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### The Script of the Qu'rān and the etiquettes of writing

A number of people, both past and present, have compiled separate works on this topic. Abū `Amr 'l-Dānī is among them. Abū 'l-`Abbās 'l-Marākishī compiled a work titled *'Unwān 'l-Dalīl fī marsūm khaṭ 'l-Tanzīl* in which he addressed the question of the script of the Quran and its differences with the rules of the Arabic script. He explained that the written form of the letters would vary because of variations in the meaning of their words. Hereunder I will, God willing, point to its objectives.

On the authority of his own chain of transmitters Ibn Ashtah in the work *'l-Masāʿif* quotes Ka`b 'l-Aḥbār as saying that: "The first person to compile an Arabic, a Syriac, and in fact, all scripts was Adam (s), three hundred years prior to his death. He wrote them in clay and then had them baked. When the earth was overcome by the Flood (those tablets were dispersed) and each community received its script which it then used for writing. Ismā`īl b. Ibrāhīm received the script of the Arabs."

He also quoted Ibn `Abbās, on the authority of `Ikrima, as saying: "The first to coin the Arabic script was Ismā`īl. He compiled the entire script, its shape and its logic, and then streamlined it without any spacing between the letters. His son thereafter inserted spaces between the letters. In other words, all the letters in the script were conjoined, without any spaces; then his sons, Humas`a and Qaizhar inserted spaces. He also reports on the authority of Sa`īd b. Jubair that Ibn `Abbas who said: "The first script that God sent down from the Heavens was that of the Arabic alphabet."

Ibn Fāris said: "We maintain that the script has divine origins because of God, Almighty's statement: `allama 'l-insān mā lam ya`lam"(96:2)<sup>1</sup> and "Nūn! wa 'l-qalam wa mā yasṭurūn"<sup>2</sup>(68:1) These letters are included in the names that God taught Adam.. Much has been reported about the letters of the alphabet (*abjad* letters) and the beginnings of writing, but this is not the place to discuss it. I have however, done so exhaustively in a separate work.

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<sup>1</sup>"(He) taught with a pen, taught man that which he knew not"

<sup>2</sup>"Nun! By the Pen and that which they write."

## Section

One rule in Arabic is that words be written using the alphabet, and that care be taken in beginning and ending with them. The grammarians have established principles and rules for this very purpose. The Qu'rān of Uthman has, in some cases, contradicted these principles and rules. Ashhab (b. `Abd 'l-`Aziz) said that on being asked if the Qu'rān may be written in the script that people recently compiled Mālik (b. Anas) replied: "No! It can only be written using the traditional script". This was reported by 'l-Dānī in the work *'l-Muqni`*. Ashhab went on to say that there was no objection on the part of the scholars to this.

In another place he said: "Mālik, when asked if the letters *waw* and *alif*, wherever found in the Scripture, may be changed, said: "No!" Abu `Amr said that this referred to that *waw* and *alif* which appears in words but is not pronounced. An example is the *waw* as it appears in the word "*'ulū*" Imam Aḥmad (b. Hanbal) said: "It is unlawful to contradict the standardized Mushaf (Uthman's version of the Scripture) in regard to the writing of the *waw*, the *yā'*, the *alif*, etc.

Baihaqī in the work, *Shu'b 'l-Imān* said: "Whoever writes the Scripture must follow the alphabet used in these other texts." He should neither contradict nor make the smallest change in what they have written. After all, they were more knowledgeable, more truthful in heart and mind, and more trustworthy than us. It thus, does not behoove us to think of ourselves as worthy of sitting in judgement of them.

Hereunder, I set out rules pertaining to: omitted letters, added letters, the use of the letter hamza, inverted letters, separated letters, and letters that allow two forms of recital, of which only one is written.

### Rule One: The Omission of letters

The alif is omitted in the following cases:

- i-When it is attached to the *ya'* of the vocative as in *Yā ayyuha 'l-Nās*; *Yā Adam*; *Yā 'l-bādī* ;and *Yā Rabb!*
- ii-When it is attached to the *ha'* of the premonitory particle as in *hā'ulā'ī*, and *hā 'antum*.
- iii-When it is attached to the pronoun *nā*, as in *anjainākum*, and *ātaināhu*.

To this category belong the words: *'ulā'ika*, *lākin*, and *tabāraka* together with their four subcategories. Also, the words *Allāh* and *Ilāh* wherever they appear. And the words 'l-

Raḥmān and subḥāna except in the verse: “subḥāna rabbī”<sup>3</sup>(17:93)

iv-After the letter lam as in: khalā'ifa, khilāfa rasūl Allāh, salām, ghulām, li'tlāf and yulāqu.

v-Between to lāms as in 'l-kalāla, 'l-Dalāla, khilāl 'l-Diyār, Lalladhī bi Bakka.

vi-In every name having more than three letters, as in Ibrāhīm, Sālīh, Mīkā'īl. This however, is not the case with Jalūt, Talūt, Hāmān, Ya'jūj, and Ma'jūj. Dāwūd is included herein because of the omission of its alif and Isrā'īl because of the omission of its yā'. Scholars differ with regard to the words Hārūt, Mārūt, and Qārūn.

vii-In every dual form of both verbs and nouns when not at the beginning or end of a word. Examples are: rajulān, yu'allimāni, 'ad'allānā, and 'in hādḥāne. An exception to this rule is the word yadāka in the verse "bimā qaddamat yadāka" (10:22)

viii-In all masculine as well as feminine, sound plurals, such as: allā'inūn and mulāqū rabbihim. Exceptions to this rule are the following: the word ṭāgūn in 'l-Dhāriyāt and 'l-Tūr; the words kirāman kātibīn (11:82) and raudāt in Shūra. The words āyāt li 'l-sā'ilīn, makr fī 'āyātina, and āyātuna bayyināt in Yūnus. Also excluded are words wherein the alif is followed by a hamza as in: 'l-sā'imīn wa 'l-sā'imāt, or by a shadda as in 'l-Dāllīn and 'l-sāffāt. A second alif in such a word will also be omitted, except for verse 12, sab`a samāwāt in *Fussilat*.

