

IMĀM QURTUBĪ’S PRAXIS OF INFERENCE FROM THE QUR’ĀNIC READINGS

(A Specialized Study of Al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān)

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Abstract: The Science of the Qur’ānic Readings is an important discussion of the Qur’ānic Sciences. There are many words in the Qur’ān which have more than one reading. Qirā’āt are primarily divided into two types: Qirā’āt al-Mutawātirah and Qirā’āt al-Shādhah. Qirā’āt al-Mutawātirah has three conditions: It should have a chain of coherent narrators till the Prophet (ﷺ), it should be in accordance to the rules of Arabic language and also should be according to the ‘Uthmānī Script of the Qur’ān. If any Qirā’āt does not fulfil any of the three conditions, it is Qirā’āt al-Shādhah. Besides the scholars of the Qur’ānic Readings, the exegetes too discussed the subject of the Qur’ānic Readings in their exegeses. Moreover, they inferred frequently from them for the interpretation of the Qur’ānic words and deduced conclusions. Al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān is one of those exegeses in which inference from the Qur’ānic Readings has been done very frequently and the impact on the variance in the meanings of the words has also been elucidated remarkably. With the aim of creating an ease in apprehension, the distinction between the both forms of Qirā’āt will be mentioned in this article with elaboration of difference in their meanings.

Keyword: Imām Qurtubī, Qur’ānic Readings, Recurrent Reading (Qirā’āt al-Mutawātirah), Rare Reading (Qirā’āt al-Shādhah).

Introduction:

Al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān basically aims to infer juristic injunctions and rulings from the Qur’ānic verses, yet it also pivots on the meticulous interpretation of the verses by admirable and extensive incorporation of the Qur’ānic Sciences. This exegesis is a landmark of the scholastic distinction

of Imām al-Qurṭubī¹, his ultimate endearment and supreme veneration to the Qur'ān. He, while interpreting the Qur'ānic verses, frequently inferred from the Qur'ānic Readings (by elaborating whether Recurrent or Rare) to enlighten the meanings of the Qur'ānic words more clearly. This article has been written with the aim of making this exceptional attribute of the exegesis prominent with respect to greatly important subject of the Qur'ānic Readings.

Lingual Meaning of Qirā'āt ﴿قراءة﴾:

The word ﴿قراءة﴾ is a Noun from the verb "قرأ" and its composition is: قرأ، يقرأ، قراءة، وقراءة. It is used in the following meanings:

a) Imām Ibn Athīr described:

. قَدْ تَكَرَّرَ فِي الْحَدِيثِ ذِكْرُ «الْقِرَاءَةِ، وَالِافْتِرَاءِ، وَالْقَارِيءِ، وَالْقُرْآنِ» وَالْأَصْلُ فِي هَذِهِ اللَّفْظَةِ الْجَمْعُ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ جَمَعْتَهُ فَقَدْ قَرَأْتَهُ. وَسُمِّيَ الْقُرْآنُ قُرْآنًا لِأَنَّهُ جَمَعَ الْقِصَصَ، وَالْأَمْرَ وَالنَّبِيَّ، وَالْوَعْدَ وَالْوَعِيدَ،
وَالْأَيَاتِ وَالسُّورَ بَعْضَهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ، وَهُوَ مَصْدَرٌ كَالْعُفْرَانِ وَالْكُفْرَانِ
قَرَأَ يَقْرَأُ: وَقَدْ يُطْلَقُ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ لِأَنَّ فِيهَا قِرَاءَةً، تَسْمِيَةً لِلشَّيْءِ بِنَعْضِهِ، وَعَلَى الْقِرَاءَةِ نَفْسِهَا، يُقَالُ
"قِرَاءَةٌ وَقُرْآنًا"

The words ﴿القراءة﴾، والافتراء، والقاريء، والقُرآن have been repeatedly used in the Prophetic Traditions in which the central meaning is to collect because to read and to collect go side by side. The Qur'ān has been denominated like this because it is a collection of narratives, commandments and prohibitions, reprimands, verses and chapters. It is applied on the Prayer because the words are read together. The Qirā'at itself has composition ﴿قراءة وقُرْآنًا قرأً يقرأ﴾

b) JubrānMas'ūd described:

