

Sharī'a Ruling Regarding the Variant Readings of the Holy Qur'ān that were authentically narrated but not included in the 'Uthmānic Maṣāḥif'

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Abstract

Many of the variant readings of the Holy Qur'ān having sound chain of narration are not included in the Uthmānic Maṣāḥif (Codices). Hence, following three probabilities can be deduced about these readings; First: Those were abrogated in 'Arḍa Akhīra (last revision). Second: Those might be among those explanatory notes of the Holy Text by Prophet Muhammad PBUH that were erroneously written by a few companions within the actual text of Qur'ān considering them a part of the Qur'ān. Third: Those may belong to such Aḥruf (readings) that were authentically transmitted from the Messenger of Allah PBUH but, they were not mentioned in orthography of the Uthmānic Maṣāḥif by the compilers due to any possible reason. To us, if we come across any authentically narrated recitation of the senior Qurrā' companions that seems contrary to the orthography of the Uthmānic Maṣāḥif and there is no proof of theirs being from the second category, then, it is better to consider them from the third category instead of the first one.

Key Words: Variant Readings, Qur'ān, Qirā'āt, Uthmānic Maṣāḥif, Qurrā'

1. Introduction

Council of Islamic Research, Lahore has an honour to publish an encyclopaedia on Qur'ānic sciences and variant readings of the Holy Qur'ān. This prestigious research work of almost three thousand pages was published in 3 volumes during March 2009 to June 2010. One of the important issues, explored by this research, is the debate amongst Muslim scholars about the legal status of the variant readings of the Holy Qur'ān that were authentically narrated by senior *Muḥaddithīn* as Imām Bukhārī etc. but not existed in Uthmānic Codices.

Majority of scholars rejected the variant readings which do not comply with one of the script of Uthmānic official Codices. By the time, this misconception became strong that there is a consensus among Muslim jurists on the rejection of these readings. This research work evaluates such misunderstandings and lead to the consequences that variant readings having sound chain are accepted by a number of distinguished early scholars even though these are not existent in Uthmānic Codices.

2. The recording and arrangement of the Holy Qur'ān in Prophetic Era

It is undeniable that the companions of the Holy Prophet PBUH had used to write the verses of the Holy Qur'ān at their own and also by the order of the Messenger of Allah. One of the most prominent examples is that of Zayd bin Thābit RA who was considered as an official scribe of revelation as he was directly appointed for this task by the Holy Prophet PBUH himself. According to a tradition Zayd bin Thābit RA said; Abū Bakr RA sent for me and said, "You used to write the Divine Revelations for Allah's Messenger PBUH: So you should search for the Qur'ān and collect it (Bukhārī, 1997)." The author of the book "Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif" has mentioned ten personal codices of great companion of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002).

In the period of the Holy Prophet PBUH, many of the companions were used to write down both the Holy Qurʾān and Ḥadīth after learning them from the Messenger of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah initially banned the companions to write anything other than the Qurʾān out of the fear lest they may confuse the word of Allah with Ḥadīth although he permitted to narrate Ḥadīth verbally. It is narrated from Abū Saʿīd Khudrī; “Do not write down what I say, and whoever has written down anything from me other than the Qurʾān, let him erase it. Narrate from me, and there is nothing wrong with that (Muslim, 2007).”

When the companions became familiar with the Word of God then the Messenger of Allah PBUH permitted them to write Ḥadīth also (Bukhārī, 1997). As for as, the orthography of the Holy Qurʾān is concerned, none of the companions had one complete written document of the Holy Qurʾān with him (Ibid.). But, different companions had different parts of it, which were written on variant raw materials like stones, leather, and date-palm leaves etcetera (Ibid.) as; the modes of writing were not that sophisticated during those times as are available today.

