

Imam al-Dani's Scholarly Contributions to the Science of Qur'anic Recitation (Tajwid)

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Abstract

This study aims to introduce Imam al-Dani and to shed light on his extensive scholarly contributions across various fields of Arabic and Islamic sciences, with particular emphasis on his specialization in the Qur'an and its sciences. The paper is structured into an introduction, two main sections, and a conclusion. The first section provides a concise biographical overview of Imam al-Dani. The second section examines his contributions to the science of Tajwid, highlighting both his independent works dedicated to Tajwid and his integration of Tajwid studies within broader scholarly writings. It is my earnest prayer that Allah accepts this endeavor and makes it sincerely for His sake, for He is the best of patrons and the best of helpers.

Keywords: Imam al-Dani's, Scholarly, Science of Qur'anic Recitation (Tajwid)

Introduction

Allah, the Almighty, has, throughout the ages, prepared devoted individuals who took it upon themselves to preserve and serve His Noble Book, dedicating their lives and sacrificing their most precious time for this cause. Among these eminent figures was the distinguished scholar, the master of the Qur'anic reciters, Imam al-Dānī may Allah have mercy on him. It is well known that Imam al-Dānī was born in the year 371 AH and passed away in 444 AH. As we are now in the year 1444 AH, a millennium has elapsed since his passing. Therefore, it is most fitting to convene symposia, forums, and conferences to commemorate the memory of this great figure, introduce his legacy, and highlight his abundant scholarly contributions. Imam al-Dānī excelled in various Arabic and Islamic sciences, though his primary focus and specialization were in the Qur'an and its sciences.

Accordingly, I deemed it appropriate to contribute this humble study, hoping to shed light on certain aspects of this esteemed Imam's life. I ask Allah for success and rectitude, for He is the best patron and supporter. This research is divided into an introduction, a preamble, two main sections, and a conclusion.

The Emergence of the Science of Tajweed

Before the fourth century AH, no book explicitly bore the term "Tajweed" in its title, nor was the term widely prevalent in the writings of scholars specializing in Qur'anic recitation. The discipline of Tajweed emerged approximately two centuries after the appearance of comprehensive works on Qur'anic readings and Arabic linguistics. Nevertheless, the subjects that later formed the core of Tajweed were discussed in earlier works.

For instance, the oldest extant book on Arabic grammar, *Al-Kitab* by Sībawayh, contains extensive discussions on articulation points, phonetic features, and related phonological phenomena. (Sibawayh, 1988).

The earliest extant comprehensive work on Qur'anic readings is *Kitāb al-Sab'ā* by Ibn Mujāhid which contains references to several topics that later became integral to Tajweed. By the end of the second and third centuries AH, the significant scientific advancements in Arabic linguistics and Qur'anic readings convinced scholars of the necessity to produce specialized works focusing on articulation, pronunciation, and phonetic phenomena. Thus, the fourth century witnessed the birth of a distinct discipline: the science of Tajweed. Several significant early contributions to Tajweed preceded the works of Imam al-Dānī including:

- The poem by Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī (d. 325 AH),
- *Al-Tanbīh 'ala al-Laḥn al-Jalī wa-l-Khafī* by al-Sa'īdī (d. c. 410 AH),
- *Al-Ri'āyah li-Tajwīd al-Qirā'ah* by Makki ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī (d. 437 AH).

Imam al-Dānī*His Name and Lineage*

He was 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Umar al-Umawī, their loyalists, al-Qurṭubī, widely known in his time as Abū al-Ṣayrafī and in ours as Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, attributed to his residence in Dāniyah. (Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1955; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, 1993; al-Dhahabī, *Ma'rifah*, 1997). Most historians have stated that Imam al-Dānī, may Allah have mercy on him, was born in Córdoba in the year 371 AH (al-Qiftī, 1982; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirah*, 1998; Ibn al-Jazarī, 1932).

His Scholarly Journeys

He began his pursuit of knowledge in 386 AH and traveled eastward in 397 AH. After a four-month stay in Qayrawān, he moved to Egypt in Shawwāl, where he remained for a year before performing the pilgrimage. He returned to al-Andalus in 399. He then departed for the frontier region (*al-thaghr*) in the year 403 AH, where he settled in *Saraqusta* for seven years, before returning to Córdoba and later settled in Dāniyah in 417 AH, where he remained until his death. (Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1955; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, 1993).

His Most Prominent Teachers

Among his most renowned teachers were 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ja'far ibn Khawāshī al-Fārisī, 'Alī ibn Khalaf ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Khāqān, Abū al-Faṭḥ Fāris ibn Aḥmad, and Abū al-Ḥasan Ṭāhir ibn Ghalbūn, from all of whom he studied various recitations (*qirā'āt*).

