Handwriting of Uthmanid Mushaf; 
Its Secrets, Mystery, and Benefits; 
Difficulty of Mushaf Recitation and Its Solution

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ABSTRACT
Among important issues in the realm of recitation of the holy Quran is that of handwriting of Uthmanid mushafs and the nature of its appearance. That handwriting causes multiple problems in reading especially for beginners. However, some hold that the said handwriting is sacred and it is not allowed to change it. Criticizing the theory of sacredness of Uthmanid handwriting, the present essay surveys its opposition to the prevailing handwriting of the Quran in six scopes of omission, addition, hamza, change, attachment and detachment, and existence of two Quranic readings.

Key Words: Uthmanid handwriting, omission, addition, hamza, change, attachment and detachment, reading.
Introduction
Among problems faced by Muslims from early times is difficulty of reading the Quran in mushafs written by Uthmanid handwriting. In such mushafs, what is written is not in conformity with what is pronounced; for in the written mushaf there are omissions, additions, or changes of letters on whose basis the Quran cannot be read. To change that handwriting is considered heresy from point of view of so many early and contemporary Islamic scholars, being treated as an impudently act or even distortion.

From a long time ago, and even now, the Quranic reciter did not know how to recite words whose writing is opposite to his understanding of Arabic writing:

- When he sees الرحمان he is astonished how to read it, for he does not observe م (omission).

- In اولئك he pronounces و after ل based on his knowledge, while correct recitation does not allow him do that. In addition، ل is not seen after م and it doubles the problem: addition and omission. Thus، in مائة he should pronounce ل according to the writing، while he should not do that (addition)، and so forth.

Thus، we find errors in pronunciation or orthography of Quranic words made by so many Muslims from early times up to now. They encounter problems in reading Quran in such a way that cannot be ignored، except those who learn Quran on
the basis of Uthmanid mushaf handwriting from their childhood and become familiar with it. A few of such individuals are safeguarded against those problems - an immunity rooted in memorization and memory not in Uthmanid handwriting.

In this essay, we deal with this question whether Uthmanid mushaf handwriting is sacred or not. Our answer to that question is negative. Then, we classify samples of written and pronounced differences in the Quran caused by omission, addition, or anything else. Thirdly, we investigate advantages and mysteries of Uthmanid mushaf handwriting through mentioning examples. Fourthly, we narrate criticism of those mysteries and advantages. And finally, we present suggestions made by Islamic scholars for solving the problem of Quranic recitation on the basis of Uthmanid mushaf handwriting and conclude that presented suggestions cannot solve that problem for all Quranic reciters.

Of course, samples and examples of Uthmanid mushaf handwriting presented in this essay are not all samples and discussions related to our topic.

Our survey results in this belief that a change should be made in the Quranic handwriting in order to facilitate its reading and that there are no religious obstacles in this connection.
Is Mushaf Handwriting Sacred?

There is no definite proof and evidence for sacredness of mushaf handwriting and method of writing of the Quran, though some Sunni scholars insist on that, saying:

1. Prophet’s companies were a people whom God honored through His guidance. Marvelous impressions of purity of their hearts and their unbreakable link with God indicate this reality that God chose them as primary deposits of assisting the Seal of Prophets. Even sublime ambitions cannot compete with the lowest level of their position. Those scholars narrate from the holy prophet that: “Best people are my generation, then, those who come after them, then, those who come after them”\(^1\) (al-Bukhari, hadith 2457; Muslim, hadith 4601). The holy prophet did not confine prominence of companions to a specific realm, and should some probabilities appear in this connection, one should note that the primary duty for which some of them were chosen by God was to write down the Divine Book - something to be done by themselves and no one else in God’s knowledge.

2. Revelation writers wrote the Quran for the holy prophet and he confirmed their, as well as other companions’, style of writing – as can be seen in what he said to Mua’wiya b. Abi

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\(^1\) We do not know how the first century after the holy prophet was treated the best while they killed Uthman, Ali, and Ali’s descendents, captured Ali’s daughters, and destroyed ka’ba by ballista and burnt it. (Askari,2,8-9).
Sufyan[^2]: “Put some flake of cotton in the ink, take the pen in a tilted mode, raise ب, separate س, do not fill م, write ﷽ beautifully, make الرحمن lengthy, write الرحم nicely, and put the pen on your left ear because it makes you more conscious” (al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 10,314; al-Suyuti, *al-jami’ al-Saghir*, 1,34; al-A’sha, 3,49).

