

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > Al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, The Prolegomena to the Qur'an > 4. Insight about the Readers of the Qur'an > Yazid b. al-Qa'qa'

4. Insight about the Readers of the Qur'an

Synopsis: The biographies of the Seven Readers: 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir al-Dimishqi; Ibn Kathir al-Makki; 'Asim b. Bahdala al-Kufi; Abu 'Amr al-Basri; Hamza al-Kufi; Nafi' al-Madani; al-Kisa'i al-Kufi. And the three other readers: Khalaf b. Hisham al Bazzar; Ya'qub b. Ishaq; Yazid b. al-Qa'qa'.

Opinions have varied about the seven famous readings of the Qur'an that are most commonly known among people. A number of Sunni scholars have maintained that all of them have been reported through uninterrupted transmission (*tawatur*) 1 from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). This is sometimes assumed to be the most common view among them. It has been maintained, on the authority of al Subki, that the readings reported by uninterrupted transmission are ten in number. 2 Some of them have gone so far as to assert that whoever maintains that the seven readings of the Qur'an need not be reported by uninterrupted transmission has committed an act of disbelief. This radical opinion has been attributed to the Mufti of Andalusia, Abil Sa'id Faraj b. Lubb.3

Among Shi'ites, it is commonly known that these readings have not been reported by uninterrupted transmission; rather, some of them are based on the personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) of the reader; and others, on single narrations (*khabar al-wahid*). 4 This opinion has been adopted by a group of Sunni scholars and is most likely to be the prevalent one among them, as we shall note. It is certainly the correct view. In order to verify this conclusion, it is necessary to mention two points:

First, Muslims of all sects and schools of thought are in agreement that the immutability of the Qur'an is established only on [its] uninterrupted transmission. A number of Sunni and Shi'ite scholars have deduced this from the fact that there are sufficient reasons to ensure the uninterrupted transmission of the Qur'an. It is, after all, the foundation of the Islamic faith and the divine miracle for the mission of the Prophet of all Muslims, and anything with sufficient reasons for being transmitted is bound to be transmitted uninterruptedly and reliably [from the source]. For this reason, whatever has been transmitted through a single narration is definitely not from the Qur'an.

Conversely, al–Suyuti reports that "al–Qadi Abu Bakr says in his book *al–Intisar*: 'A number of jurists and theologians have maintained that small sections of the Qur'an, transmitted through a single narration,

can be lawfully considered part of it, though not with certainty. Such an opinion has been regarded as reprehensible by the people of the Truth [i.e., the Sunnis], and they have refused to accept it."5

This view [expressed by] al–Qadi Abu Bakr is evidently wrong for the same reason mentioned above–namely, that the existence of sufficient reasons for transmission is in itself indisputable evidence of the falsehood of reports that are transmitted on the authority of one or two narrators. Thus, if we were informed by one person or two persons that a great king had arrived in a city, and if the arrival of that king in that city were something which normally was impossible to hide from the people, then we would have no doubt of the falsehood of this report if no one besides the one or two persons reported it. And since it was manifestly false, how could it bring about the effects which result from the king's arrival in that city? Similarly, if a part of the Qur'an were transmitted through a single narration, then this would be a definite proof that what had been transmitted was not part of the divine speech. Since its falsehood is thus established, how can one follow the commands contained in it?

At any rate, Muslims have never disagreed that the authenticity of the Qur'anic text, as well as the fact that it is a divine speech, are both confirmed solely by uninterrupted transmission.

This makes it clear that there is no interdependency between the uninterrupted transmission of the Qur'an and the lack of uninterruption in the transmission of the readings. This is because the evidence for the uninterrupted transmission of the Qur'an and its necessity does not in any way establish that its readings have been transmitted without interruption. Similarly, the evidence against the uninterrupted transmission of the readings does not in any way reflect on the uninterrupted transmission of the Qur'an itself.

Second, the best way to prove the lack of uninterrupted transmission of the readings of the Qur'an is to investigate the careers of the readers themselves, who are seven in number, as well as of those who transmitted from them. To these seven we must add three, to make ten; we will turn to the three after we deal with the seven. [Indeed], we will give their biographies and investigate their circumstances one by one.

'Abd Allah b. 'Amir al-Dimishqi

He was known by his patronymic, Abu 'Imran al-Yahsabi. He studied the Qur'an with al-Mughira b. Abi Shihab. Al-Haytham b. 'Imran says: "Abd Allah b. 'Amir was the leader of the people in the mosque during the reign of [the Umayyad] al Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik. He used to claim that he was of the Himyar stock, but used to be challenged in this claim." According to al-'Ijli and al-Nasa'i, he was reliable. Abu 'Amr al-Dani says, "He was appointed chief judge of Damascus after Bilal b. Abi Darda'. . . . The people of Syria regarded him as an authority for his reading [of the Qur'an] and his choice [of a variant reading]." 6 Further information about his career is provided by Ibn al-Jazari, who says: "Nine different narratives have been transmitted about him, of which the most authentic is the one which says that he studied the Qur'an with al-Mughira"; however, adds Ibn al-Jazari, some narratives quote him as saying

that "he did not know with whom he studied the recitation." He was born in the year 8 A.H. (629 CE), and he died in 118 A.H. (736 CE).

