

The Importance Of Tajweed In The Recitation Of The Glorious Qur'an: Emphasizing Its Uniqueness As A Channel Of Communication Between Creator And Creations.

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Abstract: *It is vital to introduce this chapter by shedding light on the meaning of Al-Tajweed, its position in the Shari'ah, its significance and basic components. Thereafter, an outline would be made on the statement of the research paper, justification for embarking on the research, aims and objectives of tajweed among the Muslim Ummah. What the Qur'an presents to Muslims is neither the Islamization of life nor the absolute separation of religion from life. Separating religion from the state is essential, but it does not mean relegating religion to the background of social life. The Qur'an as a mode of communication between God and man teaches us something more beyond 'law' and 'politics' in the narrow sense of the two terms. It teaches us that the literal interpretation means that we lock the Word of God in the moment of its historical annunciation. Put differently, we are taught to limit the meaning of the Qur'an to the first phase of its historical construction, whereas we have to be aware of the other phase in order to grasp the dynamics, according to which the Qur'an has been able to form and shape the life of Muslims.1 (William A. G. 1993) . Awareness of the essential characteristic of the religious language in general could protect us from being totally immersed in its indoctrinated atmosphere and thus lose our human identity. On the other hand, we have to be aware that our human identity is not autonomous, or completely dissociated from other forms of life on earth as well as in the whole universe. Our human identity is divine as much as the Divine identity is humanised by our perception. The Qur'anic model I have just briefly tried to present is well presented in the philosophical mystical system of the great Andalusian Sufi Muhyî al-Dîn Ibn `Arabî (d. 638/1240,) especially in his well-known concept of the Divine Imagination versus the human imagination. There is, unfortunately, neither time nor space to elaborate on this.*

Keywords: *Ulum Al-Qur'an, Tajweed, Significance, Position, Learning.*

I. Introduction

Many Islamic Scholars have highlighted the meaning of Al Tajweed literally and technically. The word Tajweed is derived from the Arabic root Jawwada, which means to make well, to improve or to make good.' it also means to enable, to make possible or to bring forth what is better.² As a technical term Tajweed means to make good or to better the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an by giving each letter it's right with regards to the correct way of pronunciation. This would only be possible by taking into consideration the origins of pronunciation of Arabic letters and safeguarding the rules of recitation on combination of letters such as clear pronunciation (Izhr), assimilation (Idgham and substitution (Iqlab). Tajweed also means a mode of recitation of medium speed. This definition could serve as an explanation to a verse in the Qur'an where Allah (S.W.T.) commands Muslims to recite the Qur'an in a slow measured and rhythmic tone.

Scholars of Tajweed categorized the discipline into two parts, namely theoretical and practical. The theoretical aspect implies acquisition of knowledge of the rules of proper recitation of the Qur'an from reliable written sources. While the practical aspect implies the application of the acquired theoretical knowledge for practical recitation of the Glorious Qur'an based on any of the various modes of recitations which were obtained from the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and transmitted to us by the reciters (Qurrâ, among the Sahâbah (R.A.) and the Tabi 'ûn (R.A). It should be realized that a combination of theoretical and practical aspects of Tajweed is compulsory for any Muslim who seeks Allah's pleasure whenever he recites the Glorious Qur'an.

Acquiring theoretical knowledge of Tajweed alone without putting it into practice would render it useless. This is because the purpose of acquiring the knowledge is to work with it.

Al-Tajweed is one of the three branches of the 'Ulum al-Qira'ah, namely al-Tajweed (correct and good pronunciation of letters), Qirâ 'at (knowledge of various readings and knowledge on the modes or speeds of recitation such as Hadr (normal talking speed), Tarteel slow speed) Tahqiq (slow speed with great care for the purpose of teaching and learning) and Tadwir (a speed between slow and normal).

