful.'" It is reported that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "Whoever wants Allah to rescue him from the nineteen *Zabaniyya* should recite, 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful' so that Allah will make each letter a shield for him against one of them. The *basmala* contains nineteen letters according to the number of the angels of the Fire who Allah says are also nineteen. (74:30) They say in all that they do, 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful.' That is their strength and they take their strength from the name of Allah."

Ibn 'Atiyya said, "The like of this is what they say about the Night of Power being the 27th night, taking note of the position the word "*hiya*" in the words of the sura, *Al-Qadr* (97:1-5). [It is the twenty-seventh word in the *sura*.] That is like what they say about the number of angels who hastened to report the words of the one who said, 'My Lord, praise is Yours, abundant, excellent and blessed,' [after rising from *ruku*' when the Prophet said, "Allah hears the one who praises Him."] It is about thirty letters. That is why the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'I saw about thirty angels racing to see which would be the first to write it down.'" Ibn 'Atiyya said, "This is an elegant *tafsir*, but not a firm *tafsir*."

Ash-Sha'bi and al-A'mash report that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, wrote, "In Your Name, O Allah" until he was commanded to write 'In the Name of Allah,' and then he wrote that. When it was revealed, "*Say: 'Call on Allah or call on the All-Merciful'*" (17:109), he wrote, "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful." When there was revealed, "It is from Sulayman and says, '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful'*" (27:30), he wrote that. In Abu Dawud, ash-Sha'bi, Abu Malik, Qatada and Thabit ibn 'Umara said that the Prophet did not write "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful" until *Surat an-Naml* (27) was revealed.

It is reported that Ja'far as-Sadiq said that the *basmala* is the crown of the *suras*. This indicates that it is not an *ayat* of the *Fatiha* or other *suras*. People disagree about this and have three positions regarding it.

- It is not an *ayat* of the *Fatiha* or any other *sura*. This is the position of Malik.

- It is an *ayat* of every *sura*, and this is the position of 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak.

- Ash-Shafi'i said that it is an *ayat* of the *Fatiha* and what he says about the other *suras* varies. Sometimes he says that it is an *ayat* of every *sura* and sometimes that it is only one of the *Fatiha*. There is no disagreement that it is an *ayat* of the Qur'an inside *Surat an-Naml*.

Ash-Shafi'i's evidence is what ad-Daraqutni related from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "When you read '*Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,*' then recite '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*'. It is the Mother of the Qur'an, the Mother of the Book, and the Seven *Mathani*. '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*' is one of its *ayats*."

The evidence of Ibn al-Mubarak and one of the positions of ash-Shafi'i is what Muslim reports from Anas: "One day while the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was among us he nodded off and then he raised his head smiling. We asked, 'What has made you smile, Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'A *sura* was just revealed to me. It is: '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful. Truly We have given you the Great Abundance. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. It is the one who hates you who is cut off without an heir.*'" (108)"

The sound position is that of Malik because the Qur'an is not established by single reports, but by way of definitive multiple transmission about which there is no disagreement. Ibn al-'Arabi said, "It is enough for you that there is no disagreement between people about the Qur'an. There is no disagreement about the Qur'an." Sound reports which cannot be attacked indicated that the *basmala* is not an *ayat* of *al-Fatiha* or any other *sura* except for *Surat an-Naml*. Muslim reported that Abu Hurayra said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, 'Allah says, 'I have divided the prayer into two halves between Me and My slave, and My slave will have what he asks for. When My slave says, "*Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,*" Allah says, 'My slave has praised Me.' He says, "the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful," and the Lord says, "My slave has lauded Me." My slave says, "*the King of the Day of Judgement,*" and Allah says, "My slave has magnified Me (or entrusted to Me)." The slave says, "You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help," and Allah says, "This is between Me and My slave and My slave will have what He asks for." The slave says, "*Guide us on the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have blessed, not of those with anger on them, nor of the misguided,*" and Allah says, "Those are for My slave and My slave will have what He asks for.""

Allah said, "I have divided the prayer", meaning the *Fatiha*, and he called it "prayer" because the prayer is not valid except with it. So He designated the first three *ayats* for Himself, singling them out for Himself, and the Muslims do not disagree about that. Then he made the fourth between Him and His slave because it contains the abasement of the slave and seeking help from Him. That contains esteem for Allah. Then three *ayats* conclude the seven. They are three, because He uses the plural, not the dual in "Those are for My slave," So "those You have blessed" is an *ayat*. Ibn Bukayr reported that Malik said that "those You have blessed" is an *ayat*.