3. For according to the tradition, those who believe that Abu Bakr or ‘Umar wrote the mushaf again after passing away of the holy prophet assert that they wrote it according to the first style and handwriting and it was with the same handwriting that the Quran was written in ‘Uthman’s time – based on which all other later Qur’ans were written. Thus, ‘Uthmanid mushaf handwriting is a style in Quranic writing approved by consensus of all companions. That process alone can indicate sacredness of ‘Uthmanid mushaf handwriting: act of the holy prophet, and consensus of companions.

4. Therefore, it must be said that ‘Uthmanid mushaf handwriting is rooted in the consensus of companions, which is extended from the holy prophet’s time to that of ‘Uthman, and is confirmed by historical evidence as well as assertions of great scholars some of which to be narrated here:

[^2]: That tradition is absolutely not narrated in the Sunni six reliable hadith collections, nor in *Musnad* of Ahmad, *Muwatta* of Malik, and *Sunan* of al-Darimi.
* Abu ‘Amr al-Dani narrates through his chain of transmission from Musa’ab b. sa’d who said, “When ‘Uthman tore mushafs, that act astonished people (with a kind of praise).” Or Musa’ab said,” Nobody criticized that act of Uthman” (Ibid., 8).

* Commentator of al-‘Aqila narrates from Anas b. Malik who said, “Uthman sent a mushaf to any of the Muslim armies commanding them to burn any mushaf which is different from them” (al- Zarqani, 1,371).

* Malik b. Anas was asked whether mushaf can be written by articles they have invented or learned, and he answered, “No! Mushaf cannot be written unless in accordance with the primary style of writing” (al-Dani, 8; Tash kubrazadeh, 2,372; al-Suyuti, al-Itqan, 4,168; Ibn Farhun, 98). Abu ‘Amr then presents an appendix to indicate that no Muslim scholar opposes that opinion (al-Dani, 10; al-Zarkashi, 1,379 narrating from al-Muqni’).

* Al-Shatibi composed a poem narrating Malik b. Anas’ opinion in this connection (al-‘Aqila, introduction).

We conclude from Abu ‘Amr al-Dani’s statement that among Islamic umma, there is no scholar who opposes that affair.
* Ahmad b. Hanbal says, “To oppose handwriting of mushaf of ‘Uthman in ﯽ، ﯼ، ﯴ or otherwise is unlawful” (al-Suyuti, al-Itaqan, 4,169).

* Qadi ‘Iyad says, “It is a matter of consensus of Muslims that should anyone deliberately omit a letter, replace a letter with another, or add a letter not included in the ‘Uthmanid mushaf - which is called Imam and is a matter of consensus of companions who believe altogether that such a letter is not in the mushaf – he would be an infidel” (Ibid., 288; al-Dani, 9).

* Ibn Faris says, “The opinion I hold is sacredness of Quranic handwriting, for God asserts, “Taught by the Pen, taught Man that he did not know” (96, 4-5), “Nun. By the Pen, and what they inscribe” (68, 1), and such letters are narrated in the names God taught Adam” (al-suyuti, al-Itqan, 4,268; also Fiqh al-Lugha of al-Sahibi).

**Weakness of proofs of Sacredness of Mushaf Handwriting**

Although those proofs of sacredness of handwriting we narrated are not all of them, they are extracted from them and chiefly indicate them all. However, we must say that those proofs seem weak for the following reasons:

1. Let us suppose that companions were of virtue, sacredness, and soul purification; but can this prove sacredness of their handwriting?!
It must be said that it has no relation with sacredness of Quranic handwriting, and the reality is what al-Baqillani asserted, “As for Quranic writing, God has made nothing obligatory for Muslim umma in this connection and made nothing compulsory for revelation writers in terms of a specific style so that they write it on that basis and nothing else, for should it be compulsory, it would be known merely through narration, while there is nothing in the Quran, neither explicitly nor implicitly, in this connection. Consensus of scholars of umma cannot result in sacredness of Quranic handwriting too. Sacredness of companions must not be considered a proof for priority of their style in writing the Quran, rather, legal tradition leads us to lawfulness of mushaf writing in any easy way, for the holy prophet commanded revelation writers merely to write it down without presenting any specific facet and style or prohibiting anyone from writing the Quran in a different way” (Ibid.). We will discuss this affair in detail at the end of our discussion.

