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**RECITATION OF QUR'ĀN
ACCORDING TO THE
MELODIC MODES
(MAQĀMĀT)**



Recitation of Qur'ān According to The Melodic Modes (Maqāmāt)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Question: What's the Ruling on One Learning the Maqāmāt and Applying Them to the Recitation of the Qur'ān?

Naturally beautifying one's voice in accordance with the rules of the Qira'āt and Tajwīd, in accordance with the rules of the pronunciation, the Sifāt and Makhārij of Al-Hurūf, beautifying one's voice *naturally* in a way that prompts one to soften his heart and the hearts of those listening, and it gets his heart and the hearts of those listening to ponder and reflect upon the Qur'ān and feel Khushū' — that's no doubt recommended, and that's the meaning of the Hadīth that's in Sahīh Bukhāri,

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالْقُرْآنِ

*Whoever does not recite Qur'ān in a nice voice is not from us.*¹

He's not one of us who doesn't beautify his voice when he recites the Qur'ān. In order to answer this question, one must understand what Maqāmāt are. Here, in the question, he says, "*What's the ruling on learning the Maqāmāt?*" What he should have added is, "*What's the ruling on one learning the **musical** Maqāmāt and applying them to the recitation of the Qur'ān?*", because they're musical Maqāmāt — Al-Maqāmāt Al-Mūsīqīyyah. That's what they really are. Musical Maqāmāt, as it pertains to the Qur'ān, is applying *musical* rhythms or *musical* rules to the recitation of the Qur'ān. Pay attention to that definition, listen to it closely — applying *musical* rules to the recitation of the Qur'ān. Because if you know that definition, you'll see how despicable that sounds — applying *musical* rhythms or tunes to the recitation of the Qur'ān. That right there should tell you all you need to know. Musical Maqāmāt are specific rhythms and developed

¹ Bukhāri: 7525

tunes that are used for entertainment by musicians and singers, like Al-Bay'ā, An-Nahawan, As-Saba, As-Sika — they're Maqāmāt and rhythms based on the rules of music. The Qur'ān is mightier than to be combined or attached in any way to that which is attached to music. And it's not something new, it's not a new science. This matter was actually discussed by the Ulamā' of earlier centuries, because this science was known from, possibly والله أعلم, even before the revelation of the Qur'ān.

If the recitation with the Maqāmāt, the musical Maqāmāt, is taking away from the proper recitation of the Qur'ān, it's going against the established rules of recitation, if it's changing the way the Qur'ān should be recited, adding or taking away anything in order to make it fit the rules of music — whether it pertains to the Sifāt or Makhārij of the Hurūf or Tajwīd or anything similar to that, there's no dispute among the Ulamā' that it's Harām. It's Harām to listen to it, and it's Harām to recite it. Let me give you an example. For certain musical Maqāmāt, they do certain waves or pitches or vibrations in the Madd of the Alif. In order to comply with that musical Maqām, the vocal dancing or vocal pitch with the Madd on the Alif makes that one Alif four Alifs. They've added three letters to the Qur'ān. That's one problem. So now you have four Alifs. Each Alif gets two Madds. That's a total of eight Harakāt. Which Madd has eight Harakāt? If laymen, or even students of knowledge who are not experts in the field of recitation, were to hear how the majority of them tamper with the recitation of the Qur'ān, they probably wouldn't be able to identify or recognize those errors. Some words of the Qur'ān are recited when applying the Musical Maqāmāt, they're changed so much that if someone were to give an oath by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that those words that they mentioned are not from the Qur'ān, due to their altering of that word to fit the Maqāmāt, they would be truthful — the one who gave the oath would be truthful.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said that properly beautifying the voice with rhythms should be natural, with no exaggeration, and without any training in the Maqāmāt. He said the Salaf despised, criticized, disparaged, condemned, and forbade reading with those rhythms. They disapproved reading with them. And in response to

those who claimed the Salaf allowed it, he said everyone who knows the Salaf knows with certainty that the Salaf are free from that, and they disavow themselves from reciting the Qur'ān in the Musical Maqāmāt or musical rhythms. The Salaf had nothing to do with learning or performing musical Maqāmāt when reciting the Qur'ān. Everyone knows how pious the Salaf were. They were too pious and too fearful of Allāh to recite in accordance with those musical rhythms or to even allow it. In fact, it was narrated by Al-A'mash that Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه hated it.