The Postion Of Al-Tajwid In Shari'ah

One of the famous scholars of Al-Tajweed, Imuin Al-Jazr.& stated that acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge of Tajweed is mandatory (Wajib) on every Muslim man and woman for the recitation of the Qur'an.⁸ Thus, whoever does not recite the Qur'an with Tajweed is liable to commit a sin. Allah (S.W.T.) commands Muslims to recite the Glorious Qur'an where He says:-
Meaning "... read ye. therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you ..

While commenting on this portion of the above quoted verse of the Qur'an Abdullah Yusuf 'Au Stated that recitation of the Qur'an is meritoriously equivalent to Salāt (prayer) and other forms of obligation religious devotions in Islam.^{1°} The Prophet (P. B. U. H.) recited the Qur'an with Tajweed in the presence of Angel Jibril (A.S.). The Sahābah (R.A.) learnt recitation of the Qur'an in turn from the prophet (P. B. U. H.) as part of Sunnah of their daily practice. in view of these evidences it could be ascertained that Al-Tajweed Is an individual obligation (fird ayn,) on every Muslim and a Sunna of the Prophet (P. B. U. H.). On the other hand specialization in the knowledge of Al-Tajweed for the purpose of teaching it to others is classified asfard Kifayah (collective obligation) which some people could undertake in order to suffice others and represent the entire Muslim Community."

Significance Of 'Ilm Al-Tajwid

'Ilm al-Tajweed is significant in effecting recitation of the Qur'an as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). This is irrespective of whether the reciter is an Arab and masters Arabic language or not. It is a universal knowledge in theory and practice. Thus it could be compared with any of the contemporary science. For instance in the formula of addition in mathematics $1+1=2$. Wherever you are the answer is always 2, it will never be 3 or 5. Likewise in ilm al Tajweed the rules of Izhār Idgham and Iqlab on combinations of letters of the Qur'an are the same anywhere.

The Prophet (P.B.U.I-L) was reported to have said in a Hadith that "he is not one of us, he who does not recite the Qur'an in a pleasant tone"² Recitation of the Qur'an in a pleasant tone could only be possible by application of the knowledge of Al-Tajweed. There are many Prophetic traditions which promise multiple rewards for recitation of the Qur'an. Among such Ahadih are.

"Whoever read a letter (Hart) of the Qur'an (the Book of Allah) he has 10 rewards".

"Whoever is engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an,

understands its meanings and teaches its sciences, he is best among thent"

"the best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."

Knowledge of al-Tajweed is necessary in order to safeguard a reciter of the Qur'an from committing mistakes. Such mistakes could in some cases tantamount to changing the meanings of Qur'anic verses and / or committing a sin instead of getting rewards from Allah (S.W.T)'

Basic Components Of 'Ilm Al-Tajwid.

As a discipline in 'Ulum al-Qira'ah (sciences of recitation) the principal aspects of concern in 'Jim al-Tajwid are correct pronunciation of Arabic letters in the Qur'an and the correct length and emphasis given to vowel signs under different circumstances and combinations. An overview on the scope of contemporary and earlier literature on 'Jim al Tajweed would reveal that books on the discipline emphasize the under listed which could be seen as it's basic components.

Origins of pronunciation of Arabic letters (Makharij al-Khuruf). There are differences of opinion among scholars on the number of origins of 'etters. Imām Al-Jazri, Khalil Ibn Ahinad and some scholars maintained that there are seventeen (17) origins of pronunciation while other scholars like Imām al-Shatibiy maintained that there are sixteen (16) origins. Qutrab, Al-Jarmi and Ibn Ziyad on the other hand state only fourteen (14) origins. The first view that stated 17 is the most popular and accepted opinion.' These are the places of origin of pronunciation of all Arabic letters. On this opinion Imām Al-Jazri stated in his book the Muqaddimah that:"

The places of articulation of letters are 17 — and whoever has obtained knowledge would select such a number".

