

The Relationship of Quranic Qiraat and Sunnah

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Abstract:

Quranic Mutawatir (Authentic) Qiraat (readings, recitations) and Sunnah (prophetic tradition) were both delivered by prophet Mohammed peace be upon him. This paper was conducted to show that the prophetic tradition is the source of Mutawatir Quranic Qira'at to correct the misbelief that Qiraat may have been originated from other sources. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to show the relationship between Quranic Qira'at and prophetic tradition on the one hand and the extent of this relationship on the other. The research takes an analytical approach by tracking the texts whose interpretation leads to this judgement. The research shows that the relationship between Quranic Qira'at and prophetic traditions is perfectly clear since they were both delivered by prophet Mohammed peace be upon him.

Keywords: relationship, prophetic tradition, Mutawitir, Qira'at.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anything that has one source must have one single system. Therefore, Quranic Qiraat and prophetic traditions have one single source as they were revealed from the Almighty Allah to prophet Mohammed who did not utter but revelations from Allah. This suggests that there is a robust connection between Qiraat and prophetic traditions. Although they have different sounds and recitations, Quranic Qiraat end up to one single source. If we track narration of prophetic traditions, we will find them all end up to prophet Mohammed no matter how multiple these narrations are.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is important to define some concepts associated with this research; these include the Quran, the

prophetic tradition and Qira'at.

2.1 QURAN

Linguistically, the Quran implies collection; Quran in Arabic means to collect. To read the Quran is to pronounce it as a whole. The Quran was called as such because it consists of various Suras (chapters) which are linked together. For instance, the Quran combines "stories, commandments, threats, verses, chapters together; to read the Quran is to recite it" [1]. Conventionally, the Quran is defined as the Speech of Allaah, sent down to Muhammad, which people use as a means to worship Allaah through its recital [2].

2.2 QIRAAT

Linguistically, Qiraat can be defined in the same way as Quran since the plural of Qira'ah (reading) is Qira'at (readings). Conventionally, Qiraat is defined as

pronouncing the words of the Quran, and attributing each Qiraah (reading) to its narrator [3], This definition implies that Quran is inclusive of all the words including those in which there is a disagreement in its reading.

2.3 THE PROPHETIC TRADITION

Linguistically, Sunnah is defined as the flow and continuity of something with ease [4]. It can also mean the method, biography, rulings, destination. Moreover, it is also referred to as the beliefs and speech and actions of the Caliphs of the prophet [5]. However, Sunnah is conventionally defined differently by different scholars and disciplines. Scholars of Fiqh (Jurisprudence) have their definition of Sunnah which varies from those definitions of Hadith scholars and Creed scholars. In this paper, I follow the definition of the general norms which define Sunnah as “the methodology used in religion with no obligation.” [6].

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QIRAAT AND SUNHAH

Qiraat are closely connected with the science of Hadith. If we examine the efforts spent by Muhaditheen (Scholars of Hadith) in the science of Qiraat with regards to text and tracking of attribution, we can find that such efforts clearly indicate the correspondence between these two sciences. A case in point is the book authored by Imam Abu Omer, Hafs Ibn Omer Al-Duri entitled “A book on the Qiraat of the Prophet”, which was edited by Hikmat BasheerYaseen. (the book consists of 222 pages published in 1988, Maktabat Al-Dar, Al- Madinah Al-Munaurah). One of the aims of this book is to direct Qiraat Shathah (i.e. non-authentic Qiraat). The author suggests that non-authentic Qiraat are Arabian but they do not fulfil one of the agreed requirements to qualify Qiraat as authentic. These requirements include the agreement with aspects of Arabic grammar; corresponds with Ottoman calligraphy and being authentic in terms of attribution. If a particular Qiraah does not fulfil any of these requirements, it will be liable for being critiqued as non-authentic.