The Qur'ān should be protected and respected. It has its own distinct, supreme rules, its own way of recitation. The Qur'ān came beautiful from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى with its own rules, as it was revealed to the Messenger ﷺ and as Jibrīl taught it to the Messenger ﷺ. It doesn't need anyone to beautify it. Many of the teachers or experts who teach how to apply the Maqāmāt to the Qur'ān appear like musical entertainers or performers. You see them teaching the Qur'ān, والعياذ بالله, with the Maqāmāt, like conductors in front of an orchestra or a choir. A new student of ours who just returned from studying those Maqāmāt after I strongly deterred him from that, he told me that in classes the teacher would frequently reference music and musicians, and he would even play music for them to get a rhythm to apply it.

Some countries stipulate that their official Qur'ān reciters in their media need certificates from music academies before they can be considered or accepted. Some reciters openly admit they formally learn music as part of their training in reciting the Qur'ān according to the Maqāmāt. That's why it's not unusual for you to see reciters mention their love of musicians and that they listen to famous singers in some of their interviews. The reaction of those *listening* to the famous reciters who recite in the Maqāmāt takes the disrespect of the book of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى even further than that. Are the shouts and the reaction of the audience who listen to those reciters, who recite based on the Maqāmāt, in accordance with the command of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

So when the Qur'ān is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy? ²

When the Qur'ān is recited, it should be listened to. One should listen to it silently so that he can attain the mercy of Allāh. Some even hum the musical Maqāmāt while the reciter is reciting or while he takes those short breaks. A brother told me that some reciters pay a group to encourage that. It's gotten to a point where people uncontrollably make hysterical or sudden dance moves instead of listening with Khushū' to attain the sweetness of the Qur'ān. A very famous reciter who was reciting to a large audience, possibly والله أعلم, in a funeral. He made a sudden dance move while he was reciting,

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ

And if Allāh had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. ³

Then he apologized after he was banned for six or twelve months and he said, "I couldn't control myself," because music and musical rhythms inspire dancing. The Qur'ān recited properly, as Jibrīl taught Rasūl Allāh ﷺ, it inspires one to contemplate, it increases one's faith and fear of Allāh, it increases his Khushū', and it guides one to deeds. It softens the heart and causes the skin to shiver.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا

² [7:204]

³ [42:27]

The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith...⁴

And another verse,

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ
إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Allāh has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance [i.e., mention] of Allāh.⁵

Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى said the Qur'ān should be protected and respected from being recited in the musical Maqāmāt. Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali said the majority of the Ulamā' don't allow the musical Maqāmāt, and some related an Ijmā' on that, and he spoke strongly against it. So did many other Ulamā' — Imām Mālik, Imām Ahmad, Muhammad Ibn Sirīn, An-Nawawi, Al-Qurtubi — Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى! Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى said it's not permissible for the Qur'ān to be recited in the musical tones. And I told you to pay attention to the definition of what Al-Maqāmāt Al-Mūsīqīyah are. Ibn Taymiyyah said it's not permissible to combine to the Qur'ān rhythms that are combined to music. It's comparing the Qur'ān to the music.

When I was a child in Madīnah with my father, memorizing the Qur'ān — may Allāh سبحانه وتعالى give him a long life full of deeds and heal him and cure him — my father took me many times to a very famous Shaykh. His name was Shaykh 'Abd Al-Fattāh Ibn Sayyid 'Ajami Al-Marsafi. He was a teacher in the University of Madīnah and he has several other big positions. He was a contemporary giant and

⁴ [8:2]

⁵ [39:23]

Imām in the sciences of the Qur'ān and Qira'āt. He said reciting the Qur'ān with those musical Maqāmāt is not permissible in any way, even if it doesn't conflict with the rules of Tajwīd! He states that reciting the Qur'ān with the Musical Maqāmāt doesn't and cannot coincide with the rules of Tajwīd. He said the Muslimīn have an Ijmā' on following the rules of the Qur'ān and on the prohibition on the Maqāmāt, and I consider that Harām as well.

One thing that needs to be noted is that there are some reciters who strongly objected to the musical Maqāmāt being applied to the Qur'ān, and they refused, under pressure, to learn or recite the Qur'ān in those musical Maqāmāt. They naturally beautify their voices, and at times, their recitation may spontaneously correspond with the patterns of some of the Maqāmāt, when it wasn't intended. So some use that to claim legitimacy for the recitation in the Maqāmāt, but it occurred spontaneously. That's different than those who learn it and are trained in it.