'Abd Allah b. 'Amir had two transmitters who learned his reading of the Qur'an from intermediary authorities. These [transmitters] were Hisham and Ibn Dhakwan.

As for Hisham, his full name was Ibn 'Ammar b. Nuayr b. Maysara. He acquired the reading of the Qur'an by presenting it to Ayyub b. Tamim. According to Yahya b. Mu'in, Hisham was reliable; according to al-Nasa'i, he was acceptable. Al Daraqutfil says, "He was truthful and highly esteemed." He was born in the year 153 A.H. (770 C.E.), and he died in the year 245 (859 C.E.).

According to al-Ajuri, who reported on the authority of Abu Dawud, "Abu Ayyub"-that is, Sulayman b. 'Abd al-Rahman-"was better than him [Hisham]. Hisham transmitted four hundred traditions, supported by chains of transmission which were baseless." Ibn Wara says, "For a long time I intended to refrain from studying the tradition with Hisham, because he used to charge money for relating it." Salih b. Muhammad reports that Hisham "used to take from me the tradition [free of charge], but would not relate a tradition without being paid. . . . Al-Marwazi reports that Ahmad [b. Hanbal] mentioned Hisham, saying that he was confused and insignificant. Ahmad went on to relate a specific example of Hisham's reading, of which he disapproved to the extent that he declared that 'anyone who prays behind him, he should repeat the prayer. "9

As for those who transmitted the reading of the Qur'an on his authority, the sources are in disagreement. Thus, one should refer to *Tabaqat al–Qurra'* and other such sources.

As for Ibn Dhakwan, his full name was 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Bashir. He was also known as Bashir b. Dhakwan. He studied the Qur'an by presenting it to Ayyub b. Tamim. According to Abu 'Amr al-Hafiz:(he also studied with al-Kisa'i when the latter came to Damascus. He was born on the day of 'Ashura' ['I0 Muharram] in the year 173 A.H. (789 c.E.), and he died in the year 242 (856 c.E.). 10

Concerning those who transmitted the reading of the Qur'an on his authority, none of them are known.

Ibn Kathir al-Makki

His full name was 'Abd Allah b. Kathir b. 'Amr b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd Allah b. Zadhan b. Rruzan b. Hurmuz al-Makki al-Dari; [he was] of Persian origin. According to *Kitab al-Taysir*, he acquired the reading of the Qur'an by presenting it to 'Abd Allah b. al Sa'ib. This opinion has been accepted as definitive by al-Hafiz, Abu 'Amr al-Dani and others. However, he was declared weak by al-Hafiz Abu al-'Ala' al-Hamadani, who said, "He is not known among us." 11 Ibn Kathir also presented his reading [for authoritative approval] to Mujahid b. Jabr and Darbas, the client of 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas. He was born in Mekka in 45 A.H. (665 C.E.) and died in 120 A.H. (738 C.E.). 'Ali b. al-Mudayni regarded him as reliable, and so did Ibn Sa'd. Abu 'Amr al-Dani mentions that "he learned the reading of the Qur'an from 'Abd Allah b. al-

Sa'ib al Makhzumi," but the generally accepted view is that he studied with Mujahid. 12

Ibn Kathir had two transmitters, al-Buzzi and Qanbal, who learned his reading through intermediary authorities.

As for al-Buzzi, his full name was Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Qasim b. Nafi' b. Abi Buzza. He was also known as Bashshar, and he was of Persian origin, from Hamadan. He converted to Islam at the hand of al-Sa'ib b. Abi al-Sa'ib al Makhzumi. According to Ibn al-Jazari, he was a meticulous teacher, with a precise memory. He was born in 170 A.H. (786 C.E.) and died in 250 A.H. (864 C.E.). 13 Al-Buzzi studied with Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Alqama, known as Qawwas, and with Abu al-Akhrit Wahab b. Wadih al-Makki and 'Abd Allah b. Ziyad b. 'Abd Allah b. Yasar al-Makki 14 However, according to al-'Uqayli, "his transmission of the tradition was rejected"; similarly, Abu Hatim says that "he was weak in the transmission of the tradition-I do not report on his authority." 15

Concerning those who studied the reading with him, the authorities are in disagreement.

As for Qanbal, his full name was Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Khalid b. Muhammad Abu 'Amr al-Makhzumi; [he was] the client of al-Makki. He acquired his reading of the Qur'an by presenting it to Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Awn al-Nabbal, who later deputized him to teach in Mekka. Qanbal also transmitted the reading on the authority of al-Buzzi The leadership of those who taught the Qur'an in Hijaz eventually passed to him, and he also held the position of chief of police in Mekka. He was born in 195 A.H. (810 C.E.), and he died in 291 A.H. (903 C.E.). 16 [But after he was made] chief of police, his character was tarnished. As he advanced in age, he became infirm and deteriorated mentally. Thus he stopped teaching the reading of the Qur'an seven years before his death. 17

Concerning those who transmitted his reading of the Qur'an, the authorities are in disagreement.

