

Chapter – 28

Imam A'asim Koofi

(??? - 745 AD)

In the art of recitation of Quran, which is known as "*Tajweed*", there are seven prominent scholars and they are considered as "Imam" for this subject. So in reference to them, "قرأت سبعة" (*seven ways of recitations*) are famous. They are:

- (1) *Asim Koofi* (2) *Nafey Madani*
- (3) *Abu 'Amr Basari* (4) *Ibn Kathir Makki*
- (5) *Ibn 'Aamir Shami* (6) *Hamza Koofi*
- (7) *'Ali Kasai Koofi*

Each Imam has two disciples, who are called "Ravi" (*narrators*) and all of them are considered authentic. The students of Asim Koofi are Sha'aba and Hafsa, the students of Nafey Madani are Qaloon and Darash, the students of Abu 'Amr Basari are Dawri and Susi, the students of Ibn Kathir Makki are Ravi Bazi and Qanbul, the students of Ibn 'Aamir Shami are Khalaf and Khalad, and the students of 'Ali Kasai Koofi are Abu Harith and Dawri 'Ali.

Of these Imam, the most prominent and widespread is Imam 'Asim Koofi. His full name is Abu Bakr 'Asim. His father, Bhdla abi an-Nujood al-Asadi, belongs to the Asad tribe, which is a branch of Jazimah tribe. Although his father was known as Abu an-Nujood, but his actual name was Abdullah. Some say that Bhdla was the mother of Abu Bakr Asim. By profession the whole family was related to the trade of wheat.

In fact, Hazrat 'Asim learned all the arts of theology, but he emphasized on the importance of reading the Quran in a correct way and kept it based on some principles. Because of his special attention and interest he was honored with the position of "*Imam*" in this art.

There are three names met with as the teachers of 'Asim. They are' Abdullah al-Salami, Zar bin Jaish al-Asadi and Abu 'Amr Saeed bin Ayas ash-Shaibani. These three teachers got the basic knowledge of recitation of Quran from different Companions of the Prophet. The Companions who conveyed this knowledge to these three gentlemen, include the names of 'Uthman Ghani, 'Ali Murtaza, 'Abdullah bin Masood, Zaid bin Thabith and Ubi Ibn Ka'ab.

In the time of the Noble Prophet, there were, and still are, various tribes of Arabs. Between each tribe, there was a slight difference in reading the Quran. When each tribe read in its own dialect, they were allowed to read it by the Prophet.

From various hadith it comes out that the Jabriel used to come to the Prophet and recite and listen Quran to and from the Noble Prophet, especially during the month of Ramazan. It is just possible that Jabriel himself also read the Quran at different times according to different tribal dialects, and the Prophet listened it. For example:

sometimes رُضُوَانٌ , and sometimes رُضُوَانٌ ,

sometimes اَنَّ , and sometime اِنَّ ,

sometimes سَدًّا , and sometimes سُدًّا , and so on.

During the Prophet's time, once a person read one word of the Quran with one accent and the other person with another pronunciation. When the two reached to the court of Prophet, he confirmed both of them as correct and said:

أَنْزَلَ الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرَفٍ

{*Quran has descended in seven dialects*}

Thus according to their own dialects, some read with phonetic Fathah/ Zabar, some read with phonetic Kasrah/ Zair some read with phonetic Dhammah/ Pesh. So each tribe had the privilege of reading the Quran according to their own language.

There are some differences between قرأت سبعة (seven ways of recitations), and قرأت عشرة (ten ways of recitations), but the most important thing is that there is no change in the meaning of these Verses anywhere and by any means.

In seven ways of recitations, the book of Allamah Shatabbi is the most popular book for the recitation of the Quran, and in ten ways of recitations, the book of Allamah Jazari is more famous and popular. Both of these books are in Arabic. In Persian and Urdu, the books of Shah Abdul Haque Dahlavi, Qari Karamat Ali Junpuri and Allamah Mahmood bin Muhammad bin Sibghatullah Madrasi are very comprehensive and authentic.

Imam Jazari has also set up rhymes' to facilitate memorization of the principles of the Quranic recitation. Remembering these verses help to understand the articulation points of various alphabets and the words attributes and discriminate them each other. For example:

والنون من طرفه تحت اجعلوا
والراء يداينه لظهر ادخل
فى السين والضاد كذا من حرف ذا
منه و من فوق الثنايا السفلى