1. "قرأ الشيء : جمعه وضم بعضه إلى بعضه الآخر"
2. "قرأ الكتاب : نطق بكلماته"
3. "قرأ الكتاب القى النظر عليه وطالعه ولم ينطق بكلماته"
4. "قرأ عليه السلام : أبلغه إياه"³

Terminological Meaning of Qirā'āt ﴿قراءة﴾:

The term "قراءة" has been defined by various scholars differently according to their visions, a few are as follows:

☞ AbūḤayyānAndalusī:

"يُبْحَثُ فِيهِ عَنِ كَيْفِيَّةِ النُّطْقِ بِالْفَاظِ الْقُرْآنِ هَذَا هُوَ عِلْمُ الْقِرَاءَاتِ"⁴

The science of Readings is that in which the ways to pronounce the Qur'ānic words are discussed.

☞ 'AllāmahZarkashī:

⁵ "القراءة هي اختلاف الفاظ الوحي المذكور في كتبة الحروف او كيفيتها، من تخفيف و تثقيل و غيرهما"

Method of inscribing the letters and dissention in the pronunciation of the Qur'ānic words in the subject revelation e.g. either to read any word with shadd or takhfif is called the Science of Readings.

☞ Imām Ibn Jazrī:

⁶ "القراءات: علم بكيفية اداء كلمات القرآن، و اختلافها معزواً لناقله"

☞ ImāmZurqānī:

"القراءات جمع قراءة، و هي في اللغة مصدر سماعي لقراء- و في الاصطلاح مذهب يذهب اليه امام من سواء كانت ائمة القراء مخالفا به غيره في النطق بالقرآن الكريم، مع اتفاق الروايات و الطرق عنه، ⁷ هذه المخالفة في نطق الحروف ام في نطق هيئاتها"

Types of the Qur'ānic Readings:

There are two types of the Qur'ānic Readings: Recurrent and Rare.

a) Recurrent Reading (القراءة المتواترة):

هذه كل قراءة وافقت العربية مطلقا، ووافقت أحد المصاحف العثمانية ولو تقديرا، وتواتر نقلها، ⁸ "القراءة المتواترة المقطوع بها"

Therefore, there are three conditions for any reading to be recurrent. They are:

1. It should be reported by the chain of honest narrators till the Prophet (ﷺ);
2. It should be in accordance to the rules of Arabic language, and most importantly
3. It should be according to the 'Uthmānic Script of the Qur'ān.

b) Rare Reading (القراءة الشاذة):

كل قراءة وافقت العربية ولو بوجه ووافقت أحد المصاحف العثمانية ولو احتمالاً وصح سندها فهي القراءة "الصحيحة التي لا يجوز ردها ولا يحل إنكارها بل هي من الأحرف السبعة التي نزل بها القرآن ووجب على قبولها سواء كانت عن الأئمة السبعة أم عن العشرة أم عن غيرهم من الأئمة المقبولين، ومتى اختل ركن الناس ⁹ "الثلاثة أطلق عليها ضعيفة أو شاذة أو باطللة الأركانمن هذه"

A reading which is (i) in accordance to any one aspect of the rules of Arabic language; (ii) according to any one script amongthe 'Uthmānic Script of the

Qur'ān (iii) has been reported by the chain of honest narrators till the Prophet (ﷺ), is called Authentic Reading and is among those Seven Dialects on which the Qur'ān was revealed; its negation is not permitted, rather it is obligatory for every Muslim to accept it whether it is amongst the seven or ten or other than tens. If any one of the three conditions are void, it is termed as Ḍa'īf, Shādh or Bāṭil.

☞ Allāmah Dimiyāṭī asserted:

¹⁰وأجمعوا على أنه لم يتواتر شيء مما زاد على العشرة المشهورة

It has been agreed that all those readings which are other than ten popular readings will not be considered to be Recurrent.

Instances from Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān:

Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān is greatly rich exegesis in respect of the Qur'ānic readings that to quote some of the instances from it would be just like to build a bridge over a sea. Imām Qurṭubī makes frequent use of the readings of the word under discussion while interpreting the verses in such an excellent manner that the apprehension of the meaning of the subject word becomes far easier. This is indeed a great admirable attribute of the exegete that he describes maximum reported readings and elaborates their lingual meanings as well. The instances mentioned below will provide an overview of the exegete's praxis of inference from the Qur'ānic readings and will follow the order of the Chapters of the Qur'ān.