'Asim b. Bahdala al-Kufi

His full name was Ibn AbI al-Nujud Abu Bakr al-Asadi; [his tribe was a] client of the Asad of Kufa. He acquired the reading of the Qur'an by presenting it to Zarr b. Hubaysh, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, and Abu 'Amr al-Shaybani. Abu Bakr b. al-Shaybani reports that 'Asim told him, "No one has taught me even one letter of the Qur'an except 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami. I used to leave him and present the reading to Zarr [for his critical approval]." Hafs reports that 'Asim also told him, "The reading that I have taught you is the one I learned from Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, who transmitted it [on the authority of] 'Ali [b. Abi Talib]. And the reading that I have taught to Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash is the one that I presented to Zarr b. Hubaysh [for his critical approval], which is the reading [he received on the authority] of Ibn Mas'ud. 18

Ibn Sa'd says that 'Asim was "reliable, but made mistakes in the transmission of the tradition." 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad reports, from his father, that 'Aim was "a prolific and reliable authority; however, al-A'mash

memorized [the tradition] more correctly." Al-'ljli says that "he ['Asim] had a compilation of traditions and a reading [of the Qur'an]. He was a reliable authority and one of the leading readers . . . and he was a supporter of 'Uthman." Ya'qub b. Sufyan says, "His transmission of the tradition contained some confusion; nevertheless, he is reliable." Ibn 'Ulayya also was critical of him, saying, "Everyone named 'Asim was faulty in memorizing the tradition." According to al-Nasa'i, "He is acceptable," but, according to Ibn Kharash, "His transmission of the tradition contains some deniable things." Al-'Uqayli says, "He had no problem except poor memorization of the tradition." Al-Daraqutni also found fault with his memory, while Hammad b. Salma reports that "Asim became confused toward the end of his life." He died in 127 or 128 A.H. (745 or 746 C.E.). 19

'Aim b. Bahdala's reading was transmitted by two persons directly from him: Hafs and Abu Bakr.

As for Hafs, he was Ibn Sulayman al–Asadi, who was raised by 'Asim. According to al–Dhahabi, "Hafs was reliable in his reading, consistent and accurate, but not so in the transmission of the tradition." Hafs himself said that he "did not depart from 'Asim's reading except in one word in "Surat al–Rum" [Sura 30, The Romans] verse 54, where Hafs read the word as *du'f* in 'God is He who shaped you out of weakness,' whereas 'Asim read it as *daf*." Hafs was born in 90 A.H. (708 C.E.) and died in 180 A.H. (796 C.E.).20

Ibn Abi Hatim reported from 'Abd Allah, who had reported from his father: "His [Haf 's] transmission of the tradition was rejected." Moreover, 'Uthman al-Darimi and others have related, on the authority of Ibn Mu'in, that he was not reliable. Ibn al-Madini says that "Hafs was weak in the tradition, and I intentionally avoided [transmitting] from him." Al-Bukhari states that he was rejected by the compilers [of biographical dictionaries]. A similar opinion was held by Muslim. Al-Nasa'i considered him untrustworthy and [said] that the traditions he transmitted were not recorded. Salih b. Muhammad says, "His traditions were not recorded, and all of them were objectionable." Ibn Kharash went as far as declaring him "a liar, rejected for fabricating traditions." Ibn Hayyan said: "He used to change the chains of transmission, and even fabricated chains for those traditions that did not have ones." Ibn al-Jawzi, in his section on the fabrication of traditions, quotes 'Abd al-Rahman al-Muhdi, who said, "I solemnly declare that it is not permissible to transmit [traditions] on his [Haf 's] authority." Al-Daraqutni declared him weak, and al-Saji said, "Hafs is one of those whose traditions have disappeared. What he transmitted contained objectionable traditions." 21

As in the case of other readers of the Qur'an, the authorities are not in agreement about who transmitted from him.

As for Abu Bakr, his full name was Shu'ba b. 'Ayyash b. Salim al-Hannat al-Asadi al-Kufi. According to lbn al-Jazari, "He presented his reading for critical approval to 'Asim three times, and to 'Ata' b. al-Sa'ib and Aslam al-Manqari. He lived long, but stopped teaching seven years before his death, and some say even longer than that. He was a great religious authority, learned, and active in devotion. He used to say, 'I am half of Islam.' He was one of the great scholars of prophetic tradition. When he was on his

deathbed and his sister was crying, he asked her: 'What makes you cry? Look at that corner. I completed eighteen thousand recitations of the Qur'an there." He was born in the year 95 A.H. (713 C.E.) and died in 193 or 194 A.H. (808 or 809 C.E.).22