This is confirmed by the division and by what the Prophet said to Ubayy when he asked the Prophet, "How do you recite when you begin the prayer?" He replied, "I recited, '*Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds*' to the end." The *basmala* was not part of it. That was the position of the people of Madina, the people of Syria and the people of Basra. Most reciters counted "*those You have blessed*" as an *ayat*. This is also related from Abu Nadra from Abu Hurayra who said that the sixth *ayat* is "those You have blessed". The people of Kufa count the *basmala* as part of it and do not count "*those You have blessed*".

If it is said that it is confirmed in the copies of the Qur'an that the *basmala* is written and transmitted as it is transmitted in *an-Naml* and that this is multiple transmission, we reply that that is sound, but is it because it is Qur'an, or is it a divider between *suras* as is related from the Companions, "We did not know the end of the *sura* until '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*' was revealed." (Abu Dawud) Or it may be for the blessing, in the same way that the Community agrees to write it at the beginning of books and letters. All of that is possible. Al-Jurayri said, "Al-Hasan was asked about 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful' and said 'At the beginning of letters.'" He also said, "'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful' was not revealed in any of the Qur'an except *an-Naml*." The criterion is that the Qur'an is not established

by logic and deduction. It is established by definitive multiple transmission. So the statement of ash-Shafi'i about the *basmala* being at that beginning of each *sura* is unsound because the *basmala* is not an *ayat* of each *sura*. Praise belongs to Allah.

It is reported that a group related that the *basmalas* are part of the Qur'an. Ad-Daraqutni dealt with all of that. We do not deny the transmission of that and we have indicated it, but we have firm reports which counter it which are related by reliable imams and *fuqaha'*. In *Sahih Muslim*, 'A'isha is reported as saying, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to begin the prayer with the *takbir* and the recitation of 'Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.'" Muslim also reported that Anas ibn Malik said, "I prayed behind the Prophet, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and they began with '*Praise be to Allah.*' They did not mention '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful,*' either at the beginning or the end of recitation."

So our school prefers that, and it is logical. That is because the Mosque of the Prophet in Madina passed through many years from the time of the Messenger of Allah, until the time of Malik and during all that time no one recited, "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful," following the *Sunna*. This refutes the *ahadith* you cite. Our people, however, prefer to recite it in the voluntary prayers, and there are traditions (*athar*) about reciting it or an allowance for doing that. Malik said, "There is no harm in reciting it in the *nafila* or simply reading the Qur'an."

A group of the school of Malik and his people said that it is not part of the *Fatiha* or any other *sura*, and it is not read by the one who prays the obligatory or any other prayer, either silently or aloud. It is permitted to recite it in *nafila* prayers. This is well-known in his school and with his people. There is another transmission that it is recited at the beginning of the *sura* in *nafila* prayers but not at the beginning of the *Fatiha*. It is related that Ibn Nafi' began his recitation with it in the obligatory and *nafila* prayers and did not ever omit it. Some of the people of Madina say that there must be "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful," among them Ibn 'Umar and Ibn Shihab. Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, Ishaq, Abu Thawr and Abu 'Ubayd said that. That indicates that it is a matter of *ijtihad* and not definitive, as some ignorant individuals claim.

A group of scholars believe that it is recited silently with the *Fatiha*. They include Abu Hanifa and ath-Thawri. That is related from 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Ammar and Ibn az-Zubayr. It is also the view of al-Hakam and Hammad, and it is stated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abu 'Ubayd. Something similar to that is related from al-Awza'i. The evidence is the report from Anas ibn Malik: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, led us in the prayer and we did not hear him recite, '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful.*'"

This is a good position, and the traditions (*athar*) reported from Anas agree on it and remove the disagreement about the recitation of the *basmala*. It is related that Sa'id ibn Jubayr said, "The idolaters used to come to the mosque. When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, recited, '*In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful,*' they said, 'This Muhammad mentioned the Rahman of

Yamama,' meaning Musaylima. So he was commanded to recite it silently and it was revealed, '*Do not be too loud in your prayer or too quiet in it.*' (17:110)" At-Tirmidhi al-Hakim said, "That has lasted until now, even if the cause no longer exists, as running remains in *tawaf* even if the cause no longer exists and silence in the day prayers even if the cause no longer exists."

The Community agree that it is permitted to write it at the beginning of every book of knowledge and letter. There is disagreement about books of poetry and whether or not it should be written in them.

