ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi: A Qira’at Figure Of 8th Century

Mohd Faizulamri bin Mohd Saad, Sabri bin Mohamad, Latifah Abd Majid, Haziyah Hussin, Mohd Fadlan Othman and Mohd Arif Nazri

Department of Quran and Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, The National University of Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the contribution of Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi to the field of Qira’at. His prominence in Quranic commentary appears to give a huge contribution to Qira’at field. The research method applied in this article was data gathering which will be analyzed thoroughly and properly. From his works and discussions in particular, it is concluded that he was an expert in this field. In fact, he defended Qira’at when a Qira’at was rejected by any party.

Key words: Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Qira’at, Quranic commentary, Bahr al-Muhit.

Introduction

This study presents an investigation into the part played by Abu Hayyan in disseminating Qira’at studies in the world. Special attention is given to his connection with the teachers and his disciples. Focuses upon the connections and chains of Islamic learning of his teachers, can help us weave together the threads of scholarly interaction in Qira’at studies during his periods. In addition, it will reveal the authority and superiority of each particular Qira’at scholar.

Thus, this study is an attempt to give a description of the life and works of Abu Hayyan of the most respected scholar in Qira’at studies. It is an examination of how his involvement in the chain of networks of Qira’at learning influenced his thought and intellectual disposition as well as his writings on Qira’at studies. Accordingly, focuses on discussion of the intellectual biography of Abu Hayyan were revealed. The rationale for this focus on the major scholars under whom Abu Hayyan studied is to put him as a great scholar in proper context, for it is certain that he played an important role in channeling Qira’at studies from into the world.

Methods:

In the interest of validity and reliability, the study provides multiple sources of evidence. These include tape recorded in-depth interviews with specific researches in particular with an expert educationalist in the field of Qiraat and academicians who are biographers of this great scholar. Also included are data-gathering techniques such as library and document analysis. Research methods used to examine the original writings of Abu Hayan is largely qualitative and consist of approaches such as hermeneutic and content analyses.

Results And Discussion

Biography of Imam Abu Hayyan:

Imam Abu Hayyan’s full name as agreed by historians was Muhammad bin Yusuf bin ‘Ali bin Yusuf bin Hayyan. He was known by the title Athir al-Din (Ibn al-Jazari 1351H, 285). His nickname (kunyah) was Abu Hayyan (al-Safdi n.d., 5:267; al-`Asqalani n,d,. 2:121; Ibn al-Jazari, 1351H, 285) as believed by most historians. Some also said that his nickname was Abu Abdullah, and this can be seen in the introduction of tafsir al-Bahr al-Muhit itself (al-Andalusi n,d,. 1:2). His most famous nickname was Abu Hayyan that it was used more often than his real name (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 11).

Imam Abu Hayyan had a few names that attributed to him which are (Nafh al-Tib, 2:535, Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 12):

a. Al-Ghirnati: Attributed to Ghirnatah (Granada) a city of Andalus which was his birthplace.
b. Al-Andalusi: Attributed to Andalus.
c. Al-Nifzi: Attributed to Nifzah, one of Berber ethnics.

Corresponding Author: Mohd Faizulamri Saad, Department of Quran and Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, The National University of Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
E-mail: faizam@yahoo.com
d. An-Nahwi: Attributed al-Nahw as he was a scholar and a teacher of the Arabic grammarian of his time.
e. Al-Hayyani: Attributed to his eldest grandfather, Hayyan.
g. Al-Shafie: The fiqhi sect he followed during his lifetime in Egypt.
h. Al-Atthari: Attributed to al-Atthaar.
i. Al-Maghribi: Attributed to al-Maghrib (Morocco) which in general it included Morocco and Andalus.
j. Al-Misri: Because Imam Abu Hayyan resided in until his death.
k. Al-Zahiri: Attributed to a fiqhi sect, al-Zahiri. This sect was so prominent during Abu Hayyan’s time.
l. Al-Maliki: There is a possibility of Abu Hayyan practicing al-Maliki fiqh as it was the most prominent sect in Morocco.

Imam Abu Hayyan was born on the last tenth days of Shawwal 654H/1265AD (Ibn al-Jazari 1351H, 285). This has been mentioned by Abu Hayyan himself in the ijazah that he awarded to al-Safdi (n.d., 5:267): “My birthplace was in Granada at the end of of Shawwal year 654H”.