3. Compilation of the Holy Qurʾān during Abū Bakr’s RA Caliphate

During the caliphate of Abū Bakr RA there were heavy casualties among the *Qurrāʾ*, Those who knew the Qurʾān by heart, of the Holy Qurʾān were martyred during the battle of *Yamāma*. So, ʿUmar RA out of the fear of losing Qurʾān suggested to Caliph Abū Bakr RA to order for the collection and compilation of the Qurʾān. Initially Abū Bakr RA was reluctant to act upon this advice but later on, he was convinced and appointed Zayd bin Thābit RA to shoulder this exigent assignment, as it is reported on the authority of Zayd bin Thābit that: Then Abū Bakr said to me, “You are a wise young man and we do not have any suspicion about you, and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah’s Messenger PBUH. So you should search for the fragmentary orthographies of the Qurʾān and collect it in one book. By Allah if they had ordered me to shift one of the mountains, it would not have been heavier for me than this ordering me to collect the Qurʾān. Then I said to Abū Bakr, “How will you do something which Allah’s Messenger PBUH did not do” Abū Bakr replied, “By Allah, it is a good project.” Abū Bakr kept on urging me to accept his idea until Allah opened my chest for what He had opened the chests of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. So I started looking for the Qurʾān and collecting it from what was written on palmed stalks, thin white stones and also from the men who knew it by heart (Bukhārī, 1997).

This was such a difficult and challenging task that sometimes he had to travel a lot to get even a single verse of the Holy Qurʾān as it is depicted through this tradition; Zayd bin Thābit added, “A verse from Surah *Aḥzāb* was missed by me when we copied the Qurʾān and I used to hear Allah’s Messenger PBUH reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzayma bin Thābit al-Anṣārī. According to another tradition ʿUmar RA also contributed with Zayd bin Thābit RA to accomplish this pivotal duty. They did not accept even a single verse from a companion unless he presented two eye witnesses for that he had learnt and written those verses in the presence of the Messenger of Allah. It is narrated from ʿUrwa bin Zubayr that casualties were heavy among the *Qurrāʾ* of the Qurʾān on the day of the battle of *Yamāma*. Abū Bakr RA afraid that a large part of the Qurʾān may be lost. Thus, he ordered ʿUmar and Zayd to sit at the door of Prophet’s PBUH Mosque and if someone comes with at least two eye witnesses for that he had learnt and written those verses from the Messenger of Allah than write it down (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002).”

In this way the whole of the revelation was preserved in written style during the period of the first caliph of the believers but this was in the form of Codices and not in the form of Codex. These Codices remained in the custody of Abū Bakr RA, later on passed over to second caliph ʿUmar RA and after his demise they were kept with his daughter Ḥafṣa RA.

4. Compilation of the Holy Qurʾān during ʿUthmān RA Caliphate

History bears witness that Islamic peninsula broadened up during the caliphate of ʿUmar RA to a considerable extent. As per the need of the time many of the companions migrated to variant places like Syria, Basra, *Kūfa* etc. for the sake of imparting the knowledge of divine revelations to the people. Each of them used to teach the Holy Qurʾān their respective students in the manner in which they had directly learnt it from the Messenger of Allah. Consequently, different variant readings of the Holy Qurʾān came in practice in different regions. Everyone started claiming his reading as correct one and blaming others’ ones as erroneous. In fact, most of those styles were in agreement with the seven variant readings told by the Holy Prophet PBUH. This fact is borne by this narration; narrated ʿAbdullāh bin ʿAbbās: Allah’s Messenger said, “Gabriel recited the Qurʾān to me in one way.

Then I requested him (to read it in another way), and continued asking him to recite it in other ways, and he recited it in several ways till he ultimately recited it in seven different ways (Bukhārī, 2007).”

Later on, this difference of opinion among the people became worse, as stated in this Ḥadīth; Ḥudhayfa bin al-Yamān came to ‘Uthmān at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer *Ārmīniyya* and *Ādharbāijān*. Ḥudhayfa was afraid of their (the people of Syria and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur’ān, so he said to ‘Uthmān, “O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur’ān) as Jews and the Christians did before (Bukhārī, 2007).”