ix-In every plural that takes the *mafā'il* or some similar form. Examples are: 'l-masājid, masākin, 'l-yatāmā, 'l-Nasārā, 'l-masākīn, 'l-khabā'ith, 'l-malā'ika. Wherever the word khaṭāyāna appears the second alif will be omitted.

x-In every word depicting a number such as thalātha and thulātha. And the word sāḥir except at the end of *'l-Dhāriyāt*. If the word is in the dual however, then both its alifs are omitted. The *alif* of the following words, when in the indefinite form, will also be omitted: 'l-qiyāma, 'l-shaiṭān, sulṭān, ta`ālā, allātī, allā'ī, khāliq, `ālim, qādir. The words 'l-aśḥāb, 'l-anḥār and 'l-kitāb. This applies to the indefinite forms of these words as well, except in the following cases: "Li kulli ajal Kitāb", "Kitāb ma`lūm" "Kitāb rabbīka", in *Kahf*, and "Kitāb mubīn" in *'l-Naml*. Also omitted is the alif of the basmala, including the verse: “Bism Allāh majrehā”<sup>4</sup>(11:41), and the first letter of the imperative form of the verb

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<sup>3</sup>Say! Limitless in His Glory is my Lord!

<sup>4</sup> "In the name of God be its run"

*sa'ala.*

xi-In every word having two or three alifs together as in: Adam, ākhar, 'a'ashfaqtum, and 'a'andhartum. Also omitted is the alif in the word ra'ā except in the case of mā ra'ā, and wa laqad ra'ā as found in *'l-Najm*, and the word *'āl-'an* except in the verse: "fa man yastami' al'āna" <sup>5</sup>(72:9). And the two alifs of the word *'l-'aika* except in the chapters, 'l-Hijr and Qāf.

xii-The yā' of a defective noun having a nunation in the nominative and the accusative cases, as in the verse: "bāgh wa lā `ād" (173:2) The same is true in if such a word forms part of the vocative idāfa construction, except in the case of the verses: "Yā `ibādiya alladhīna asrafū" <sup>6</sup>(53:39) and "yā `ibādiya alladhīna āmanū"<sup>7</sup>, in *'l-'Ankabūt*. It is omitted even when not part of the vocative, except in the case of the verses: "wa qul li `ibādī" and "asri bi `ibādī, as found in Tāhā and Hāmim respectively. Also included is the verse: "fa 'udkhulī fī `ibādī wa udkhulī jannatī" <sup>8</sup> (89:29)

xiii-It is also omitted if it appears along with another yā' as in: waliyyin, 'l-ḥawāriyyīn and muttaki'īn. Exceptions to this rule are: `illiyyīn, wa yuhayyi', hayyi', 'l-makr 'l-sayyi', sayyi'at, 'l-sayyi'at, and af a'īna. Also included is the word yuḥyī, not singly, but when attached to a pronoun.

Xiv-The ya' is also omitted wherever the following words occur: 'atī`ūn, fa ittaqūn, khāfūn, fa irhabūn, fa arsilūn, fa`u`budūn except in , Yā Sīn, wa ikhsaunī except in 'l-Baqara; yakidūn except in fa kīdūnī jamī`an, fa`ittabī`ūnī except in Al `Imrān and Tāhā, fa lā tundhirūn, lā tasta`jilūn, lā takfurun, lā taqrabun, lā tukhzūn, lā tafd'āḥūn, yahdiyani, sayahdīn, kadhdhabūn, yaqtulūn, an yukadhdhibūn, wa`īd, 'l-jawār, bi 'l-wād, and 'l-muhtadūn, except in 'l-A`rāf.

xv-The waw when it appears twice is omitted as in lā yastawūn, fa'u, wa 'idh 'l-mau'ūdatu, ya'ūsa.

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<sup>5</sup>"Who now or ever tries to listen"

<sup>6</sup>"O! my servants (ya `ibādiya) who have been excessive. . ."

<sup>7</sup>"O! my servants (ya `ibādiya) who proclaim faith. . ."

<sup>8</sup>"Now therefore, enter into the ranks of my servants and enter my Paradise."

xvi-The lām which is incorporated (mudgham) is omitted as in 'l-lail, alladhī, illa, Allāh, allāhumma, alla`natu and its derivatives, 'l-lahwu, 'l-laghwu, 'l-lu'lu', 'l-lāt, 'l-lamam, 'l-lahab, 'l-laṭīf, and 'l-lawāma.

Section

### Omissions that do not follow this Rule

The alif is omitted from: mālik 'l-Mulk; dhurriyatan dī`āfan; murāghaman; khādī`uhum; akkālūn li 'l-suḥt; bāligh; li yujādilūkum; wa bāṭilun mā kānū ya`malūn in 'l-A`rāf and Hūd; 'l-mī`ād as in 'l-Anfāl; turāban, in 'l-Ra`d 'l-Naml, and `Amma, judhādhan, yusāri`ūna, ayyuha 'l-mu`minūn, yā ayyuha 'l-sāḥir, ayyuha 'l-thaqalān, ummi Mūsa fāriḡha, wa hal nujazī, man huwa kādhibun, li 'l-qāsiyāt, in 'l-Zumr, athāratin, `āhada alaihu Allāh, and wa lā kidhdhāba.