2. Was the holy prophet not ummi (illiterate)? How did he confirm companions’ handwriting and style in writing the Quran, then?! Attested by so many scholars, the story of Mu’awiya was not related to writing the Quran at all, for he was not among revelation writers and there is no certain
evidence in the history that he wrote, even a single verse, for the holy prophet.

“Mu’awiya and his father Abu Sufyan announced Islam in the Mecca conquest. In addition to being among *tulaqa’* (those who were freed), he was among *mu’allafa qulubuhum* who were paid for their announcing Islam … Ishaq b. Rahawayh, al-Bukhari’s master, has explicitly asserted that nothing of what was said on Mu’awiya’s virtues was correct” (Abu Rayya, 128). “Mu’awiya did not write even a single Quranic word” (*Ibid.*, 130) let alone to write a verse, or to be considered among revelation writers.

The forged traditions concerning prophet’s teaching Mu’awiya how to write بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم is contradictory to the illiteracy of the prophet. How can we believe that the holy prophet taught Mu’awiya rules of writing, then?! (For forged traditions about Mu’awiyya, see Abu Rayya, 127-35). Even if we suppose that such a story is correct, it is not related to the Quranic handwriting.

3. Does consensus of companions up to Uthman’s era and from his time up to an unknown era indicate that the holy prophet has taught a particular style in the Quranic writing while he was illiterate?!

4. One who claims sacredness of Quranic handwriting should present an explicit proof for his claim. From where can
he find such a proof and present it to us? We have several proofs proving the contrary of that claim, including:

(a) Abu ‘Amr al-Dani narrates a hadith through his chain of transmission to al-Sha’bi that he said, “I asked muhajirun (immigrants from Mecca to Medina) from where and whom they have learned writing. They replied, ‘From people of Hira’. People of Hira were asked where and whom they had learned writing from, and they replied, ‘From people of Anbar’” (Ibid., 9).

(b) Disagreement between Zayd b. Thabit and his fellows concerning handwriting of the word التابوته whether it should be written that way or `this way التابوته They referred to ‘Uthman in order to solve that problem, and he told them to write it in the first form التابوته. Yea! That disagreement and its consequence indicate perfectly incorrectness of the theory of sacredness of Quranic handwriting, for had it been sacred taught by the holy prophet, Zaid must have said to his fellows that the holy prophet had told him to write it in the form of التابوته“ and ‘Uthman must have ordered Zaid to write it in the form that the holy prophet had dictated to him, while nothing can be found in no source in this connection” (Tash Kubrazadeh,2,422).

Among famous scholars who treat the idea of sacredness of Quranic handwriting as incorrect, as mentioned earlier, are Abubakr al-Baqillani in his book al-Intisar and Ibn Khaldun.
Ibn Khaldun says, “Handwriting and writing are among products made by humans. In early Islam, Arabic handwriting not only did not reach its zenith in terms of firmness and beauty, but even it was not at its middle rank, for Arabs lived in deserts in ignorance being alien to and unaware of arts. It was due to that deficiency among companions that so many cases in their Quranic handwriting were in contradiction to the style and art of the prevailing handwriting of that time. Then, tabi‘un (the generation next to companions) followed companions’ style in Quranic handwriting as a token of blessing, as sometimes in our time the style of handwriting of a saint or scholar is followed in Quranic handwriting as a blessing, whether that style is correct or incorrect” (Ibid., 248).