☞ **Instance One:** ¹¹الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“All the praises and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of the ‘Ālamīn”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurṭubī reports that there are following four readings of the words ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾:

- 1) All the seven reciters and the majority read it as ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾ with raf‘a on the letter dāl; ¹²
- 2) Sufyān b. ‘Uyainah and Ra’ūba b. ‘Ujjāj read it with nasab on the letter dāl as ﴿الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ﴾; ¹³
- 3) From Ibn Abū ‘Ablah with ḍammah on both the letters dāl and lām and read as ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾ with the rule that the diacritical mark on the previous letter is followed on the next one which is common among Arabs. ¹⁴
- 4) From Ḥassan b. Abu’lḤassan and Zayd b. ‘Alī in which letter dāl is read with kasra as ﴿الْحَمْدِ لِلَّهِ﴾¹⁵ and the diacritical mark on the next letter has been followed in the previous one. ¹⁶

Difference in meaning: Imām Qurtubī also mentions the difference in the meaning of the first two reported readings by quoting the axiom of Sībawayh:

- a) الْحَمْدُ¹⁷: It means that the person who is reading this word is reporting that the praise is from him and also from all the creatures for Allāh the Almighty;
 b) الْحَمْدُ: It means that the person who is reading this word is reporting that the praise is only for Allāh the Almighty.¹⁸

❧ **Instance Two:** وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكَ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ¹⁹
 يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ

“And remember when We delivered you from Pharaoh people, who were afflicting you with a horrible torment, killing your sons”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions that there are two readings of the word ذَبَّحَ (يُذَبِّحُونَ); most of the reciters have read it with shadd on the letter bā' for emphasizing but Ibn Muḥīṣan read it with fath on it as ذَبَّحَ (يُذَبِّحُونَ).²⁰

Difference in meaning: He then explains the difference in the meaning with the change in diacritical marks in readings:

- ذَبَّحَ (ذَبَّحَ) means to pierce (سَقَّ);
 ذَبَّحَ (مَذْبُوح) means which has been slaughtered;
 ذَبَّحَ (ذُبَّحَ) means the cleavage at the base of fingers;
 ذَبَّحَ (مَذْبُوح) means the cleavage in the earth after a heavy flood.²¹

❧ **Instance Three:** إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّبِيَّانَ²²

“Verily! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians and Sabians”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī states that word الصَّبِيَّانَ (الصَّبِيَّانَ) is the plural of صَبِي (صَابِي) but some considered it to be of the word صَاب (صَاب) which resulted in the dissension in its reading. Majority read it with the letter ḥamzah after the letter bā' except Nāfi' who read it without the letter ḥamzah as الصَّبَانِ²³.

Difference in meaning: He elaborates the meanings of both the readings:

- 1) Those who read it with the letter ḥamzah have derived it from صَبَات (صَبَات) which means the emergence of stars and also from صَبَاتْنِيَةِ الْغَلَامِ (صَبَاتْنِيَةِ الْغَلَامِ) which means the appearance of teeth of a boy;
- 2) Those who read it without ḥamzah have derived it from صَبَا، يَصْبُو (صَبَا، يَصْبُو) which means inclination. The lingual meaning of Ṣābī is a person who inclines towards a certain religion and then expatriates from the existing. That is why a person who embraces Islam, the Arabs used to say صَبَا قَدًا (صَبَا قَدًا) and الصَّبَابُونَ (الصَّبَابُونَ) are those who expatriated from the religions of the previous books of Allāh.²⁴

❧ **Instance Four:**²⁵ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ لِأَجْلِ لَكُمْ

“And to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī reports two readings of the verse which also have impact on their respective meanings. Majority read the verse as ﴿بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ﴾ and only Nakh‘aī read as ﴿بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ﴾.²⁶

Difference in meaning: He expounds the readings and their respective meanings:

﴿حُرِّمَ﴾ (It is Passive voice which means that it has been prohibited by the Almighty Allāh.

