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Chapter 1: The Precedence Of The Shi'ah In Quranic Sciences

This chapter comprises several sections but it is necessary to note that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him, was the first to classify Qur'anic sciences. He dictated sixty categories thereof, illustrating each through an example. This is found in a book which we relate, on his authority, through several chains of narration. It is the first source for all that is subsequently written on Qur'anic sciences. We still have a copy of this book.

The first compilation of the whole Qur'an in the chronological order of revelation which was done after the Prophet's demise is that of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, peace be on him. The narrations that came down to us from the Household of the Prophet to that effect are widely transmitted (*mutawatirah*) while the Sunnis' reports in this respect are extensive (*mustafidah*). We have cited some of them and have reviewed Ibn Hajar Asgalani's view in the unabridged version.

Section One: The First Writers about Qur'anic Exegesis

The first person to write on this subject was Sa'id ibn Jubayr who was a *tabi'i* (i. e. a Muslim who lived in the generation following that of the Companions of the Prophet). He was the most learned *tabi'i* in exegesis (*tafsir*) as al–Suyuti related in *Al–Itqan*, on the authority of Qatadah and mentioned his work on *tafsir*. Ibn al–Nadim also mentioned him in *Al–Fihrist* while listing the works written on *tafsir* and showed that none was earlier than Ibn Jubair's. His martyrdom took place in the year 94 A. H.

The fact that Ibn Jubair was among the sincere Shi'ah has been attested by our scholars in their books on the biographies of transmitters of hadith (*rijal*). Allamah Jamal al–Din ibn al–Mutahhar in *Al–Khulasah* and Abu Amr al–Kishshi, in his book on *rijal*, were among those who attested to that. The latter also related some hadiths from the Imams in his praise, about his being a Shi'ah and his perseverance. Al–Kishshi said: 'The only reason why Hajjaj killed him was this affair i. e. his being a Shi'ah. He was killed in the year 94 A. H. '

Another group of *tabi'i*s from among the Shi'ah also wrote books on tafsir after Ibn Jubair. Among them was Abu Muhammad, Ismail ibn Abdurrahman al–Kufi al–Qarashi who was known as al–Suddi, the senior (d. 127 A. H). Al–Suyuti says in *Al–Itqan*: 'The ideal *tafsir* is that written by Ismail al–Suddi. Masters of *tafsir* such al–Thawri and Shu'bah related from him. 'Al–Najashi has mentioned him and also his *tafsir* and so did Sheikh Abu Jafar al–Tusi in his list of Shi'ah authors. Ibn Qutaybah explicitly stated in *Al–Ma'arif* and al–Asqalani in *Al–Taqrib* and *Tahdhib al–Tahdhib* that he (al–Suddi) was a Shi'ah. He was a disciple of Ali ibn al–Husein, al–Baqir and al–Sadiq, peace be on them.

Another one was Muhammad ibn al—Sa'ib ibn Bishr al—Kalbi, the author of a famous *tafsir*. Ibn al—Nadim has mentioned him when he listed the books compiled on Qur'anic exegesis. Ibn Adiy says in his *Al—Kamil*: "Al—Kalbi has many sound hadiths to his credit especially those related on the authority of Abu Salih. He was also well—known for his exegesis. No one has a lengthier and more elaborate exegesis than his". Al—Sam'ani says "Muhammad ibn al—Sa'ib, the exegete, was from Kufa and believed in the returning, *al—raj'ah*. His son, Hisham had a respectable lineage and he was an extremist Shi'ah." He was among the special partisans of Imam Zayn al—Abidin and his son al—Baqir. He died in the year 146 A. H.

Among them was also Jabir ibn Yazid al–Ju'fi who was an authority on exegesis. He learnt it from Imam al–Baqir to whom he had devoted himself. He died in 127 A. H. The commentary by al–Ju'fi is not the same as that ascribed to Imam al–Baqir, which Ibn al–Nadim mentioned in his list of the works on exegesis. He said: "The book of al–Baqir, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al–Husayn.... was related from him by Abu al–Jarud, Ziyad ibn al–Mundhir, the head of Jarudiyyah, a branch of the Zaydiyyah." A group of reliable Shi'ah scholars such as Abu Basir, Yahya ibn al–Qasim and al–Asadi had transmitted the commentary of Imam al–Baqir on the authority of Ibn al–Jarud before he joined the Zaydiyyah.