He was born in Mataksharish, a city in Granada (al-Andalusi n.d., 1:7). Imam al-Subki (n.d.,9:149) stated: “He was born in Mataksharish, a city that was fenced by the people of Granada”. Imam Abu Hayyan died on 28th Safar 745H/1362AD at the age of 90 and was buried at al-Sufiyyah cemetery (al-Safdi n.d., 2:193). There was another view stated that he died on 18th Safar (‘Umar Rida Kahhalah n.d., 12:193). Nevertheless, the first viewpoint was stated by the student of Abu Hayyan himself, Salah al-Din Khalil bin Aybak al-Safdi who was definitely nearer to him knew the true date better.

Abu Hayyan’s Teacher:

As someone who loved knowledge so much, Abu Hayyan sought knowledge very hard and he spent his time only for seeking knowledge. Therefore, it is not surprising that he managed to reach the highest level of knowledge mastery in his time. He has learnt from a lot of teachers and received ijazah from them. He mentioned that he had learnt from 450 teachers, while the teachers who awarded him ijazah were so many and they were people of Granada, Malaqah, Sabtah, Africa, Egypt, Hijaz, Iraq and Sham (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:541-542).

When he mentioned about his teachers in another place, he did state that it was his teachers’ history and their number was 500. In addition, there were more than thousand teachers who have awarded him ijazah, and he also has studied 19 Qira’at books. Ibn al-Malihi said: “He was the best teacher in Qira’at”. Abu Hayyan’s student al-Safdi also stated that he has 400 teachers while the number of teachers who awarded him ijazah reached 1500 people. (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:560). His teachers are the proof that his knowledge in various fields is undeniable. In fact, this enables him to be entitled as a multi-disciplined figure of his time. Historians have quoted that Imam Abu Hayyan has authored a book that describes his teachers with their biodata. He named it as al-Nudar (al-Asqalani n.d., 2:123) but unfortunately the book was missing.

Among his teachers in the field of Qira’at were: (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:535 – 560; al-Safdi n.d., 2:187; Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006,49-98): Ahmad bin Sa’d bin ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Ansari (712H), Ibn al-Dabbagh, Ahmad bin ‘Ali bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin ‘Isa, Abu Ja’far bin Dabbagh al-Ru’ayni al-Andalusi (680H), Al-Maliki: There is a possibility of Abu Hayyan practicing al-Maliki fiqh as it was the most prominent sect in Morocco, Abu Hayyan admired al-Maliki fiqh which in general it included Morocco and Andalus.