﴿حُرِّمَ﴾ (It is like كُرِّمَ ; and the meaning becomes ﴿صَارَ حَرَامًا﴾ which means it became prohibited.²⁷

❧ **Instance Five:**²⁸ مَنْ بَعْدَ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَىٰ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ

“After payment of legacies, he (or she) may have bequeathed or debts, so that no loss is caused (to anyone)”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī reports two readings of ﴿غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ﴾, one being the same by Majority and by Ḥassan as ﴿غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةٍ﴾.²⁹

Difference in meaning: He also differentiates the meaning of the reported readings:

﴿غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ﴾ (the factor behind this reading is the verb يُوصَىٰ; that a person should not will which is harmful for the heirs.³⁰

﴿غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةٍ﴾ (the factor behind this reading is the noun وَصِيَّةٍ; that a bequeath should not be harmful for the heirs.³¹

❖ **Instance Six:**³² لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّعْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ

“Allāh will not punish you what is unintentional in your oaths, but he will punish you in your deliberate oaths”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions that there are two readings of the word ﴿عَقَدْتُمْ﴾; one being the same and the other is ﴿عَاقَدْتُمْ﴾.³³

Difference in meaning: He explains the difference in the meanings of both the readings which is stated as under:

﴿عَقَدْتُمْ﴾ It is derived from the word ﴿العقد﴾ which has two meanings:

1. To fasten like with the rope;
2. An oath that has been established ﴿اليمين المنعقدة﴾ which means that one decides firmly to do something but fails to fulfil it or contrariwise.³⁴

﴿عَاقِدْتُمْ﴾ The meaning of ﴿عَاقِدَ﴾ is very similar to ﴿عَاهَدَ﴾ which means to bind oneself or commit something.³⁵

❖ **Instance Seven:**³⁶ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفِرُّونَ

“And He sends guardians (angels) over you, until when death approaches one you, our Messengers take his soul, and they never neglect their duty”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions that there are three readings of the word “تَوَفَّتْهُ”; the others two are:³⁷

- توفاه رسلنا by Ḥamzah
- تتوفاه رسلنا by A‘mash

Difference in meaning: He explicates the meanings of all readings as under:

﴿تَوَفَّتْهُ﴾ This reading is on the basis of feminine expression of the verse;

﴿تَوَفَّاهُ﴾ This reading is on the basis of masculine expression of the verse;

﴿يَتَوَفَّاهُ﴾ This reading is also on the basis of masculine expression of the verse and it means the Angel of death and his companions. It is also supported by Ḥaḍrat Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله تعالى عنه).³⁸

❖ **Instance Eight:**³⁹ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيِّنَ يَدَىٰ رَحْمَتِهِ

“And it is He Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy (rain)”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions that there are seven readings of the word ﴿بُشْرًا﴾ which are stated as under:

- 1) By majority as ﴿بُشْرًا﴾⁴⁰ ;
- 2) By the people of Ḥaramain and Abū ‘Amr as ﴿بُشْرًا﴾ with replacement of letter bā’ with nūn and ḍammah on both the letters nūn and shīn;
- 3) By Ḥassan and Qatādah as ﴿بُشْرًا﴾⁴¹ with replacement of letter bā’ with nūn; ḍammah on letter nūn and sakūn on letter shin;
- 4) By Ḥamzah and A‘mash as ﴿بُشْرًا﴾⁴² with replacement of letter bā’ with nūn; fath on letter nūn and sakūn on letter shin;

- 5) By 'Āṣim as ⁴³بُشْرًا with letter bā' having sakūn on letter shin and tanvīn on letter alif; Nahḥās reported another reading from 'Āṣim as بُشْرًا with fath on letter bā';
- 6) By the people of Yaman as بُشْرَى ;
- 7) The last one is ⁴⁴بُشْرًا

Difference in meaning: He illuminates the difference in the meanings of all readings stated as follows:

بُشْرًا: It is the plural of بُشِيرٌ which is a noun and denotes a person himself; and it is also possible that it is the plural of بُشُورٌ which is used in the sense of مَنْشُورٌ. It means He Who sends the dispersed winds;

بُشْرًا: It is an abbreviation of بُشْرٌ in a similar way as it is said: كُتِبَ وَرُسِلَ

بُشْرًا: It has an impact of the previous word's meaning such as it is said: "وَهُوَ" "الَّذِي يَنْشُرُ الرِّيحَ نَشْرًا" which means He is Who disperses the winds prudently.

It is also said: نَشَرْتُ الشَّيْءَ فَانْتَشَرَا which means that I dispersed something and it got dispersed;

بُشْرًا: It is the plural of بُشَيْرٌ which means those winds which are herald of the coming rain; a verse that supports this meaning is:

أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ⁴⁵ (He sends herald winds)

بُشْرَى: It is read on the scale of ⁴⁶حَبْلَى

❖ **Instance Nine:**⁴⁷ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرَهُمْ لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ

"Though their plot was not such as to remove the mountains from their places"

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī states that the word "لِتَزُولَ" is read in another way also by Ibn Muḥīsin, Ibn Juraj and Kisā'ī with fath on first letter lām and raf'a on the second as ⁴⁸لِتَزُولَ.