The Shari'a recommends mentioning the basmala at the beginning of every action, like eating, drinking, slaughtering, sex, purification, embarking on a ship and the like. Allah says, "*Eat that over which the name of Allah has been mentioned*" (6:119) and "He said, '*Embark in it. In the name of Allah be its voyage and its landing!*'" (11:41) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Lock your door and mention the Name of Allah. Put out your lamp and mention the Name of Allah. Cover your vessel and mention the Name of Allah. Tie up your waterskin and mention the Name of Allah." He said, "If anyone of you wants to go to his wife, he should say, 'In the Name of Allah. O Allah, keep shaytan away from us and keep shaytan away from what You provide us with.' If a child is decreed for them, Shaytan will not harm him at all." He told 'Umar ibn Abi Salama, "Boy, say the name of Allah Almighty and eat with your right hand and eat what is in front of you."

When 'Uthman ibn Abi'l-'As complained to him of a pain he had in his body since he had become Muslim, the Messenger of Allah said to him, "Place your hand on that part of your body which pains you and say 'In the Name of Allah' three times and then say seven times, 'I seek refuge in the might and power of Allah from the evil of what I feel and am on my guard against.'" Ibn Majah and at-Tirmidhi report that the Prophet said, "The veil between the jinn and the private parts of the sons of Adam when he enters the privy is to say, 'In the Name of Allah.'" Ad-Daraqutni reported that 'A'isha said, "When the Prophet touched his *wudu*' vessel, he said the Name of Allah and then poured the water on his hands."

Our scholars say that this refutes the Qadarites and others who say that our actions are decreed for us. The argument against them in that is that Allah commanded us to begin every action with the *basmala*.

The meaning of "In the Name of Allah" is "by Allah", and the meaning of "by Allah" is by His creation and determination to reach what is reached. Some say that "In the Name of Allah" means "I begin with the help, success and blessing of Allah. This is Allah teaching His slaves to mention His Name at the beginning of actions.

There is disagreement about the derivation of *ism* (Name), with two basic positions. The Basrans say that it is derived from *sumu*, which means height and elevation. It is said that *ism* means that the person is in an elevated place. It is said that the name lifts the named from others. It is said that the name is called that because it is higher than the other parts

of speech by its strength. The noun (*ism*) is stronger by agreement because it is the root. These are three statements.

The Kufans say that it is derived from *sima*, which means a sign, because the Name is a sign of the One to whom it is given. So the root of *ism* is *wasam*. The first is sounder because of the form of the diminutive and the form of plural which is *asma'*. Another disagreement indicates the soundness of that, and it is the next point.

If it is true that *ism* is derived from height, Allah was described by it before creation existed, after it existed and will be when it is annihilated, and creatures have no effect on the Names or Attributes. This is the position of the people of the Sunna. Those who say that it is derived from *sima*, say that before time Allah was without name or attribute. When He created creatures, they gave Him Names and Attributes. When He annihilates them, He will again have no name or attribute. This is the position of the Mu'tazilites, and it is contrary to that on which the Community agree. It is worse than their error when they say, "His Word is created." Exalted above that is Allah! It is according to this that there is a disagreement about the Name and Named.

The people of truth believe, as Qadi Abu Bakr ibn at-Tayyib al-Baqillani mentioned, that the name is the thing named and Ibn Furak is content with that. It is the position of Abu 'Abida and Sibawayh. If someone says, "Allah is Knowing" his words indicate the Essence which is described as being knowing. So the Name is Knowing and it is what is Named. It is the same when someone says, "Allah is the Creator." The Creator is the Lord and it is the Name itself. So their view is that the Name is the Named itself with no distinction.

Ibn Hassar said, "Those among the innovators who deny the attributes claim that namings have no meaning except the Essence. That is why they say that the Name is not the Named. Whoever affirms the Attributes, affirms that the names have meanings which are the qualities of the Essence. They are not expressions, but they are Names in their view. More of this will come in *al-Baqara* and *al-A'raf*."

Allah is the greatest and most comprehensive of all the Names, so that one scholar said that it is the Greatest Name of Allah and no one else has it. That is why it has no dual nor plural. That is one of two interpretations of the words of the Almighty, "*Do you know of any other with His Name?*" (19:65), in other words anyone named with His Name which is Allah. Allah is the Name of the True Existent who has all the Divine Attributes and is described as Lord and alone possesses real existence. There is no god but Him. Glory be to Him! It is said that it means the One who should be worshipped. It is said that it means the One whose existence is necessary who always was and always will be. The meaning is the same.