There are five (5) places that are organs of speech in the human body from where all the seventeen places of articulation of letters emerged. These are:

- a) The throat - (Al-Halq)
- b) The tongue - (Al-lisan)
- c) The two lips - (Al-shafatayn)

- d) The nostril — (nose) - (Al-Khaishu)
- e) The chest or thoracic cavity - (Al-Jawfa)

Each of these places has one or more other places of origin. For

instance al-jawf has only one origin where the letters of prolongation (maddah) which are Alif, wāw and Yā' (ا, و, ي) are pronounced. On the

other hand the throat (halq) has 3 origins which are the upper, middle and lower portions from where different letters such as Ha 'u, Alif and Jim (ح, ا, ج) are pronounced.

2- The forms of pronunciation of letters (St-al-Khiiruj), this means the quality or description of how to pronounce Arabic letters from their origins. There are two groups of forms of pronunciation of letters. The first group are those which are independent without opposites. These include whistling (Al-Safir) Shaking the voice (Qalqalah), easiness (Al-liyn), tilting (Al-inhiraf), light pronunciation (Al-tarqiq), spreading (Al-tafasshi) and prolongation (Al-Istitalah).

The second group are those that have their opposites as follows:

Form opposite

Lowering the voice Outward pronunciation

(Al-Hams,) (Al-Jahr,)

Emphasis in pronunciation Softening of pronunciation

(Al-Shiddah) (Al-Rikhawali,)

Raising the tongue Lowering the tongue

(Al-Isti 'la) (Al-Istidl,)

Attachment Separation

(Al-Jtbāq) ('Al-Infitāh,)

Sharpness of the tongue Complete usage of the tongue

(Al-Idhlaq,) (Al-Ithmat,)

3-

Signs and styles to be observed while reciting the Qur'an, such as how to start the recitation, where a waqf (pause) is either preferred, necessary or compulsory. Where to make a full-stop, where there should be no full-stop and where it is preferable to make it. Also how to continue with the recitation in a situation where the reciter stops for taking a breath at a place where there should be no pause or pull-stop before the end of a verse) or where to make prostration of recitation.

4- General rules which are applicable in all modes of recitations, such as Al-Izhār, Jdghrn, Iqlāb silencing (Ikhfā,), and prolongation (Al-Maddah,).

5- Specific rules on some letters and sign. These include among others:(a) Rules on the letter "M" with sukūn (Mini-al-Sākinah) ()

(b) Rules on the letter "N" with sukūn (Nūn-al-Sākinah) ()

(c) Rules on the letters "N" and "M" with double signs (Nun and M ifl I cii- MusiiczdudciIi) ()

(d) Rules on the definite article "Al" (Al-al-Mu 'rifah) (J) The sun letter "U" (Al-al-Shamsifyah) (J)

The moon letter "L" (Al-at-Qainariyah) (j,J)

(e) Rules on the letter "Lam" which is in a verb (lam — al-Fi 'ii and Lam combined with affl (Lain Alij).

(f) Rules on the letter "a" which could not stand on its own (Al-hainzah a?- Wasl) and the "a" which could stand on its own (Al-Hamzah — al-Qat'i), (). These are also called dependent and independent Han'zzah:

(g) Rules on the vowel sign (o) Al — Sukūn ().

(h) Rules on the letter "h" for affiliation (Ha' al Kināyah) (e.g.)

(i) Two similar letters (Mithlain), neighbouring letters (Mutaqarribain), distant letters (Mutajānisain) and far away letters (Ivliitaha 'idain).

j) Independent (Al — Maqtu,,), and dependent (Al-Mawsuel,):

Letters.

(k) (Al-Hadhāf) and (Al - Ithbat).