5. Variant Readings of the Holy Qur’ān before ‘Uthmān’s Compilation

There are two important points with respect to the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān during the time of Third Caliph of the believers and these are;

First: Many of the variant readings of the Holy Qur’ān which were still prevalent among people before the compilation of the Holy Qur’ān during the period of the Third Caliph of the believers, but abrogated after *‘Arḍa Akhīra*, the last revision of the Holy Prophet PBUH with angel Gabriel during last Ramadan of his life, as it is mentioned in the Ḥadīth of *Samura*; The Holy Qur’ān was revised many times and the companions were used to say that our reading is according to the *‘Arḍa Akhīra* (Ḥākim, 1411 AH). There was also difference among the companions of the Holy Prophet PBUH that which of the companions’ recitation was in accordance with *‘Arḍa Akhīra*. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās said; the angel Gabriel was used to revise the Holy Qur’ān with Prophet Muhammad PBUH once in a year but the year of demise he revised twice and the reading of companion ‘Abdullāh bin Masūd was in accordance with the *‘Arḍa Akhīra* (Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, 2001). Some of the narrations declared Zayd bin Thābit’s RA reading as in accordance with the last one. ‘Allāma Ibn Ḥajar developed the relationship between these two narrations that both of them are correct, so the recitation of both the companions in accordance with the *‘Arḍa Akhīra* (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH). This discussion aimed at revealing the fact that some of the variant readings were abrogated after the last revision of the Holy Qur’ān by the Allah’s Messenger PBUH with the angel Gabriel. These abrogated readings were of the kind which initially was permitted by the Allah’s Messenger PBUH on the basis of the principle of making ease for the people. So it is apt to say that some of the *Sab‘a Aḥruf*, Seven ways of the recitation of the Holy Quran, where the wording, accent or dialect may differ but the meaning is the same or at least not opposing, were abrogated and some remained in practice even to date. This is the view of the majority of the Scholars and it is supported by the traditions (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005).

Second: Another problem faced before the compilation of the *‘Uthmānic Muṣṣhaf* (codex) was that, some of the companions had perplexed the interpretation of the Holy Prophet PBUH with the actual text of the verses. So, they also copied those interpretations with the actual text of the verses while writing their codices of the Qur’ān considering them a part of Qur’ān. Evidence to such a mistake is the Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Yūnus, the freed slave of ‘Ā’isha the wife of the Prophet (PBUH), that ‘Ā’isha asked me to copy a *Muṣṣhaf* for her, and she said: 'When you reach this verse, call my attention: Guard strictly the *Ṣalawāt* especially the middle *Ṣalāh*. When I reached it, I called her attention and she dictated to me: 'Guard strictly the *Ṣalawāt* especially the middle *Ṣalāh* and the *Ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr* i.e. afternoon prayer, and stand before Allah with obedience.' Then she said: I heard it from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). It is apparent from other traditions that the words of *Ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr* were mentioned by the Allah’s Messenger PBUH either in order to interpret the verse or otherwise it was a kind of recitation which was abrogated afterwards (Ibid.).

6. Compilation of the Codex of ‘Uthmān

Keeping in view the all the issues related to the recitation of the Quran, Caliph ‘Uthmān RA decided to get prepared such a compilation of the Holy Book, which would comprise of all the established variant reading of the Qur’ān according to the *‘Arḍa Akhīra*. Primarily he took this decision in order to familiarize the people with the authentic readings of the Qur’ān introduced by the Messenger of Allah PBUH and to discourage the prevalent blame game regarding the variant readings. Secondly, he wished so to nullify the practice of all abrogated readings and to gather the people upon the official style of reading. Thus, he appointed Zayd bin Thābit RA, ‘Abdullāh bin Zubair RA, Sa‘īd bin Al‘āṣ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ḥārith bin Hishām RA to undertake this responsibility. On the preparation of this official codex, multiple copies of the same were produced and sent to different big cities while, all other personal codices of the Companions were burnt.