Ibn Khaldun goes further and repudiates the idea of those who attribute addition or omission of letters to some causes saying that in لاذبحته which must be read لاذبحته, they consider addition of أ as a notice that slaughtering did not happen, and for addition of ي in بليد they treat it as a notice for perfection of God’s power. Ibn Khaldun asserts that it is obviously clear that such attributions and reasoning for handwriting should be considered as nothing but assertions without any proof. What made them justify and argue for the necessity of observing that handwriting, was their belief in the purification of companions from any deficiency and fault, holding that they were
safeguarded against shortage of knowledge as well as deficiency and fault regarding handwriting” (Ibid., 248).

Some Samples of Contradiction of ‘Uthmanid Quranic handwriting with the Prevailing One

There are so many cases in the Quranic handwriting that should be read in contradiction to its appearance - a problem causing difficulties in Quranic recitation even for those who are familiar with the Quran. From early times, scholars attempted to formulate some rules and criteria for writing the Quran, to specify frames based on which ‘Uthmanid handwriting was circulated, and to write some books in this connection. They specified criteria and frames in six realms. Here we narrate them briefly so that those who recite the Quran on the basis of ‘Uthmanid handwriting realize how to be safeguarded against faults in their recitation.

First realm: Omission

- Omission of الف

a) Omission of الف in یا for calling, such as یا بالا to the people unless in three cases of 24, 31; 43, 49; 55, 31 (al-Dani,16).

b) Omission of the الف for reminding, such as هاًتم, هذا علامة (al-Hamuda,103 narrated from shah al-Shatibiyya).

c) Omission of the الف from نا if preceded by a pronoun, such as أنجيكم which should be written أنجيكم according to Arabic rules.

d) Omission of the الف from الله.

e) Omission of the الف from الرحمن and سبحانه unless in 17, 1.

f) Omission of the الف after ل such as خلفه (خلف) خلفلف (خلف), and between two ل such as تكون (كللة) كلمة (كلمة) (كللة) (كللة) (كللة).

g) Omission of the الف in muthanna such as رجلان (رجلان), أملاك (أملاك), (أملاك) (أملاك), (أملاك), (أملاك) (أملاك) (أملاك) (أملاك) and so on.

h) Omission of the الف from regular plurals, whether masculine or feminine, such as سمعون and أميرات and the like.

i) Omission of the الف from a plural with the rhythm مفاعل, مفاعل, مفاعل, مفاعل, and so forth.

j) Omission of the الف from any number, such as تلث (ثلث).

k) Thus, the الف is omitted after ع such as ع , ب , such as ع , تب , such as ع , التي , after such as ع , the people, after such as ع , the people, after such as ع , the people, and after such as ع , the people, in the whole Quran.
الف (l) is omitted after ر only in three cases of 13, 5; 27, 67; and 78, 40.

m) الف (ل) is omitted after ائمئة such as

n) الف (ل) is omitted in كتاب (كتاب) كتب unless in four cases of 13, 38; 15, 4; 18, 27; 27, 1.

o) الف (ل) is omitted in all non-Arabic names such as ابراهيم, صل بن سليمان, صل حسن, عمران, لقمان, mentioned in the Quran, unless if they are used very little such as طالوت، جالوت.

p) الف (ل) is omitted in so many other cases without following any specific rule, such asملك الملك، ضعف، ذراع، خدعهم. (For details, see al-Dani, 18-38 and al-Suyuti, al-Itqan, 4,169-71).

- Omission of ی:
  a) In any word ended in ی which has tanwin, such as غيرباغ ولاعاد.
  b) Omission of one of two یs for brevity, such as لايستحي، النبهين.

- Omission of ٰ:
  a) Omission of ٰ when it is accompanied by another ٰ such as فأووا (لايستتون)، فاو لايستون.
  b) Omission of ٰ in such cases as ممحو (بدنع) سنده and ٰ (ممحو) يمح (سنده).
  c) Omission of ٰ which is like أ such as absence.

- Omission of ۏ:
is omitted in writing when it is combined, such as الليل، (al-Zarqani, 1,363).