He heard *Kitāb al-Sab'ā* by Ibn Mujāhid from Abū Muslim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Kātib, through direct transmission, and he also studied ḥadīth from Abū Muslim, Aḥmad ibn Farās al-'Abqasī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Uthmān al-Zāhid, Ḥātim ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Bazzār, Aḥmad ibn Faṭḥ ibn al-Rassān, Muḥammad ibn Khalīfa ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār, Aḥmad ibn 'Umar ibn Maḥfūz

al-Jīzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Umar ibn al-Naḥḥās, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qābisī, Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Zamnīn, 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb ibn Munīr al-Miṣrī, and a large group of other scholars (Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1955; al-Dhahabī, 1997).

His Most Notable Students

Among those who studied under him were: Abu Bakr ibn al-Fasih, Abu al-Dhawwad Mufarrij, Abu al-Husayn Yahya ibn Abi Zayd, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Mufarrij, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Dash, Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn Najah, Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Mizahim, Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Mubashir, Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn Ibrahim, and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Ali, in addition to many others (al-Dhahabi, 1997; Ibn al-Jazari, 1932).

His Scholarly Status and Works

Abu 'Amr, may Allah have mercy on him, was among the leading scholars in the sciences of the Qur'an, its various recitations (riwāyāt), interpretations (tafsīr), meanings, modes of transmission, and grammatical analysis. He authored numerous valuable works in these fields, totaling approximately one hundred and twenty compositions, too many to list individually. Among his notable works are:

1. Jāmi' al-Bayān fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'
2. Tījāz al-Bayān fī Qirā'at Warsh
3. Al-Talkhīṣ fī Qirā'at Warsh
4. Al-Taysīr
5. Al-Muqni' fī Rasm al-Muṣḥaf
6. Al-Muḥṭawā fī al-Qirā'āt al-Shādhah
7. Al-Arjūzah fī Uṣūl al-Sunnah
8. Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā' wa-Akḥbāruhum
9. Kitāb al-Waqf wa-al-Ibtidā'

Praise by Scholars

His student, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Mughāmī said: "*Abū 'Amr al-Dānī was one whose supplications were answered and who adhered to the Mālikī school of law.*" (Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1955). Al-Dhahabī stated: "*The reciters have always acknowledged Abū 'Amr al-Dānī's excellence, precision, and mastery, and they rely heavily upon his transmissions regarding orthography, tajwīd, and variant readings.*" (Al-Dhahabī, 1993). Ibn al-Jazarī described him as: "*The teacher of teachers and the master of the masters of Qur'ānic reciters.*" (Ibn al-Jazarī, 1932).

His Death

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, may God have mercy on him, passed away in Dāniyah (Denia) on Monday, in the middle of Shawwāl in the year 444 AH. He was buried on the same day after the 'Aṣr prayer. The governor of Dāniyah walked before his bier, and a great multitude of people attended his funeral (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī 1993; Ibn al-Jazarī, 1932).

Al-Dānī's Contributions to the Science of Tajwīd

The contributions of Imām al-Dānī, as indicated by the available sources, are primarily manifested in the field of authorship. However, a careful examination of his biography his extensive travels, the large number of his teachers, and his profound mastery of Arabic sciences and the various readings of the Qur'an leads one to conclude that he must have also

made significant efforts in teaching and instructing Tajwīd, in addition to his writings. Nevertheless, the sources do not explicitly document this aspect of his work.

The Contributions of Imām al-Dānī to the Science of Tajwīd

As for Al-Dānī's contributions in the field of authorship related to the science of Tajwīd, they can be classified into two main directions:

The First Domain: Independent Works.

This refers to works that are exclusively devoted to the science of Tajwīd. Within this direction, there are two areas:

The First Area: General Works on Tajwīd. By this, I mean those works that were composed solely on Tajwīd, comprehensively covering its various topics. The Book *Al-Taḥdīd fī al-Itqān wa al-Tajwīd*. This work has been published, edited by Dr. Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamād, and printed at Al-Khulūd Press in Baghdad (1407 AH / 1988 CE). Its opening lines read:

"Praise be to Allah, the One who alone bestows blessings, the One singular in favors, Possessor of overwhelming might and enduring religion... To proceed: What has driven me to compose this work is what I have observed of the negligence of the reciters and Qur'ānic instructors of our time the proper articulation of recitation and the perfection of reading, as well as their abandonment of the practices enjoined by God Almighty and urged upon His nation by His Prophet ﷺ, and so on. The book "Al-Taḥdīd" is regarded as a principal reference for many scholars who authored works or composed poems on the science of Tajwīd, particularly in the articulation points and characteristics of letters. Its significance is further evidenced by the wide transmission and the abundance of extant manuscript copies.