According to the tradition; narrated Anas: ‘Uthmān ordered Zayd bin Thābit RA, ‘Abdullāh bin Zubayr RA, Sa‘īd bin Al‘āṣ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ḥārith bin Hishām RA to rewrite the man-orthography in perfect copies. ‘Uthmān RA said to the three Qurayshī men, “In case you disagree with Zayd bin Thābit on any point in the Qur’ān, then write it in the dialect of *Quraysh*, the Qur’ān was revealed in their tongue.”

They did so, and when they had written many copies, ‘Uthmān RA returned the original codex to Ḥafṣa RA. ‘Uthmān sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur’anic materials, whether written in fragmentary codices or whole copies, be burnt (Bukhārī, 2007).

The four authorized companions had prepared this *Muṣḥaf* on the standard of Codices of Abū Bakr RA. This committee conferred to the *Qurra’* of Medina but did not consult with all of the *Qurra’* companions in other big cities. Thus, there is an ample chance that some of the variant readings might have been missed of mentioning during the inscription of *Uthmānic* codex. Due to this, variant reactions of the companions are historically witnessed, when, they received this codex. Ḥārith bin al-Ḥakam al-Kilābī said: I came to the house of Abū Musā al-Ash‘arī whereas Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ḥudayfa bin Yamān RA were also there. I saw the *Muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān before them and ‘Uthmān had ordered them to evaluate their *Maṣāḥif* according to his *Muṣḥaf*. Abū Musā said: what do you find additional in my codex, do not erase it and what you not find, mention it (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002).

The narrator of this Ḥadīth, Ḥārith bin al-Ḥakam al-Kilābī, is mentioned in the books of *al-Jarḥwa al-Ta‘dīl* (Science of validation of narrators of a tradition) but, there is no positive or negative remark about him. The text of this narration is also supported by some other narrations, such as; when ‘Uthmān ordered that all other Qur’āns be burned, Ibn Mas‘ūd refused to hand over his copy and said: “I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah seventy Surah when Zayd was still a child, must I now forsake what I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah? (Ibid.)” This narration is sound according to Sheikh Aḥmad Shākir (Aḥmad bin Muhammad, 1995).

Due to this fact, many of the variant readings having sound chain of narration were failed to be recorded in the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. Hence, following three probabilities can be deduced about the authentically narrated readings of the *Qurra’* companions;

- a) Those were abrogated in *Arḍa Akhīra*.
- b) Those might be among those explanatory notes of the Holy Text by Prophet Muhammad PBUH that were erroneously written by a few companions within the actual text of Qur’ān considering them a part of the Quran.
- c) Those may belong to such *Aḥruf* that were authentically transmitted from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) but, they were not mentioned in orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* by the compliers due to any possible reason.

To us, if we come across any authentically narrated recitation of the senior *Qurra’* companions that seems contrary to the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* and there is no proof of theirs being from the second category, then, it is better to consider them from the third category instead of the first one. This view is also supported by some narrations, arguments, proofs and the sayings of the predecessor. According to few narrations, Caliph ‘Umar RA was used to recite some of those readings that are not found in the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin al-Aswad narrated on the authority of his father that his father prayed behind ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb RA and he recited ‘*Ghayr al-maghḍūb ‘alayhim wa ghayr al-ḍālīn*’ (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002). According to Dr. Muḥib al-Dīn Wā‘iz this narration is correct (Wā‘iz, 2002). Another tradition narrates that ‘Umar RA recited Surah Āl-‘Imrān in the *Fajr* prayer and recited ‘*Allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa l-ḥayy al-qayyām*’ (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002). This narration is *Ḥasan* as evaluated by Dr. Muḥib al-Dīn Wā‘iz. According to another narration quoted below, Ibn ‘Abbās RA recited in evening prayer ‘*Idhā jā ‘a fatḥullāhi wa l-naṣr*’ (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002). The *Sand* (Chain of narrators) of this narration is *Ḥasan* (Wā‘iz, 2002). It is mentioned in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; the companions of ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd came to Abū Dardā’, (and before they arrived at his home), he looked for them and found them. Then he asked them: “Who among you can recite (Qur’ān) as ‘Abdullāh recites it” They replied, “All of us” He asked, “Who among you knows it by heart?” They pointed at ‘Alqama. Then he asked ‘Alqama. “How did you hear Ibn Mas‘ūd reciting Surah al-Layl (The Night)?” ‘Alqama recited: ‘By the male and the female.’ Abū al-Dardā’ said, “I testify that I heard me Prophet reciting it likewise, but these people want me to recite it: -- ‘And by Him Who created male and female’ but by Allah, I will not follow them (Bukhārī, 2007).”