There is disagreement about whether this Name is derived or a unique designation for the Divine Essence. Many of the people of knowledge believe the first but then disagree on its actual derivation and root. Sibawayh reported from al-Khalil that its root is *ilah*, on the measure of *fi'al*. The *alif* and *lam* replace the *hamza*. Sibawayh said that it is like *an-*

nas (people) whose root is *anas*. It is said that its root is *lah* and the *alif* and *lam* are added to exalt it. This is what Sibawayh preferred. Al-Kisa'i and al-Farra' said that "*bismillah*" is made up of '*bismi - al-ilah*' and elision has occurred and the first lam assimilated into the second and so becomes a double lam.

It is said that the name Allah is derived from *walaha*, to be bewildered. *Walaha* means loss of intellect, and someone who is *walih* is bewildered. Allah bewilders minds when they think on the realities of His attributes and reflect on gnosis of Him. So the basis of *ilah* is *walah* and the *hamza* is changed from the *waw*. That is also reported from al-Khalil. It is related that ad-Dahhak said, "He is called Allah because creatures devote (*ta'allaha*) themselves to Him in their needs and make supplication to Him in times of hardship. It is related that al-Khalil ibn Ahmad said something similar. It is also said that it is derived from elevation and that the Arabs used to use "*laha*" for something elevated and they used the verb for sunrise.

It is said that the name Allah is derived from the word *ilah* (god), which means an object of worship so that the meaning of "Allah" is the Object of Worship. So what the unifiers say, "There is no god but Allah" means "there is no object of worship other than Allah." Here "*illa*" means "other", not "except." Some claim that the root is *al-ha*' which alludes to the third person. That is since they affirm Him as existing in their natural intellects and indicate Him with the letter of allusion. Then the *lam* of possession is added to it since they know that He is the Creator and Master of things, and *laha* then is added for magnification.

The second position is taken by a group of scholars, including ash-Shafi'i, Abu'l-Ma'ali, al-Khattabi, al-Ghazali, al-Mufaddal and others, and is related from al-Khalil and Sibawayh. It is that the *alif* and *lam* are a necessary part of it and cannot be elided from it. Al-Khattabi said that the evidence that the *alif* and *lam* are an intrinsic part of the structure of this name and not added for definition is that it is included in the vocative, as "*Ya Allah!*" The vocative is not combined with the definite article *alif-lam*. One does not say, "*Ya ar-Rahman.*" Allah knows best.

There is also disagreement about the derivation of *ar-Rahman*. Some of them said that it has no derivation because it is one of the names particular to Him and if it had been derived from mercy (*rahma*), it would be connected to the one shown mercy and it would be possible to say, "Allah is *Rahman* to His slaves" as one does with *rahim*. If it had been derived from *rahma*, the Arabs would not have denied it when they heard it because they did not deny the mercy of their Lord. Allah says, "*When they are told to prostrate to the All-Merciful, they say, 'And what is the All-Merciful?'*" (25:60)

At al-Hudaybiyya, when 'Ali wrote at the command of the Prophet "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful," Suhayl ibn 'Amr said, "As for 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful,' we do not know 'In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful!' Rather write 'In Your Name, O Allah.'" Ibn al-'Arabi says that this indicates that they did not know the attribute rather than the One Described. Evidence is found in the fact that they said, "What is the Rahman?" not "Who is the

Rahman?" Ibn al-Hassar said, "It is as if he [the one who said this] had not recited the other *ayat*, 'Yet they still reject the All-Merciful.' (13:31)" One group believe that it is derived from *rahma*, and is intensive, meaning the One who possesses mercy such as no one else has. It has no plural or dual whereas *rahim* can be dual or plural.

Ibn al-Hassar said that part of what indicates the derivation is what at-Tirmidhi transmitted as sound from 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf. He heard the Messenger of Allah say, "Allah Almighty says, "I am the All-Merciful. I created kinship (*rahim*) and split it as a name from My Name. Whoever maintains ties, I maintain ties with him. Whoever severs it, I sever him." This is a text for its derivation and so there is no point in contention about it. The denial of the Arabs was simply due to their ignorance of Allah and what is mandatory for Him.

Al-Anbari mentions that al-Mubarrad stated that ar-Rahman is a Hebrew name. Ahmad ibn Yahya also said that. This view is unwarranted. Abu'l-'Abbas says that the attribute is for praise. Qutrub says that it is possible to combine the two for stress.

There is disagreement about whether the two names *Rahman* and *Rahim* have one meaning or two meanings. It is said, that they mean the same, as do *nadman* and *nadim*. It is said that *Rahman* is a special name with general action and *Rahim* is a general name with a particular action. This is the position of the majority.

