

Historical Origin of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* in Sokoto State and the Role of *Musabaqah* (Qur'an Recitation Competition) Towards its Development

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Abstract: Qur'an was revealed by Allah (SWA) as guidance to mankind, it contains *qisas* (Stories of the past nations), *Tauhid* (Islamic monotheism), Examples and Islamic law (*Shari'ah*). The aims of Islamic *Shari'ah* is to secure man's belief, life, progeny, sense and wealth. The messenger of Allah (SAW) teaches his companions specifically and his *Ummah* generally, how to read and understand the message of the Qur'an and the need for teaching others. He mentions the virtues of Qur'an memorization and memorizers at many occasions, like wise his companions played a vital role in conveying the proper way of Qur'an recitation and memorization to the subsequent generations. This became tradition over centuries among the Muslim *Ummah*. This paper examines the historical origin of *tajwid* and *tahfidh* in Sokoto State and the role of *Musabaqa* (Qur'an recitation completion) towards its development. The paper however discovered how the Qur'an recitation competition contributed in producing *Huffadh* among Muslim youths in the state.

Keywords: Qur'an, *Tajwid*, *Tahfidh*, *Musabaqa* (Qur'an recitation completion).

INTRODUCTION

Qur'an is the book of Allah (S.W.T) which was revealed to the last prophet Muhammad Peace and Blessing of Allah (S.W.T) be upon him, as a guidance to mankind and the first source of Islamic law that regulates human conduct. Thus, the messenger of Allah and his companions gave much emphasis in acquiring its knowledge and preserved its text and its original way of recitation. No doubt the best way of preserving knowledge, is by putting it into memory. The messenger of Allah was the first person to memorize the Glorious Qur'an, followed by some of his companions which became a tradition up to the present time. The science of *Tajwid* is more of reciting the Glorious Qur'an as it was revealed by Allah (S.W.T) on to the messenger of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) and recited by the companions. This paper will look at the origin of *tajwid* and *tahfidh* in Sokoto State and the contributions given by *Musabaqah* in developing the two.

Origin of Qur'anic Memorization:

The origin of Qur'an memorization can be traced back to the messenger of Allah (S.A.W) being the first person to receive the Qur'anic revelation and the first human being to memorize the Glorious Qur'an. The messenger of Allah was *Ummi* (He doesn't know how to read or write) He therefore used to put all what was revealed to him into his memory. Imam Ahmad recorded from Ibn Abbas that the messenger of Allah used to struggle very hard to grasp the revelation and he used to move

his lips (rapidly with the recitation).¹ Allah the Exalted revealed on to him that:

Move not your tongue concerning to make haste there with. It is for us to collect it and that it be recited. And when we have recited it to you then follow its recitation. Then it is for us to make it clear to you.²

Therefore, memorization of the Glorious Qur'an is the *sunnah* of the messenger of Allah (S.A.W). He urged his companions most of the time to do the same. As a result, a number of the companions of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W) memorized the entire Qur'an.

Memorizers among the Companions

The companions of the Glorious prophet (S.A.W) were the first to learn Qur'an from the messenger of Allah. They were acquainted with the virtues of Qur'anic memorization and its memorizers. They were taught by the Prophet (S.A.W) They therefore strived in putting the entire Qur'an into their memory and taught others. This brought about a number of Qur'anic memorizers among the companions, even though their exact number was not recorded. Al-Bukhari reported that "Qatadah asked Anas (R.A) who collected the holy Qur'an during the life time of the Glorious prophet(S.A.W) he replied : the holy Qur'an was collected by four men all of whom were from the *Ansar*, they were Ubaiy bn Ka'ab, Mu'adh, Zaid

¹ . Al-mubarakpuri, S. Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged), Darussalam, Riyadh, 2003, p.270