**Second Realm: Addition**

- Addition of ألف:
  a) Addition of ألف after و in the end of any noun which is plural or is treated as plural, such as أولواالألفابل، ملاقوايهم، الربوا، ان اموالك (al-Zarqani, 1,363).

  b) Addition of ألف after which is in form of و such as in 5, 29; 28, 76; 12, 85.

  c) Addition of ألف after م such as مانه، مانتين. But فين ألف في فئة is not added nor pronounced.

  e) Addition of ألف after the following words: لكنه هو الله رئي in sura 18, البشروة، الرسول، السبئ، السبيل in sura 33, الفئة, قواريرامن فصيلة, 167 in sura 76, and words similar to them (al-Dani, 44).

  f) نون الخفيفة نون الخفيفة is written in two cases: ليكوننا من الصغيرين in sura 12 and ننسفنا بالنسف in sura 96. إن is written ألف in the whole Quran (al-Suyuti, *al-Itqan*, 4,177).

  g) Addition of ألف in such cases as ولاوضعوا in sura 9, and لاذبحته in sura 27.

- Addition of ی:
  a) Any ي which should be omitted because of contact of two sakins is recorded in ‘Uthmanid Mushaf, such as يؤتي الحكمة، الاياتي الرحمن، يهدى العمي.
b) Addition of ی is seen in nine cases: من 3, أفاین مات in sura 3, وایینانی ذی القدری in sura 6, نباي المرسلین in sura 10, من تلقاتي نفسى in sura 16, نور وراءى in sura 20, أفاین مت in sura 21, لقاءى الأخرة in sura 42, حجاب in sura 51, and ملادعه.

- Addition of و:

  أولوا, أولنک, أولاء, أولات حمل, ساوريكم دارالفاسقين is added.

Third Realm: Hamza

a) If hamza is in the end of a word, it should be written in accordance with its preceding letter, such as ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割. However, some exceptions are seen in the Quran, such as ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割.

b) If hamza is sakin, it should be written in accordance with its preceding letter, such as ﻧ分割.

c) Also, if hamza is preceded by a sakin و it should be written only as و without any letter, such as ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割, ﺑ分割 (al-Suyuti, al-İtqan, 4,176; al-Dani, 65).

Fourth realm: Change

a) The word ﻟ分割 is written ﻟ分割 in the الصلاة, الزكوة, الغدمة, النجوة, الحياة instead of ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割, ﻟ分割 respectively.
b) **الف** is written ی if it is changed from ی such as یا ’باهسرتی، یا یاسفی، یا همانی.

c) **الف** is written ی in such words as یا یکامن، یا ییا یمکن حتى، یدنی، یعیسی unless in الدلاياب in sura 12 (Ibid., 65; al-Zarqani, 1364).

d) **رحة** for feminine is written ت in the word رحمة in some cases, such as ین رحمة الله in sura 7, ین ذكر رحمة ربك in sura 19, ین رحمة الله وبركاته in sura 2, ین رحمة ربك ورحمة لله in sura 11, ین رحمة ربك خير both in sura 43, and perhaps some other cases.

e) **نعمة** is written نعمة in eleven cases, in suras 2, 3, 5, 14, 16, 31, 35, and 52.

f) In such words as سنة، مرأة، كلمة، معصية، شجرة، جنة، آية، غيابية، جمالية، مرضة، فطرة، ابنة، بقية is recorded ت in ٌUthmanid mushaf.

**Fifth Realm: Attachment and Detachment**

a) When یا is added to یا it is written یا unless in ten cases, such as یا یانقلوُ، یا یانعلوْ، and the like.

b) **ما** in من is attached to یا in all cases and is written مما.

c) **عن** is attached to یا in all cases unless in عن منهواعمه in sura 7.

e) ین is attached to یا in all cases unless in یا یان ماتريئک in sura 40.
f) \(\text{أنّ} \) is attached to \(\text{ما} \) in all cases unless in suras 31 and 22.

g) \(\text{كلّ} \) is attached to \(\text{ما} \) in all cases unless in sura 4 and \(\text{من كلّ ما} \) in sura 14.

h) \(\text{لا} \) is attached to \(\text{لكيلايكون} \) in sura 22, \(\text{لكيلايظعم} \) in sura 57, and \(\text{لكيلايظعم} \) in sura 33.

i) Some words are attached in ‘Uthmanid mushaf, such as:

\(\text{كثَّما} \), \(\text{وُكَّان} \) unless in the following:

\(\text{كثَّما} \) in sura 31 and 22.

j) Some words which should be attached are detached in ‘Uthmanid mushaf, such as:

\(\text{هؤلاءالقوم} \), \(\text{هذالكتاب} \), \(\text{هذالرسول} \), \(\text{يَسَّن} \) the last two, unless in sura 14.