Many students came across the world to learn from Imam Abu Hayyan in various field of studies such as tafsir of Qur’an, hadith (prophetic tradition), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Arabic language etc. This phenomenon can be traced back to the facts that he was a teacher at the biggest mosque in Cairo; he lived long enough to serve his community by sharing his knowledge (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 75). Among his famous students in Qira’at were (Ibn Qadi Shahbah t.th, 1:151; al-Safdi t.th, 2:187; Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 76-85): Ibrahim bin Ahmad bin ‘Abd al-Wahid bin ’Abd al-Mu’min bin Sa’id bin Kamil bin ’Ulwan al-TanukhialDimashqi (800H), Ibrahim bin Ahmad bin ’Isa, Badr al-Din bin al-Khabsab al-Qadi al-Misri al-Shafi’i (774H), Ibrahim bin Abdullah bin ‘Ali bin Yahya bin Khalaf al-Muqri’ al-Nahwi, Burhan al-Din al-Hakari (749H), Ahmad al-Hanbali, a syleik in Amid and Peninsular of al-Furatiyyah. He moved to Egypt and learned the seven Qira’at from Imam Abu Hayyan, Ahmad bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz bin Yusuf al-Harrani (788H), Ibn Maktum, Ahmad
bin Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad bin Maktum bin Ahmad, Taj al-Din Abu Muhammad al-Hanafi al-Nahwi (749H), Ahmad bin ‘Ali bin Ahmad, Abu Ja’far al-Humayri al-Ghirnati also known as al-Shaquri (785H), Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin ‘Ali al-Asbahi al-Andalusi, Shihab al-Din Abu al-‘Abbas al-Inabi al-Nahwi (776H), Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Yahya bin Nahlah (732H), Al-Samin, Ahmad bin Yusuf bin Abdul al-Da’im bin Muhammad, Shihab al-Din al-Halabi (756H), Abu Bakr bin Ajudhindi bin ‘Abdullah al-Shamsi known as Ibn al-Jundi (769H), Hayyan bin Muhammad bin Yusuf bin ‘Ali, the son of the Imam Abi Hayyan, Al-Safdi, Salah al-Din Khalil bin Aybik bin Abdullah al-Safdi (764H), Salih bin Muhammad al-Qaymiri, Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Khalil bin Ibrahim, his lineage was directly connected to the Third Caliph, Uthman, was known among the hadith scholars as Ibn Khalil (777H), Muhammad bin Ahmad bin ‘Ali bin al-Hasan bin Jami’ al-Dimashqi (776H), Ibn Marzuq, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr bin Marzuq (781H), Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Latif bin Muhammad bin ‘Ali, Abu al-Fath al-Subki (744H), Muhammad bin ‘Ali bin al-Hasan, al-Husayni al-Dimashqi (765H), Muhammad bin ‘Ali bin Muhammad bin Abd al-Kafi bin Dargham, was known as Ibn Sakr, Muhammad bin Muhammad bin ‘Ali, Shams al-Din Abu al-Abbas al-Ghumari al-Misri al-Maliki al-Nahwi (782H) and Muhammad bin Ya’qub bin Isma’il bin ‘Abd al-Khaliq, Abu Abdullah al-Maqdisi (749H).

These were among the famous followers of Imam Abu Hayyan. The list shows us the depth of knowledge of the Imam especially in the field of Qira’at.

His Aqeedah and Legal School:

a. Creed:

Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi was a scholar of ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama’ah, following Ash’arite school which was founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash’ari. Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrawi pointed out that the reader of Quranic verses related to the Attributes and Names of Allah in al-Bahr al-Muhit can be assured that the Imam followed Ash’ari school (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 35).

He opposed the view of the Mu’tazili school, especially the opinions of al-Zamakhshari. For example when dealing with verse 55 of al-Baqarah;

And [remember] when you said, “O Moses, indeed we shall not believe thee until we see God face to face!”

According to this verse, al-Zamakhshari said that it is impossible to see Allah even in the Hereafter, while Imam Abu Hayyan said that this topic is still a matter of disputes among Muslim scholars. The Al-Qadariyyah, Mu’tazili, Najjariyah, Jahmiyyah and their counterparts argued that it is impossible for us to see Allah with our naked eyes, contradicting with the belief of the majority Muslim scholars. Imam Abu Hayyan explained that there are so many prophetic traditions in favour of his point of view, thus we need to believe in it. Abu Hayyan also emphasized that al-Zamakhshari used the religious texts out of its context as a result of his fanaticism of his school of thought (Al-Andalusi n.d., 1:211).

Imam Abu Hayyan also could not tolerate with the concept of philosophy as can be inferred from his writing; when I arrived at Egypt, I see many Egyptians embraced philosophy without any objection. It really shocked me, even we the Andalusians hate philosophy! (al-Andalusi n.d., 5:150; Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 34).

Many scholars acknowledged the creed of the Imam. Among them was al-Kamal Ja’far, saying that; Imam Abu Hayyan is trustworthy, reliable, firm and his creed is pure from any heresy of philosophy, Mu’tazilah and Mujassimah (al-`Asqalani n.d., 2:123). Kamal al-Din al-Adfuwi praised Abu Hayyan as a knowledgeable, trustworthy man and his creed was pure from any heresy of philosophy, Mu’tazilah and Mujassimah. Other scholars also mentioned that he followed the path of the al-salaf al-salih. (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 34).

Legal school:

Imam Abu Hayyan is a disciple of Zahiri school when he was in Andalus, due to the fact that Zahiri was the prominent school of fiqh at that time in Andalus.

