



BY THE PEN

THE QALAM STUDENT JOURNAL

"NŪN, BY THE PEN AND THAT WHICH THEY INSCRIBE!" QURAN 68:1

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Editor's Note

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
Salutations be upon his beloved servant Muḥammad the chosen one, his family, his companions, and those who follow in their path.

“Knowledge is prey (*ṣayd*) and writing tethers it (*qayd*)” was the motto for centuries of Islamic scholarship that produced the most groundbreaking contributions on subjects ranging from scripture to language to science and philosophy. *By the Pen* is a newsletter organized by the *‘ālimīyah* student body of Qalam Seminary with the goal of providing a platform for students to develop their penmanship and join the ranks of this longstanding tradition of authorship.

After several months of planning, writing, editing, and designing, we are excited to showcase—with the grace of Allah—the hard work of our students. As the theme of this edition is Quranic studies, you will find in the following pages nine primary contributions in the form of book reviews, translations, articles, and reflective pieces all related to the Quran. To make the newsletter more engaging, we have included poetry, trivia, and advice from the teachers.

This project could not have been possible without the dedication and effort of many students who spent hours after class bringing this newsletter to fruition. We have attempted to keep the material and language accessible to students of all levels. We hope that students will be inspired by this volume’s impressive array and quality of contributions to take the leap forward and improve their own writing skills and contribute toward the newsletter when the time comes.

The current intended readership is the student body, alumni, and affiliates of Qalam Seminary. This offers the benefit of sharing research to be discussed, analyzed, and critiqued by fellow students. For now, all entries will be kept internal so that students can write comfortably without the fear of misinterpretation or spreading of their work to other audiences. We hope that the newsletter will grow into a published journal for a wider readership in the near future, *in-shā’-Allāh*.

Mufti Muntasir Zaman
Editor-in-Chief

A Peek into the Past: Analysis of a First- Century Quranic Manuscript

By Aasiya Tori

Introduction

The study of manuscripts has infatuated scholars of codicology and Islam throughout the centuries.¹ Codicology, also known as bibliology or textual bibliography, revives the cultural and religious significance of a work and traces its story as it traveled the Muslim world on rock, papyrus, and eventually, paper. Many refer to it as the archaeology of books. Throughout the Muslim world in basements and tattered buildings, piles of unread manuscripts are in ruin, waiting to be reopened, studied, and revived. One such manuscript was discovered in a *masjid* in Sana'a, Yemen, with only 25 of a total of 520 pages, also referred to as folios, remaining, with many interesting features to be examined.

Figure 1 is a digital photo of the earliest first-century manuscript known to us, which was intricate for its time. The elaborate detail of the edging and precision of the calligraphy demonstrates that the recipient or reader of this codex was someone with status or money. Experts who studied other folios of the same Quran through paleographic techniques and chemical analysis estimated that it was the *muṣḥaf* of Caliph al-Walīd of the Umayyad rule. Calligraphers usually signed their names and dated the edges of their works. However, many early Arabic manuscripts were often not dated at all. Due to the damage surrounding this particular manuscript, one cannot determine if it was signed or dated by the artist. Additionally, because this is *Sūrat al-Qiyāmah*, a chapter in the middle of the Quran, the date may not have been on this particular page.

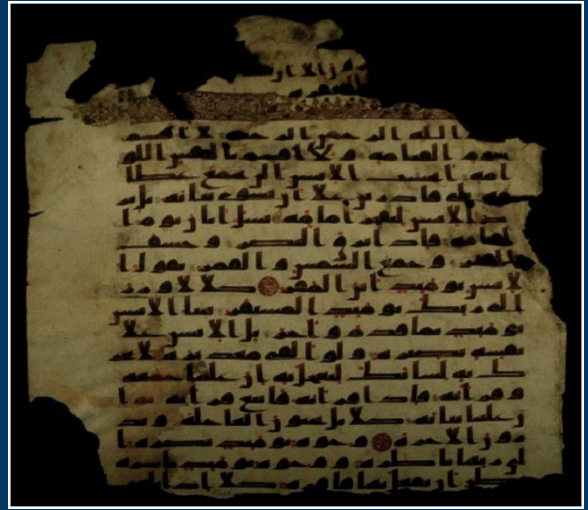


Figure 1: A folio of a first-century-Hijrī Quranic manuscript showing the beginning of *Sūrat al-Qiyāmah*.

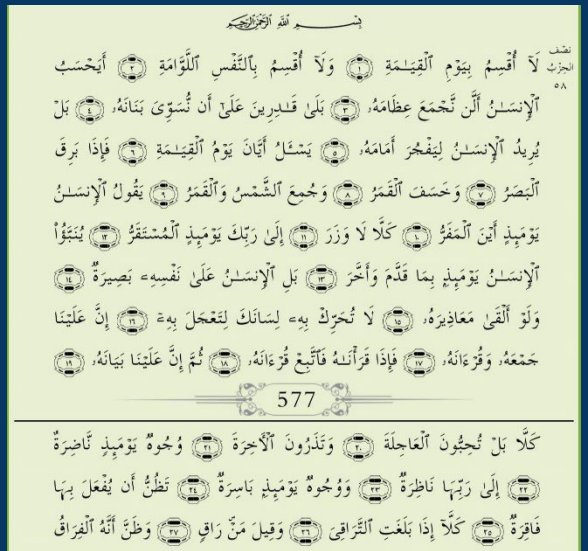


Figure 2: A popular print of present-day copies of the Quran, also *Sūrat al-Qiyāmah*.