² . Qur'an 75, verse, 16-19

bn Thabit and Abu Zaid.”³ This Hadith if directly considered in its context, it seems as if the four companions mentioned in the *Hadith* were the only memorizers of the Glorious Qur’an at the time of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W). But according to imam al-Qurtuby, as mentioned by Imam al-Suyuty in *Al-Itqan*, that, seventy memorizers among the companions were killed at the battle of Yamamah and the same number were killed at the battle of “*Ma’unah well*” (*Bi’r ma’unah*). This is an indication that the above mentioned Hadith does not restrict the number of Qur’anic memorizers among the companions into four only, at the time of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W), rather it shows the number of memorizers Anas (R.A) were familiar with.⁴ Thus the four rightly guarded Caliphs, was reported to have memorized the bulk of the Qur’an. I.e. Abubakar bn Abi Quhafa, Umar bn Al-Khattab, Uthman bn al-Affan and Ali bn Abi Talib (R.A). Other memorizers among the companions were, Abdullah bn Mas’ud, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bn Abbas, Abdullah bn Amr, Ubaiy bn Ka’ab, Mu’adh bn Jabal, Aisha bnt Abi-bakr, Hafsa bnt Umar and Ummu Salamah among others. In fact prior to the compilation of the Qur’an during the Caliphate of Abubakar al-Siddiq (R.A) the preservation of Qur’an by heart tend to be more than those who recorded it.⁵

Memorization during the Time of Tabi’un and their Followers:

The companions of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W) were satisfied with the saying of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W) that “the best among you is he who learnt Qur’an and teaches it to others.”⁶ They therefore engaged in learning Qur’an and teaching it to their students who were the *Tabi’un*. When Caliph Uthman bn Affan standardize the Glorious Qur’an he sent about five copies to different Muslim centers (Makkah, Madina, Kufa, Basra and Syria) Each and every copy was attached with an expert memorizer of the Glorious Qur’an in order to teach the people of the Area. The Areas became centers of Qur’anic knowledge, and a number of Memorizers emerged as a result. Malam

³. AbdulRahman Al-Suyudy, *Al-Itqan fi Ulumul-Qur’an*, Darul Hadith al-Qahira, Egypt, 2006, page. 220

⁴. Ibid

⁵. Kasim. A , *memorization of the Glorious Qur’an: A Guidance for Beginners*, Sifawa Press, Sokoto, 2008.

⁶. Al-Bukhary, *Sahih al-Bukhary*, Darul-kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 2007. volum.II page.351

Abdullah bn Foduye in his book “*Faraidul jalilah*” enumerates some personalities among the *Tabi’un* who were the memorizers of the Glorious Qur’an. He mentioned Abdul-Rahman bn Hurmuz al - A’araj, (D.117 A.H), mujahid bn Jabar (D.103 A.H), Ikamah Maula bn Abbas (D.105 A.H) Alqamah bn Qais bn Abdullah (D.62 A.H), Aswad bn Yazid (D.75 A.H) Zirru bn Hubaish (D.84 A.H), Ata’a bn Abi Rabah (D.115 A.H), Hasan bn Abi Hasn al-Basari, Masruq bn al-Ajda’ al-Kufy (D.63 A.H), Said bn Jubair (D.95 A.H) Among others.⁷

The Nature of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* during the Time of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders:

The word *jihad* is an Arabic word from the root “*الجهاد*” which means suffering and exerting. Literally, *jihad* means to struggle, to make an effort, to endeavor, to exert. Technically, *jihad* means to put up defense against an enemy through any possible way⁸. Therefore, the term *jihad* leaders refer to the scholars that led people into struggle for the creation of Sokoto caliphate under the leadership of *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fodio.

Shaykh Uthman bn Muhammad Fodio bn Uthman bn Salih bn Harun, a Scholar teacher and reformer was born in the year 1754.C.E in Gobir. He was brought up by his parents. He was taught Qur’an by his father Muhammad Fodiyo and his mother Hawwa’u and later on continued learning from many other scholars of the time. Famous among them was Jibril bn Umar from Agadas in present Niger Republic. The Sokoto caliphate was a system of an Islamic government established by the Sokoto *jihad* scholars, after they had defeated and replaced the kingdom of Gobir the caliphate came into being from 1808 to 1903⁹

Shaykh Uthman bn Fodio (may Allah have mercy on him) came at a time when religious education was very minimal there were a lot of evil inclinations and mix up religion with so many traditions and cultural beliefs. *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fodio started calling people to the correct teachings of Islamic religion. He challenged the people of the time more especially the scholars on neglecting the education of their children and their wives. Here Qur’anic education and science of

⁷. Foduye A. *Faraidul Jalilah*, (NP) 2003, p.72-73

⁸. J.M. Kaura, *Sokoto Caliphate literature in the context of 19th century Jihad in Hausa Land*, 9th Inaugural lectures, 2009, page 8.