Due to the wide spread of

Islam and the expansion of Islamic territories one the one hand and the fact that companions of the prophet (being the people who heard hadith from the prophet) dispersed widely in different counties for teaching people religious matters and that many of them died, the accuracy of narration reduced. Therefore, it was necessary to write Hadith and keep records of its collections. Thus, Muahddithun (Hadith scholars) started to write the prophetic hadith paying meticulous attention to its attribution and text. To ensure authenticity, some Hadith scholars such as Bukhari and Muslim. Did not narrate except those prophetic hadith on which there is a unanimous agreement amongst people of the accuracy of Hadith being narrated. However, it should be born in mind that authentic Hadiths are not only those which are available in Al-Sahihain (the authentic books of Bukhari and Muslim) as there are hundreds of thousands of Haiths which are available in other sources. In his Book, Imam Nisabori, for instance, narrated Haiths that he sees as authentic (based on the requirement set by Bukhari and Muslim) although they have not been mentioned in Sahihain (Bukhari and Muslim books).Therefore, anyone who tracks Qiraat and their attribution to the prophet will find that prophetic tradition is closely connected with the Quran and Qiraat because prophetic Hadith, the Quran and Qiraat are all pure revelations from the Almighty Allah to prophet Mohammed peace be upon him. This can be further discussed in the following paragraphs. All Qiraat were revealed by the Almighty Allah to the prophet Mohammed peace be upon him and no one should argue on this no matter what knowledge he has. This indicates that there is strong connection between Qiraat and Sunnah. Anyone researching books of prophetic Hadiths will find that Qiraat are closely related with the prophetic traditions. Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him said that Jibreel used to recite the Quran to him once a year and before he died he recited it twice [7]. Ibn Syreen narrated that Obaidah said that the Qiraah (reading, recitation) that was recited by Jibreel during prophet Mohammed’s final

year was the normal Qiraah (reading) that people read today.” Thus, the companions of the prophet heard the Qiraat from prophet Mohammed peace be upon him and the Tabi'een (Followers i.e. the generation of Muslims that came after the Companions) heard these Qiraat from the companions of the prophet and these Qiraat were then heard one generation to another until we heard them today.

Therefore, the 10 authentic Qiraat being recited currently are consistent with the ones that were recited by Jibreel to prophet Mohammed [8]. In addition, it was narrated in prophetic Haith that Omer ibn Al-Khattab may Allah be pleased with him once disagreed with Hisham ibn Hakeem (another companion) may Allah be pleased with him with regards to the pronunciation of some sounds in Surah Al-Furqan (a chapter in the Quraan) and they referred the matter to prophet Mohammed peace be upon him. The prophet asked each one to recite and they recited differently. The prophet praised each recitation saying that “it has been revealed thus” and then said “this Qur'an has been revealed in seven Ahruf. You can read it in any of them you find easy from among them” [9].

Furthermore, Alqamah (a companion of the prophet) said that I entered upon some companions of the prophet including Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. Abu al-Dard'a heard of their arrival and came to meet them. He asked: Is there anyone amongst you who can read? We replied: Yes. He then asked: Who is the most competent reader? They pointed to me. He then said: Read. Therefore, I read. He said: Is this how you heard it read from the mouth of your companion? I said: Yes. He then said: And I too heard it read like that from the mouth of the prophet and these people deny it [10], This happened following the collection of the Quran into one single book. Therefore, this Qiraah was considered as non- authentic because it does not correspond with the Ottoman calligraphy [11].

4. CONCLUSION

This research attempted to find out the relationship between Qiraat and Sunnah and the findings revealed the following:

- There is a close relationship between Qiraat and Hadith since the time of the prophet peace be upon him
- Qiraat can never be disintegrated with prophetic tradition, and he who argues otherwise is not logical.
- Qiraat and prophetic traditions have the same source i.e. prophet Mohammed peace be upon him

Lastly, the researcher recommends those who are in Qiraat and researchers generally to read deeply in Hadith sciences to direct the Qiraat according the prophetic Hadith and therefore it can be made clear to Muslims how Qiraat are strongly connected with Haith science.

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