The yā' is omitted from: ibrahīm in Baqara, and wa 'l-dā`i idhā da`āni; wa man ittaba`ani, saufa yu'tī Allāh, wa qad hadān, nunjī 'l-mu'minīn, fa la tas'alni ma laisa, yauma ya'ti la takallamu, ḥatta tu'taunī mauthiqan, tufannidūn, 'l-muta`āl, matāb, ma'āb and `iqāb, in Ra`d, and Ghāfir; fihā `adhāb, ashraktumūnī min qabl, taqabbal du`ā'i, la'in akhkhartani, and yahdiyani. From *Kahf* the following five: 'in taranī, an yu'tiyanī, an tu`allimani, and nabghī. From Tāhā the ya' of the following verse is omitted: alla tattabi`anī. Also the following: wa 'l-bād, inna Allāha lahād, an yaḥd`urūn, rabbi 'irjī`ūn, wa la tukallimūn, yasqīn, yashfin, yuḥ'yīn, wād 'l-naml, 'atumiddūnani, fa mā ātāniya, tashhadūn, bi hād 'l-`umyī, ka 'l-jawāb, in yuridn 'l-Raḥmān, lā yunqidhūn, fa isma`ūn, laturdīn, sāl 'l-jaḥīm, 'l-talāq, 'l-tanād, tarjumūn, fa i`tazilūn, yunād 'l-munādi, li ya`budūn, tuṭ`imūn, yad`u 'l-dā`i twice in Qamar; yasri, akramani, ahānan, waliya dīn.

The waw is omitted in the following cases: wa yad`u 'l-Insān, wa yamḥu Allāh, in Shūra, yauma yad`u 'l-dā`i, sanad`u 'l-zabāniya. Marrakīshī said: The secret in omitting the waw in these four places is to illustrate the quickness of the act, the ease with which the subject will perform, and the severity of its occurrence on one who is so afflicted. And in the verse: "wa yad`u 'l-insān" the omission illustrates the fact that this supplication would be easy for man, who will hasten towards it as he hastens towards things that are good for him. In fact, man, in terms of his natural tendencies, is closer to evil than he is to good. In the verse: "wa yamḥu Allāh 'l-Bāṭil" the omission alludes to the speed with which evil disappears and shrinks. In the verse: "yad`u 'l-dā`i" the omission

alludes to the swiftness of the supplication as well as the response to the supplicants. And in the last verse, (sanad`u 'l-zabāniya) the omission alludes to the swiftness of the (reckoning), the quick response of the angels of Hell, and the severity of the strike (on those destined for hell).

## **Rule Two**

### **The Addition of Letters**

The alif has been added to the waw in plural nouns such as yā Banī Isrā'īl, mulāqū rabbihim, and 'ulū 'l-albāb as opposed to singular nouns such as la dhū `ilm. The exception to this however, are the words, 'l-riba, and in imru'un halaka. The alif is also added at the end of singular and plural nouns, in the nominative and the accusative cases, except in the case of jā'ūka, and bā'ū wherever they occur. Also excluded are `atau `utuwwan, fa 'in fā'u, wa alladhīna tabawwa'u 'l-dāra, `asa Allāhu an ya`fuwa `anhum in 'l-Nisā, and sa`au fi āyātīnā in Saba'.

After the inscribed hamza a waw is added as in tafta'u, mi'a, mi'atain, 'l-dhanūna, 'l-rasūla, 'l-sabīla, wa la taqūlanna li shay'in, la adhbāhannahu, la auda`ū lakum, 'a lā ila Allāh, la ila 'l-jahīm, lā tay'asū min rauḥ Allāh, innahū lā yay'asū, a fa lam yay'as.

An alif is inserted between the yā' and the jīm in jī'a, in 'l-Zumar and 'l-Fajr. The word ibn is always written with a hamza. A yā' is also added to naba' 'l-mursalīn, mala'ihī, mala'ihim, min ānā'i 'l-lail in Tāhā, min tilqā'i nafsī, min warā'i ḥijab in Shūra, 'itā'i dhi 'l-qurba in 'l-Naḥl, wa`duhū wa lākin in 'l-Rūm, bi ayyikum 'l-maftūn, banaināhā bi aid, afa'in māta, afa'in mitta. The waw is added to 'ulū and its derivatives and to sa'urīkum.

Murrākīshī said: "Just as these letters have been added to words such as jī'a, naba'i and the like to menace, show deference to, threaten and promise, so too, have they been added to the word bi aydin to glorify God's power through which He made the Heavens, which in terms of power, are without equal..

Kirmanī in the work 'l-`Ajā'ib said: "Prior to the advent of the Arabic script the shape of the faṭḥa was in the form of the alif, the d'amma in the form of the waw, and the kasra in the form of the yā'. Thus, because of their proximity to the era of the first form of writing words such as la auda`ū and so on are written with an alif. instead of the fatha. Also, 'itā'i dhi 'l-qurba is written with a yā' instead of a kasra and 'ulā'ika and so on are written with a waw instead of a d'amma.**Rule Three**

## The Hamza

The vowel-less hamza, which may appear at the beginning, the middle, or the end, will conform to the vowel of the letter preceding it. Thus: 'i'dhan, 'u'tumina, 'l-ba'sā', iqra', jī'nāka, hayyi', 'l-mu'tūn, and tasu'uhum. In the following cases, however, it is omitted: fa iddāra'tum, ri'yā', li 'l-ru'yā', shaṭ'ahū. It is also omitted after the fa' at the beginning of an imperative as in fa'tu, and after the waw as in wa'tamiru.