⁹ Ibid. page 7

Tajwid were among the areas of knowledge neglected by the people.

Shaykh and his lieutenants strived to change the situation in the area. By teaching both males and females the religion of Islam which includes Qur'an and other subjects that deals with other religious obligations, to extent that some scholars accused the jihad leaders of allowing co-education which was against the teaching of Islam. Malam Abdullah in replying indicated that they did it out of legal necessity and asked "Goni" which would be lesser evil, to allow women to remain in total ignorance of their religion or to teach them along with men. They therefore wrote so many books of Islamic Knowledge in order to solve the situation, but the research here is concerned with the books related to Qur'anic sciences. Malam Abdullah wrote a book titled "*Faraid-al-jalilah*" and "*Miftahu-al-Tafsir*" he explained some concept of *Tajwid* and Qur'anic sciences in these books he also talked on the need for *Tajwid* in Qur'anic recitation. In his "*faraid al-jalilah*, he said:

تجويد من سنة النبي * دليله ما قال في
أبي
ومن يرد أن يقرأ القرآن * فليحسن الصوت به إحسانا
ولا تلوكة كلوك البقر * بل أعربوا كذا أبي عن عمر
تجويد الإعطاء للحروف * بحقها أو حكمها
المعروف

Meaning: (reciting the Glorious Qur'an with *Tajwid* is the *Sunnah* of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W), the *sunnah* is what was reported regarding Ubay (Companion of the Glorious Prophet (S.A.W) when the messenger of Allah said to him Allah (S.W.A) commanded me to recite the Glorious Qur'an to you. The companion asked, did Allah mentioned me with my name, the messenger of Allah said yes, and recited the Qur'an to him with *Tajwid*.) Whoever wants to recite Qur'an, he should make sure that he prepare his voice and recited it with good recitation. You shouldn't chew (the letters of the Qur'an) as a cow chews grasses; rather, you should read it with its Arabic form. That is how it was reported from Umar (R.A).¹⁰

This is an indication that there is an existence of science of *Tajwid* and its application during their period. Also Qur'anic memorization was known and there were a number of Qur'anic memorizers during the time, Sultan Muhammad Bello mentioned in his book "*infaqul-maisur*" that about two hundred *Qurra'a* were killed in the battle of

Tsun-tsuwa.¹¹ He also described his uncle Malam Abdullah as "*al-Qari'ul Mujawwad*"¹² that is a vast Qur'anic reciter that recites Qur'an with *tajwid*

This shows the level of Qur'anic memorization and science of *Tajwid* during the period of the jihad leaders.

The Nature of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* after the Jihad leaders and before 1986:

After the role played by the *Jihad* leaders of Sokoto caliphate, (*Shaykh* Uthmanu bn Fodio, Malam Abdullah and Muhammad Bello) towards the development of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* Muslims became to some extent acquainted with the *Tajwid* and Qur'anic memorization. This phenomenon continued until 1903 when the British colonialism destroyed the Caliphate, and a number of Islamic values were distorted. Islamic educational system was replaced by the western education which takes away the attention of Muslim youth from engaging themselves in acquiring Islamic education. This caused negative effects to the Islamic education in general and science of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* in particular. The legacy left by the *jihad* leaders towards *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* started declining to the minimal stage to the extent that *Tajwid* was not fully practicalized when reciting the Glorious Qur'an and Some were in total disagreement with the science of *al-tajwid*.

The 1960 independence of the federal republic of Nigeria became another stage of *Tajwid* revival and promotion of Qur'anic recitation in Northern Nigeria in general which Sokoto state is included. The following are some factors contributed to the revival of *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh*:

1. Creation of embassies of Arabic countries in the nation: After Nigeria became an independent country, so many Arabic nations opened their embassies and consulates for diplomatic relations. As a result the people of the nation became in contact with the Arabian whose some of them were Qur'anic memorizers and *Tajwid* teachers.
2. Studying in Arabic countries: With the relationship between Nigeria and Arabian countries, students from Nigeria used to go to Arabian countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia e.t.c for acquiring Islamic and Arabic language knowledge. Some of them used to

¹⁰ . Abdullah Fodio. Op.cit, page 65.

¹¹ . S.M Bello. Op.cit page:119

¹² Ibid. page:211

memorize the Glorious Qur'an and learn *Tajwid* before returning home.