Rules on the letter "R" (Rā)

The Importance Of Tajweed

Listening to the Qur'an being recited correctly is enough to soften even the hardest of hearts and Muslims and non-Muslims alike find it a deeply moving experience even if they do not understand what is being said. We feel this even more in Ramadaan when we are in the tajweeh prayers and we can really feel the difference if we go to a masjid where the tajweed rules of Qur'an recitation are not being observed as they should. Every single Muslim has to recite Qur'an in Salaah but many of us do not realise that reciting the Qur'an correctly, observing the rules of recitation is not an advanced science for expert reciters alone, rather it is an obligation upon each and every one of us whenever we recite the Qur'an.

What is Tajweed?

The word tajweed linguistically means 'proficiency' or 'doing something well'. It comes from the same root letters as the word 'Jayyid' in Arabic (meaning 'good'): Jeem, Waw and Daal. When applied to the Qur'an, it means giving every letter of the Qur'an its rights and dues of characteristics when we recite the Qur'an and observing the rules that apply to those letters in different situations. We give the letters their rights by observing the essential characteristics of each letter that never leave it. And we give them their dues by observing the characteristics of each letter that are present in them some of the time and not present at other times.

The Qur'an was revealed with tajweed rules applied to it. In other words, when the angel Jibreel (alaihis salaam) recited the words of Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) he recited them in a certain way and he showed the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) the ways in which it was permissible to recite the Qur'an. So it is upon us to observe those rules so that we recite it in the way it was revealed.

At the time of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) there was no need for people to study tajweed because they talked with what is now known as tajweed so it was natural for them. When the Arabs started mixing with the non-Arabs as Islam spread, mistakes in Qur'an recitation started appearing, so the scholars had to record the rules. Now, because the everyday Arabic that Arabs speak has changed so much from the Classical Arabic with which the Qur'an was revealed, even Arabs have to study to/jweed.

The Quran is the word of Allah, and its every syllable is from Allah. Its recitation must be taken very seriously. The purpose of the Science of tajweed in essence is to make the reciter proficient in reciting the Qur'an, observing the correct pronunciation of every letter with the rulings and characteristics which apply to each letter, without any exaggeration or deficiency. And so through this the reciter can recite the Qur'an upon the way of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) who received it from Jibreel who received it from Allah (subhanahu wa ta'aala) in the Classical Arabic dialect that it came down in.

Arabic letters each have a makhraj - an exit or articulation point - in the mouth or throat from which they originate and they also each have sifaat - attributes, or characteristics - particular to them. Knowing the makhraj and sifaat of each letter is an important part of Tajweed. Sometimes two letters have very similar exits which makes mixing them up easy. So if a person does not know the attributes of each letter there is a danger that he will change the meaning of the words in Qur'an recitation. Observing the rules of tajweed in reciting protects the reciter from making mistakes in reciting the Qur'an.

The ruling of reading with tajweed Muhammad bin Al-Jazaree the great Qur'an and Hadeeth scholar of the 9th Century (Hun) says in his famous poem detailing the rules of tajweed:

And applying tajweed is an issue of absolute necessity,

Whoever doesn't apply tajweed to the Qur'an, then a sinner is he."

Sheikh Zakariaa Al-Ansari [died in 926 H.] said in explanation of this verse in his book:

Sharh al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyaa;

"It is required to observe all of the Arabic rules in that which changes it and ruins the meaning" So he regarded it as an obligation to keep away from the major mistakes in reciting the Qur'an.

The scholars have divided the types of mistakes one might fall into when reciting the Qur'an into two types:

1. Clear mistakes: which usually change obvious things and change the meaning.
2. Unobvious (hidden) mistakes: for which one may need to study tajweed rules.

And the majority of scholars agree that applying the tajweed rules of Qur'an such that the Clear Mistakes are avoided is an individual obligation (Fard 'Ayn) upon every Muslim who has memorised part of or all of the Qur'an. As for applying all of the rules of tajweed and avoiding the unobvious mistakes then it is (Fard Kifaayah) upon the Muslim ummah. That is, there must be some students of knowledge who have knowledge of that. This is because the Quran was revealed with the tajweed rules applied to it and the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) recited it back to Jibreel in that way and the Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) read it in that way, so it is an established Sunnah.