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**Sixth Realm: Two Quranic Readings**

In ‘Uthmanid mushaf, we see that some words are written in two forms according to two different readings, such as:

\(\text{واعدننا} \), \(\text{وعدننا} \);

\(\text{الصاعقة} \), \(\text{والصاعقة} \);

\(\text{ملك يوم الدين} \), \(\text{ملك يوم الدين} \);

\(\text{الريح} \), \(\text{الريح} \); \(\text{تفادوه} \), \(\text{تفادوه} \);

\(\text{ظهورون} \), \(\text{ظهورون} \); \(\text{لافتقلونهم} \), \(\text{لافتقلونهم} \);

\(\text{لاستم} \), \(\text{لاستم} \); \(\text{لاصاصحي} \), \(\text{لاصاصحي} \);

\(\text{كمسانع العظاء} \), \(\text{كمسانع العظاء} \); \(\text{غما} \).

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**Mysteries and Advantages of ‘Uthmanid Handwriting**

Although the handwriting some samples of which mentioned in various realms makes recitation of the holy Quran difficult
even for those who are familiar with it, scholars have attempted to find and recount some mysteries and advantages for that handwriting:

**1. Making the Word Flexible for Valid Readings**

The most fundamental, basic mystery of that style of handwriting is that it guides us in the various readings read by companions of the holy prophet in different cases delivered from generation to generation up to the present time. For instance, they wrote ﷲیﺨﺪﻋﻮن which could also be read ﷲیﺨﺎدﻋﻮن, and we know that according to Abu ‘Amr b. ‘Ala’ al-Basri’s reading the first recitation is accepted.

**Some Samples of Flexible Cases**

1. ﷲیﺎیہ

   We know that there must be ﷲاﻟﻒ after ﷲﻩ according to Arabic handwriting rules, but in ‘Uthmanid handwriting ﷲاﻟﻒ is not added in three cases: 24, 31; 43, 49; 55, 31.

   In ‘Uthmanid handwriting ﷲاﻟﻒ is omitted because ﷲاﻟﻎدادة is also recorded from the holy prophet, according to Abd Allah b.’Amir al-Shami al-Yahsibi’s reading - while other reciters have recited ﷲیﺎیہ. Thus, companies’ style in omitting ﷲاﻟﻒ makes the word flexible for both readings.

2. ﷲاﻟﻎدادة
The term الغداة is repeated two times in the Quran: in suras 6 and 18. Contrary to rules, it is recorded in mushaf with الغداوة: و. Two reasons can be mentioned for such a writing: First, it is in accordance with Abd Allah b. 'Amir’s reading who recited الغداوة, and second, companions used to write الف which was changed from و like that, such as: الزكوة، النجوة، مشكوة، الرُّبّا. It should be noted, however, that الرَّبَّا is recorded in an indefinite form رِبَّا in the Quran (30, 39). Companions preferred to ignore the rule in that case in order to allow the reciter to discontinue, for in case of discontinuity it must be read رِبَّا.

3. Flexibility for Imala

Every principle الف in the end of a term connected to a pronoun is written in the form of ی when it is originally ی changed to الف. Examples of that kind can be found in the Quran a lot, most of which in sura 91.

4. Farsh al-Huruf

There is no general criterion for such words; that is why they are called farsh al-huruf. By huruf is meant words recited by the holy prophet in two literal structures, as they say, when it is proved by companions as well. If so, it is astonishing that companions and revelation writers wrote those words in such a way that they are compatible with both literal structures. (See
al-Dani, *al-Muqni’*; al-Suyuti, 4,169-281; al-Zarqani, 2,362-6; and the like.)

