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Recitation of Holy Quran in Maqamat: Principles and Limits in the Verses and Their Exegesis

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Abstract
There is no discussion of Maqamat directly in the Quran; that is why we don't find the answer to this question in a simple way. This study adopts the way indirectly by organizing and arranging the eight verses in two different groups: five principal verses and three verses that are always present against the Maqamat. These verses are being understood through some major exegesis. The three concepts have been kept separately and clearly in this article: What do the verses say directly? What do the exegetes quote, and what does the author interpret? No verse directly, and a statement of any exegete based on the explanations of any verse claims the permissibility of Maqamat, neither denied. The verses give principles and limitations: recitation is to be ordered and unharried, the words keep their originality, and the reciter and listener must be contemplated and reflect on the heart through meaning. Those verses that are being presented against the Maqamat are related to frivolous diversion, not recitation of the Qur'an. The conclusion is conditional: Maqamat can only be defended when they are under the rules of Tajweed and the cause of contemplation. Now here remains the question that is unanswered: whether the Maqamat system will fall under this or not, which has been rejected seriously by strict exegesis that cannot be settled by verses and exegesis merely.

Keywords: Maqamat, Qur'anic Recitation, Tartil, Tahsin Al-Sawt, Tafsir, Exegesis, Principles and Limits, Qur'anic Melody

Introduction
If you ask a trained reciter how he learned his craft, he will speak of a teacher, long periods of practice, and specific melodic modes maqamat through which he navigates often almost

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instinctively. Yet, if you pose the question to a religious scholar whether these melodic modes are permissible the answer is far less clear-cut. There has long been a consensus among Muslims that one should beautify one's voice when reciting the Quran. It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) remarked to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari that he had been granted "one of the flutes of the family of David"[1] and he further instructed: "Adorn the Quran with your voices"[2]. Imam al-Nawawi notes that there is a consensus that beautifying one's voice during recitation is commendable[3], while Imam al-Ghazali includes the refinement of the voice and tartil (measured, rhythmic recitation) among the outward etiquettes of reciting the Quran.[4]

The consensus ends, however, when a beautiful voice shifts into the realm of formal musical composition. Ibn al-Qayyim examines the arguments from both sides before offering his own conclusion[5], while Ibn Kathir who advocates for a gentle, reverent, and humble style of recitation asserts that the Quran must remain free from melodies structured upon musical meters[6]. In 1956, Dar al-Ifta of Egypt issued a detailed ruling declaring it impermissible to recite the Quran using musical melodic modes, citing verses such as Surah Al-Hijr (15:9) and Surah Al-Muzzammil (73:4) in support of this ruling.[7]

This research paper examines the most frequently asked question that is neglected most of the time: if the maqamat are the method of reciting the Holy Quran, so the verses themselves, which are understood by the exegetes, what do they say regarding this? In this study, it has brought the eight verses regarding this topic. The first five verses are primary, which are Saba 10, Fatir 1, Al-Muzzammil 4, Al-Baqarah 121 and Al-Zumar 23 and three verses are those that often bring against the system of maqamat, which are Luqman 6, An-Najm 59 to 61 and Al-Isra 64. Well, the selection of verses does not claim to be complete or comprehensive rather it has been tried to bring those verses who are very close to this topic.

The study of these verses has been completed through some major exegeses, including Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir etc. Besides that, Al Sadi differs from another exegetic

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also incorporated in it. The method of explanation of these verses is very simple. In part A it has been brought the exact quotations of different exegesis and in part B what has been interpreted through their explanation has divided into three categories: What the verse explicitly defines, what the exegetes have narrated what we as author infer or understand through this process. The chains of narration for the traditions have not been re-verified; in instances where a scholar has deemed a chain weak, the tradition is presented solely as a report rather than as an evidentiary argument.[9]

Literature Review

This subject has been written on from various angles, but not, to my knowledge, from the aspect of verses. Khalil's analytical study is based on al-Nawawi, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Ibn Hajar and Ibn Taymiyyah. He says that maqams are melodies taken from singing and it is not permissible to learn them for recitation. It does not examine any verse, and since it is not yet in print, its weight should be placed in that light[10]. Al-Khairi explains the meaning, history and conditions of recitation with a tune in the light of hadith and the sayings of scholars and only mentions two verses in passing.[11]

