

THE CONTRIBUTION OF IMAM SHATIBI IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENCE OF RECITATION

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ABSTRACT

The article provides information about one of the prominent scholars in the science of Qur'anic recitation, that is Imam Shatibi. Such issues as his name, titles, date and place, birth and death, scientific trips, his works, and his place in the science of recitation are discussed. Exemplary stories which are beneficial for everyone from his life are cited.

KEYWORDS: *Qur'an, Recitation, Shatiba, Imam Shatibi, Al-Taysir, Hirz Al-Amani.*

INTRODUCTION

The Noble Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, step by step through revelation, and it was memorized in his heart. Then our Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, conveyed it to the Companions. Gradually, among the Companions, those who were prominent in the recitation of the Holy Qur'an began to appear. They taught the recitation of the Holy Qur'an to other Companions and to the next generation. As they heard and learned from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of God be upon him, they passed on and taught it to those who came after them.

With the passage of time, when the religion of Islam began to spread from the Arabian Peninsula to other countries, difficulties arose in learning the recitation of the Holy Qur'an among peoples other than the Arabs. Therefore, the scholars started to solve this problem. The Mushaf of Uthman, which was free of points and movements at first, was put points and symbols (harakat) by experts in the field of recitation and linguists. In this way, the rules of recitation and tajweed, which should be followed by everyone who reads the Holy Qur'an, were gradually developed theoretically.

When talking about the recitation of the Qur'an, prominent scholars who developed its scientific theories come to mind. One of these leading scholars is undoubtedly Imam Shatibi. This article provides information about the life, scientific activity, and scientific legacy of this world-renowned scholar.

His full name, time and place of birth: Imam Shatibi's full name is Abu Muhammad Abul Qasim ibn Firruh ibn Khalaf ibn Ahmad al-Ruayni al-Andalusi ash-Shatibi. He was born in the year 538 AH (1143 AD) in the city of Shatiba, Andalusia (now Spain)¹. Sources mention that he was blind when he was born.

Some researchers mention his kunyah Abul-Qasim as his own name Qasim. His famous kunyah is Abu Muhammad.

The reason why it is called Shatibi is to attribute him to his hometown. Shatiba is the name of a large walled city in eastern Andalusia.

His life, path of knowledge, and teachers: From a young age, Shatibi stood out from his peers with his unique talent, love for books, sharp mind, and memory.

His intellectual family supported him in the path of science and promoted him to science from a young age. At that time, Shatibi diligently studied sciences such as recitation, hadith, and fiqh in the classes organized in the mosques of Shatiba. His special love and interest in the science of recitation caused him to be more engaged in this science.

According to what Abu Amr ibn al-Salah wrote in his work “Tabaqat al-Shafiiyya”, Abul Qasim Shatibi memorized the entire Qur’an in front of Abdullah Abu al-As al-Nafari in his homeland and learned seven recitations from him. After moving to the ancient Andalusian city of Valencia, he studied the book “al-Taysir” on the science of recitation from his second teacher AbulHasan ibn Huzail. This work did not leave his memory throughout his life. Later, Shatibi created his famous qasida based on this work.

It is known that Shatibi also learned from the prominent recitation teachers of his time, such as Abul Hasan ibn al-Na’ma, Abu Abdullah ibn al-Saada, Abu Muhammad ibn Omar, Abu Abdullah ibn Abd al-Rahim, and Alim ibn Abdulaziz.

In 572 AH (1177 AD), Imam Shatibi went on a journey to perform Hajj and during the journey he arrived in Alexandria, Egypt. He heard hadith from Imam Hafiz Abu Tahir Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salafa Isfahani and other scholars who lived in this city. It can be seen from this that Shatibi learned the science of hadith along with the science of recitation from the great scholars of his time.

When he arrived in Makkah, he learned from great scholars such as Abu Tahir al-Silfi². Also, he went to apprentice with Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Hamid and learned from him the book “Kamil” by the famous linguist Sibawaih and the book “Adab ul-Katib” by Ibn Qutayba. After that, he went on a pilgrimage³.

When Shatibi traveled to Egypt, Qadi Fazil Abdurrahim honored him and invited him to teach Qur’an, Hadith, Nahw and Arabic language to the students at “Fadiliyya” madrasa and created all the favorable conditions for him. At the same time, Imam Shatibi was the head of the Qur’an recitation teachers in this madrasa. As Shatibi persistently taught recitation, vocabulary, grammar, and other useful sciences there, his name became famous and spread everywhere. He reached the level of chairmanship of teaching the Qur’an and students start coming from all over for the purpose of education. People around him benefited from his generosity of knowledge like the earth benefits from rain. Shatibi taught here until his death.