'Abd Allah b. Ahmad [b. Hanbal] reported, on the authority of his father, that "he [Abu Bakr] was reliable, though sometimes inaccurate." 'Uthman al-Darimi regarded him as weak in the transmission of traditions. Ibn Abi Hatim reported that he asked his father about Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash and Abu al-Ahwas. He said, "I do not approbate either of the two." However, according to Ibn Sa'd, "He was reliable, honest, knowledgeable about the tradition and juridical decision ('ilm), but committed many errors." Ya'qub b. Shayba said, "His transmission of the tradition contained some confusion." Abu Nu'aym declared that "there was none among our teachers who committed more errors than him." According to al-Bazzar, "Abu Bakr did not memorize the tradition properly."23

Abu 'Amr al-Basri

His full name was Zuban b. al-'Ala' b. Ammar al-Mazini al-Bari. It is said that he was from Fars. He accompanied his father when the latter fled from al-Hajjaj, and he studied the reading of the Qur'an in Mekka and Medina. He also studied it in Kufa and Basra with a number of people. Indeed, none among the seven readers [of the Qur'an] had as many teachers as he [had]. The people of Syria used to follow the reading of Ibn 'Amir and abandoned it only toward the end of the [eighth] century. This was because a person who came from Iraq instructed the people in the Umayyad Mosque according to the reading of Abu 'Amr. This reading became well known through him in Syria. Al-Asma'i says, "I heard Abu 'Amr saying, 'I do not know of anyone before me more learned than myself."'24 He was born in 68 A.H. (687 C.E.) and, as reported by many, died in the year 154 A.H. (770 C.E.).

Al-Duri reports, on the authority of Ibn Mu'in, that he [Abu 'Amr] was regarded as trustworthy. On the other hand, Abu Khaythama has reported that "there is no objection to Abu 'Amr b. 'Ala' except that he did not memorize the traditions." Nasr b. 'Ali al-Jahdami reports that his father said, "I was told by Shu'ba: 'Pay close attention to what Abu 'Amr reads; and whatever he chooses for himself, write it down, because he is going to become a master [in this matter] for the people." In his book al-Tahdhrb, Abu Mu'awiya al-Azhari says that Abu 'Amr was among the most learned of the people about the variant readings and Arabic terminology, and the rare as pects of their speech, and their most eloquent poetry. 24 Abu 'Amr's readings were transmitted by two transmitters, who learned it from Yahiya b. al-Mubarak al-Yazidi. These were al-Duri and al-Susi.

As for Yahiya b. al-Mubarak, Ibn al-Jazari reports that "he was a grammarian, a teacher of the Qur'an, reliable, and highly educated." He settled in Baghdad and became known as al-Yazidi because of his connection with Yazid b. Mansur al Himyari, the maternal uncle of the [Abbasid caliph] al-Mahdi, the education of whose children he undertook. He acquired his reading by presenting it for critical approval to Abu 'Amr, who, in turn, deputized him to teach it. He also studied with Hamza [another reader]. Abu

Amr al-Duri and Abu Shu'ayb al-Susi transmitted the reading on his [al-Yazidi's] authority. He held certain opinions [based on his own judgment] in which he disagreed with Abu 'Amr on a few points. Ibn Mujahid remarks that "we relied on al-Yazidi--despite the fact that other associates of Abu 'Amr were more excellent than him-because he assumed the responsibility of transmitting Abu 'Amr' s reading and devoted himself exclusively to it, engaging in nothing else. He was regarded as the most accurate of them all." He died in 202 A.H. (817 C.E.) in Marw at the age of seventy-four. Some have said that he was past ninety or close to one hundred. 25

As for al–Duri, his full name was Hafs b. 'Amr b. 'Abd al-'Aziz al–Duri al-Azadi al-Baghdadi. According to Ibn al–Jazari, he was reliable, trustworthy, an accurate recorder of readings, and the first to compile the various readings [of the Qur'an]. He died in the month of Shawwal in the year 246 A.H. (860 C.E.)26 Al–Daraqutni regarded him as weak, whereas al-'Uqayli considered him reliable. 27 As for those who learned the reading from him, the authorities are in disagreement.

As for al–Susi, his full name was Abu Shu'ayb Salihi b. Ziyad b. 'Abd Allah. Ibn al–Jazari regarded him as an accurate recorder in writing and reliable. He studied the reading of the Qur'an both by presenting it for critical confirmation and by carefully listening to Abu Muhiammad al–Yazidi. In fact, he was among his most prominent associates. He died in his late sixties in the early part of the year 261A.H. (874 C.E.)28 Abu Hatim regarded him as honest, and al–Nasa'i considered him reliable. Ibn Hayyan counted him among the reliable transmitters. According to Abu 'Amr al–Dani, "al–Nasai transmitted the readings on his authority, whereas Muslim b. Qasim al–Andalusi regarded him as weak and without documentation." 29As for those who transmitted the reading on his authority, the authorities are in disagreement regarding them.

