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Beautifying the voice in reciting the Qur'an and its relationship to musical maqamat: an analytical study

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Abstract

This study is about the Qur'anic recitation and the misinterpretation of the word *taghanni*, and an attempt to summarise the sayings of scholars in this section. *Taghanni* does not mean that one should sing while reciting the Quran; rather, it means that one should make their voice beautiful when reciting it. Making the voice beautiful when reciting is required so that both the reader and the listener can focus properly and benefit. Scholars from the past and present have disagreed on the issue of reciting the Qur'an with melodies and *maqamat*, also known as "singing the Qur'an." This is after they agreed that transgression by singing or composing, if it reaches the point of exaggeration, increase or decrease by satisfying the movements, or lengthening, or singing, or otherwise, is prohibited, and it is not permissible to do so with the Holy Quran. Imam Al-Nawawi and others have stated that scholars are unanimous in recommending that the voice in the Qur'an be improved as long as it does not violate the agreed-upon rules of recitation.

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Introduction

The sound made by Taghanni while reciting the Quran has two forms: permissible and prohibited. It is forbidden to recite it in a way that distorts the articulation points of the letters and rules of tajwid. In hadiths, it is permissible to beautify one's voice by adhering to the articulation points of the letters and the rules of tajwid.

All scholars agree that reciting the Quran in a beautiful voice is mustahab. If a person's voice is not beautiful, he

should try to beautify it as naturally as possible.

According to Imam Nawawi, "Scholars unanimously agree that it is mustahab to beautify the voice in reciting the Quran unless the limit for qira'ah is not exceeded due to lengthening". If this limit is exceeded, even if only one letter is added or removed, the recitation becomes haram"^[1].

Musical Maqamaat Types (melodic modes)

The maqamat (melodic modes) are tunes or melodies that musicians and singers use. Maqamat are tunes that have been classified by specific rhythms by those who specialise in that art. This is not a new science; rather, it was compiled by studying and listening to people's tunes, as al-Khaleel ibn Ahmad al-Faraaheedi did with poetry rhythms. He came up with sixteen metres (bahr). There are six modes compiled by musicologists, which are as follows:

1. Al-Bayyaat Maqam (Bayati).

This is a maqam that conjures up feelings of humility and monasticism. The maqam is what focuses the heart and causes it to ponder Allah's verses and their meanings.

2. Rast Maqam (Rast).

Rast is a Persian word that means "consistency." This maqam is preferred by maqamat specialists when reciting verses that tell stories or prescribe rulings.

3. Maqam Nahaawand (Nahawand).

This maqam instils humility and reflection, as well as feelings of compassion and gentleness. This maqam was named after the Iranian city of Nahawand.

4. Seeka Maqam (Sikah).

The slow and easy pace of this maqam distinguishes it.

5. As-Saba Maqam (Saba).

This maqam is spiritual and powerful, evoking feelings of compassion.

6. Al-Hijaaz Maqam (Hijaz).

This is an Arabian maqam named after the Arabian region of the Hijaz. It is one of the most spiritual maqams, as well as one of the most effective in aiding concentration during Qur'an recitation.

These are the words and literal definitions of specialists in that field. Except for the last, they are all non-Arabic maqamat. It should also be noted that the maqamat are based on the tunes that people sing and play. As a result, this is a

science that existed prior to the Qur'an and its recitation. Readers can recite according to one of the maqamat without knowing anything about it, and reciters can vary their recitation by using different maqamat based on the verses and their meanings.

There are only two possibilities for recitation with a melody or tune:

1. Unintentionally generated melodies: Most people do this when reciting the Qur'an. As a result, everyone who recites the Qur'an in a melodious manner would not go beyond that simple method of creating a tune. This is permissible, and it is a good and praiseworthy type of melodious recitation, as the Prophet of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stated: "He is not one of us who does not beautify his voice for the Qur'an"^[2]. It is permissible and mustahabb in this case, according to the ruling.
2. Songs and musical rhythms that have been learned and practised and that require specific measures and vocal control to be performed correctly. This is not permitted because reciting the Qur'an has its own measures and vocal control that are subject to the rules of tajweed that have been transmitted from the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and cannot be in accordance with the measures as dictated by the rules of those tunes that are used in singing, as doing so would undermine the rules of tajweed. This is something that is not permitted.