- Receiving Scholars from Arabic countries: Some Arabic countries like Egypt used to send scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies to some African countries for teaching religion and Arabic language. Al-Azhar University of Egypt do sent two teachers to any institute that has an agreement with them to stay for four years teaching religion and Arabic language. Most of this scholars sent by Azhar are Qur'anic memorizers and vast in the science of *al-tajwid*. this and some other factors contributed to the revival of *Tajwid* to some extent in Nigeria in general and in Sokoto state in particular, but there were no schools for Qur'anic memorization and science of *Tajwid* in the state.

Qur'an Recitation Competition and its Role in Promoting *Tajwid* and *Tahfidh* in the Area

Individual efforts was made by some visiting and indigenous scholars in teaching the science of *tajwid* and Qur'an memorization by using different ways and methodologies. In 1984 a group of concern scholars of Sokoto State origin established a committee which task was to organize a *Musabaqah* in celebrating certain occasions such as marriage and naming ceremonies within the locality of Sokoto metropolis with the aim of advocating the science of *tajwid* and Qur'an memorization among the people. Even though the then competition was centered on the application of science of *tajwid* in Qur'an recitation, Therefore Memorization was not the primary objective of the competition. The committee was chaired by late Malam Abu-Bakr Usman Nupawa, Malam Abu-Bakr Ali Bakura as secretary and Malam Sidi A. Sidi as PRO¹³

The national Qur'an recitation competition established in the year 1986 (by the center for Islamic studies, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto) and it was the first of its kind in the nation was one of the giant pillars contributed towards the spread of *tahfidh* and *tajwid* in the state. The competition was organized with the aim of boosting the moral of the Muslim youths towards memorizing the Glorious Qur'an in accordance with *tajwid*.¹⁴ As a result, many Muslim youths

were engaged in learning the procedure and principles of Qur'an recitation as well as its memorization, not only in Sokoto state but in Nigeria as a whole. The competition was in the first place held in Sokoto in the year 1986.

Borno in the year 1987, kano in the year 1988, Oyo in the year 1989, Bauchi in the year 1990, Plateau in the year 1991, Lagos in the year 1992, katsina in the year 1993, Niger In the year 1994, Kaduna in 1995, Abuja 1996, Ogun in the year 1997 1998/1999 Adamawa, kwara in the year 2000, Sokoto in the year 2007 Zamfara in the year 2002 Nasarawa 2003, Yobe 2003/2004 Kebbi 2004, Kano 2005, Bauchi 2005, Kaduna 2007, Edo 2008/2009, Sokoto 2010, Jigawa 2011, Katsina 2012, Zamfara 2013, Jigawa 2014, Edo 2015, Nasarawa 2016, Kwara 2017, Katsina 2018, Gombe 2019, Legos 2020, Kano 2021, Bauchi 2022, Zamfara 2022/2023¹⁵.

As a result of the competition, the Sokoto state government Under ministry of education appointed a coordinator of Qur'an recitation competition at the state level, also each local government appointed coordinator for the competition whose responsibility is to search for Qur'an memorizers from various schools, this encouraged many schools to pay much attention in teaching their students and guiding them to the appropriate way of reciting the Glorious Qur'an as well as its memorization.

The categories of the competition are: two (2) Hizibs, ten (10) Hizibs twenty (20) Hizibs, forty (40) Hizibs, sixty (60) Hizibs, and sixty (60) Hizibs with Tafsir for both males and females students. As a result, many participants from Sokoto emerged winners and represented Nigeria in the International Qur'anic competition in Saudi Arabia e.g

Auwal Khamis from Sokoto state emerged winner in the year 1993 and became 2nd winner in Saudi Arabia.

Sadiq Siddiq also emerged winner in the 2nd category (60 *hizibs*) in the year 1997 and became 1st in Saudi Arabia. Also, Dauwud Abdul Qadir from Sokoto state also became 1st in the third category (40 *hizibs*) and emerged second winner in the Saudi Arabia in the year 2001. Hadi Mahmud Dole, Abdullahi Abubakar Imam and Malami

¹³ . Oral interview with Malam Sidi A. Sidi (age: 55) at his house in Tsamiyar dila area Sokoto. On 29/11/2014 at 9:30 am

¹⁴ . Status of the Center for Islamic Studies, reviewed in 1997. Page: 2

¹⁵ . An Interview with Prof. Mode Shuni,(age 61) former Director center for Islamic Studies UDUS Sokoto at his Office on 14/01/2013 at 02:15pm

Abdullahi emerged winners at the national competition in 60 *hizibs*, 40 *hizibs* and 20 *hizibs* respectively in the year 2006. Abdullah became 3rd position winner while Malami emerged 1st position winner in Saudi Arabia. Also Nazir Abubakar Sulaiman emerged winner in the year 2013 in 60 *hizibs* and became 4th position in the international competition in Saudi Arabia.