Hamza al-Kufi

His full name was Ibn Habib b. 'Ammara b. Isma'il Abu 'Ammara al-Kufi al-Tamimi. He was a young contemporary of the Prophet's companions. He acquired his reading of the Qur'an by presenting it to Sulayman al-A'mash and Humran b. A'yan for critical authorization. It is reported, in the book *al-Kifaya al-Kubra wa al-Taysir*, that he learned the reading of the Qur'an with Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layla and with Talha b. Masraf; whereas, in *al-Taysir*, it is mentioned that he learned it from Mughira b. Maqsam, Mansur, and Layth b. Abi Sulaym. Still, in *al-Taysir wa al-Mustanir*, it is related that he learned his reading from Ja'far b. Muhammad al Sadiq (peace be upon him). All these sources mention that Hamza "began his reciting of the Qur'an with Humran, and presented his reading to al-A'mash, Abu Ishaq, and Ibn Abi Layla for confirmation. After 'Asim and al-A'mash, the leadership in the reading passed to him. He was a master in his field, a competent authority, reliable and trustworthy, and incomparable. According to 'Abd Allah al-'Ijli, Abu Hanifa told Hamza, "In two things you have achieved supremacy over us and we are not [as strong] in them: the Qur'an and [your performance of the religious] obligations." Sufyan al-Thawri said that "Hamza achieved supremacy over people in the matter of the Qur'an and the performance of the obligations." 'Abd Allah b. Musa said,

"His teacher al-A'mash used to say, whenever he saw him coming, 'This is the authority on the Qur'an." He was born in the year 80 A.H. (699 C.E.) and died in 156A.H. (772 C.E.).30

Ibn Mu'in regarded him as reliable, and al-Nasa'i considered him acceptable. Al 'ljli also regarded him as a reliable and righteous individual. According to Ibn Sa'd, "He was a righteous person who knew the traditions. He was truthful and had a compilation." According to al-Saji, "He was truthful but of poor memory and not exact in his transmission of the traditions." He was also criticized by a group of traditionists (*ahl al-Hadith*) for his reading of the Qur'an, to the extent that some of them invalidated the prayer if the recitation followed his reading. Al-Saji and al-Azdi have both reported that "some people criticized his reading and ascribed [its defectiveness] to a reprehensible habit of his." Moreover, al-Saji adds that he heard Saluma b. Shabib say that "Ahmad [b. Hanbal] used to dislike praying behind anyone who adopted Hamza's reading of the Qur'an." Al-Ajuri has reported, on the authority of Ahmad b Sinan, that "Yazid b. Harun used to severely disapprove of Hamza's reading." Ahmad b. Sinan heard Ibn Muhdi say that "if I had the authority over those who follow Hamza's reading, I would have had them flogged." Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash declared that "in our opinion, Hamza's reading is a sinful innovation." Ibn Durayd said, "I would like to see Hamza's reading out of Kufa."31

Hamza's reading was transmitted by Khalaf b. Hisham and Khallad b. Khalid, both of whom learned it through intermediary authorities.

As for Khalaf, his full name was Abu Muhiammad al-Asadi b. Hisham b. Tha'lab al-Bazzar al-Baghdadi. According to Ibn al-Jazari, "He was one of the ten readers, and one of those who transmitted the reading on the authority of Sulaym, who transmitted it from Hamza. He had memorized the Qur'an at the age of ten, and started seeking knowledge at the age of thirteen. He was trustworthy, prominent, ascetic, pious, and learned." Ibn Ashta has related that "Khalaf followed Hamza in his reading, but differed from him on 120 letters." He was born in 150 A.H. (767 C.E.), and he died in 229 A.H. (843 C.E.).

According to al–Lalka'i, "Abbas al–Duri was asked about the story related, on the authority of Ahimad b. Hanbal, regarding Khalaf b. Hisham. He [al–Durl] said, 'I did not hear it directly from him, but my associates told me that they mentioned Khalaf in Ahmad b. Hanbal's presence, and it was said that he used to drink.' Ahmad then commented on this, saying, 'We have heard of this. Nevertheless, by God, he is regarded by us as reliable and trustworthy." Al–Nasa'i regarded him as reliable. Al Daraquni declared him pious and learned, and added that Khalaf used to say, "I have performed my prayers repeatedly for forty years during which, in accordance with the rulings of the Kufans, I used to drink wine." Al–Khatib al–Baghdadi, in his history of Baghdad, relates, on the authority of Muhammad b. Hatim al–Kindi: "I asked Yahya b. Mu'in about Khalafal–Bazzar. He said, 'He did not even know [about] the science of tradition ['ilm al–Hadith].' "33

As for those who transmitted the reading from him, we shall mention them later. As for Khallad b. Khalid, his full name was Abu 'Isa al-Shaybani al-Kufi. According to Ibn al-Jazari, "He was a master of Qur'an reading, reliable, knowledgeable, a careful investigator [of the authenticity of traditions], and a teacher."

He received his reading of the Qur'an by presenting it for confirmation to Sulaym, and was regarded as one of the most meticulous and prominent among his associates. He died in the year 220 A.H. (835 C.E.).

As for those who transmitted the reading from him, the sources are in disagreement.