Section Two: The First Writers of the Recitation of the Qur'an and the First Compilers of the Different Recitations

The pioneer in this field was Aban ibn Taghlib al–Rab'i (Abu Sa'id) while others believe that it was Abu Umaymah al–Kufi. Al–Najashi wrote in his index of Shi'ah writers: 'Aban, may Allah have mercy on him, was a pioneer in all the disciplines pertaining to the Qur'an, jurisprudence and hadith. He followed a unique method of recitation that is well–known among the scholars of recitation.' Then he (al–Najashi) linked his chain of transmission in the narration of the book to Muhammad ibn Musa ibn Abi Maryam, the author of *Al–Lu'lu'*, on the authority of Aban, and added, 'It opens with: The *hamzah* is a difficult letter....

In *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim has mentioned Aban's works on recitation saying: "Among his books are *Ma'ani al–Qur'an* (Meanings of the Qur'an) which is a nice book, *Kitab al–Qira'a* (Book of Recitation) and a book on the principles of transmitting hadiths according to the Shi'ah school."

After Aban, Hamza ibn Habib, one of the seven famous reciters, wrote *Kitab al–qira'a* (Book of Recitation). In *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim writes: "*Kitab al–Qira'a* was written by Hamza ibn Habib who was one of the seven disciples of al–Sadiq, peace be on him." In *Kitab al–Rijal*, Sheikh Abu Jafar al–Tusi also counted him among the disciples of al–Sadiq ('a). A document in the handwriting of Sheikh al–Shahid Muhammad ibn Makki related on the authority of Sheikh Jamal al–Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al–Haddad al–Hilli, reads: "Al–Kasa'i learnt the recitation of the Qur'an from Hamza, and he from Abu Abdillah, al–Sadiq who learnt it from his father (al–Baqir) who learnt it from his father, Zayn al–Abidin who learnt it from his father, al–Husayn who learnt it from the Commander of the Faithful, Ali."

This person, Hamza, learnt the recitation from al–A'mash also and the latter from Hamran ibn A'yun who were both among the Shi'ah masters as we will see in due course. No one is known to have written about the methods of recitation before Aban and Hamza. Al–Dhahabi and others who wrote about the classes of reciters declare that the first person to write about the methods of recitation was Abu Ubayd al–Qasim ibn Salam who died in 224 A. H. There is no doubt that Aban preceded Ibn Salam because both al–Dhahabi in his *Al–Mizan*, and al–Suyuti, in his *Al–Tabaqat* have explicitly stated that Aban died in 141 A. H. This means that he passed away eighty three years before Abu Ubayd. Likewise Hamza ibn Habib who, as they mentioned, was born in 80 A. H. and died in 154, 156 or 158 A. H., the last date being mere conjecture. In any case, the Shi'ah are the pioneers in the field of recitation. Al–Dhahabi and al–Suyuti were not unaware of that. They wanted to say that Abu Ubayd was the first Sunni to write about this subject.

Apart from those we mentioned, other Shi'ah scholars also preceded Abu Ubayd. Among them were: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Sa'dan, the blind. Counting him among the Shi'ah reciters in *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim says "He used to teach the Sunnis. In the beginning, he followed the recitation of Hamza but later he followed his own way. He was born in Baghdad but subscribed to the Kufi school. He died on the day of Arafa (9th Zu al–Hijjah) in 231 A. H. He is the author of *Kitab al–Qira'a* and *Kitab Mukhtasar al–Nahw*.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Abi Sarah al-Rawwasi al-Kufi, the teacher of al-Kasa'i and al-Farra', one of Imam al-Baqir's devoted followers, also preceded Abu Ubayd. Abu Amr al-Dani has mentioned him in *Tabaqat al-Qurra*' thus: "He (Abu Ja'far) related the 'letters' on the authority of Abu Amr and attended the lessons of al-A'mash. He followed the Kufi school. He had a particular way of recitation which has also been reported. Khallad ibn Khalid and Ali ibn Muhammad al-Kindi heard the 'letters' from him, while al-Kasa'i and al-Farra narrated from him. He died a short time after the end of the first century. He wrote *Kitab al-Waqf wa al-Ibtida* (A Book on Pausing and Restarting) in two versions: big and small and *Kitab al-Hamzah*, as recorded in the indices of al-Najashi and others."

Another author was Zayd al–Shaheed born in 80 A. H. He preserved the recitation of his (great) grandfather, the Commander of the Faithful, which has been related by Umar ibn Musa al–Rajhi. In the beginning of the book on Zayd's recitation, al–Rajhi says: "I have heard this recitation from Zayd ibn Ali

ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on them. I have not seen a person who is more knowledgeable than him in the Book of Allah, its abrogating and abrogated verses, its problematic topics and its grammar". Zayd was martyred in 122 A. H. at the age of forty-two during the reign of Hisham ibn Abdulmalik, the Umayyad king.