State Qur'an recitation competition: Arabic and Islamic education board contributed immensely to the development of Qur'an memorization through organizing competitions right from local government level up to the state level.

Forty six (six) participants both males and females are expected to participate in each category from the twenty three (23) local government of the state, cash and kind gifts were presented at the closing ceremony which encourage the youth to pay much attention to the memorization of the Glorious Qur'an. This resulted to a number of memorizers among the youth in different areas of the state. The following are the statistics of student's participation of the *Musabaqa* of twenty five (25) years:

YEAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
2022	362
2021	382
2020	355
2019	353
2018	352
2017	350
2016	346
2015	348
2014	341
2013	340
2012	240
2011	243
2010	240
2009	236
2008	227
2007	204
2006	193
2005	184
2004	172
2003	153
2002	163
2001	145
2000	162
1999	133
1998	111 ¹⁶

¹⁶. A comprehensive result of the State *Musabaqah* of, 1998 to 2009 compiled by the office of the co- Ordinator Qur'an Recitation Competition Arabic and Islamic Education Board Sokoto.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, it is clear from the foregoing research that the role of Muslim scholars and Institutions in promoting *Tajwid* and Qur'an memorization in Sokoto state cannot be over emphasized. Since at the time of the first generation coming down to the time of *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fodiyo in 1804. A number of books were published explaining the need and the obligation of *tajwid* in our daily recitations. Also, scholars contributed through preaching and sermons. Example of this class of scholars are; Malam Aliyu Gidan Kanawa, Malam Isa Talata Mafara and Malam Abubakar Jibril to mention but a few. The second category of these scholars include, those that engaged themselves in teaching people the rules of *Tajwid* and its application as well as memorization of the Glorious Qur'an, like *Shaykh* Ali Hassan Sulaiman, *Shaykh* Abdullah Al-Zawawiy, Malam Muhammad Bello (Goni) ibn Muhammad Boyi, Malam Abubakar Usman Nupawa (*Mai Idghami*), Malam Sani Abdullahi Jos and Malam Bello Abdul-Hakim among others.

The introduction of Qur'an recitation completion in the country at large and in the state in particular, is another contributing figure that helps in producing *huffaz* in the state that memorized the glorious Qur'an in accordance with the science of *tajwid*. These *Huffaz* were able to emerged winners in the national and International Qur'an competitions.

Educational institutions were not left behind both public and private ones. The public schools and Institutions include Centre for Islamic Studies, Arabic and Islamic Education Board and Sultan Muhammadu Maccido Institute for Qur'an and General Studies, Sokoto. While the private ones include: *Shaykh* Abdullahi Fodiyo Institute Sokoto, Nur al-Huda *Islamiyyah* Isa and *Hizbul-Rahim* Zawiyah Tambuwal. Contributions given by these great scholars and Institutions impacted on the people of the state religiously, educationally, morally and materially especially the youths. In the first place, people of the state unlike at the early period are now convinced with the need and obligation of *Tajwid* in their daily recitations. Secondly, government complements the efforts of groups and individuals by introducing programs and schools for Qur'an Memorization and *Tajwid* in the state. Many youth

memorized the entire Qur'an and represent the country at the International Qur'anic Recitation Competition and they returned home victorious with cash and kind prizes. Some books were written on *Tajwid* and techniques for Qur'an memorization by the visiting and resident scholars in the state. Another impact is the proliferation of the schools for Qur'an memorization in the state, which helps in producing memorizers of the Glorious Qur'an.

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List of Informants:

1. Malam Sidi A. Sidi (age: 55) interviewed at his house in Tsamiyar dila area Sokoto. On 29/11/2014 at 9:30 am
2. Prof. Mode Shuni (age 61) former Director center for Islamic Studies UDUS Sokoto interviewed at his Office on 14/01/2013 at 02:15pm

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