After he arrived in Egypt, he observed that Zahiri school is not well known there. So, he followed the school of Shafi’i where he studied al-Muharrar, a book written by al-Rafi’i and al-Minhaj composed by Imam al-Nawawi from al-Iraqi. He learned and memorized some part of al-Minhaj (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:541-542) before he copied the book by hand. Then he summarized it and named it al-Wahhaj (al- `Asqalani n.d., 2:121; Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2007, 38).

Even though he followed the school of Shafi’i, he was influenced by the first doctrine al-Zahiri. Al-Isnawi did mention: Imam Abu Hayyan was keen to the school of ahl al-Zahir and sometimes it was too obvious.

In case of the commentary of the Quran, Imam Abu Hayyan also seemed to be more inclined towards the literal meaning of the Quran, and sometimes he used the opinion of Ibn Hazm whenever there is any dispute in
the legal texts. He also summarized the work of Ibn Hazm entitled al-Anwar al-Ajia fi Ikhtisar al-Muhalla, as he mentioned it in the book of al-Bahr al-Muhit (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2006, 38).

**Imam Abu Hayyan’s Works:**

The legacy of Imam Abu Hayyan’s work to us is priceless. It has benefited all disciplines of Islamic knowledge. He said to his student, al-Safdi in his ijazah where his writings reached 46 books and the other seven were not able to be completed (al-Safdi t.th, 5:280-281). On the other hand, al-Ru‘ayni was also a student of Imam Abu Hayyan said that there were 50 books in total including long and short text (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:563; Ibn Qadi Shahbah n.d., 1:151). In addition, Ahmad Amin said that Imam Abu Hayyan’s writings were precisely 65 books, and yet only 10 from them we received in our hands. While Dr. Khadijah al-Hadithi said in her study case that Imam Abu Hayyan’s writings were 66 books in total (Ahmad Khalid Shukri 2007, 91).


In 8th century in Egypt were al-Imam al-’Allamah Muhammad bin Yusuf Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi (745H) (Ibn al-Jazariyy 1351H, 2:285) and Abdullah bin Aydaghdi bin Abdullah al-Shamsi who was also known as al-Jundi (769H) (Ibn al-Jazariyy 1351H, 1:180). While the famous great Qira’at figure in al-Andalus was ‘Ali bin Umar bin Ibrahim al-Kattani Abu al-Hasan al-Khayjati (723H) (Ibn al-Jazariyy 1351H, 1:557; Ibn al-Jazariyy 1351H, 1:81).

The most famous book that was produced in 8th century was Ma’rifah al-Qurra’ ‘ala al-Tabaqat wa al-Irshad, this book was written differently from previous writers by explaining Qira’ah only without fasr. This book was written by Abu al-Qasim bin al-Barizi.

1. Al-Shur’ah fi Qira’at fi al-Sab’ah, this book was written differently from previous writers by explaining Qira’at only without fasr. This book was written by Abu al-Qasim bin al-Barizi.
2. al-Faridat al-Barizah fi Hall al-Shatibiyyah by Abu al-Qasim bin al-Barizi.
4. Sharh li al-Shatibiyyah, until the chapter of al-Hamz only, by Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Buskhan.
5. Waqf Hamzah and Hisham by Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Buskhan.
6. al-Tazkirah fi al-Radd ‘ala Man Radda Tafkhim al-Alif wa Ankarahu by Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Buskhan.
13. Al-Kifayah, a collection of nazam according to the school of al-Shatibiyyah, by Abu Muhammad al-Wasiti.
Issue In Qira’ at Studies:

Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi was very vocal when it comes to defending Qira’at. Whenever one person disputed any Qira’at, he would defend it, and defending Qira’at was his priority. Apparently this was because he understood that Qira’at is the word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For example:


For example, some scholars of Basrah’s School of Grammar (Al-Mubarrad 1997, 2:749), Ibn’ Atiyyah and others (al-Muhaymid 2001, 28) stated that the reading of Imam Hamzah with kasrah of mim in ’al-Arhami’ in surah al-Nisa’ is not possible and it is a weak Qira’ah. They stated that it cannot be connected with damir by using ’ataf. Al-Zamakhsyari also viewed that, with his statement that ’ataf with apparent damir is not correct (al-Zamakhsyari n.d., 1:493). Al-Zajjaj (1988, 2:6) also stated that the reading of the jar in the ’al-Arhami’ in Arabic is wrong and it cannot be done except for poetry purpose.