Nafi' al-Madani

His full name was Naji' b. 'Abd al-Rahiman b. Abi Nu'aym. According to Ibn al Jazari, "He is one of the seven readers and a prominent scholar, reliable and righteous, and is originally from Isfahan." He acquired the reading of the Qur'an by presenting it [for critical approval] to a second-generation group of the Prophet's companions (*tabin*) in Medina. Sa'id b. Manur heard Malik b. Anas say, "The reading of the people of Medina is in accordance with the tradition of the Prophet." When he was asked if he meant the reading of Nafi', he replied affirmatively. 'Abd Allah, the son of Ahmad b. Hanbal, asked his father about which reading he liked most. He said, "The reading of the people of Medina." 'Abd Allah went on to ask, "What if that is not available?" Ahmad b. Hanbal replied, "[The reading of] 'Aim." Nafi' died in the year 169 A.H. (785 C.E.)34

Abu Talib reported that Ahmad b. Hanbal said, "People used to learn the reading of the Qur'an from Nafi', but he was not good in the transmission of the traditions." Al-Durr, following the opinion of Ibn Mu'in, regarded him as trustworthy, whereas al-Nasa'i considered him acceptable. Ibn Hayyan mentioned him among the reliable persons. Al-Saji declared him honest, but related that "Ahmad and Yahya disagreed regarding him. Whereas Ahmad regarded his transmission of the tradition as objectionable, Yahya considered him reliable."35

Nafi' had two direct transmitters of his reading: Qalun and Warash.

As for Qalun, his full name was 'Isa b. Mina' b. Wardan Abu Musa. He was a client of the Banu [clan] Zuhra. It is said that he was brought up by Nafi', who was the one to nickname him Qalun for the excellence of his reading, since the term qiilun in Greek meant "good." However, according to 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali, Nafi' used to call him that because Qalun was Byzantine in origin because of his great grandfather, 'Abd Allah, having been a Byzantine war captive. He acquired the reading of the Qur'an by presenting it for critical confirmation by Nafi'. Ibn Abi Hatim relates that Qalun was deaf. He used to teach the Qur'an and catch the students' errors in pronunciation and intonation by lip-reading. He was born in 120 A.H. (737 C.E.) and died in 220 A.H. (835 C.E.).36

According to Ibn Hajar, "As for his reading, he is reliable; but as for the tradition, only little of what he transmitted is worth recording." Ahmad b.Salihi al-Miri was asked about his traditions. He smiled and said, "Should one record [the traditions] from anyone [who transmits them]?"37

As for those who transmitted the reading from him, the authorities are in disagreement.

As for Warash, his full name was 'Uthman b. Sa'ld. According to Ibn al-Jazarl, "He succeeded to the leadership of those who taught the reading of the Qur'an in Egypt during his time. The reading which he chose was at variance with Nafi"s. He was a reliable and competent authority in Qur'an reading." 38 He was born in 110 A.H. (728 C.E.) in Egypt and died there in 197 A.H. (812 C.E.).

As for those who transmitted the reading from him, the authorities are in disagreement.

Al-Kisa' al-Kufi

His full name was 'Ali b. Hamza b. 'Abd Allah b. Rahman b. Firiuz al-Asadi. He was a client of the Banu Asad, and of Persian descent. According to Ibn al-Jazari, "He was the leader in this field, [the one] upon whom the leadership of the readers in Kufa devolved after the death of Hamza and al-Zayyat." He acquired his reading from Hamza, to whom he presented it four times for approval, and on whom he depended. Abu 'Ubayd, in his book on the readings, says: "Al-Kisa'i was selective in his adoption of readings. He has accepted some of Hamza' s reading and rejected other parts of it." There is a difference of opinion regarding the year in which he died. The most accurate one seems to be the one recorded by more than one scholar, and [especially by] the scholars of the tradition (*huffaz*), namely, 189 A.H. (804 C.E.). He had learned the reading by memorizing it [in studying with] Hamza al-Zayyat, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layla, 'Isa b. 'Amr al-A'mash, and Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash with all of whom he studied the tradition-and from Sulayman b. Arqam, Ja'far al Sadiq (peace be upon him), al-'Azrami, and Ibn 'Uyayna. . . . He tutored the Abbasid Hamn al-Rashid [in the reading] and his son al-Amin.39

Al-Marzubani relates, on the authority of Ibn al-'Arabi, that "al-Kisa'i was one of the most learned persons, but used to do forbidden things, constantly drinking wine and openly admitting to [homosexuality]. Yet he was an accurate reader [of the Qur'an], knowledgeable in the Arabic language, and honest."40

Al-Kisa'i had two direct transmitters: al-Layth b. Khalid and Hafs b. 'Umar.

As for al-Layth, his full name was Abu al-Harith b. Khalid al-Baghdadi. According to Ibn al-Jazari, he was reliable, well known, and a competent recorder [of the reading]. He presented his reading to al-Kisa'i for critical approval and he was among his most prominent associates. He died in 240 A.H. (854 C.E.).41 As for the transmitters who related his reading, the authorities are in disagreement about them.

As for Haf b. 'Umar al-Duri, his biographical data were provided above, with 'Asim's.