As for the vowelless hamza, if it appears at the beginning of a word, or is attached to supplementary letter then it is always written on the alif as in Ayyūb, 'idhā, 'ulu, s'aśrifu, fabi'ayyi, and sa'unzilu. Exceptions to this appear in the following places: 'a'innakum latashhadūna, and 'a'innakum la takfurūnā, and 'a'innakum lata'tūna in 'l-Naml and 'l-'Ankabūt, 'a'innā lamukhrajūnā, 'a'inna latāriku and 'a'inna lana in 'l-Shu'arā'. Also: 'a'idhā mitna, 'a'in dhukkirtum, 'a'ifkan, 'a'imma, li'alla, la'in, yauma'idhin, ḥīna'idhin are all written with a yā', except in qul 'a'unabbi'ukum, and hā'ulā'i when they are written with a waw.

If it appears in the middle of the word it will be placed on the letter that conforms to its vowel, for example sa'ala, su'ila, naqra'uhū. But this is not the case with jazā'uhu appearing in three places in Yusuf, and the words la'amlā'anna, 'imtala'ati, ishma'azzat and iṭma'annū. This rule also does not apply if the hamza has a fatha and the letter prior to it is given a kasra, or a damma. Also, where the hamza has a damma and the letter prior to it a kasra then it will be written in conformity to that letter. For example 'l-khāṭī'a, fu'ādaka, sanuqri'uka. If the previous letter is vowel-less, the hamza will be omitted, as in yus'al, lā taj'arū, except in the case of 'l-nash'a and mau'ila, both in 'l-Kahf.

As mentioned previously, if the hamza is preceded by an alif with a fatha then the letter resembling the hamza will be omitted because it has become attached to a letter identical to it. One example is the word abnā'anā. Also omitted is the alif in the word Qu'rānan as found in Yusuf and Zukhruf.

If the hamza with a damma or a kasra is preceded by an alif then it is not omitted as in ābā'ukum, ābā'ihim, except wa qāla auliyā'uhum, ilā auliyā'ihim in 'l-An`ām and auliyā'uhū in 'l-'Anfāl, and naḥnu auliyā'ukum in Fussilat.

As mentioned previously, when the hamza appears after a word that resembles it then it is omitted as in shana'ān, khāsi'īn, mustahzi'ūna. If it appears at the end then it

assumes the vowels of the letter preceding it as in sab'a, shaṭi'i, lu'lu'u. Exceptions are the following: tafta'u, yatafayya'u, 'atawakka'u, tazma'u, ma ya`ba'u, yabda'u, yunashsha'u, yadhra'u, naba'un, the first qāla 'l-mala'u in qad aflāḥa, and all three in 'l-Naml, jazā'ū in five places: twice in 'l-Mā'ida, in 'l-Zumr, 'l-Shūra, and 'l-Hashr, shurakā'u in 'l-An`ām, and 'l-Shūrā', ya'tīhim anbā'u in 'l-An`ām; `ulamā' banī, min `ibādī 'l-`ulamā'u, 'l-d`u`afā'u in Ibrahim and Ghafir, fī amwālina mā nashā'u, mā du`ā'u in Ghāfir, shufa`ā'u in 'l-Rūm, inna hādha lahuwa 'l-balā'u, balā'un mubīn in 'l-Dukhān, bura'ā'u minkum. In all the foregoing cases the hamza is written on the waw.

If the letter preceding it is vowel-less then the hamza is omitted as in mil'u 'l-'ard, dīf'un, shay'in, 'l-khab'u and mā'a. Farrā' has made the following omissions: latanū'u, wa an tabū'a, and 'l-sū'a. I however, maintain that these three ought not to be omitted because the alif after the waw is not in the form of the hamza, but is added to the waw of the verb.

## **Rule Four**

### **Substitution**

To show stress, the waw in the following cases substitutes for the alif: : "'l-śalāt, 'l-zakāt, 'l-ḥayāt, and 'l-ribā--except where these occur as part of the idāfa construction--'l-gadāt, mishkāt, 'l-najāt, and manāt.

A yā' substitutes for every alif that has been changed from it as in yatawāffakum. This occurs in both nouns as well as verbs, with or without an attached pronoun or a vowel. To this category belong yā ḥasrata and yā asafā, but not tatrā. Other examples are: kilta, hadānī, wa man `asānī, 'l-aqsa, aqsa 'l-madīna, man tawallāhu, ṭaghā 'l-mā'a, and sīmahum. Also excluded are words in which the alif is preceded by a yā' as in 'l-dunya, 'l-ḥawāya, except the word yaḥya in the form of a noun or a verb.

The following words will be written with a yā': ilā, `alā, 'annā meaning how, matā, balā, ḥatta. An exception is lada 'l-bāb. Triliteral words, both nouns and verbs, that end in a waw will be written with an alif as in 'l-śafā, shafā, `afā, mā zakā minkum, daḥāhā, talāhā, ṭaḥāhā, and saajā. The word d`uḥā wherever it appears is an exception to this rule.

The non stressed nūn of emphasis will be written with an alif as in lanasfa`an, yakūnan, and idhan. It will also be written with a nūn as in ka 'ayyin.

And the feminine hā' will be written except: in the case of raḥmat as appears in

the following chapters: Baqara, 'A`rāf, Hūd, Maryam, Rūm and Zukhruf; ni`mat as appears in Baqara, āl `Imran, Mā`ida, Ibrāhīm, Naḥl, Luqmān, Faṭir, and Tūr; sunnat as appears in Anfāl, Fāṭir, and for the second time in Ghāfir, imra'at when coupled with its partner, tammam kalimatu rabbika 'l-ḥusna, fa naj`al la`nat Allāh, wa 'l-khāmisata an la`nat Allāh; the word ma`siyat as appears Qad Sami`a, inna shajarat 'l-Zaqqūm, qurratu ayn, jannt na`īm, baqiyyatullahi, yā abati, allāt, mard`ātī, hayhāta, dhāta, ibnat, and fiṭrat.