All these peoples' works on recitation were accomplished earlier than that of Abu Ubayd al–Qasim ibn Salam. This confirms the precedence of the Shi'ah in writing about the science of recitation.

Section Three: The first to write about Qur'anic laws

The first to write about this discipline was Muhammad ibn al–Sa'ib al–Kalbi, one of the aforementioned disciples of al–Baqir ('a). In the chapter about the books on Qur'anic laws in *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim says: "*Kitab Ahkam al–Qur'an* is written by al–Kalbi, who related it from Ibn Abbas." Since Al–Kalbi died in 146 A. H. and al–Shafi'i in 204 A. H. (aged fifty–four), al–Suyuti's claim that the latter was the first person to compile a work on Qur'anic laws is inaccurate.

He also recorded in *Tabaqat al–Nuhat* that the first to write on this field was al–Qasim ibn Asbagh ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf al–Bayani al–Qurtubi, the Andalusian narrator of hadith and lexicographer. This too, is flawed as al–Qurtubi died in 340 A. H. at the age of 93 years and some days.

Section Four: The First to Write about the Peculiarities of the Qur'an (Gharib al–Qu'ran)

The pioneer in this branch of learning was one of the sheikhs of the Shi'ah, Aban ibn Taghlib. Shi'ah scholars have confirmed this fact and so have Yaqut al–Himawi, in *Mu'jam al–Udaba* and Jalal al–Din al–Suyuti in *Bughyat al–Wu'at*. They declared that he died in 141 A. H.

Al–Suyuti mentioned in *Al–Awa'il* that the first person to write about the peculiarities of the Qur'an was Abu Ubaydah Ma'mar ibn al–Muthanna, recording as others did, the date of his death which is either 208, 210 or 211 A. H. I do not think that al–Suyuti forgot what he, himself had written about Aban that he had a book about the peculiarities of the Qur'an, rather he meant that Abu Ubaydah was the first writer in the field among the residents of Basra and not the first among the Sunnis because that would have meant Abu Ubaydah, the Safuri Kharijite. Al–Jahidh was explicit on the fact that the latter was a Kharijite as stated in *Kitab al–Hayawan*, recently published in Egypt.

It is pertinent to know that those who wrote about this topic after Aban were a group of the Shi'ah among whom were Abu Ja'far al–Rawwasi who also preceded Abu Ubaydah, Abu Uthman al–Mazini (d. 248), al–Farra' (d. 207), Ibn Durayd al–Kufi the lexicographer (d. 321) and Ali ibn Muhammad al–Simsati. Their biographies and the evidence of their being Shi'ah will come later in the chapter on grammar and that on lexicology.

Section five: The Shi'ah Pioneers in Writing about the Different Meanings of the Qur'an

The first Shi'ah to write a book on the meanings of the Qur'an was Aban ibn Taghlib (d.141). His book has been mentioned by Ibn al–Nadim in *Alfihrist*, al–Najashi in *Asma' al–Musannifi al–Shi'ah* and others. I have not found even a trace of anyone who had anticipated him. For sure, from among us, al–Rawwasi and al–Farra' have compiled some works on the subject. Ibn al–Nadim says: ".... the book *Ma'ani al–Qur'an* was written by al–Rawwasi, the book *Ma'ani al–Qur'an* was written by al–Farra who dedicated it to Umar ibn Bakr. Both were Shi'ah."

The first to write a book about abrogating and abrogated verses (*al-nasikh wa al-mansukh*) is Abdullah ibn Abdulrahman al-Asamm al-Musma'i al-Basri, one of the Shi'ah sheikhs and a disciple of Abu Abdillah al-Sadiq, peace be on him. The next is Darim ibn Qubaysah ibn Nahshal ibn Majma', Abu al-Hasan al-Tamimi al-Darimi, a Shi'ah sheikh of the early period. He lived so long that he met Imam al-Ridha' and died at the close of the second century. To his credit is *Al-Wujuh wa al-Naza'ir* and *Al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh*. Al-Najashi has mentioned these books in his *Asma' al-Musannifin min al-Shi'ah*. Then al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Faddal (d. 224A. H.), who was a disciple of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha' and grand sheikh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa al-Ash'ari who hailed from the city of Qum. He was also a disciple of al-Ridha' and he lived till the time of Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari.