These, then, are the seven readers whose biographical information we mentioned, along with those who transmitted their readings. Al-Qasim b. Fira has worked their names, and the names of their transmitters, into his famous [orally transmitted] ode known as "al-Shatibiyya." As for the other three readers who complete the [group of] ten, they are Khalaf, Ya'qub, and Yazid b. al-Qa'qa'.

Khalaf b. Hisham al-Bazzar

We have given his [Khalaf's] biographical information in our treatment of Hamza. His reading was transmitted by Ishaq and Idris.

As for Ishaq, his full name, according to Ibn al–Jazari, was Ishaq b. Ibrahim b. 'Uthman Abu 'Abd Allah b. Ya'qub; [he was] originally from Marw, but he settled in Baghdad. [According to al–Dhahabi,] "He was Khalaf's copyist, and the one who transmitted and adopted his reading. He was regarded as reliable." 42 He died in 286 A.H. (899 C.E.).

As for those who studied the reading with him, the sources are in disagreement.

As for Idris, his full name, according to Ibn al–Jazari, was Idris b. 'Abd al–Karim al–Haddad Abu al–Hasan al–Baghdadi. "He was a master in his field, an accurate recorder of readings, precise, and reliable. He studied with Khalaf b. Hisham." Al Daraqutni was asked about him, and he said: "Reliable, and more than reliable by a degree." He died in 292 A.H. (904 C.E.)43

As for those who transmitted the reading on his authority, the authorities are in disagreement.

Ya'qub b. Ishaq

His full name was Ya'qub b. Ishaq b. Zayd b. 'Abd Allah Abu Muhammad al-Hadraml; [he was] a client of the Banu Hadram, and originally from Basra. According to Ibn al-Jazari, he was one of the ten readers [of the Qur'an]. Ya'qub has provided the names of the teachers with whom he studied the reading. For a year and a half, he learned [it] from Salam, and then he presented it to Shihab b. Shanfara in five days. Shihab had received the reading from Maslama b. Muharib al-Muharbi in nine days; Maslama had learned it from Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali, who had received it from the Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him). Ya'qub died in the month of Dhii al-Hijjah, 205 A.H. (820 C.E.), at the age of eighty-eight. 44 Both Ahmad b. Hanbal and Abu Hatim regarded him as honest, and Ibn Hayyan has reckoned him among the reliable transmitters. However, according to Ibn Sa'd, he was not regarded as definitively trustworthy by the scholars [of biographical dictionaries]. 45

Two persons transmitted the reading from Ya'qub. They were Ruways and Ruh...

As for Ruways, his full name was Muhammad b. al-Mutawakkil Abu 'Abd Allah al-Lu'lu'i al-Basri. According to Ibn al-Jazari, he was a competent teacher of [Qur'anic reading and recitation], accurate and of great fame. He had acquired his reading by presenting it to Ya'qub al-Hadrami for critical confirmation. Al-Dani considers him one of the most intelligent of Ya'qub's associates. Muhammad b. Harun al-Tammar and the Imam Abu 'Abd Allah al-Zubayr b. Ahmad al-Zubayri al-Shafi'i acquired the reading from Ruways by presenting [reading aloud] it to him for critical confirmation. He died in the year 338 A.H. (949 C.E.).46

As for Ruh, his full name was Abu al-Hasan b. 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Hudhali. He was a client of Banu Hudhayl, and a grammarian who originated from Basra. Ibn alJazari regarded him as a prominent teacher, reliable, a meticulous recorder [of the reading] and widely acknowledged [for this]. He presented his reading to Ya'qub alHadrami for confirmation, and was regarded as one of his most celebrated associates. He died in 235 or 234 A.H. (849 or 848 C.E.).47

As for those who presented their readings to him for confirmation, the authorities are in disagreement.

Yazid b. al-Qa'qa'

According to Ibn al–Jazari, Yazid b. al–Qa'qa' was known as the Imam Abu Ja'far al Makhzumi al–Madani al–Qari': "He was one of the ten readers [of the Qur'an] from the second generation of the Prophet's Companions, widely acknowledged and highly esteemed." He acquired the reading by presenting it to his master, 'Abd Allah b. 'Ayyash b. Abi Rabi'a, as well as to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas and Abu Hurayra for critical approval. Yahya b. Mu'in states: "He was the leading authority in Qur'an reading among the people of Medina. It was for this reason that he was named al–Qari'. He was reliable, but transmitted only a small number of traditions." Ibn Abi Hatim asked his father about him and was answered, "He was of sound traditions." 48 He died in Medina in the year 130 A.H. (747 C.E.).

Yazid b. al-Qa'qa' had two transmitters of his reading: 'Isa and Ibn Jammaz.