Difference in meaning: He explains that the purpose of the reading لِتَزُولَ is to show the magnification of deceit by pagans. Imām Ṭabarī declared the first reading لِتَزُولَ more appropriate.⁴⁹

❖ **Instance Ten:**⁵⁰ لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ

قَوْمٌ مَسْحُورُونَ

"They would say in the evening: Our eyes have been (as if) dazzled. Nay, we are a people bewitched"

Reported Readings: It is reported by Imām Qurtubī that the word "سُكِّرَتْ" is read as ⁵¹سُكِّرَتْ by Ibn Kathīr without tashdīd on letter kāf.

Difference in meaning: For elaborating the difference in the meanings of both readings, he quotes some axioms of scholars which are described below:

﴿سُجِّرَتْ﴾: Ibn ‘Abbās (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and Ḍaḥḥāk said: it means that our eyes have been dazzled with bewitchment ﴿سُدَّتْ بِالسَّحْرِ﴾. Ḥassan deemed it to be ﴿سُجِّرَتْ﴾ which means that they have been bewitched. Kalbī said ﴿اغشيت ابصارنا﴾ i.e. our eyes have been copulated. Qatādah interpreted as ﴿أُخِذَتْ﴾ which means they have been captured. Mu’arrij took it as ﴿دِيرِنَا﴾ which it derived from الدوران and it means we have been dazzled. Juwībar narrated as ﴿خُدِعَتْ﴾ meaning we have been deceived. Abū ‘Amr al-‘Alā’ said that it means they have been overwhelmed. Maḥdawī said the reading with tashdīd is for emphasising on the meaning.

Imām Qurtubī commented that all the above mentioned axioms have somewhat similar meanings and the comprehensive meaning to it is ﴿مُنَعَتْ﴾ which means that our eyes have been prevented.⁵²

﴿سُجِّرَتْ﴾: Ibn ‘Arabī interpreted it as ﴿مُلِنَتْ﴾ which means they have been filled. Abū ‘Alī said the people who read it like this have resembled it with the condition of their eyes during intoxication. Farrā’ said it is derived from ﴿سُكُور﴾ i.e. the calmness of wind.⁵³

❖ **Instance Eleven:**⁵⁴ وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا

مُنْرٍ فِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا

“And when We decide to destroy a town, We first send a definite order to those among them who lead a life of luxury”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions four readings of the word ﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾ which are:

1. Majority read it is ﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾⁵⁵;
2. ﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾ By Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī, Abū Rijā’, Abū al-‘Āliyah, Rabī’, Mujāhid, Ḥassan, Qatādah, Abū Ḥaiwa Shāmī, Ya‘qūb, Khārīja from Nāfi’, Ḥammād b. Salma from Ibn Kathīr and Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (رضى الله تعالى عنه) with tashdīd on letter mīm;
3. ﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾ By Ḥaḍrat Ibn ‘Abbās (رضى الله تعالى عنه) with madd on letter alif.
4. ﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾ By Ḥassan and Yaḥya b. Ya‘mur with kasr on letter mīm on the scale of ﴿فَعَلْنَا﴾ and they narrated it from Ḥaḍrat Ibn ‘Abbās (رضى الله تعالى عنه)⁵⁶

Difference in meaning: The difference in the meaning of readings elaborated is as follows:

﴿أَمَرْنَا﴾: Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī said that Allāh dominates the rich on them; Ibn ‘Azīz said ﴿تَأَمَّرَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾ means ﴿تَسَلَّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾ i.e. He overruled them;⁵⁷

﴿أَمْرَنَا﴾: Kisā'ī said it means that Allāh increases in number the rich and the cruel over them;

Abū 'Ubayd said whether it is أمرته or أمرته, both have the same meaning of ﴿كثرتهم﴾ which means something has increased. The same opinion has been given by Ibn 'Azīz who said that أمرنا and أمرنا have same meaning of ﴿كثرتنا﴾ which means we increased something.⁵⁸

﴿أَمْرَنَا﴾: The scholarly opinions quoted by ImāmQurtubī are:

- ḤaḍratQatādah and Ḥassan said that it means ﴿أكثرنا﴾ and it has been supported by AbūZayd and Abū 'Ubayd who believed that its origin is ﴿أَمْرَنَا﴾ and latterly abated as أمرنا but this stance has been refuted by Kisā'ī as he asserted that only أمرنا is used in the sense of abundance.