Even there are scholars who refute this reading by saying; If I happened to pray behind any imam who reads al-Arhami’ with kasrah, I will definitely take off. (Al-Mubarrad 1997, 2:749). Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Nahwi (1987, 2:144) criticized whoever refuted sternly the reading of Hamzah. As for example; the Islam criticized the scholars of Basrah Grammar School, al-Zamakhsyari and Ibn ‘Atiyyah: “Their point of view was to prohibit ’atf to damir majrur except the in the case of repetition of jar but their excuses are not reliable. But the right opinion is the idea of Kufah scholars which is allowing (’atf to damir majrur).” He clarified by stating evidence from verse 217, chapter al-Baqarah.

He also criticized Ibn ‘Atiyyah by saying that: The weakness of Ibn ‘Atiyyah which is not parallel with his good deeds and actions is that he criticized the Qira’at which was verified by the prophet himself, accepted by the scholars of Qira’at among the Companions such as Uthman, ‘Ali, Ibn Mas’ud, Zayd ibn Thabit, and the Companions who read from Ubay ibn Ka’b. Ibn ‘Atiyyah rejected it with a dangerous idea that came from his mind. Such courage was only shown by the Mu’tazilah scholars like al-Zamakhshari as he often threw accusations to the Qurra’ (readers) and their Qira’at (style of Qur’anic reading). Imam Hamzah read from Sulayman ibn Mahran al-A’ mash, Hamran ibn A’yan, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Layla dan Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq. He did not read any word of Quran ever except from athar, he was a pious man and trustworthy in hadith.

There are various evidences in the Quran that showed ’atf does not have repetitions of al-khafit. As for example, in surah al-Baqarah verse 217, surah al-Nisa’ verse 127 and verse 162 and surah al-Hijr verse 20. According to these verses, Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Nahwi (1987 2:147) mentioned about Qira’at Imam Hamzah: Whoever claimed that there is error in Qira’at Imam Hamzah, he is a bad liar!

b. Reading of Imam Ibn ‘Amir al-Shami in surah al-An’aam verse 137.

Pertaining the reading of Imam Ibn ‘Amir which is with ya’ in ‘syuraka’ihim’, Ibn ‘Atiyyah was among the scholars who rejected this Qira’at (1993, 2:349), he stated that this style of reading is weak in terms of language
use among the Arabs. Imam al-Tabari also rejected this Qira‘at because Arabic grammatical system did not allow any separation between mudhaf and mudhaf ilayh.

Al-Zamakhshari in his work al-Kashshaf also rejected this reading, stating that the separation is not possible except for the poetry needs. Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Nahwi (1987, 4:229) in confirming Ibn ‘Amir’s style of reading cynically rejected al-Zamakhshari’s point of view by saying: “I wonder how was supposed a non-arab rejected a pure Arab’s recitation in Qira‘at Mutawatirah while his grammar is weak. Theoretically in Arabic language, it is not only in one poem line (there is much more).

He said: “I really wonder how a man could be suspicious towards the Seven Qurra’ who were acknowledged by all Muslims from east to west in Quranic recitation. Muslims fully believe and accept their excerpt, memory, understanding and their religion. They separated between mudhaf and mudaf ilayh in one sentence, there is an Arabic quote: ‘huwa ghulam – insya Allah – akhiba’, therefore separation in mufrad (single) form is easier.

Conclusion:

Shaykh al-Dhahabi concluded Imam Abu Hayyan as an amazing and famous masterpiece, widely spread and various, read, discovered by people and copied. It is not impaired or lost its fame because of earlier books, in fact the people of Egypt and others came to study from him. (al-Tilmisani 1997, 2:541). His name was mentioned in historical books as an expert in Qira‘at discipline. As well as his writings that explained further about Qira‘at proved that his contribution was very big in this field. His number of teachers proved his integrity in various discipline especially in Qira‘at. As well as other scholars as a result of his upbringing verified that his large contribution to the fields of knowledge. His tireless effort has borne its fruits, in the shape of large number of significant masterpieces that could be passed from a generation to another especially in Muslim’s world.

References

Al-Quran al-Karim.