This fact is also a known fact that the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* was agreed upon by all of the Companions. The only difference was about the continuance recitation of those *Aḥruf* that were not assembled in the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. Otherwise, the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* in itself was a complete orthography of the Holy Quran, even without those *Aḥruf* that were missed of mentioning. This notion is also justified according to the following saying of the Messenger of Allah PBUH; it was narrated that Ubayy said: “I had no confusion in my mind from that time I embraced Islam, except when I recited a verse and another man recited it differently. I said: ‘The Messenger of Allah SAW taught me this.’ And the other man said: ‘The Messenger of Allah SAW taught me too.’ So I went to the Prophet SAW and said: ‘O Prophet of Allah, did you not teach me such and such a verse’ He said: ‘Yes.’”

The other man said: ‘Did you not teach me such and such a verse?’ He said: ‘Yes. Gabriel and Mīkāʾīl, peace be upon them, came to me, and Gabriel sat on my right and Mīkāʾīl on my left. Gabriel, peace be upon him, said: ‘Recite the Qurʾān with one way of recitation.’ Mīkāʾīl said: ‘Teach him more, teach him more- until there were seven modes of recitation, each of which is good and sound’ (Nasāʾī, 2007).” This might be the reason that ‘Uthmān RA remained restricted to those of the *Sabʿa Aḥruf* that were available with the companions of Medina and its close proximity instead to collect all of them which were settled down in major cities of Muslims Caliphate. In an authentic narration Ibrāhīm al-Nakhī said that during the compilation of *Uthmānic Muṣḥaf*, the *Muṣḥaf* of Syrian and *Baṣrian* had presented to ‘Uthmān RA whereas the *Muṣḥaf* of the people of *Kūfa* had not submitted to him. So, the standard copy of the *Muṣḥaf* for *Kūfa* city was prepared in the light of variant readings of ‘Abdullāh bin Masʿūd reported verbally (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 2002). This narration is classed as authentic by Ibn Ḥajar ‘Asqalānī (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH).

Dr. Ibrāhīm bin Saʿīd al-Dawssarī has said that jurists of the *Salaf* and the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* were not comprehensive of all variant readings (Dawssarī, 2013). Similarly, Sheikh Ḥamd bin ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥamd has the same opinion (Ḥamd bin ‘Abdullāh, 2013). Imām Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī (d. 444/1053) has said that the best justification for the authentic variant readings that were not included in the *Muṣḥaf* of *Uthmān*, is the explanation of *Salaf* that codices of *Uthmān* were one of the *Aḥruf*. The second *ḥaraf* is the reading of ‘Abdullāh bin Masʿūd and Abū al-Dardā’ ‘By the male and the female’. And all these *Aḥruf* are right (Zarkashī, 1990). On the contrary Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī himself is of the opinion that *Uthmānic Muṣḥaf* includes all *Aḥruf* (Dānī, 1408 AH). Makkī bin Abī Ṭālib (d. 437/1045) has said that if the reading of ‘Abdullāh bin Masʿūd would be in accordance with *Uthmānic* orthography than we will read it whether we will neither read nor deny this (Ḥamawī, 1983). Abū Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām (d. 224/838) has reported the view of scholars that they consider the authentic reading of companions that were not included in the *Uthmānic orthography* such as of the readings that *Uthmānic* codex comprises (Qāsim bin Sallām, 1995). Imām Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728-1328) has also reported that majority of the *sala f* and Muslim jurists believe that *Uthmānic Muṣḥaf* comprehends only one *Ḥaraf* (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005)