Imam al-Ja'barī referred to it in his commentary *Kanz al-Ma'ānī* when discussing the prolongation (madd) of semi-vowel letters (ḥarfayn min ḥurūf al-līn) according to the transmission of Warsh, when followed by a hamzah, as in *shay'in* and *al-saw'i*. He stated: "Among those who explicitly affirmed the prolongation for the others is al-Dānī in his *Taḥdīd*, where he said: 'If the stopping point coincides with a hamzah, there is no disagreement regarding the increased prolongation (al-tamkīn).'" (al-Ja'barī, 2011).

Muqaddimah fī al-Tajwīd: Some researchers have mentioned this work and noted the existence of a manuscript copy preserved in certain collections (Brockelmann, *History*). However, the work itself has not yet been located or studied directly.

The Second Domain: Works on Specific Topics within the Science of Tajwīd

Kitāb Taqdīr al-Madd bi-l-Ḥurūf (The Measurement of Lengthening by Letters):

This work was mentioned by al-Muntūrī, who, in his commentary on *al-Durr al-Lawāmi'*, referred to it under the chapter on prolongation (*madd*). After citing the narration transmitted by Abū 'Amr in *Irshād al-Mutamasikīn* from Ḥamzah — where a man recited before him, excessively stretching the prolongation, and Ḥamzah reprimanded him, saying: "Do not do that! Do you not know that anything beyond natural curliness is kinky, anything beyond whiteness is leprosy, and anything beyond proper recitation is no recitation at all?" al-Muntūrī then commented: "al-Dānī stated in his *Kitāb Taqdīr al-Madd bi-l-Ḥurūf* after narrating this story: 'May Allah have mercy on him he meant that any extension beyond the

proper measure, and any deviation from the standard practice of the early generations (*salaf*) and the master reciters, is not considered part of authentic recitation, nor is it employed in performance, for it lacks authoritative precedent and is not sanctioned by any recognized *qāri'*." Al-Dānī himself referred to this work in his *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, although he titled it *Mas'alat Miqdār al-Madd 'an al-Qurrā'* (al-Dānī, 2007).

al-Baḥṭh al-Ma'rūf fī Makharij al-Ḥurūf: This work was mentioned by Dr. 'Abd al-Muḥaymin al-Ṭaḥḥān in his book *Abū 'Amr al-Dānī and His Work Jāmi' al-Bayān*, where he noted that it exists in manuscript form in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

al-Farq bayna al-Ḍād wa-l-Zā' fī Kitāb Allāh 'Azza wa-Jall wa-fī al-Mashhūr min al-Kalām: This book has been edited and published in several editions (Muḥsin, 1970; Aḥmad, 1990; al-Ḍāmin, 2007).

Its opening reads: *"All praise is due to Allah, the One worthy of praise, its Guardian, its Deserver, and its Rightful Recipient. May Allah send blessings upon Muḥammad, His Prophet, the Seal of His Messengers, His Chosen One among His creation, and upon his family, and grant them abundant peace. To proceed: Among the things that complete the knowledge of students of the Qur'ān and secure for them the name of mastery is the precision of recitation (tajwīd), which is attained by knowing the distinction between Ḍād and Zā' in the Book of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and by the proper usage of each in accordance with its articulation in the Arabic language.*

A poem (rajaz) on the articulation points and attributes of the letters: It was mentioned by Carl Brockelmann in his *History of Arabic Literature*, where he noted its existence in manuscript form at the National Library in Paris under catalog number 4.

The Book of Zā' Letters in the Noble Qur'an: This book was published with critical editing by Dr. Ali Hussein al-Bawwab. Its opening reads: *"The eminent scholar, Shaykh Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Uthmān, the Qur'ān reciter, jurist, and grammarian may Allah envelop him in His mercy said: Praise be to Allah, the Exalted, the All-Compelling... To proceed: I have abridged in this section the occurrences of the letter zā' specifically in the Book of Allah, the Exalted..."* From this introduction, it is evident that this work is distinct from his earlier treatise, *The Distinction between Ḍād and Zā'*

al-Sharḥ wa al-Tabyīn: This work addresses the topic of stopping (waqf) with *rūm* and *ishmām*. It was not listed in the published catalogue of al-Dānī's works; however, extensive references to it appear in the commentaries on *al-Durrar al-Lawāmi'*. Among those who cited it is al-Muntūrī in his commentary on *al-Durrar al-Lawāmi'*. He said in the chapter on stopping: *"Al-Dānī stated in 'al-Sharḥ wa al-Tabyīn': I was informed by a reciter that if the letter preceding the word to be stopped upon is a non-madd (non-lengthening) letter and is either nominative, genitive, or accusative, there is no disagreement among the reciters that one must indicate the stop with a gesture (rūm or ishmām); if someone stops without such an indication, it is impermissible, as it would result in combining two adjacent quiescent letters, which is not allowed.*