The Clear mistakes must be avoided by all and to avoid them one must memorise and read attentively and have knowledge of some basic aspects of tajweed. If a person falls into the clear mistakes, this is considered a sin and *tim Taymiyyah* even regarded it undesirable for a student of knowledge (i.e. someone who knows tajweed) to pray behind a person who makes clear mistakes in their *salat/h*. As for the unobvious mistakes, then the ruling on them is lighter and the recitation of a person falling into this type of mistake is regarded as lacking in completeness but prayer behind such a person is sound.

The List below shows what type of mistakes fall under each category.

Clear mistakes:

Mistakes in words which are clear and conspicuous, usually changing the meaning. Mistakes related to correct pronunciation of letters so that letters are not mixed up. Scholars and the ordinary Muslims should avoid these.

Examples of Clear mistakes:

Changing one letter into another, or a short vowel (*harakah*) into another, (changing *Fat hah* into *Damma* or the letter *Qaaf* into *Kaafetc*)

Not observing the elongations (*Madd*) at all. Reciting them quickly as if there is no *madd/so* that they turn into the length of a vowel.

Making a *madd* letter out of a normal *harakah*.

Stopping or starting at an incorrect place so that the meaning is spoilt. Like stopping at '*ilaaha*' (There is no-God), without completing *Illallaah* (except Allah).

Unobvious mistakes:

Mistakes which are to do with perfecting pronunciation and are not obvious. Known only those who have studied *taf weed* rules or experts in this field. Ordinary Muslims may not know these or perceive these as mistakes.

Examples of Unobvious mistakes:

- Not being totally exact with the elongation of letters: (making the *madd* shorter or longer by 1/2 or even 1/4 degree etc.)

- Not observing the attributes of each letter perfectly: (Slightly rolling the *Raa'*, exaggerating the *N'* sound in *Noon* etc.)

- Not observing the rules with which to pronounce letters when they are next to each other (like not merging certain letters that should be merged (*idghaam*) and not clearly pronouncing those which should be clearly pronounced (*idh-haar*) etc.)

- Making light letters sound heavy and heavy letters sound light (Except if by doing this you change a letter into another; in this case it would be an obvious mistake).

And of the proofs that the scholars bring to show the obligation of *tajweed* and that it is an established *sunnah* is that Allah says in the Qur'an, the meaning of which is:

And recite the Quran (aloud) in a (slow and melodious) style (*tarteela*)' (Surah *Muzzammil*, aayah 4).

Ali ibn Abi Talib (radi Allahu 'anhu) said in the explanation of this aayah:

"at-Tarteel is *tajweed* of the letters and knowing where to stop (correctly)".

And of the proofs also is that Allah says in the Qur'an, the meaning of which is:

Those who we have given the Book to, give it its right in recitation (recite it as it should be recited)' (Surah *al-Baqarah*, aayah 121).

And of the rights of reciting correctly is reciting it the way it was revealed. There are various *ahadeeth* also showing us the importance of *tafweed*.

Umm Salamah was asked about the recitation of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and she described it as a recitation 'clearly-distinguished letter by letter'. Sa'eed bin Mansoor relates in his *Sunan* that a man was reciting the Qur'an to Abdullah bin Mas'ood and he recited;

"*Innamas sadaqaatu lii fuqara-i wal masaakeen*", so Ibn mas'ood said: "This was not how the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) recited it to me" So the man asked, "How did he read it to you oh *Aba Abdir-Rahman*?" So he said "*Lil Fuqaraaaa-i wal masaakeen*", he elongated the word *Fuqaraa* and the knowledge of the different lengths of elongation (*mudood*) is also from the rules of *tafweed*

Reciting the Qur'an melodiously

1. The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) used-to recite the Qur'an in slow, measured, rhythmic tones as Allah had instructed him, not hurriedly, but rather "he would recite a swab in such slow rhythmic tones that it would be longer than it would seem possible."