7. Ruling about the Recitation of the Authentically Transmitted Readings That Were Not Included in the Orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*

Imām Ibn Taymiyya says that there is difference of opinion among the scholars about the recitation of the authentically transmitted readings of the Holy Qurʾān that were not included in the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. He also added, that it is difficult to decide that whether such readings would be regarded as Qurʾān or not. He writes; “There are two different opinions attributed to Imām Mālik (d. 179/795) and Imām Aḥmad (d. 241/855) regarding variant readings of the companions that have a sound chain and are consistent with Arabic but does not correspond with the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. According to a verdict of these scholars it is allowed to recite such readings during offering prayers while the second verdict describes that it is not permissible. The first judgment is based on the reason of act of the companions while the other is opinion of majority of the scholars (Ibid.)” To him, the recitation of such readings in prayer is correct provided the reader knows that they are transmitted through an authentic chain of narration. Another of his writings says; “who believe in the authenticity of readings of al-Aʿmash or Yaʿqūb bin Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī such as ten famous readings, it is allowed to him to recite these in his prayer (Ibid.)” He also wrote; “this dispute that ten famous readings of the holy Qurʾān are whole of *Sabʿa Aḥruf* or some of them, was initiated by later scholars whereas the former scholars had not any disagreement in this issue (Ibid.)”

According to him, the real basis of transmission of the Holy Qur'ān is memorization and not that the inscription (Ibid.). So if, any of the readings of the Holy Qur'ān is authentically transmitted through a companion of the Messenger of Allah PBUH that will not be a *shādhah* (divergent) reading (Ibid.).

One possible reason of this view may be that, during the preparation the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*, emphasis was on investigating *Talaqqī* (directly learn of the recitation) of a *Qārī* of the Holy Quran. In order to meet this requirement some rules were designed to prove that either the companion really had directly learnt the reading from the Messenger of Allah PBUH. So if a reading is non-existent in the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* but, the facts prove that the companion had directly learnt it from the Messenger of Allah PBUH, then, it will also be considered as appropriate as a recitation present in the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*.

An objection that can be raised to this view may that the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* were not merely prepared keeping in view the rule of *Talaqqī* but *Talaqqī* according to *Arḍa Akhīra*.

This can be answered likewise that the reading of Ibn Mas'ūd was in accordance with the *Arḍa Akhīra* as supported by companions like Ibn 'Abbās. This can also be generalized about all famous *Qurrā'* companions that their readings would most likely on the pattern of the *Arḍa Akhīra*. Thus, if any such reading which is not found in the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* but transmitted authentically by the *Qurrā'* companions, its recitation will be considered as valid, as that of the the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751-1350) has the view that the prayer with such kind of readings is correct (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1991). 'Allāma Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) and 'Alī bin Sulaymān al-Mardāwī (d. 885/1480) have the same viewpoint as Ibn al-Qayyim (Mardāwī, 1419 AH). Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223) has attributed this say to Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (Ibn Qudāma, 1968). Shiekh Muhammad bin Ṣālih al-'Uthaymīn (d. 2001) says such readings as valid but it will not be practiced in public places in order to avoid any kind of aggression ('Uthaymīn, 1428 AH).