- Abū al- Ḥassan exemplified: ﴿ماله﴾ أمر means his assets increased.

- Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said: when any tribe used to increase in number before the advent of Islam, the people would say ﴿بنى فلاناً أمر﴾;

- ImāmQurtubī concludes by adducing a following Prophetic tradition which he considers to be authentic:

لَقَدْ أَمَرَ أَمْرُ ابْنِ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، إِنَّهُ يَخَافُهُ مَلِكُ بَنِي الْأَصْفَرِ.⁶⁰ 59

“The number of Ibn-Abi-Kabsha (the Prophet (ﷺ) Muhammad) has so much increased that even the King of Banī Al-Aṣfar (Byzantine) is afraid of him.”

﴿أَمْرَنَا﴾: It is the reading of majority who derived it from ﴿الأمر﴾ which means that we commanded them to obey by making them frightened through threat.

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❖ Instance Twelve:⁶² سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“This is the Chapter of the Qur'ān which We have sent down and which We have enjoined (ordained its laws)”

Reported Readings:ImāmQurtubī states that the word ﴿فَرَضْنَاهَا﴾ is read in two other ways:

- 1) Majority read as ﴿فَرَضْنَاهَا﴾;
- 2) By some people as ﴿فَرَضْنَاهَا﴾ with tashdīd on letter rā’;

- 3) By Abū ‘Amr as ﴿فَرَضْنَاَهَا﴾ with tashdīd on letter rā’ and alif after letter nūn.⁶³

Difference in meaning: The difference in the meaning of both the readings is stated as follows:

﴿فَرَضْنَاَهَا﴾ It means that We (Allāh) have obligated the commandments in this Chapter of the Qur’ān on you and the people after you;

﴿فَرَضْنَاَهَا﴾ It means that We (Allāh) have revealed multiple commandments in this Chapter of the Qur’ān;⁶⁴

﴿فَرَضْنَاَهَا﴾ It means that We (Allāh) have revealed it in piecemeal because the meaning of الفرض is also القطع (cessation); فُرْضَةُ الْقَوْسِ (incision of arch) is also derived from it. فرض النفقة means the portions of inheritance and فرض النفقة is the section of expenditures or alimony. فَرَضْنَا is the revelation of this Chapter separately and with tashdīd, it denotes emphasis. It means that this Chapter contains abundant commandments.⁶⁵

❖ Instance Thirteen:

﴿سَوَاءٌ﴾ مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءٌ⁶⁶

“Or those who earn evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous good deeds, in their present life and after their death?”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī reports that the common reading is ﴿سَوَاءٌ﴾⁶⁷ with raf‘a on the letter ḥamzah but Ḥamzah, Kisāi and A‘mash read it with nasb on the letter ḥamzah as ﴿سَوَاءٌ﴾ and is supported by Abū ‘Ubayd.⁶⁸

Difference in meaning: He elaborates the difference in the meanings as under:

﴿سَوَاءٌ﴾ It is acting as a subject (mubtadā’) in the verse in which its predicate (khabar) is مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ. In this case the pronoun will be disbelievers whose life is worse and so will be their death;⁶⁹

﴿سَوَاءٌ﴾ It means that We (Allāh) will make their lives and deaths equally worse.⁷⁰

❖ Instance Fourteen:⁷¹ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ

أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ

“They belied and followed their own lusts. And every matter will be settled.”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī mentions the following three readings of the word ﴿مُسْتَقَرٌّ﴾:

- 1) By majority as ﴿مُسْتَقَرٌّ﴾;

- 2) By Shība as ﴿مُسْتَقَرَّ﴾ with fatḥ on letter qāf;
 3) By AbūJa‘far b. Qa‘qā’ as ﴿مُسْتَقَرَّ﴾⁷² with kasr on on letter qāf.⁷³

Difference in meaning: The difference is elaborated as follows:

﴿مُسْتَقَرَّ﴾ It means that there is a time specified for every matter with will occur without any change in it;⁷⁴