It is recorded in historical sources that after Sultan Malik Nasir Salahuddin Yusuf ibn Ayyub conquered the land of Bait al-Maqdis, in 589 AH (1193 AD) he went to visit Shatibi and fasted Ramadan with him⁴.

His scientific potential and unique characteristics: In meetings, Shatibi refrained from useless words that had no interest in science and religion. During the recitation of the Qur'an, he would always perform ablution, wear clean clothes, and be in accordance with the Sunnah, as the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded.

Shatibi was very intelligent and known for his knowledge of religious sciences as well as his talent in the field of poetry. He prayed a lot, and his heart was always awake with the remembrance of God. Although his eyes were weak, his inner heart was open⁵.

Ibn Jazari said: "I read the following in the book "Misbah" by Abul Ma'ali ibn Ainul-Fudala: "Imam Shatibi says: "I saw the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, in Rawda-i Sharif ten nights in a row and read the Qur'an to him. Then he, may God bless him and grant him peace, said to me: "May God protect you from doubts".

According to the story, two people sitting near Imam Shatibi got into an argument and started insulting each other in Turkish. Then Shatibi was asked about what they were saying. He questioned one of them and made him sit on his right side. Then he questioned the second one and sat him down on his left side, and he replied: "This one said such and such, and that one said such and such." He told the story in Turkish until the end. However, he did not know this language.

Taj ibn Subki says: "Shatibi was one of the pious scholars and worshipers of Allah".

According to reports, Shatibi would sit down to teach recitation after performing the morning prayer at the "Fadiliyya" madrasa. Students used to compete with each other for their turn to read and came to him at night. When Shatibi sat in his seat, he would not say anything other than "Whoever came first, let him read." Then he would listen to the lesson of the first person who came, then the one who came after him. One day Shatibi, contrary to custom, said: "Whoever came second, let him read." The second person started reading. The first student who came was surprised that he was left behind, and not knowing the reason for this, he thought, "What sin caused me to miss the Shaikh's lesson?" and remembered that night, he forgot to take ablution because of his passion for recitation, and he came to the Shaikh right after he woke up. Since Shatibi was aware of this, he referred to the reading of the second person who came, not his. Then the young man ran to the bathroom near the madrasa and took a bath, and arrived before the Sheikh finished listening to the second man's recitation. The blind sheikh was sitting in his previous position. As soon as the second reciter finished his recitation, he said: "Whoever came first, let him recite." The young man began to recite. This situation is one of the most beautiful stories that we know.

His students: People who became great scholars of their time were educated by Imam Shatibi. In particular, Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sakhawi learned the science of recitation from him. It was Abul Hasan al-Sakhawi who was recognized as the teacher of the reciters after the death of his teacher Shatibi. In addition, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Umar al-Qurtubi, Sadid Isa ibn Makki, Murtada ibn Jama'a, Kamal ibn Ali ash-Shuja' az-Zarir (Shatibi's son-in-law), Zain Muhammad ibn Umar al-Kurdi, Abul Qasim Abdurrahman ibn Said Shafi'i, Isa ibn Yusuf ibn Ismail al-Maqdisi, Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Musa al-Najibi, Abdurrahman ibn Ismail al-Tunisi and others were also his students.

His scientific legacy: Shatibi's works were written in Arabic, mostly in poetical way. In particular, the work "Hirz al-Amani wa Wajh al-Tahani" which theoretically describes the rules of seven recitations, is recognized in the Islamic world. This work served as the main textbook in madrasahs for centuries because of its ease of reading and memorization. For example, it was taught in Bukhara madrasahs for several centuries. The work consists of 1173 baits, and each bait ends with the letter "Lam".

Imam Jazari, one of the scholars of recitation, says: "I saw the following text printed on a copy of "Lamiyya": "It is narrated from Shatibi that whoever memorizes this qasida will enter paradise". One of the readers who read this inscription went to him to ask about it. When he was asked, he said: "Yes, whoever memorizes it will enter heaven, and even if he dies at home with this qasida, he will enter heaven".

In addition, Shatibi has about ten works devoted to the science of recitation, and they are still being published again and again. For example, he reviewed Ibn Abdul Barr's book "Tamhid" in the style of qasida with 500 verses and called it "al-Qasida al-Daliyya". The scholar's book called "Nazima az-Zuhar fi A'dadi Ayat as-Suwar" is also famous.

Death: Shatibi died at the age of 52 on June 20, 1194 AD, on the 28th of Jumadul-Akhir 590 AH. He was buried on Monday in the tomb of Abdurahim ibn Ali ibn Hasan Qadi Lakhmi Asqalani Misri, the minister of Sultan Salahuddin Yusuf ibn Ayyub. Located in the village of Wafara in Cairo, this mausoleum has become a shrine. The well-known reciter Jazari says about it: "I visited Shatibi's grave several times with my students. Standing in front of his grave, God answered my prayer with my disciples"⁸.

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