QURAN TRIVIA

These trivia questions are either about a *sūrah* or *āyah* from the Quran. There is one question from each *juz* .

1

Identify the *sūrah*: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Nothing like it has been sent down in the Torah, the *Injīl*, the *Zabūr*, or the Quran, and it is seven oft-repeated verses and the mighty Quran, which I have been given."

2

Identify the *āyah*: The companion Zayd bin Arqam mentioned that the companions used to speak to each other during prayer, but after this *āyah* was revealed, they were told to remain silent while praying.

3

Identify the *āyah*: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever recites ____ after every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents them from entering paradise except death."

4

Identify the *āyah*: Abū Bakr used it to comfort and strengthen the Muslims with after the passing of the Prophet ﷺ.

5

Identify the *āyah*: It has a meaning that corresponds to the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "If you make an intercession, you will be rewarded."

6

Identify the *āyah*: It establishes the foundations for all of *ṭahārah*: *wuḍū* , *ghusl*, and *tayammum*.

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> 500
students



8.9
acres of land



10
instructors



3 in 1

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The Impact of the *Qirā'āt* on *Tafsīr*

By Basil Farooq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ وَأَتَمُّ
التَّسْلِيمِ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ، أَمَا بَعْدُ:

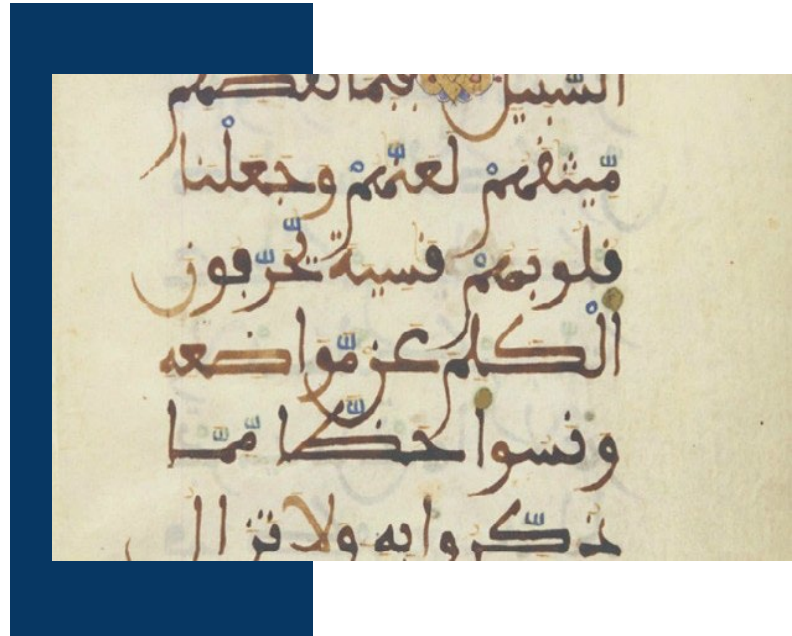
Muslims look to the Quran as their source of guidance and revere it as the Word of Allah ﷻ. Muslim scholars have valued the Quran in every generation: from the time of the Prophet ﷺ to the modern day. In their discussions, we find that the Quran consists of wording (*naẓm/lafẓ*) and their meanings (*ma'ná*).¹³ In the early generations, scholars were experts in both of these areas, however, with the passage of time, two groups emerged. The first group, the *qurrā'*, focused their science, *qirā'āt*, on the preservation of the wording of the Quran. The second group, the *mufasssīrūn*, focused their science, *tafsīr*, on the preservation of the meanings of the Quran.

The main goal of the *qurrā'* was to preserve the Quran and discern which transmissions were authentically a part of the Quran. Therefore, they distinguished between canonical (*mutawātir*) and extra-canonical (*shādhah*) recitations. The canonical *qirā'āt* were mass-transmitted in a way where it fostered certainty that the Quran was revealed from Allah ﷻ to the Prophet ﷺ. The *qurrā'* set certain conditions in order to determine if a *qirā'ah* was canon. Conversely, extra-canonical transmissions failed to meet the conditions of *tawātur* and were not a part of the Quran.¹⁴

The Quran is a multiform text, where the words can be recited in various *mutawātir* ways. Naturally, the field of inquiry and exploration opened up questions such as: What were the exact differences and nuances being communicated with the various *qirā'āt*? Were the *qirā'āt* simply a manifestation of the diverse Arab dialects

conveying the same meanings or were they conveying different meanings and emphasis? If they were conveying different meanings, what was the overall message of the passage, when all *qirā'āt* were considered? These questions were addressed in an area of study called *Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt*.¹⁵

In this short research article, I aim to present a window into these discussions by presenting the foundational principles underlying *tawjīh* discussions and a systematic framework that can be used by scholars to engage in these discussions. At the end of the article, I list several *tafsīr* books which engage with *tawjīh al-qirā'āt*.



Principles of *Tawjīh*

All *tawjīh*¹⁶ discussions rest upon the foundational principle that there cannot be any contradiction between two *mutawātir qirā'āt*. Contradictions are not possible because the *qirā'āt* have been proven to be Quran, which was transmitted to the Prophet ﷺ from Allah ﷻ. His Perfection of Speech is highlighted in the verse: “Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies”.¹⁷ Three guiding principles which explain the relationships