2. He would stop at the end of each aayah.

3. He commanded people to recite in a beautiful voice in a pleasant melodious tone. He said "Beautify the Qur'an with your voices [for a fine voice increases the Qur'an in beauty]" and he said

4. "He who does not recite the Qur'an in a pleasant tone is not of us." Unfortunately all too often we find people reciting the Qur'an quickly and without changing their tone and without any feeling.
5. We should put all our efforts into reciting the Qur'an with as much feeling as we can! Have you ever prayed behind an Imam who read with feeling? Well the Prophet (sallallahu alaihiwa sallam) said "Truly the one who has one of the finest voices among the people for reciting the Qur'an is the one whom you think fears Allah when you hear him recite."
6. And once when the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) complimented Abu Moosaa alAsh'ari on the beauty of his recitation, Abu Moosaa said "Had I known you were there, I would have made my voice more pleasant and emotional for you."

Let us remember, that the Qur'an is the word of Allah. In it we find exhortations, warnings, glad tidings, parables, stories of the past, commands and prohibitions. Aayaat to make us think, reflect, cry, fear, hope, love, fall down in prostration! How can we recite all of this without feeling!? When we recite an aayah of Qur'an we should imagine that we are trying to feel and convey the full message behind that aayah. Perhaps some of us don't feel confident. I believe that this lack of confidence comes partly from not knowing the rules of Tajweed correctly and so fearing that we will make mistakes and partly from not understanding the meaning of what we are reciting. So let's work hard to remove these two obstacles by learning to recite and working towards learning Arabic.

Helpful Tips Towards Learning Tajweed

You must find a Qur'an teacher who has studied tajweed to listen to your recitation and correct you. Tajweed cannot merely be learnt from books, because the movements of your mouth as well as the sounds are important and only a teacher can correct you and make sure

you are applying the rules correctly. Sometimes local Mosques will run classes. Qur'an recitation is a science which was passed down generation by generation through teachers not just books, with a direct line to the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)

Find a book containing the rules of tajweed and learn each rule little by little, applying it as you go along with the help of your teacher. There are many concise Arabic books and in English there are some books as well as tapes to help. Look for books with some drawings showing you how to pronounce each letter.

Listen to Qur'an tapes of reciters who recite very clearly, at a medium or slow speed (like Sheikh Hudhaify or Sheikh Mahmud Khaleel Hosary) and try and notice them applying the different rules of tajweed. Repeat after them while trying to apply the rules you've learnt. Try to copy their tone and melody as well and see how it changes as the meaning of what they're reciting changes.

- Tajweed website: There is an excellent tajweed website I came across in English which details many aspects of tajweed in a very clear way including a Question and Answer section: <http://www.abouttajweed.com>
- Tajweed Mus-haf You can get a new Mus-haf (copy of the Qur'an), called Mus-haf atTaf weed, which has the rules of tajweed incorporated in the text of the Qur'an in colour coding This is very helpful as it prompts you as you go along. There is also a computer program you can buy with it which highlights tajweed rules with recitation.
- Tajweed Poem: If you know Arabic you could memorise Ibn al-Jazaree's poem which contains all the rules of tajweed. You can get the poem on tape sung as a nasheed in Arab countries.

You might find memorising the rules easy in this way.

Try and apply the rules you learn to the surahs you have already memorised and don't become lazy about reciting correctly. You might have to revise the surahs by looking back at them.

Practice and repetition. Will make perfect insha Allah: As Ibn al-Jazaree says in his poem about acquiring Tajweed:

'And there is no obstacle between it (learning Tajweed) and leaving it, Except that a person must exercise his mouth with it!'

May Allah help us all to give His Book its right when we recite it and make reciting it more beloved to our tongues than anything else. Aameen.

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