What Jalal al–Din Al–Suyuti says about Abu Ubayd al–Qasim ibn Salam (d. 224), shows that the latter who was contemporary with al–Hasan ibn Ali ibn Faddal (who himself wrote about the subject), was the first to write about this topic. It is worth noting that Ibn Faddal lived a long time after al–Masma'i and even Darim ibn Qubaysah. In any case, the Shi'ah preceded all others in this respect.

The rarities (*nawadir*) of the Qur'an first came to light through the work of Ali ibn al–Husayn ibn Faddal, a Shi'ah sheikh of the third century. Ibn al–Nadim states in *Al–Fihrist*: "Also the book on the rarities of the Qur'an by Sheikh Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim, who was a Shi'ah; the book of Ali ibn al–Hasan ibn Faddal who was also a Shi'ah and the book of Abu al–Nasr al–Ayyashi." Ahmad ibn Muhammad al–Sayyari, the Basri author also had a book on *nawadi al–Qur'an*. Al–Sayyari was writing for al–Tahir during the lifetime of Imam al–Askari. Another author, Abu al–Hasan Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad who was known as al–Harithi wrote *Nawadir ilm al–Qur'an*. Concerning him, Al–Najashi observes, "He was among our prominent companions (the Shi'ah) and a reliable person."

When we turn to metaphorical passages (*mutashabih*) of the Qur'an we find that Hamza ibn Habib al–Zayyat al–Kufi, was the first to write about this subject. He died in Hulwan in 156 A. H. Ibn al–Nadim reports: "...and the book *Mutashabih al–Qur'an* by Hamza ibn Habib, one of the seven disciples of al–Sadiq." Sheikh Abu Ja'far al–Tusi also counted him among the disciples of al–Sadiq. Ibn Uqdah preceded both of them in stating this fact in his *Rijal*. A group of our companions who have also taken up this topic include Muhammad ibn Ahmad al–Wazir (a contemporary of Sheikh al–Tusi and the author of

Kitab Mutashabih al–Qur'an) and Sheikh Rashid al–Din Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shahrashub al–Mazandarani (d. 588).

Sheikh Hamza ibn Habib was the pioneer in writing about *al-maqtu wa al-mawsul* (places of pausing and joining in the recitation of the Qur'an). Ibn al-Nadim, Muhammad ibn Ishaq, says in his *Al-Fihrist* "*Kitab Maqtu al-Qur'an wa Mawsulah* was written by Hamza ibn Habib one of the seven disciples of al-Sadiq"

The first scholar to use dots in writing the letters of the Qur'an, define its vowel signs (*i'rab*) and save it from phonetic alterations found in most early copies of the Qur'an was Abu al–Aswad. Some scholars are of the view that this credit goes to his student Yahya ibn Ya'mar al–'Udwani but the first view is more accurate. It makes no difference though for all agree that both of them were Shi'ah. We have given many proofs to that effect in the original version of this book.

The first to write on the field of metaphoric usage (*majaz*) in the Qur'an, as far as I know, is Yahya ibn Ziyad al–Farra' (d. 207) to whom we will refer in the chapter about the authorities of Arabic grammar. Al–Mawla Abdullah Efendi has declared in his *Riyad al–Ulama* that he was a Shi'ah and added "al–Suyuti's claim that al–Farra' had Mutazilite leanings perhaps originated from the fact that a large number of Sunni scholars confuse Shi'ah and Mutazilite principles. In fact, he was a Shi'ah of the Imammiyah sect." A number of people also wrote about metaphorical usages in the Qur'an (*majazat*). The best of these works is *Kitab Majazat al–Qur'an* by Sayyid Sharif al–Radi al–Musawi, the brother of Sayyid al–Murtada.

The first to write on Qur'anic parables (*amthal*) was the venerable Sheikh Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al–Junayd. At the end of the list of the works about Qur'anic sematics in his *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim writes: "The Book of Parables by Ibn al–Junaid....." I have not come across an earlier author whose works are as good as his.

The pioneer in writing about the merits (*fada'il*) of the Qur'an is Ubay ibn Ka'b al–Ansari, a companion of the Prophet, as Ibn al–Nadim has stated in *Al–Fihrist*. It seems that Jalal al–Din al–Suyuti was not aware of the precedence of Ubay in this field when he said: "The first to compile a book on the merits of the Qur'an was Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al–Shafi'i who died in 204." Also Sayyid Ali ibn Sadr al–Din al–Madani, the author of *Al–Salafah* has observed in *Al–Darajat al–Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat al–Shi'ah* that Ubay ibn Ka'ab was a Shi'ah, giving many proofs and citations. I have also included more evidences in the original version of this book.

