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Review paper

The History of the Spread of *Riwayah* (Narration) Warsh in Hausaland

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ABSTRACT: Muslims believe, read, recite, meditate, memorize, listen to teach and engage the Qur'an in various numerous ways in order to worship Allah. Even when Muslims try to incorporate the Qur'an's teachings into their daily lives, whether intellectually or aesthetically, the primary goal is worship. They have every reason to be in constant and varied engagement of the Qur'an, one of such reason is inherent in the promise of Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an, Allah says: Surely, those who recite the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) and establish prayers (*Salat*) and spend (clarity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, they hope for a source (gainful) trade that will never persist. *Riwayat* (Narration) the plural of *riwayah* that is different narration because Qur'an was revealed in seven letters different dialects which deals with authentic narration from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Keywords: Qur'an,*Riwayah*, *Warsh*, *Tajwid* Hausaland

INTRODUCTION

History has shown that Islam came to Africa before the migration of Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Makkah to Madinah in the year 622CE.[1]

Al *Shaykh* Abdullah b. *Foduye* had mentioned that Uqbah b. Nafi'u brought Islam to West Africa during the 1st century of the *Hijrah*, when he first visited Africa. It should be remembered that Islam and its scholarship go together, because the religion of Islam cannot be practiced without the knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.[2]

The Qur'an is an ultimate miracle and is the word of Allah revealed to His last Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Qur'an is written in different *Riwayat*, memorized by heart and read according to several chains of transmitters. The recitation of the Glorious Qur'an is compulsory upon every Muslim both in and outside prayers. The Qur'an combines both the prosperity of this world and Hereafter. Recitation of the Glorious Qur'an was taught by the Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He taught his Companions how to read the Qur'an properly and has said:

The best of you is he who learned the Qur'an and teaches it.[3]

Many among the Companions memorized the Qur'an by heart and the Prophet ((May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) sometimes to listened to how they read. In fact, those who memorized the Glorious Qur'an were very much respected in the court of the Prophet ((May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[4]

Another reason for the spread of *Riwayah Warsh* and its dominance in our land (Hausaland) is because it is the *Riwayah* of the *Jihad* scholars who strived hard in reforming the religion and teaching people. As *Shaykh* Abdullah b. Foduye mentioned in his Tafseer *Diya' al-Ta'aweel fee Ma'aan al-Tanzil:*

I will also explain (differences) among the most popular qira'at with reference to qira'ah Naafi' through the Riwayah of Warsh from Naafi' as it is our qiraa'ah in this land.

He also expressed that (i.e. *Warsh* is their *Riwayah*) in many of his books, like his saying in *Miftah al-Tafseer* in

the chapter of *Imaala*.
Our *Warsh* has maintained being in between (major and minor Imaala). He also said in the book in chapter simplifying the Alhamza: Our *Warsh* used to make ibdaal where two Alhamzaa having a vowel met.
That was how they were teaching *Riwayah* of *Warsh.* The spread of *Riwayah Warsh* in this region is because its people are following the Maliki School of Law and mostly people use to follow their leader. *Imam* Malik learned Qur'an from Nafi'i who later was the teacher of *Warsh. Imam* Malik (May Allah have mercy on him) was quoted to have said:
The Qira'ah of Nafi' is Sunnah[5]
The preponderance of the *Riwayah* of *Hafs* thereafter in Hausaland was because of some Arab (scholars) who recited Qur'an following this *Riwayah* came to Sokoto for instance, to teach people in universities and colleges. Later, they started teaching people *Riwayah* of *Hafs* from Asim. Among them include *Shaykh* Muhammad Hassan Ali Sulaiman an Egyptian, from whom many scholars and students learned this *Riwayah.* Then, *Shaykh* Abdullahi Zawawy Ash-Shanqeety followed suit. This continues to date because of what people see of the simplicity of *Riwayah Hafs* compared to that of *Warsh.* Perhaps, it is because of its natural for souls to incline to what is simpler and easier. This is what is apparent to me and Allah knows the reality of the matter.
As a result of the introduction of Islam to Hausaland by the Arab teachers and scholars, Qur'anic schools sprang up almost all over the area to Borno where Islam appeared first. The Qur'anic education was not left to the children and adults who attended Qur'anic schools but even the ruling class engaged themselves in the study of the Glorious Qur'an too.
Among the fourteen or twenty *Riwayat* of the Glorious Qur'an, four have the published copies of the Glorious Qur'an and two are predominantly practiced in this part of the world (i.e. *Warsh* and *Hafs*).[6]
As mentioned earlier, the scholars who brought Islam to Hausaland were Maliki followers, hence, they practiced the *Riwayah* of *Warsh.* The concern of any person that introduced Islam to any place or to any group of people was recitation of the Qur'an and its memorization. When Islam was introduced to Hausaland, it continued spreading from one area to another. The agents of this spread included the chiefs of Hausaland like Yaji of Kano and Muhammadu Korau of Katsina. This spread of Islam brought about the establishment of *Makarantun Allo* (Local Qur'anic Schools) which taught in *Riwayah Warsh.* This was what brought the earlier domination of *Riwayah Warsh* in Hausaland. This domination extended to the life time of *Shaykh* Uthman b. *Foduye* and beyond.
However, in the late 19th century, the then Northern Nigerian Government in its effort to restore or to remove the negative policies on Islamic education as a result of intercession of the British Colonial rule, some foreign scholars from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt and Pakistan among others were brought to teach both in the secondary and some tertiary institutions established in places like Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Zaria, Kaduna and Kebbi among others. Since then, the popularity of the former (i.e. *Warsh*) started diminishing, thereby giving way to the *Riwayah Hafs.* In addition, scholarships were awarded to many students to go to Arab countries to read Islamic Studies. Majority of these Arab countries recite the Qur'an using *Hafs* style. Hence these students came back home with the influence of *Riwayah Hafs,* which they use in teaching students at secondary and tertiary institutions. This has greatly helped in the promotion of *Riwayah Hafs* in Hausaland.[7]
The Qur'anic recitation competition has over the years been achieving these objectives. Beside bringing Muslims together by meeting with fellow members every year helps in the shifting of the youth from *Warsh* to *Riwayah Hafs.*[8]
As for *Kasuwar Kurmi* in Kano, they are selling the books in wholesales; therefore, I decided to obtain the record of books in sample method.
At Khalifa Isyaku Rabi'u's house, known as Qur'an House, the books are in packets I found that the number of copies of the Glorious Qur'an printed in *Riwayah Hafs* are larger than copies of the *Riwayah Warsh*.[9] This clearly shows that the people of Hausaland gives more attention to *Riwayah Hafs* than the *Riwayah Warsh* in contemporary period.