2. *Flexibility for two Readings in order to Present Two Meanings*

Some samples of that kind are as follows:

a) اﺱﺎری which is recited اﺱﺮی and اﺱﺎری, both being plural of اﺱیر (captive), but the former indicating less amount. It is said that they are both recorded from the holy prophet so that the divine speech may include both amounts: less and most.

b) ﺗﻔﺎدوهﻢ which is recited ﺗﻔﺪوهﻢ and ﺗﻔﺎدوهﻢ in order to convey two meanings.

c) ﻣﺴﮑﻴﻦ ﻣﻃﺎعم which is recited ﻣﻄﺎعم مﺳﮑﻴﻦ and ﻣﻄﺎعم مﺳﮑﻴﻦ.

d) ﺷاﺪ ﺟا ﻗлив which is recited ﻟوﻻ دﻓﻊ ﻣن ﻟوﻻ دﻓﻊ الله الناس and ﻟوﻻ دﻓﻊ ﻣن ﻟوﻻ دﻓﻊ الله الناس.

e) ﻣن ﻓد ﺳا ﻣت which is recited ﺛﻼﺛا and ﺛﻼﺛا.

f) ﺑﺎئد ﻣن ﺑﻴن اﺱﻓارا which is recited ﺑﺎئد ﻣن ﺑﻴن اﺱﻓارا and ﺑﺎئد ﻣن ﺑﻴن اﺱﻓارا.

g) and other cases.

Companions omitted اﻟﻒ of that kind in all cases in mushaf because اﻟﻒ are similar to dots added to words later. Had companions written اﻟﻒ in such cases, the Quran could have not been recited but in one way. That is why all scholars from early times held that one pillar of correct reading was its compatibility with ‘Uthmanid mushaf handwriting. In a poem in *Tibat al-Nashr*, Ibn al-Jazari says, “Any reading which is in
accordance with a facet of syntax and Arabic, which contains a probability of ‘Uthmanid handwriting, and whose chain of transmission is correct, is Quran (and its recitation as Quran is correct); hence, those three affairs are pillars of reading.”

3. Criticism of Opinion of Ibn Khaldun and His Associates
It is clear that Ibn Khaldun did not present his opinion without reason. In proving his idea that companions were not even at the middle level in terms of handwriting, Ibn Khaldun nullifies reasoning of the opponents. However, it should be said that he merely invoked to two Quranic assertions: 27, 21; 51, 47.

It is clear that the reasoning narrated by Ibn Khaldun had been presented by opponents of his opinion. That reasoning was not presented by companions who wrote those two verses in a specific form. On the other hand, what is said that in “لااذبحنا” is added to لا to indicate that slaughtering did not happen or in “بأيده” ى is added to show God’s perfect power is not correct.

Criticism of Ibn Khaldun concerning His Criticism of لااذبحنا
Although that reasoning is incorrect, it should not be said that there is no acceptable proof for such writing. While commenting on ولاووضعواخلالكم in sura 9, Muhammad Tahir b.
‘Ashur mentions a plausible reason for that, saying, "I believe that those who wrote mushaf have had a purpose in such writing… Perhaps they aimed at reminding that أوضعوا and أذبحنه has´" (10, 217). Ibn ‘Ashur had already cited al-Zajjaj’s words who said that the reason for such a writing is that أ in Arabic and many other languages is written الف.

Such a purpose must be praised. What confirms the nobility of that purpose is these words of Ibn ‘Ashur: “Companions wrote two close words in two forms purposefully. We find those two words in لااذبحنه ﻻاذبحنه. Had the reason for adding الف been weakness of handwriting in companions’ time, they should have added الف to ﻻ in both words” (Ibid., 10,217).

Now, it becomes clear that if الف were not added to ﻻ in لااذبحنه, it could be read with ‘as in the previous word, whose result was exaggeration in the sense of slaughter meaning one in which feeling of pain and torture is repeated and increased, while Solomon’s aim in his threat was either to torture the hoopoe severely because of its disobedience or to kill it immediately and rapidly without any torture.

Addition of الف to ﻻ indicates that لااذبحنه is from ذبح and not ذنبيح, the latter reflecting torture which cannot be true with Prophet Solomon.