A group of our companions who have also written about the subject include al–Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Hamza al–Bata'ini and Muhammad ibn Khalid al–Barqi. Both lived during the time of al–Ridha'. Others are Ahmad ibn Muhammad al–Sayyati Abu Abdillah, the Basri author who was contemporary with al–Zahir and Imam al–Askari; Muhammad ibn Mas'ud al–Ayyashi; Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim (Sheikh al–Kulayni); Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr Abu Ali al–Kufi who died in 346 and other sheikhs from

among our companions.

The first to write a book about dividing the Qur'an into seven parts and delimiting its verses was Hamza ibn Habib al–Zayyat al–Kufi who was one of the seven authorities on recitation and a Shi'ah, as we have already quoted from a number of sheikhs. The books *Asba al–Qur'an* and *Hudud ay al–Qur'an* have been mentioned by Ibn al–Nadim who attributed them to this man. I have not come across anyone who has precedence over him in this subject.

Section Six: Shi'ah Authorities on the Qur'an

Abdullah ibn Abbas was the first among the Shi'ah to write a commentary of the Qur'an. All our scholars attest to his being a Shi'ah. In his book *Al–Darajat al–Rafi'a fi Tabaqat al–Sh'iah*, al–Suddi has given a beautiful biographical account of him. I have also written a detailed account on that in the original version of this book. Ibn Abbas died in 67 A. H. in Ta'if. When he was about to die he prayed: "O Allah I seek nearness to You through my loyalty to Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him."

Among them is Jabir ibn Abdullah al–Ansari, a Companion of the Prophet. In Abu al–Khayr's *Tabaqat al–Mufassirin* he was rated among the best interpreters. Al–Fadl ibn Shadhan al–Nishapuri, a disciple of al–Ridha' says: Jabir ibn Abdullah al–Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) was among the first supporters of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him. Ibn Uqdah has described Jabir as "devoted to the Ahl al–Bayt" and I have elaborated this point in the unabridged version of this book. He died in Medina after the year 70 A. H. at the age of ninety–four. Ubay ibn Ka'b is counted among the first category of commentators of the Qur'an from among the companions. As the reader knows, Ubay was a Shi'ah. There is a detailed account of his biography in *Al–Darajat al–Rafi'ah* and in the our unabridged version.

Following these Companions come the *tabi'is* such as Sa'id ibn Jubayr who was the most learned *tabi'i* in the field of the commentary of the Qur'an according to Qatadah's testimony as recorded in *Al–Itqan*. We have previously mentioned him, noting the fact that he was a Shi'ah. Among them was also Yahya ibn Ya'mur, a *tabi'i* and a notable Shi'ah authority on the Qur'an. Ibn Khillikan reports: "He was among the reciters of Basra from whom Abdullah ibn Ishaq learnt the recitation. He was knowledgeable in the Qur'an, grammar and Arab dialects. He learnt grammar from Abu al–Aswad al–Du'ali and was one of the early Shi'ah who preferred the Ahl al–Bayt without degrading the good people from other sects."

Among them also is Abu Salih who was known as the "Student of Ibn Abbas in exegesis". His name was Mizan al–Basri and was a Shi'ah *tabi'i*. In his *Al–Kafiyah fi Ibtal Taubat al–Khati'ah*, Sheikh al–Mufid, Muhammad ibn al–Numan attested to his being a Shi'ah after relating a narration from him on the authority of Ibn Abbas. Abu Salih died at the close of the first century.

Another authority on Qur'anic exegesis was Abu Abdillah Tawus ibn Kaysan al-Yamani. He learnt the commentary of the Qur'an from Ibn Abbas. Sheikh Ahmad ibn Taimiyyah counted him among the most

learned in exegesis as recorded in *Al–Itqan*. Ibn Qutaybah attested to his Shi'ism in *Al–Ma'arif*. On page two hundred and six of the Egyptian edition we read: "Those who are Shi'ah are al–Harth al–A'war, Sa'sa'a ibn Sawhan, al–Asbagh ibn Nabatah, Atiyyah al–Aufi, Tawus and al–A'mash. Tawus passed away in Mecca in 106 A. H. He was a devoted follower of Ali ibn al–Husayn al–Sajjad ('a)"

Among them was al–A'mash al–Kufi i. e. Abu Muhammad Sulayman ibn Mahran al–Asadi. Ibn Qutaybah's testimony to his Shi'ism has already been stated. Al–Shahristani, in his *Al–Milal wa al–Nihal*, and others say the same thing. Al–Shahid al–Thani Zayn al–Din, in *Hashiyat al–Khulasah* and Muhaqqiq al–Bahbahani in *Al–Ta'liqah* and al–Mirza Muhammad Baqir al–Damadi in *Al–Rawashih* all confirm that he was a Shi'ah. I have elaborated this point in the original version of this book and added other citations. Al–'Amash died in 148 at the age of 88.