Regarding this, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim stated^[3]: "Everyone who knows anything about the lives of the early generations will agree that they had nothing to do with reciting the Qur'an with musical tunes that require effort to learn and perform, are based on rhythmic movements, are measured, counted, and have a specific limit. They were too religious to recite to those tunes and to allow it. They used to recite the Qur'an in both sad and joyful tones, and they would make their voices beautiful for the Qur'an, sometimes reciting in sad or joyful tones, or with a tone of longing. Human nature instils and dictates this, and the Lawgiver did not forbid it because there is a strong natural inclination toward it. Rather, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged it and said that Allah would listen to someone who recites the Qur'an in a beautiful voice, as he said: "He is not one of us who does not beautify his voice for the Qur'an." This hadith may be interpreted in two ways:

1. It tells them something that we (Muslims) all do.
2. Those who do not do so are not following the Prophet's (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) guidance and way".

Imam Ibn Katheer said: "The point is that what is prescribed in Islamic teaching is nothing more than beautifying the voice in such a way that it will prompt one to ponder and understand the Qur'an, and to be humble and submit to Allah's commands". The Qur'an should be protected from being recited in a melodious manner that is based on developed tunes, rhythms, and rules of music that are usually used for entertainment purposes; it should be respected and should not be recited in this manner"^[4].

The concept of *taghanni* (reciting in a melodious voice) in Qur'anic recitation

Reciting in a melodious voice (*taghanni*) could mean one of the following:

1. making the voice beautiful when reciting, while reciting aloud in a tone that conveys feelings of humility, softening of the heart, and sadness without exaggerating or straining.

Taghanni means to recite aloud, as it was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah does not listen to anything (more approvingly) than He listens to a Prophet reciting the Qur'aan aloud in a melodious voice"^[5]. This means that we are both commanded and encouraged to use beautiful voices when reciting Qur'aan.

1. The meaning of *taghanni* is clearly stated in this hadeeth. It's explained by the phrase "reciting aloud." Reciting aloud entails raising one's voice and making it beautiful, in a natural manner without artifice, in which one enjoys and finds pleasure. Before the Qur'aan was revealed, Arabs would ride camels and sing *huda'a* (camel driver songs) to make the journey go faster while sitting in their saddles, and so on.
2. It is possible that *taghanni* refers to singing and music, as well as impressing others with the tune, without understanding or humility, as mentioned in the hadeeth describing the Signs of the Hour.
3. It is unlikely that *taghanni* means being satisfied with the Qur'aan alone and not needing people, because the meaning is different and linguistically unacceptable.

Making the voice melodious in recitation should be done naturally rather than through teaching and training according to musical rules.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim stated that reciting Qur'aan with a tune and in a melodious voice is permissible if done naturally and without exaggeration, special teaching, or training. If extra effort is made to improve the natural tone, as when Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari said to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "If I had known (you were listening), I would have made it more beautiful for you," that is acceptable. However, if the recitation in a melodious voice is done artificially, with special training and musical rhythms, the *salaf* despised it, criticised and condemned it. The *salaf* were known to recite the Qur'aan in a sad tone, making their voices beautiful and giving it a sad tone at times and a joyful tone at others. This is entirely natural"^[6].

The doctrines of scholars about reciting the Qur'an in maqamat and melodies

The first requirement: the permissible and their evidences

Imam Al-Qurtubi, May Allah have mercy on him, said: "A group of scholars permitted the raising of the voice in the

Qur'an, taming it; and that is because if the sound was good with it, it would fall into the souls and listen in the hearts, and they would argue by his saying—may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him— It was narrated that Al-Bara bin Azib said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Make your voices beautiful when you recite Quran"^[7].

And because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) listened to the recitation of Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) and liked it, he said to him, "You have been given a beautiful voice like that of Dawood." He [Abu Moosa] asked, "Were you listening to that, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Yes." He said, "If I had known that you were listening, I would have tried to make it more beautiful for you"^[8].

And also in hadith, Mu'awiya bin Qurra reported that Abdullah bin Al-Maghaffal Al-Muzani said: "I saw Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the day of the Conquest of Mecca, riding his she-camel and reciting Surat-al-Fath or part of Surat-al-Fath. He recited it in a vibrating and pleasant voice"^[9].

Among those who held this view were Abu Hanifa and his companions, al-Shafi'i, Ibn al-Mubarak, and al-Nadr Ibn Shumail, which is the choice of Abu Jaafar al-Tabari, Ibn al-Hasan, Ibn Battal, and Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, and others^[10].

The second requirement is the scholars who say that it is forbidden and their evidences

As for the evidence that scholars, ancient and modern, inferred in this regard, it can be found in a large volume, and I will refer to some of what suffices for the purpose: Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said^[11]: "However, it is not permissible to recite the Qur'an with melodies. Singing is not accompanied by melodies, which is accompanied by the singing of instruments and others." It is recommended to refer to this important book, as it was written specifically for listening issues, as well as the book Al-Tibyan of Imam Al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on them.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim spoke at length about resolving the dispute over the issue, and he said in "Zad al-Ma'ad fi Hade Khair al-Abad" and said^[12]: "Everyone who has knowledge of the conditions of the predecessors (Salaf) knows for sure that they are innocent of reciting the Qur'an with the uptight melodies of music, which are rhythms and the movements are numbered and limited, and that they are more fearful of Allah than they should recite".

Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani summarised the schools of thought and put them together in a good way. He said: "There is no doubt that souls tend to hear the recitation in a beautiful voice more than they are inclined to those who do not recite with a beautiful voice, because a beautiful voice has an effect on the tenderness of the heart and makes tears flow, and there was a difference among the predecessors regarding the permissibility of the Qur'an with melodies"^[13].

Composing and singing according to Imam Ibn al-Qayyim

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim summed up this hukm in an excellent way, saying that it is in two parts^[14]: The first is the natural, innate composition that the reader produces on his own, without any pretension, rehearsal, or instruction. It is permissible. As Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari said to the Prophet, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, "If I had known that you were listening, I would have tried to make it more beautiful for you".

The other is the artificial composition, which is not the nature of the reader to come up with but can only be achieved by falsification, fabrication, and practice, like one who learns the sounds of singing in different types of melodies on specific rhythms that can only be achieved by learning. This is what the *salaf* despised, rebuked, vilified, prohibited reciting with it, and condemned those who did.

The opinion chosen by the researcher

I can say that there is no dispute among scholars regarding the prohibition of learning the musical *maqamat* in order to read the Qur'an with melodies of singing. Rather, the reader must recite the Qur'an as our righteous predecessors recited it, but if the reader is able to learn the *maqamat* without entering into the music, there is nothing wrong with this. Whoever honestly returns to himself knows that what attracts the ears of listeners to many readers who recite the Qur'an with musical *maqamat* is the pleasure of listening to melodious tones and singing voices, not contemplating the meanings of the Qur'an. And he who listens to many reciters (Qari) who recite the Qur'an by the way of the *Mujawwad* recitation, which is famous in our time, now sees the best witness and proof of that.

Conclusion

1. The desired way of reciting the Qur'an is to recite it with a nice voice, based on tajwid rules, that is, with the Arabic tune. It is not permissible to recite the Quran with "profane" taghammi as if singing.
2. The musical *maqamat* is a collection of people's melodies in singing, and it has nothing to do with the science of readings; rather it grew up in the homes of people of music and singing, and all of them are foreign in origin, except for the Hijazi *maqam*.
3. Learning musical rhythms and melodies is undoubtedly forbidden, and if it is for the purpose of reciting the Qur'an, then it is absolutely forbidden. Rather, it is evidence of the corruption of its owner's intention.
4. The prohibition of listening to songs with musical instruments in order to imitate them in reciting the Qur'an, as well as going to music institutes to learn the laws of singing known as melodies, rhythms, and weights, in order to recite the Great Qur'an.
5. Beautifying the recitation of the Qur'an and improving the voice is achieved by adhering to the rules of recitation and Tajwid and controlling the exits of the letters, as well as what the reader reads and performs without walking on the rules of the *maqamat*, and this is agreed upon.
6. What some people call the composing of the Qur'an using the musical *maqamat*, which is necessary for depicting the meanings and tuning the melodies, is a transgression against the Book of Allah Almighty.
7. The reality indicates that the reader's preoccupation with these musical *maqamat* causes him to stretch and distort during the recitation, and all of this distracts the listener from contemplating meanings to the splendour of performance at the expense of contemplation.

Footnotes

- [1] Al-Adhkar by Imam Al-Nawawi, Publisher: Dar Ibn Hazm for Printing and Publishing, Edition: First Edition, 1425 AH, Page 206.
- [2] Narrated by al-Bukhari in his Saheeh (7527).
- [3] Zaad al-Ma'aad fi Hadiy Khayr al-'Ibaad (1/493)
- [4] Fadaa'il al-Qur'an (p. 114).
- [5] Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6989) and Muslim (1319).
- [6] Zaad al-Ma'aad fi Hadiy Khayr al-'Ibaad (1/ 482).
- [7] Sunan an-Nasa'i 1016, Book 11, Hadith 141, Grade: Sahih.
- [8] Sahih Muslim, Salaat al-Musaafireen, (793).
- [9] Sahih al-Bukhari 7540, Book 97, Hadith 165.
- [10] Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān, p. 11, part: 1.
- [11] Al-Istiqaama (1/246).
- [12] Zaad al-Ma'aad fi Hadiy Khayr al-'Ibaad (1/466-475).
- [13] Fath al-Bari by Ibn Hajar (9/72).
- [14] Zaad al-Ma'aad fi Hadiy Khayr al-'Ibaad [1/482-493].

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