The custom of adding some letters for indicating its vowel-point has some other samples in the Quran, such as أولئك in
which و is added to prevent from being mistaken by الیک, but since we are familiar with such additions nobody has criticized them even after appearance of symbols for vowel-points. In some such words as اوﻻت and اوﻟﯽ is added but no one has suggested that و should be omitted because it is not pronounced.

**Ibn Khaldun and بایید**

We should bear in mind that contrary to what Ibn Khaldun has asserted in this connection, the addition of ی is purposeful. It is added to notify that this word is an infinitive whose third letter is د and not the plural of يد (meaning hand) whose third letter is (ید). Thus, it must be emphasized that such additions are for reminding something in the structure of words and not merely for those unacceptable reasons mentioned by Ibn Khaldun and others.

**4. Remedies for Facilitating Quranic Recitation**

We mentioned earlier that the Quranic handwriting is not sacred, but it is traditionally safeguarded from the very beginning as a cultural heritage. Had Quranic handwriting been sacred, it should have not been different in mushafs sent by ‘Uthman to Islamic main lands (al-Hamuda, 100), but must have been written in one style (Al-Baqillani, 403).
Companions neither omitted nor added a single letter from and to the Quran. When they heard words of the holy Quran, they wrote them according to the prevailing handwriting of their time—something happened again when Muslims added dots to the Quran. Quranic handwriting is not narrated to us as mutawatir; that is why companions wrote their mushafs in various styles.

Ibn Kathir says that writing was not that complete in that time, and even there were disagreements concerning writing Quranic words— in terms of art of writing and not meaning—for people were poor in this connection lacking capability in the art of writing (Fada’il al-Qurn, 15). It is said that scholars allowed people to write the Quran in a different style than ‘Uthmanid handwriting, and this indicates weakness of handwriting in that time. Thus, it is quite possible that differences in ‘Uthmanid handwriting were rooted in the weakness of writers in the art of writing.

In order to become freed from difficulties of Quranic recitation, which are rooted in ‘Uthmanid handwriting, scholars have offered various suggestions:

First, since ‘Uthmanid handwriting is of mysteries and advantages on the one hand and is not in harmony with its pronunciation in so many cases on the other, let it be taught only to professional Quranic reciters and researches at centers
for higher education. But there is no problem to write the holy Quran in usual handwriting for teaching beginners as well as recitation of all new Muslims and all other people. Opinion of Abd al-Salam, who was exemplary in knowledge, is in harmony with that idea.

In other words, there are two ways for Quranic writing:

  a) A special way for scholars’ mushafs, and

  b) A way for the mass, whether common or elite, in usual Arabic style, so that it can be read and taught easily. That is why Abd al-Salam says, “It is not fair to write the Quran in the present time according to earlier styles, for it may lead to closing the knowledge of Quran... Also earlier styles should not be left because of ignorance of ignorant people” (al-Zarkashi, 1,379).

2. Another group believes that companions’ handwriting can be divided into two parts:

  a) A part which must necessarily be preserved and they are such cases that guide us in various facets of reading, and

  b) A part whose following is not necessary and they are such cases that lack the said purpose.

The opinion of Musa b. Jar Allah is in harmony with that division (Sharh al-‘Aqila, 6-10).

Finally, we come to the conclusion that there are four opinions in this connection:
a) Necessity of precise following of companions’ handwriting.

b) To follow the prevailing handwriting to facilitate reading for both common people and the elite.

c) Necessity of observing companions’ handwriting in mushafs of scholars while following the prevailing handwriting in mushafs of the mass.

d) To differentiate between that part of companions’ handwriting whose purpose of writing in the present time is guiding in the various readings which must be preserved, and that part which lacks such a purpose which should be written in the prevailing style.

Anyhow, it must be said that even those suggestions cannot prevent from difficulties of Quranic reading for both common people who wish to recite the Quran through learning Arabic handwriting and professional reciters.

Therefore, since ‘Uthmanid handwriting, in spite of its mysteries and advantages, is not sacred, the holy Quran should be written in such a way that all people can easily and correctly learn it in a short time and then read it.

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