﴿مُسْتَقَرَّ﴾ In this reading, مُسْتَقَرَّ is the attribute of أَمْرٍ; it means that every matter that is written in the Mother Book must have to happen.⁷⁵

❖ **Instance Fifteen:**⁷⁶ سَيُصَلِّي نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

“He will be burnt in the Fire of blazing flames”

Reported Readings: Imām Qurtubī reports three readings of the word ﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾:

- 1) By majority as ﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾ with fatḥ on letter yā’;
 2) By AbūRijā’ and A‘mash as ﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾⁷⁷ with ḍammah on letter yā’;
 3) By Ibn Kathīr, ḤassanBaṣrī and ‘Āṣim as ﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾ with ḍammah on letter yā, fatḥ on letter ṣād and tashdīd on letter lām.⁷⁸

Imām Qurtubī comments that the first reading is the preferred one.

Difference in meaning: The difference in meanings is explicated as follows:

﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾ It has been derived from الاصلاح meaning يصليه الله i.e. We (Allāh) will make him enter in the hellfire. This meaning is supported in another verse
 ﴿فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا﴾⁷⁹;

﴿سَيُصَلِّي﴾ It has been used in the meaning of سَيُصَلِّيهِ الله which means he will be entered by Allāh in the hellfire. This meaning is supported in another verse
 ﴿وَأَتَصَلِّيَهُ جَذِيمًا﴾⁸⁰.⁸¹

Conclusion:

- The study of the Qur’ānic Readings is one of the most imperative discussions in the Qur’ānic Sciences.
- There are different lingual meanings of Qirā’at, the most common is the way of reading something.
- Terminologically, Qirā’at is the way in which the letters and words of the Qur’ān are read.
- There are two types Readings: Qirā’at al-Mutawātirah and Qirā’at al-Shādhah.

- Qirā'at al-Mutawātirah is that reading which is reported by the chain of honest narrators till the Prophet (ﷺ); it is in accordance to the rules of Arabic language and also to the 'Uthmānī Script of the Qur'ān.
- Qirā'at al-Shādhah is that does not fulfil any of the three conditions or that reading which is not Recurrent is Rare.
- There is consensus of Muslim community that there are ten readings which are Recurrent and the rest are Rare.
- In the exegesis Al-Jami' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, Imām Qurtubī mentions various readings of the word under discussion while interpreting the verses; rather this exegesis is quite prolific in presenting the variety in readings.
- Imām Qurtubī always mentions the source of the reading from whom it has been reported with the exception of only a few.
- He not only indicates the reported readings but also mentions the word from which a specific reading has been originated.
- He also describes the differentiation in the meaning of words with the change in the reading in a remarkable detailed manner.
- While expounding the variation in the meanings, he infers from the supporting Qur'ānic Verses, the Prophetic Traditions and the literary opinions of Muslim polymaths and linguists.
- At many places, he directs towards the preferred reading and in some instances he mentions his own preference too.

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¹His full name is Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abū Bakr b. Farḥ al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Andalusī al-Qurtubī. He was one of the most eminent scholars of Córdoba, Spain. He was an adept exegete and a proficient scholar of the Science of the Prophetic Traditions ('Ilm al-Ḥadīth). The full name of his exegesis is Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān wa'l-Mubayyinulimā'atadāmmānahumin al-Sunnatiwa'Āy al-Furqān which holds an incredibly distinguished position among not only the classical exegetical literature but also among the commentaries of the Modern era. There are many stupendous oeuvres on his panel regarding numerous Islamic disciplines. He died in 671 A.D in Egypt. (For details, See: Zarkalī, Khair al-Dīn, Al-A'lam, 15thed, Beirut, Dār al-'Ilmi'lMalāyīn, 2002, 5: 322; Ibn 'Imād Ḥanbalī, Shadharāt al-Dhahabfi Akhbārmun Dhahab, Edi: Abdul Qādir Arnāuṭ, 1sted, Beirut, Dār Ibn Kathīr, 7: 584; Ḥājī Khalīfah, Kashaf al-Zunūn, Beirut, Dār Ahyā' al-Torāth al-'Arabī, n.d. 1: 390; Ibn Farḥūn, Mālikī, Al-Dībāj al-Madhab fi Ma'rfati 'Ulamā' A'yān al-Madhab, Edi: Abū Nūr, Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī, Dār al-Torāthli'lṬaba' wa'l-Nashr, 2011, 2: 308)

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