As for 'Isa, his full name was Abu al-Harith 'Isa b. Wardan al-Madani al-Hadhdha'. According to Ibn al-Jazari, "He was a leading authority and skillful teacher of the reading, and an accurate reader [of the text of the Qur'an]." He presented his reading for critical approval to Yazid b. al-Qa'qa' and to Shayba, and later to Nafi'. Al-Dani regarded him as "one of the most prominent and the most senior among the associates of Nafi'. He was at times the link to Nafi' in the chain of transmission." 49 He died, as estimated on the basis of the sources, in the year 160 A.H. (777 C.E.).

As for those who presented the reading to him, the sources are in disagreement. As for Ibn Jammaz, his full name was Sulayman b. Muslim b. Jammaz Abu alRabi' al–Zuhrr; [he was] the client of Banu Zuhra from Medina. According to Ibn al Jazari, he was a prominent teacher and an accurate reader of the Qur'an. He presented his reading to Yazid b. al–Qa'qa' and Shayba for critical approval, as is mentioned in the two books *al–Kamil* and *al–Mustanir*. Thereafter, according to *al–Kamil*, he presented it to Nafi'. He died, as is estimated on the basis of the sources, after the year 170 A.H. (786 C.E.). 50

The transmitters of the ten Qur'an readers mentioned here are those known to the biographers. The readings transmitted by other chains are not accurately recorded. The biographers mention other transmitters of the ten readers but, as already pointed out, are in disagreement on them, so they are not mentioned here.

- 1. For the meaning of tawatur (uninterrupted transmission), see note 1 to the author's introduction. Trans.
- 2. Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azim al-Zurgani, Manahil al- 'Irfan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, 2 vols. (Cairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya,

- (1943]) vol. I, p. 433.
- 3. Ibid., p. 428.
- 4. Khabar al-wahid is a report based on a single narration, which goes back to a single narrator, and which, as such, does not attain the level of certainty of the tawatur transmission.-Trans.
- 5. Jalal al-Din Abd al-Rahiman al-Suyuti, Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 3d ed., 4 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Turath, 1985) vol. I, secs. 22-27, p. 217.
- 6. Ibn Hajar Tahdhab al-Tahdhib, vol. 5, p. 274.
- 7. Shams al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah al-Dhahabi, Ma'rifat al-Qurra' al-Kibar 'ala al-Tabaqat wa al-A 'sar, 2 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risala, 1984) vol. 1, pp. 85-86
- 8. Ibid., pp. 195-98.
- 9. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 11, pp. 52-54
- 10. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra: vol. 1, pp. 198-201.
- 11. Ibid., pp. 86-88.
- 12. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 5, p. 37.
- 13. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 173-74, 178.
- 14. Muhammad b. Ahtmad ibn al-Jazari, Al-Nashr fi al-Qira 'atal- 'Ashr,ed. 'Ali Muhammad al-Dabba', 2 vols. (Cairo: Al-Maktabat al-Tijariyyat al-Kubra, n.d.) vol. 1, p. 120.
- 15. Ahmad b. 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan, 7 vols. (Hyderabad, India: Da'irat al-M'arif al-Nizamiyya, 1911-1912) vol. 1, p. 283.
- 16. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra: vol. 1, p. 230.
- 17. Ibn Hajar, Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 249.
- 18. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra: vol. 1, pp. 88, 92
- 19. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 5, p. 59.
- 20. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. I, pp. 140-41.
- 21. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 401.
- 22. Dhahabi, Tabaqiit al-Qurra', vol. 1, p. 138.
- 23. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdib, vol. 12, pp. 35-37
- 24. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 100-5.
- 25. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 12, pp. 178-80
- 26. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra ', vol. 1, pp. 151-52. 27. Ibid., pp. 191-92
- 27. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 408.
- 28. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, p. 193.
- 29. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 4, p. 392.
- 30. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 111-15.
- 31. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 3, p. 27.
- 32. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. I., pp. 208-10. 34. Ibid., p. 210.
- 33. Ibid., pp. 107-11.
- 34. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 10, p. 407
- 35. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 155-56.
- 36. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 10, p. 407.
- 37. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 155-56.
- 38. Ibn Hajar, Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 408.
- 39. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, pp. 152-55.
- 40. Ibid., pp. 121-22, 128.
- 41. Yaqut b. 'Abd Allah al-Hamawi al-Rumi, Mu'jam al-Udaba' al-Ma 'ruf bi-Irshad al Arib ila Ma 'rifat al-Adib, ed. D. S. Margoliouth, 7 vols. (London: Luzac and Co., 1923) vol. 5, p. 185.
- 42. Dhahabi, Tabaqat al-Qurra', vol. 1, p. 105. 43. Ibid., p. 255.
- 43. Ibid. pp. 254-55

- 44. Ibid. pp. 157-58
- 45. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 11, p. 382.
- 46. Dhahabi, Tabaqut al-Qurra', vol. 1, p. 216.
- 47. Ibid., p. 214.
- 48. Ibid., pp. 72-76.
- 49. Ibid., p. 111
- 50. Ibid. p. 315.

Source URL:

 $https://www.al-islam.org/al-bayan-fi-tafsir-al-quran-prolegomena-quran-sayyid-abu-al-qasim-al-kho\\ ei/4-insight-about-readers\#comment-0$