A Treatise on the Benefits of Articulation Points, Madd, Idghām, and Izhār: This work, referenced by Hikmat Bashīr (2002), focuses on the essential rulings and subtleties related to the articulation points (*makhārij*), *madd*, *idghām*, and *izhār* in Qur'ānic recitation

The Second Approach: The Integrative Approach

What is meant by this is the inclusion of knowledge of *tajwīd* within other works on *qirā'āt* and related disciplines. Among such works are:

1. The Poem Alerting to the Names of the Reciters, Narrators, Principles of Readings, and the Covenants of Faith concerning Tajwīd and Interpretations (al-Arjuzah al-Mnabbihah ala asma'al-Qura' wa arrwahwa osl al-Qiraat wa Akd addyanat bittajweed wa addlalat). This book has been published, edited by Muḥammad ibn Maqqān al-Jazā'irī. It opens with the words: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May Allah's blessings be upon our master and patron Muḥammad and upon his family. The Imām Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Uthmān al-Muqri', may Allah be pleased with him, said concerning the reciters and narrators, the principles of readings, and the covenants of faith..." (al-Dānī, 1999).

Among the *tajwīd* topics covered in this poem are:

- A discourse on tartīl.
- A discourse on ḥadr.
- A discourse on the idghām of the nūn sākinah and tanwīn.
- A discourse on izhār of nūn and tanwīn.
- A discourse on idghām al-ḥarfayn
- And other related topics

Commentary on the Poem of Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī concerning al-Qiraat and al-osol

This work was mentioned by al-Dānī himself in his book *Ījāz al-Bayān 'an Uṣūl Qirā'at Nāfi' ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān*, where he said: "Know that among what a reciter ought to avoid, by choice, is stopping where it would separate a governing word ('āmil) from what it governs (ma'mūl)...!". Then he continued: "We have explained this matter and illustrated it with examples sufficient for understanding its reality in the books of waqf and ibtidā' as well as in the Commentary on the Poem of Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī." He was also mentioned by Ibn al-Jazarī among the works authored by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī. In the biographical entry of Abū Muzāḥim Mūsā ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Khāqān—the composer of the aforementioned Rā'iyah poem Ibn al-Jazarī stated: "His Rā'iyah poem is well-known, and it was commented upon by the ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Amr" (Ibn al-Jazarī, 1932). This commentary has been published in two volumes, edited by Ghāzī ibn Binaydir al-'Umrī. The work is distinguished by being the first commentary on the first poetic composition in this field. Moreover, it encompasses significant discussions from the sciences of Qur'ānic readings (*qirā'āt*) and *tajwīd*, and contains rare and valuable insights scarcely found elsewhere. This work, he transmitted a substantial number of ḥadīths, reports, and statements related to the recitation of the Qur'ān, its virtues, the rulings governing its reading, accounts of the renowned reciters, and narrations pertaining to the rules of *tajwīd*. He elaborated on the majority if not all of the rulings of *tajwīd* with exceptional clarity and thoroughly substantiated the discussions therein. Moreover, the book is replete with rare benefits, unique insights, subtle observations, and remarkable points that are scarcely found in other works.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

1. The distinguished status of Imām Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī, his eminent scholarly rank, and his firm establishment in the sciences, as attested by leading authorities of earlier generations.
2. Al-Dānī’s broad intellectual culture, as evidenced by his abundant scholarly output and the diversity of its subjects.
3. Al-Dānī’s scholarly integrity, clearly demonstrated in his consistent attribution of merit to its rightful owners, his faithful transmission of reports, and his precise referencing of information to its original sources.

Recommendations

1. Compiling Imām al-Dānī’s preferred scholarly positions in the sciences of verification (‘ilm al-dirāyah), pausing and starting (waqf wa ibtidā’), orthography (rasm), and diacritical marking (ḍabt).
2. Collecting the errors of narrators and the corrections highlighted by al-Dānī in his various works.
3. Showcasing the efforts of scholars of Qur’ānic readings (‘ilm al-qirā’āt) across different fields, and shedding light on their biographies and scholarly journeys.

Through this brief overview of the life and works of Imām Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dānī may God have mercy on him—I have attempted, however modestly, to fulfill part of the duty of honoring and remembering this eminent ḥāfiẓ, the master of reciters and the leader of Qur’ān transmitters, especially on the occasion of the millennium of his passing.

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