The view that the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* didn't included all of the *Aḥruf* may give rise to an objection that, either some part of the Holy Qur'ān was not preserved during the compilation of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*. Then, what does it mean by the verse "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'ān and indeed, We will be its guardian? (Qur'ān, 15: 9)." Answer to this is that not only the Holy Qur'ān was preserved but, even the variant readings of the *Arḍa Akhīra* were also preserved carefully. According to a general view of *Qurrā'* all of them were preserved in the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* but, we are of the opinion that except those, some readings were also preserved in other books of Ḥadīth or authentic narrations of the Companions and their followers. In fact the preservation of the Holy Qur'ān means that, the whole of the Qur'ān will be preserved by the collective efforts of the *Umma* and not whole of it by each and every individual of the *Umma*. If seen rationally, neither all of us exactly know to read the Holy Qur'ān according to the famous reading of *Ḥafṣ*, nor, everyone knows each one of the readings other than that of the *Ḥafṣ*. And *Ḥafṣ 'an 'Aṣim* is the narration of Ḥafṣ bin Sulaymān al-Kūfī (d. 180/796) of the Qur'ānic reading of 'Aṣim bin Abū al-Nujūd al-Kūfī (d. 127/744) from Abū'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī from 'Uthmān bin 'Affān and 'Alī bin Abī Tālib and Zayd bin Thābit and Ubayy bin Ka'b from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Similarly, some of the *Qurrā'* are proficient of two *Qirā'āt*, some of *Sab'ā Qirā'āt* (Seven famous variant readings of the Qur'ān by seven *Imāms* and their fourteen transmitters), some know *Ashra Ṣuḡhrā* (Ten famous variant readings of the Qur'ān by ten *Imāms* and their twenty transmitters), and some are expert in *Ashra Kubrā* (Ten famous variant readings of the Qur'ān by ten *Imāms* and their eighty *Rawīs* transmitters). So, some of them may contain one part of the different *Aḥruf* and some may have the other part. Some scholars may object that the recitation of the readings other than the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* was not practiced persistently. It is replied that similar has been the case with any of the other readings. The recitations of other readings also remain limited to a special number of teachers and the taught in every era.

It is also a fact that there are also some readings among the *Sab'ā Ashra Qirā'āt* that were not included in any of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥifs*, e.g. word *Ṣirāṭ* is written with the letter *Ṣād* in all of the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥifs* while the *Qurrā'* has also been transmitting it with the letter *Sīn* continuously (Sha'bān, 1422 AH). Other examples are of the words *Muṣayṭir* and *Biḍānīn*, that were written with the letters *Ṣād* and *Ḍād* respectively, while, these words are also transmitted with the letters *Sīn* and *Zā'*. That is why, in Pakistan and some other countries, small letter *Sīn* is written on top of the *Ṣād*, while writing the word *Muṣayṭir*. Another fact is that the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥifs* is also transmitted through *Khābr Wāḥid* (A Ḥadīth which is narrated by people whose number does not reach that of the *Mutawātir*) through the experts of the science of Qur'ān like, Imām Dānī (d. 444/1053), Imām Sulaymān bin Najāh (d. 496/1103), and Imām Ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 316/929) etc.

So, if we find any reading of a companion which authentically transmitted but different from that of the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*, then, it will be disagreement of a *Khabr Wāḥid* with a *Khabr Wāḥid* and not that of a *Mutawātir* (A Ḥadīth which is reported by such a large number of people that they cannot be expected to agree upon a lie, all of them together) with *Khabr Wāḥid*. It is also important to mention that, the whole of the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* is not agreed upon but, there is also disagreement among the Scholars about some of the words of it. Due to this, the scholars have derived rules of preference regarding the difference of orthography in some of the words of *Muṣḥaf al-Madīna* i.e. the authentic copy of the Holy Qurʾān printed by King Fahad Complex Medina for Printing of the Holy Qurʾān.

Keening in view the opinions of the *Qurrāʾ*, it is suggested that the following rules should be followed during the recitation in the prayers;

- 1) Recitation should be transmitted authentically and known among the *Qurrāʾ*.
- 2) It should be in accordance with any one of the orthography of the *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif*.
- 3) It should be in conformity with rules of Arabic language and grammar (Jazarī, 2006).

8. Conclusion

In the light of above discussion, it is concluded that, in case of any of the authentically reported readings of the Holy Qurʾān contrary to the *Uthmānic* orthography, the recitation of the reading in accordance with *Uthmānic Maṣāḥif* would be given preference over the others readings and people will be bound to recite the Holy Qurʾān according to these codices. But this restriction will be imposed on the administrative grounds as precautionary measures to avoid any kind of social chaos, anarchy and confusion and not on the basis of any supposed *Ijmāʿ* (consensus) or *Sharīʿa* reasons.

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