Another authority on exegesis is Sa'id ibn Musayyab. He learnt it from the Commander of the Faithful and Ibn Abbas and was trained by the former with whom he participated in all his wars. Both Imam al–Sadiq and Imam al–Ridha' declared that he was a Shi'ah, as reported in the third volume of al–Himyari's *Qurb al–Isnad*. He was the leader of the reciters of Medina. Ibn al–Madaini reports: "I have never come across a person among the *tabi'is* who is more knowledgeable than him."

Another person is Abu Abdirrahman al–Salmi, the pioneer in Asim's recitation. Ibn Qutayba says, "He was among the disciples of Ali peace be on him, and a teacher of recitation and jurisprudence" Abu Abdirraham learnt from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him as reported in al–Tabrasi's *Majma al–Bahrain*. In his *Kitab al–Rijal* al–Barqi counts him among Ali's closest companions from the tribe of Mudar. He died after the age of 70.

Al–Suddi the senior, the author of the exegesis previously mentioned in section one, is also among them. Another authority is Muhammad ibn al–Sa'ib ibn Bishr al–Kalbi, the writer of *Al–Tafsir al–Kabir* already mentioned in section one.

Hamran ibn A'yun a brother of Zurara ibn A'yun al-Kufi, client of the Shayban clan, is one of those who mastered the Qur'an. He learnt from Imam Zayn al-Abidin and Imam al-Baqir. He died after the end of the first century.

We have already mentioned Aban ibn Taghlib who took the lead in every field of knowledge. He learnt recitation from al–A'mash. He was a disciple of Imam al–Sajjad (Ali ibn al–Husayn) and Imam al–Baqir, peace be on them both. He died in 141 A. H.

And among them was Asim ibn Bahdalah, one of the Seven (i.e the seven famons reciters of the Qur'an). He read from Abu Abdurraham al–Salmi who read from Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. This is why the recitation of Asim is preferred by our scholars. The venerable Sheikh Abduljalil al–Razi (d. 556) attested in his book *Naqd al–Fada'ih* that Asim was an exemplary Shi'ah. Asim died in the year 128 in Kufa. Another report has it that he died in Al–Samawa on his way to Syria and he was buried there. Like al–A'mash, he was blind. Al–Qadi Nurullah al–Mar'ashi, in *Majalis*

al-Muminin, a book on the ranks of the Shi'ah, reports that Asim was one of the Seven.

Next we shall look at the generation after that of the *tabi'is*.

Among them is Thabit ibn Dinar Abu Hamza al–Thumali who was the chief of the Shi'ah in Kufa. Abu al–Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Abi Yaqub al–Nadim, in *Al–Fihris* refers to "a book on exegesis by Abu Hamza al–Thumali who was a disciple of Ali ibn al–Husayn, peace be on him. He was a noble and reliable man and one of the disciples of Abu Jafar." Abu Hamza died in 150 A. H.

Among them was Abu al–Jarud, Ziyad ibn al–Mundhir. He transmitted Imam al–Baqir's book on commentary of the Qur'an before he became a Zaydi. As previously said Abu Basir has related it from him. Abu al–Jarud died in 150 A. H.

Another authority was Yahya ibn al–Qasim, Abu Basir al–Asadi. He was of foremost position in jurisprudence and exegesis. He had a famous work on exegesis as reported by al–Najashi who traced his chain of transmission to the author. He (Abu Basir) died during the lifetime of Abu Abdillah al–Sadiq, peace be on him, who passed away in 148 A. H.

Also, among them is al–Bata'ini Ali ibn Salim who is known as Ibn Abi Hamza Abu al–Hasan al–Kufi, a client (*mawla*) of the Ansar. He had *Kitab Tafsir al–Quran* in which he relates on the authority of Abu Abdillah al–Sadiq and Abu al–Hasan Musa al–Kazim and Abu Basir whom we previously mentioned.

Among them is al–Hasan ibn Mukhariq Abu Junadah al–Sululi. Ibn Nadim says: "He was one of the early Shi'ah. Among his works are *Kitab al–Tafsir* and *Kitab Jami' al–Ulum*" Al–Najashi also ascribed to him *Kitab al–Tafsir wa al–Qira'at* and other large works.