## Rule Five

### Disjunctions and Conjunctions

The words 'an and lā will be conjoined except in the following ten cases: an lā aqūla and an lā taqūlu in A`rāf, an lā malja'a in Hūd, an lā ilāha, an lā ta`budū illa Allāh, in Aḥqāf, an lā tushrik in Hajj, an lā ta`budū in Yā Sīn, an lā ta`lū in Dukhkhān, an lā yushrikna in Mumtaḥina, and an lā yadkhulannā in Nūn.

The words min and mā will be conjoined except in min mā malakat in Nisā' and Rūm, min mā razaqnākum in Munāfiqūn, and min man, in all places. The following are also conjoined: `an and mā except in `an ma nuhū; in and mā with a kasra except in the case wa in ma nuriyannaka in Ra`d; in mā with a fatha in all cases; `an and man except in wa yasrifuhu `an man yashā' in Nūr, `an man tawalla in Najm; 'am and man except in the case am man yakūnū in Nisā', am man assasa, am man khalaqnā in Sāffāt, am man ya'ti āminan; in and lam with a kasra except fa in lam yastajībū in Qasas; the fi and mā except in the following eleven places: the second fī mā fa`alna in Baqara, li yabluwakum in Mā`ida and An`ām, qul lā ajidu, fī mā ishtahat in Anbiyā', fī mā afad'tum, fī mā hāhuna in Shu`arā', fī mā razaqnākum in Rūm, fī mā hum fīhi, fī mā kānū fīhi, both in Zumar, wa nunshi'akum fī mā lā ta`lamūn in Wāqī'a; the words innā and mā except in inna mā tū`aduna in An`ām; annā with a fatḥa and mā except in anna mā yad`ūna in Luqmān and Hajj; kullu and mā except kulla mā ruddū ila 'l-fitnati, and min kulli mā sa'altumūhu; bi'sa and mā except when attached to the letter lam, the words ni`imma, mahmā, rubbamā, ka'annamā, and way ka'anna.

The following words are disjoined: haithu and mā, an with a fatḥa and lām, an and lan except in Kahf and Qiyāma; ayna and mā except in fa aynamā tuwallū and ainamā yuwajjihhu. There is some dispute about aina mā takūnū and ainamā kuntum ta`budūna

in Shu`arā'. Also disjoined are ainamā thuqifū in Aḥzāb, likai lā except in āl `Imrān, Hajj, Haḍīd, and the second occurrence in 'Aḥzāb; Yauma hum, lāta ḥīna, and ibn umma except in Tāhā where the hamza is written on a waw, and the hamza of ibn is omitted to become yabna'umma.

## **Rule Six**

### **Where two Recitations exist and the Script Follows one of Them**

We mean hereby recitations other than those that are deemed rare. To them belong the following: māliki yaum 'l-dīn, yukhādī`ūna, wā`adna, 'l-sā`īqa, 'l-riyāḥ, tufādūhum, tazāharūn, wa lā tuqātilūhum, laula daf`u, fariḥānun, and ṭa'iran. And in āl `Imrān and Mā`ida the word muḍ`ā`afa. Other words include: `aqadat aimānakum, 'l-'awwalīn, lāmastum, qāsiyatan, qiyāman, khaṭī`atikum, ṭā'if, ḥāsha li Allāhī, wa saya'lamu 'l-kuffār, tazāwaru, zakiyatan, falā tuṣāḥibnī, la ittakhadhta, mihād, wa ḥarām `alā qaryat, innā Allāh yudāfi`u, sukārā, wa mā hum bi sukārā, 'l-mudghata `izāma, fa kasauna 'l-`izāma, sirāja, bal iddāraka, wa lā tusa``ir, rabbanā bā`id, asāwiratan; all of the above are written without the alif—their recitation however, is both with and without the alif.

The following whilst written only with a ta' are nonetheless recited both in the plural as well as the singular forms: ghayābāt 'l-jubb, 'unzila `alaihi āyāt, in `Ankabūt, thamarāt min akmāmihā in Fuṣṣilat, jimālat, fahum `ala bayyinat, and wa hum fi 'l-ghurufāt āminūn. Also: taqiyyatan with a ya', li'ahaba with an alif, yaqdī 'l-ḥāqq without an alif in yaqdī, 'itūnī zubura 'l-ḥadīd with an alif only, nunji 'l-mu'minīn with a single nūn only, 'l-sīrāt wherever it appears, baṣṭa in 'A`raf, 'l-muṣaiṭirūn and muṣaiṭir written with a ṣād only and not with any other letter. Sometimes a word is written such that it allows both recitations as in the word fākihūn whose alif is dropped because it is a sound plural.

## **Rule Six on the Script of the Qu'rān**

### **That which is Written in Accordance with the Rare Recitations**

In this category are the verses “awa kullamā `āhadū” and “inna 'l-baqara tashābaha `alainā”. As for the *bā'* in the verse “mā baqiya min 'l-ribā” it is written with a ḍamma and the waw is vowelless. Also in this category are: “falaqātalūkum”; innamā ṭā'iruhum; ṭā'iruhū fi `unuqihī'; tusaqit; sāmīran; wa fiṣāluhū fi `āmain; `alaihim thiyāb sundusin khudrin; khitāmuhū misk; and fa udkhulī fi `ibādī.