The influence of the Shift from *Riwayah Warsh* to *Riwayah Hafs* in Hausaland

Since comprehensive survey on the factors responsible for the shift has been made discussed, it would be good to analyse the efficacy of the shift as well as other consequences resulting from the shift.
Indeed, there are some reasons that could be attached to the benefits derived from the shift as well as the effects of this situation therefore, below are some of the major reasons:

Reformation of Science of *Tajwid*

It is quite undisputable that the Glorious Qur'an as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) along with the science of *Tajwid*, and thus it is a necessity and a special duty upon every Muslim to learn the basic principles of *Tajwid.*
In Hausaland, Muslims have been aware of the existence of the science of *Tajwid* along before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in about 1808. But the problem that had been militating against the system was lack of application because, even the Jihad leaders such as *Shaykh* Abdullah b. *Foduye* indicated that the science of Qur'anic recitation is part of the Prophetic tradition[10] but, despite all this, some people in Hausaland continue to doubt and argue about the legality of *Tajwid* in Qur'anic

recitation. It even got to a level that some people call it a devilish innovation.
However, with the emergence of the *Izalah* movement in 1978, the science of *Tajwid* received top priority of attention through its teaching and learning to people. Subsequently, today everywhere in Nigeria, there are people who are well-versed and specialized in this area.[11]

Enhancement of Modern Academic Researches

One can say confidently that the challenges posed by the appearance of *Riwayah Hafs* to *Riwayah Warsh* had seriously encouraged many Muslims to learn and excel in the different methodologies of recitation.
Therefore, today, we are witnessing hundreds of scholars who have meticulously excelled and become notable authorities in the science of *Qira'at* through writing thesis and dissertations for e.g. Yelwa worse his Ph.D. thesis title *Ilm al-Tajwid,* and Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Northern Nigeria, Ibrahim's dissertation title History of Development of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Kano State.
Moreover, series of workshops and seminars are being organized in different parts of the country regarding the science of *Qira'at*. So also, youths are investing tremendous efforts in acquainting themselves with the different *Riwayat* of Qur'anic recitation through the institutionalization of Qur'anic recitation competitions at local, state and national as well as international levels.[12]

Wider Enrolment of Children through the Establishment of Islamiyyah Schools

Thousands of neglected children are now enjoying the privilege of acquiring Islamic education through the establishment of Islamiyyyah Qur'anic schools which were mainly centered on *Riwayah Hafs.* For example, *Shaykh* Abdullahi *Foduye* Institute, Tudun Wada, Sokoto, Sidi Mamman Asarakkawa, Darul Da'awah Institute, Low Cost, Sokoto and Madrasatu Tahfiz al-Qur'an, Gidan Kanawa, Sokoto.
In addition, many people who have been psychologically influenced by Western education are encouraged to enrol their children by the replacement of traditional Islamic education with an institutionalized one. This is also a great achievement, because if not for the institutionalization, many people would have continued to live in the darkness of ignorance.

Contract with Foreign Countries

The shift from *Riwayah Warsh* to *Hafs* has provided us with the opportunity of establishing and strengthening cordial relationship with the different societies and nations.
This could be tested through Qur'anic Recitation Competitions being organized annually whereby many Nigerians have, on several occasions, won or emerged winners of the competitions at International levels. It has also greatly helped in securing scholarships for Nigerians to study abroad. In addition, thousands of Nigerians have emerged in academic researches, attending seminars and international conferences through this media.
Therefore, this has paved way for Nigeria to be one of the leading nations in terms of modern Islamic academic researches; it has also encouraged inter-tribal marriages, which was hitherto considered an abomination in the past decades.

Marginalization of *Riwayah Warsh*

Despite the fact that huge benefits are derivable from the shift, it could be argued that this development has resulted in the *Riwayah Warsh*. In many places, marginalization of the most serious effect is that, the oncoming generations might not know of the existence of *Riwayah Warsh* because the copies of Qur'an available in the *Riwayah Warsh* have been seriously reduced.

Art of Writing

Art of writing is symbol of civilization and it enhances human development and peaceful coexistence.[13]

Conclusion

It could be recalled that in the previous decades, there were many people in this part of the world who have memorized and written the Qur'an manually because they were trained to learn the recitation of the Qur'an, academic activities of writing and memorization simultaneously. Thus, the issue of writing was not of great difficulty to them.
Consequently, with the emergence of the shift from *Riwayah Warsh* to *Hafs* and coupled with the effort made by people to avoid writing on states which they considered as absolute and something of great difficulty; the art of writing has almost disappeared and eroded to the extent that people see it as something that has never existed in human society.

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