Another authority is Ahmad al–Kisa'i, one of the Seven: various merits were to his credit. He was the most knowledgeable in grammar and the foremost scholar in the peculiarities of the Qur'an *gharib* al–Qur'an. He descended from a Persian family from rural Iraq. I have mentioned, in the original version of this book, his lineage and those who attested to his being a Shi'ite. He died in Ray or Tus while in the company of Caliph al–Rashid, in the year 189, 183, 185 or 193, the first being more accurate. He lived for seventy years.

After these people we shall proceed with another category. Ibn Sa'dan, the blind man: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Sa'dan ibn al–Mubarak, a Kufi grammarian. He was an accomplished leader and the author of *Al–Jami*, *Al–Mashjar* and other works. His method of recitation conforms to the common way (*mashhur*). He was honest and reliable. He wrote on the Arabic language and the way of recitation. We have previously cited Ibn al–Nadim's remark about him in *Al–Fihrist*. He mentioned him among the Shi'ah reciters and declared that he was born in Baghdad but followed the Kufic school. He died in 231 on Arafa day. Both Yakut and al–Suyuti, in *Al–Mu'jam* and *Al–Tabaqat* respectively wrote a detailed account of him. Yaqut says that he was born in 161 and died on the day of sacrifice (10th of Dhu al–Hijjah) in 281. He had a son called Ibrahim. Yaqut says: "He authored some works and corrected,

studied, examined and transmitted others. He wrote good books such as Kitab Huruf al-Qur'an."

A group of authors who wrote about the commentary of the Qur'an and were disciples of Imams al–Kazim and al–Ridha' (peace be on them) are in this category. They include Wuhayb ibn Hafs Abu Ali al–Hariri of the Asad tribe, Yunus ibn Abdurrahman Abu Muhammad, the chief of the Shi'ah of his time and Abu Muhammad Husayn ibn Sa'id ibn Hammad ibn Mihran al–Ahwazi, a retainer (*mawla*) of Ali ibn al–Husayn. We have written their biographies in the original version of this book.

Others include Abdullah ibn al–Salt Abu Talib al–Taimi of the Taym tribe, an authority on exegesis who wrote *Kitab Tafsir al–Qur'an* and narrated the hadith from al–Ridha'; the exegete Ahmad ibn Sabih; Abu Abdillah al–Asadi al–Kufi; Ali ibn Isbat ibn Salim Bayya' al–Zati Abu al–Hasan al–Muqarri al–Kufi; and Ali ibn Mahzyar al–Ahwazi, who was one of the leading figures of learning, especially in the hadith and commentary of the Qur'an. He wrote books on both.

Another group of writers includes Muhammad ibn Khalid al–Barqi. He wrote *Kitab al–Tanzil* and *Kitab al–Tafsir*. He met Imam al–Kazim and al–Ridha' and was among their reliable companions. His brother al–Hasan ibn Khalid al–Barqi wrote a number of books such as his *Al–Tafsir al–Kabir* that runs into one hundred and twenty volumes, which was dictated by Imam al–Askari, as Rashid al–Din ibn Shahrashub al–Mazandarani states in his *Ma'alim al–Ulama*.

In the third century too, a number of people wrote on exegesis. Some of them are:

Ali ibn al–Hasan ibn Faddal, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id ibn Hilal ibn Asim ibn Sa'id ibn Mas'ud al–Thaqafi al–Kufi (d. 383) and Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim al–Qummi the chief of the Shi'ah of his time. His commentary has been printed. Ali ibn al–Husayn ibn Musa ibn Babawayh al–Qummi wrote *Kitab al–Tafsir* which a large section of our companions attributed to him; Sheikh ibn al–Walid Muhammad ibn al–Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn al–Walid Abu Ja'far, the master of Sheikh Babawayh who died in 343; and Sheikh Furat ibn Ibrahim ibn Furat al–Kufi who lived during the time of Imam al–Jawad, the son of al–Ridha'. He wrote a large commentary which is well–known to us. Ibn Duwal al–Qummi (d. 350) who wrote a number of books among which is *Kitab al–Tafsir* as mentioned by al–Najashi. Salman ibn al–Khattab Abu al–Fadl al–Qummi, the author of *Al–Tafsir an Ahl al–Bayt* lived during the time of al–Ridha' and al–Jawad.