## **Section**

As for the variant readings, those that which are known for additions that are not written, as in: *auṣā, wa wassā, tajrī taḥtahā, wa min taḥtihā, sayaqūlūna Allah, lillāhi, wa mā `amilat aydihim, wa mā `amilathu*, All of this is found in the Imam's copies of the Qu'rān.

### **Note**

Because the shapes of the letters are widely recognized the script of the opening letters of the chapters follow such patterns rather than the sounds they emit. The opening letters *ḥāmīm* and *`ainsīnqāf* are separated, but not *aliflāmmīmsād* and *kāfhāyā`ainsād*: this is consonant with the previous six chapters that begin with similar letters.

### **Section: The Etiquettes of Writing**

Embellishing the script of the Qu'rān, writing legibly, clearly, and meticulously is recommended. Appending it and writing it in miniature form is disapproved. Abū `Uбайд in his work *'l-Fadā'il* reports that `Umar took exception to a man bearing a Qu'rān scripted in fine writing and he therefore beat him. He then said: "Magnify the Book of God." And `Umar was gratified to see a Qu'rān in bold script. `Abd 'l-Razzāq reports that `Alī disapproved of the Qu'rān being miniaturized. Abū `Uбайд reports that he also disapproved of the Qu'rān being written on something small. He along with Baihaqī report in the work *Shu`ūb 'l-Imān* that Abū Hakīmat 'l-`Abdī as having said: "Ali passed by me while I was writing the Qu'rān and said: "Make your script legible" So I sharpened my pen somewhat and began writing He then said: "Yes! Illuminate it thus just as God has." Baihaqī quotes a mauqūf tradition quoting `Alī as having said: "A man was pardoned on account of the great pride he took in writing 'In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'

On the authority of a *marfū'* tradition as narrated by Abān, Abū Nu`aim reports in the work *Tarīkh Isfahān* as does Ibn Ashtah in *'l-Masāḥif* that Anas b. Mālik said: "God will forgive one who embellishes the statement 'In the Name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful". Ibn Ashtah also reports that `Umar b. `Abd 'l-`Azīz wrote to his officials saying: "When one of you writes Bism Allāh 'l-Raḥmān 'l-Raḥīm then let him lengthen the word 'l-Raḥmān. And he reports that Zaid b. Thābit disliked that Bism Allāh 'l-Raḥmān 'l-Raḥīm be written with the letter *sīn* not legible. He also reports from Yazīd b. Abū

Habīb that when writing to ‘Umar `Amr b. ‘I-`As’s scribe neglected to write the letter sin in the *basmala*. `Umar then beat him. On being asked why the Prince of the Faithful beat him, he said: “on account of the *sīn!*” He also reports that Ibn Sīrīn disliked lengthening the *bā’* and attaching it to the *mīm* without the *sīn*.

Ibn Abu Dāwūd reports in the work *‘I-Masāʿil* that Ibn Sīrīn disapproved of lengthening the script of the Qu’rān. When asked why, the narrator replied that it was a kind of imperfection. Using impure material to write is also prohibited. Using gold, is praiseworthy, as pointed out by Ghazzālī. But Abū `Ubaid reports that Ibn `Abbās and Abū Dharr Ghifārī and Abū Dardā’ disliked this practice. He also reports that a copy of the Qur’ān embellished with gold came under Ibn Mas`ūd’s scrutiny, and he said: “The best way of embellishing the Qur’ān is through recitation with conviction. Our Companions have said: “Inscribing it on walls and fences is reprehensible, but doing so on roofs is even more so.” This is because it is walked upon. Abū `Ubaid quotes `Umar b. `Abd ‘I-`Azīz as saying: “Do not write the Qur’ān in places that are trodden upon.

What of using a script other than Arabic? Zarakashī has said: “I have not seen any discussion by the scholars on this topic. But it seems to be acceptable”, he said, “because one who is able to recite it in Arabic will do even better thereby.” But in keeping with the rule prohibiting its recitation in any language other than Arabic, this too, would seem to be prohibited. This is further supported by their statement: “The pen is one of two forms of speaking!” And the Arabs knew no written script other than Arabic. And the Almighty has said: “In the plain Arabic language.” (42:195)

### **Section**

Ibn Abu Dāwūd reports from Ibrāhīm ‘I-Taimī that `Abd Allāh (ibn `Abbās) said: “The Qur’ān should be penned in none other than the Mudarī dialect.” Ibn Abū Dāwūd said: “This is of the most noble dialects (of the Arabic language)”

### **Note**

Opinions differ on who first inserted the diacritical marks and the desinential inflections in the Qu’rān. Some say that the first to do so was Abū ‘I-Aswad ‘I-Du’alī under the directive of `Abd ‘I-Malik b. Marwān, others that it was Hasan ‘I-Basrī and Yaḥya b. Ya`mar, and others still, that it was Naṣr b. `Asim ‘I-Laithī.

As for the *hamza* (the character designating the glottal stop), the *shadda* (the doubling sign over the consonant), the *ru'm* (the slurring of the final vowel) and the *ishmām* (a sound between the *kasra* and the *d'amma*) *Khalīl* (the grammarian) is said to have added them.

According to *Qatāda*: "They first introduced the dots; then verses in groups of five were demarcated followed by groups of ten. Another scholar maintained: "The first innovation in the script of the *Qu'rān* was the insertion of diacritical dots at the end of the verse, followed by the dots of the opening, and the closing statements.

*Yāḥya* b. *Abū Kathīr*, in a report narrated by *Ibn Abū Dāwūd* said: "The Companions new nothing of the innovations that were introduced in the *Qu'rān* except for the three dots that appear at the head of the verses.