Abu 'Ali al-Farisi said that *Rahman* is a general name for all types of mercy for which Allah is singled out. *Rahim* can be used for how He is towards the believers, as He says, "*He is merciful to the believers.*" (33:43). Al-'Arazami says that *Rahman* is merciful to all His creatures with rain, physical and general blessings, and *Rahim* is merciful to the believers in guiding them and being kind to them. Ibn al-Mubarak said that when the *Rahman* is asked He gives and when the *Rahim* is not asked, He is angry. Ibn 'Abbas said that they are two fine (*raqiq*) names, and one is finer than the other, meaning that it has more mercy.

Al-Khattabi said, "This is problematic because fineness has no place in any of the attributes of Allah." Al-Husayn ibn al-Fadl al-Bajali said, "This is an error on the part of the transmitter because fineness (*riqqa*) is not part of the attributes of Allah at all. Rather they are two compassionate (*rafiq*) names, one more compassionate than the other. Compassion is one of the Attributes of Allah Almighty. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah is Compassionate. He loves compassion and gives for compassion what he does not for harshness."

Most scholars agree that the name ar-Rahman is used only for Allah Almighty and it is not permitted to call anyone else by it. Do you not see that He says, "*Say: 'Call on Allah or call on the All-Merciful'*" (17:109)? So it is equal to the Name in which none but Him share. He says, "*Ask those We sent before you as Our Messengers: Have We ever designated any gods to be worshipped besides the All-Merciful?*" (43:44) So they reported that the *Rahman* deserved worship. Musaylima the Liar – may Allah curse him –

was outrageous and called himself "the *Rahman* of Yamama" and so was called "the Liar".

Ar-Rahim is general and can be used in respect of creatures. As *ar-Rahman* is universal, as we said *ar-Rahim* is in harmony with revelation. Al-Mahdawi stated that. It is said that the meaning of *ar-Rahim* is: "It is by the *Rahim* that you reach to the *Rahman*." So *ar-Rahim* is the attribute of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and Allah described him with that. He says, "compassionate, merciful" when describing him. So it as if the meaning of saying, "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful" is "It is by Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that you will reach Me," in other words by following him and what he has brought, you will reach My reward, honour and the vision of My face." Allah knows best.

It is related that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "*Bismillah* is healing from every illness and protection against every disease. *Ar-Rahman* is a help for everyone who believes in Him. It is a name not used for anyone else. *Ar-Rahim* is for those who repent, believe and perform righteous actions."

Some of them explained the meaning according to the letters. It is related that 'Uthman ibn 'Affan asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about the interpretation of "In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful." He said, "The *ba'* is the trial (*bala'*) of Allah, His relief, brilliance and radiance (*baha'*). The *sin* is the splendour (*sana'*) of Allah. The *mim* is the kingdom (mulk) of Allah. As for Allah, there is no god but Him. The *Rahman* is kind to both the pious and impious of His creatures. The *Rahim* is kind only to the believers." It is reported that Ka'b al-Ahbar said, "The *ba'* is His radiance (*baha'*), the *sin* is His splendour (*sana'*), and there is nothing higher than it. The *mim* is His kingdom, and He has power over all things and nothing is hard for Him."

It is said that every letter is the opening of one of His Names. The *ba'* is the key to His Name *Basir* (All-Seeing). The *sin* is the key to His Name, *Sami'* (All-Hearing). The *mim* is the key to His Name, *Malik* (Master). The *alif* is the key to His Name, *Allah*. The *lam* is the key to His Name, *Latif* (Kind). The *ha'* is the key to His Name, *Hadi* (Guide). The *ra'* is the key to His Name, *Raziq* (Provider). The *ha'* is the key to His Name, *Halim* (Forbearing). The *nun* is the key of His Name, *Nur* (Light). The meaning of all this is supplication of Allah at the beginning of everything.

There is disagreement how '*ar-Rahim*' is connected in recitation to '*al-hamdu lillah*'. Umm Salama related that the Prophet recited '*ar-Rahim*' with a *sukun* on the *mim*, and stopping there and then beginning with a fresh *alif*. Some of the Kufans recited it in that way. Most people recite, '*ar-Rahimi'l-hamdu*', with a *kasra* on the *mim* and connecting it to the *alif* in *al-hamd*. Al-Kisa'i reported that some Arabs read it '*ar-Rahima'l-hamdu*', with *fatha* on the *mim* and connected to the *alif*, as if the *mim* was in fact silent, but with an elision into the *alif*. Ibn 'Atiyya said, "This recitation is not reported from anyone I know."