Next comes Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Jafar Abu Abdillah al-Katib al-Nu'mani whose book is known as *Tafsir al-Nu'mani* whose was the narrator of what the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, dictated about the classes of Qur'anic sciences. He named in it sixty kinds citing an example for each. We have a copy of it. He was also the narrator of *Al-Kafi* on the authority of al-Kulayni. Muhammad ibn al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Marwan who was known as Ibn al-Hajjam whose surname was Abu Abdullah. He had a number of works such as *Ta'wil ma Nazala fi al-Nabi* (s), *Kitab Tawil ma Nazala fi Ahl al-Bayt wa ma Nazala fi Shi'atihim*, *Kitab Tawil ma Nazala fi 'ada'ihim*, *Kitab al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, *Kitab al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh*, *Kitab Qira'at Amir al-Muminin*, *Kitab Qirat Ahl al-Bayt*. Harun ibn Musa al-Tala'kbari

attended Ibn al-Hajjam's lectures in the year 328 and received his permission ijazah.

Those who wrote about the kinds of Qur'anic sciences are many. Some of them are Muhammad ibn al–Hasan al–Shaybani, the teacher of Sheikh al–Mufid. He wrote *Nahj al–Bayan an Kashf Ma'ani al–Qur'an* and classified Qur'anic sciences into sixty classes. The book was dedicated to the Abbasid caliph al–Mustansir. Al–Sayyid al–Murtada quotes him in *Kitab al–Muhkam wa al–Mutashabih*. Another is Sheikh al–Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al–Nu'man who was known in his time as Ibn al–Mu'allim (Son of the Teacher). He was the master of the Shi'ah and held the professorial chair. He authored a number of books as recorded in the index of his works. *Kitab al–Bayan fi Anwa' Ulum al–Qur'an* is one of them. In *Tarikh Bagdad*, Al–Khatib says that he died in the month of Muharram in 409. Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Salim Abu al–Fadl al–Suli al–Ju'fi al–Kufi who was known as al–Saburi, the author of *Al–Fakhir fi al–Lughah*, *Kitab Tafsir Ma'ani al–Qur'an* and *Tasmiyat Asnaf Kalamih al–Majid*. He is one of the masters from among our companions. He lived in Egypt and died there in 300 A. H.

Section Seven: The First Commentaries on All Qur'anic Sciences

The first commentary comprising all the Qur'anic sciences is *Kitab al–Raghib fi Ulum al–Qur'an* by Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Umar al–Waqidi. Ibn al–Nadim has mentioned him in his *Al–Fihrist* and attested to his being a Shi'ah. The next is *Kitab al–Tibyan al–Jami' li Kul Ulum al–Qur'an* which runs into ten large volumes written by the chief of the sect, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al–Hasan ibn Ali al–Tusi. He was born in 385 and passed away in al–Ghari (Najaf) in the year 460. In the beginning of the book, he mentions that he was the first to compile all Qur'anic sciences.

Another book is *Kitab Haqa'iq al–Tanzil wa Daqa'iq al–Tawil* equal in size to *Al–Tibyan*. It was written by Sayyid al–Sharif al–Radi, the brother of al–Murtada. In this book, peculiarities of the Qur'an (*ghara'ib*), its marvels, secrets and obscure aspects have been revealed and its mysteries and intricate reports clarified. The author's thoroughness in examining Qur'anic facts and scrutinizing its interpretation makes it an unprecedented achievement. Nevertheless, this work does not cover all the Qur'anic sciences.

Al–Sayyid al–Radi also wrote *Kitab al–Mutashabih fil al–Qur'an* and *Kitab Majazat al–Qur'an*. He accomplished this feat although he lived for only forty–seven years. We have provided a nice biography of al–Radi in the original version of this book. He passed away in 406. Another book is *Rawd al–Jinan fi Tafsir al–Qur'an* in twenty volumes. It was written by the master, Sheikh Abu al–Futuh, Husayn ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al–Khuza'i al–Razi al–Nishaburi. He died after the end of the fifth century. This comprehensive work was produced after the time of Sheikh al–Tusi.

Another book of this nature is *Kitab Majma al–Bayan fi Ulum al–Qur'an* in ten volumes written by Sheikh Aminuddin Abi Ali, al–Fadl ibn al–Hasan ibn al–Fadl al–Tabrisi (d. 540 A. H). It comprises all those disciplines but the author acknowledges, in the very beginning, his dependence on Sheikh al–Tusi's *Al–Tibyan*. Lastly, comes the twenty volume *Khulasat al–Tafsir* by Sheikh Qutbuddin al–Rawandi.

Replete with facts and subtleties, it is one of the best commentaries written after the time of Sheikh al-Tusi.

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