*Abu `Ubaid* and others report *Ibn Mas`ūd* as having said: "Maintain the purity of the *Qu'rān*; do not adulterate it with anything.' It is reported that *Nakha`ī* disliked putting diacritical marks on the *Qu'rān*; *Ibn Sirīn* disliked putting diacritical marks, opening, and closing markers in the *Qu'rān*; and *Ibn Mas`ūd* and *Mujāhid* disliked the insertion of the word *`ushr* into the *Qur`ān*

*Ibn Abū Dāwūd* reports that *Nakha`ī* disliked: inserting the word *`ushr*, and the opening markers into the *Qur`ān*, reducing its size, and inserting the names of the chapters. Once, on being presented with a copy of the *Qu'rān* with its chapter names inserted he said: "Erase it, for *Ibn Mas`ūd* disliked this." It is also reported that *Abu `l-`Aliya* disliked inserting additional sentences into the *Qur`ān*, and inserting chapter names, and opening and closing markers.

*Mālik* said: "Inserting diacritical marks in copies of the *Qu'rān* that are used to teach children is unobjectionable, but not those recited by their mothers. *Hulaimī* said: In light of the statement: "maintain the purity of the *Qu'rān*" it is undesirable to insert the *a`shar*, the *akhmas*, the chapter names and the verse numbers in the *Qur`ān*. But diacritical marks are acceptable, for they have no form that may create the impression that material extraneous to the *Qu'rān* are part thereof. Their purpose is merely to point to the structure of the recited text, which is why its insertion is unobjectionable in the case of one who is in need of it.

*Baihaqī* said: "One of the etiquettes of the *Qu'rān* is that it be emboldened, and

thus be written clearly in the best possible script. Its letters should not be written small or in half size, or mixed with other script such as the numbers of the verses, the signs of prostration, the markers indicating one tenth, the pauses, the variant recitations, or the commentaries of the verses. Ibn Abū Dāwūd quotes Hasan and Ibn Sīrīn as having said: "The insertion of the diacritical marks in the Quran is all right"

He also reports that Rabī`a b. Abū `Abd 'l-Raḥmān said: "Inserting the vowel points is all right" Nawawī said: "Inserting the vowel signs and the diacritical marks is in fact a praiseworthy act for it acts as a protection from wrongful and distorted recitations." Ibn Mujāhid said: "It is important not to insert diacritical marks except on letters that allow them. Dānī said: "I will not consent to writing the diacritical marks in black, because this distorts the text of the Qu'rān, nor will I permit putting the variant readings together in a single copy of the Qu'rān in multi colors. This I believe is the greatest form of corrupting the text and the script. I would prefer that the diacritical marks, the diptote (tanwīn), the doubling sign (tashdīd), the vowel-less sign (sukūn), and the sign of elongation (madd) be written in red, whilst the *hamza* be written in yellow."

From among our Companions, Jurjānī in the work *'l-Shāfi*, had this to say: "Writing the commentary of the words of the Qu'rān between the lines is a reprehensible act."

### **Notice**

During the first era the vowels were indicated by way of dots: thus, the fatḥa was indicated by way of a dot on the beginning of the letter, the d'amma by a dot on the end of the letter, and the kasra by a dot below the beginning of the letter. This was the method adopted by Dānī. The form that is popular today, that of assigning diacritical marks taken from the words themselves, was introduced by Khalīl the grammarian. It is clearer, by far, and adopted universally. In this case the fatha is represented by a long mark over the letter, the kasra is the same but below the letter, and the d'amma is a miniature waw above the letter, while the diptote is the doubled form of the same signs. If however, the letter belonged to the *izhār* category, appearing that is, in front of a throat letter (ḥā, kha, ha, ḥamza, `ain and ghain) then the sign shall be placed above the two words; otherwise, in between. The omitted alif (alif maḥdhūfa) and its antecedent (mubdal minhu) shall be written in red while the omitted ḥamza (ḥamza maḥdhūfa) shall

be written alone, and not on any letter, and it shall be written in red as well. On the nun and the diptote the sign of inversion (ʿ alama ʿl-iqlāb) the 'mīm' shall also be written in red. The hamza that is in front of a throat letter shall remain vowel-less, but it will be pronounced when incorporated (*idghām*) and silent (*ikhfāʿ*). The hamza shall accept the sukun sign where necessary, it shall be silent when incorporated, it shall be doubled thereafter, except in the case of the letter ǰāʾ appearing in front of the letter tāʾ. In the latter case, a sukūn will be placed upon it. An example, is the word *farraṭtu* (39:56) The madd letter must not be lengthened more than the equivalent of a vowel.

### **Notice**

Harbī in the work *Gharīb ʿl-Hadīth* said: "Ibn Masʿūd's statement that the Quʾrān be left pure could mean one of two things: firstly, that the purity of its recitation be maintained, not be mixed with something else, and secondly, that its script, be free from diacritical marks and the *taʿshīr* signs.

Baihaqī said: "Most likely, he meant that it not be mixed up with other scriptures, for apart from the Quran, these are all received from the Jews and the Christians; and they cannot be trusted with them.

### **Section**

Ibn Abū Dāwūd reports in the work *ʿl-Masāʿif* that Ibn ʿAbbās objected to the practice of taking a fee for writing the Quʾrān. He reports something similar from Ayyūb ʿl-Sikhtiyānī, whilst from Ibn ʿUmar and Ibn Masʿūd he reports that they disliked the sale and purchase of the Quʾrān, and the taking of a fee for its writing. But he reports that Mujāhid, Ibn ʿl-Musayyib, and Hasan found the practice acceptable. He also reports that on being asked about selling copies of the Qurʾān Saʿīd b. Jubair replied "It is acceptable, for they take compensation only for their efforts." He also reports that on being asked about trading in the Qurʾān Ibn ʿl-Hanafiyya replied: "It is acceptable for only sheaves of paper are being sold." He also quotes ʿAbd Allāh b. Shaqīq as stating that the Companions of the Messenger of God were very strictly against trading in the Qurʾān. He also quotes Nakhaʿī as saying: "The Quʾrān is neither sold nor inherited." He also reports that (Saʿīd) b. ʿl-Musayyib objected to trading in the Qurʾān, and said: "Help your brother by providing him with the Book, or give him a copy" He also reports from ʿAṭāʾ that Ibn ʿAbbās said: "You may purchase a copy of the Book but not sell it" He

reports that Mujāhid too prohibited the sale of the Book but allowed its purchase.

Three distinct views of the pious ancestors thus emerge of which the third regards its sale but not its purchase as objectionable. In our view this is the soundest opinion, one that is ratified in the work *Sharḥ 'l-Muhadhdhab* and transposed in the work *Zawā'id 'l-Raud'ah*, quoting Shāfi'ī. Rāfi'ī said: "It has been said that the price paid is for the book itself, for the words of God cannot be sold. And it has also been said that the price is payment for the writing. These two views have been attributed to Ibn 'l-Hanafiya and Ibn Jubair. There is, in this regard, a third view that the (price paid) is reimbursement for both the aforementioned costs. Ibn Abū 'l-Dāwūd reports that Sha`bī said "It is acceptable to sell copies of the Qu'rān, for only the sheets of paper and the labor of writing are being paid for.

### **Section**

The shaikh, `Izz 'l-Dīn b. `Abd 'l-Salām said the following in the work *'l-Qawā'id*: "To stand out of respect for the Qu'rān is an innovation that was not prescribed in the first generation." But the correct view in this regard is the statement of 'l-Nawawī in the work *'l-Tibyān* that it is indeed a commendable act, because it glorifies the Qu'rān and because it is thus, not subject to neglect.

### **Section**

It is commendable to kiss the Qu'rān for `Ikrima b. Abū Jahl (r) used to do so and because, as some have said, it is by analogy, not unlike the kissing of the Black Stone. Also, because it is a gift from God, kissing it is a meritorious act, much like the kissing of a young child.

There are, in this regard three opinions recorded from Aḥmad (b. Hanbal): that he regarded it as permissible, as commendable, and that he suspended judgement. This because this practice, its merits notwithstanding is an act of worship, wherein the use of analogy is proscribed. This is why `Umar said with regard to the Black Stone: "Had I not seen the Prophet (s) kiss you I would not have kissed you!"

### **Section**

Applying perfume to the Qur'ān is commendable, as is perching it on a rack, whilst it is impermissible to rest on it, for this is insulting and disrespectful. Zarkashī said: "It is also disrespectful to stretch one's feet in its direction." Ibn Abu Dāwūd in his

work 'I-Masāhif reports that Sufyān disliked hanging the Qu'rān (on walls etc.). He also reports 'I-Daḥḥāk as having said: "Do not use a stand for the books of Hadīth as you do for the Qu'rān.

### **Section**

It is, according to the most authentic opinion, permissible to show respect to the Qur'ān by embellishing it with silver. Baihaqī reports that Walīd b. Muslim said: "I asked Mālik about embellishing the Qu'rān with silver, so he produced a copy of the Qu'rān for our benefit, and said: 'My father informed me from my grandfather that when the Qu'rān was compiled in the era of `Uthmān they embellished the copies in the same manner. As for its embellishment with gold, it is, according to the most authentic view, permissible for a female, but not a male. Some restrict this permissibility to the Book itself, and not to its cover, but it would seem that they are both permissible.

If there is need to suspend some pages of the Qu'rān because they have become moist for instance then in the view of 'I-Hulaimī doing so in some crevice is unlawful, because they may fall and be trampled upon. Because of the disrespect that would be shown to the written text, it is also not permissible to shred its pages, and thus cause its letters and words to be detached from each other. Hulaimī also said it is permissible to wash them with water while burning them is not objectionable, for `Uthmān reduced those copies of the Qur`an having abrogated verses to the fire and no one objected to it. Others however, have stated that burning them is better than washing for in the latter case some of it would undoubtedly drop on the ground. The judge, Husain, in his notes, has stated emphatically that burning is unlawful because it is disrespectful, but Nawawī regards it as merely objectionable. The works of some Hanafite scholars declares that if the Qu'rān becomes wet it should not be burned, but buried instead. This view is questionable, because it may cause the Qu'rān to be trampled upon.

### **Section**

Ibn Abū Dāwūd reports from (Sa`īd) b. 'I-Musayyib as saying: "It is not permissible for you to say musaiḥif musaijid (the diminutive forms of the words muṣḥaf and muṣjid) for that which belongs to God is indeed majestic.

### **Section**

Our ruling and that of the majority of scholars is that it is not permissible for

those big or small, who are ritually impure, to touch the Qu'rān. This is so because of the statement of the Almighty: "None except the pure are permitted to touch it." (56:79) A tradition of the Prophet (s), reported by Tirmidhī states: "The Qu'rān must be touched by none other than one who is pure."

### **Conclusion**

Ibn Māja and others report from Anas a marfū` tradition stating: "Seven acts will confer on the servant of God rewards even while he is interred in his grave: one who imparts knowledge, one who digs a canal, one who digs a well, one who plants date palms, one who builds a masjid, one who leaves a child who seeks his pardon after he has died, and one who bequeaths a copy of the Qu'rān.