The work of musicologists describes the process of recitation. Indra wan and his colleagues showed how the system of vowels works with the Bayat and Hijaz in the recitation of Surah Fatiha by an imam and admitted that this is only one example[12]. Nelson's book is a standard source for understanding recitation as an oral art, but it does not impose any sharia rulings[13]. Two books by Arafa ibn Tantawi collect the sayings of jurists and quote Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Kathir, but they do not contain any sections on verses or interpretation[14]. Verses in fatwas only appear as brief references, while rulings are based on other grounds. The Egyptian fatwa is of this type. A 2021 research-based fatwa from Jordan deems the recitation of the Quran with a melodious voice permissible, subject to certain conditions, and cites evidence from hadith and the works of jurists[15]. What is currently lacking is a study that examines the verses individually in consultation with Quranic exegetes to determine the extent to which a specific point can be substantiated by each verse.

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Key Terms and Backgrounds

In music, a "*Maqam*" is a structural framework of musical notes defined by specific intervals. It consists of a foundational note Qarar, a central or focal note Ghammaz, and a distinct character that determines its emotional impact on the listener[16]. The term "maqam" originally means "place" or "location"; its musical application is a later development. Al-Urmawi used the term "adwar" for this concept, and it is said that Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi was the first to apply the term "maqam" to this system of musical notes[17]. None of the exegetes examined here employ this term. Consequently, whatever the Quranic verses may state regarding sound, any connection to the concept of maqamat can only be reached through inference.

The term "*Lahn*" carries several distinct meanings. Lexicographically, it can refer to a deviation from the correct manner of recitation or singing[18]; it may denote a structured melody[19]; or it can signify an implication or tone as seen in the phrase lahn al-qawl (the "tone" or "implication" of speech) in Surah Muhammad (verse 30)[20]. Whether an exegete intends the meaning of "error" or "melody" is determined by the context.

Al-Qurtubi defines "tartil" (recitation with measured rhythm) as follows:

"والترتيل: التنضيد والتنسيق وحسن النظام"[21]

Tartil means arranging things in an orderly fashion, organizing them, and maintaining a sound structure.

It is attributed to Hazrat Ali ؓ that tartil consists of "knowing the appropriate places to pause and articulating the letters with precision and excellence." Ibn al-Jazari mentioned this without an isnad (chain of narration); therefore, it is not relied upon here[22]. *Tahsin al-sawt* that is, beautifying one's voice is considered desirable by consensus. However, al-Nawawi warns against elongating the voice in a manner that causes a letter to be added or obscured[23]. *Tarji'* refers to the repetition or oscillation of the voice:

"وأما الترجيع فهو الترديد في الصوت"[24]

And Tarji' means the repetition or oscillation of the voice.

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Regarding *taghanni*, the hadith states: "He is not one of us who does not recite the Quran with taghanni." Ibn ‘Uyaynah interpreted this to mean becoming independent of others through the Quran, while Imam al-Shafi ‘i interpreted it as reciting in a soft, subdued voice, imbued with a sense of sorrow or melancholy[25]. Ibn al-Qayyim categorizes taghanni into two types. If it is natural to occur without formal training or deliberate effort then it is permissible and praiseworthy. Conversely, if it is acquired through affectation and practice, learned melodies structured according to specific rhythms and measured cadences then the early generations did not approve of it[26]. Any Quranic verses pertaining to the voice must be understood in light of this distinction.

4. Part One: The Five Principal Verses

1. Surah Saba, Verse 10

"وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۖ يَا جِبَالُ أَوِّبِي مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرَ"

And We bestowed upon David a great favor from Us. (We said:) 'O mountains, join him in glorifying [Allah], and you too, O birds!

A. Citations from Notable Exegetes

Al-Tabari interprets "awwibi" as "glorify [Allah] along with him," without making any reference to the voice of David (peace be upon him)[27]. Ibn Kathir, however, links the term to the nature of the voice:

"التأويب في اللغة هو الترجيع"[28]

In the Arabic language, 'ta'wib' signifies 'tarji" [i.e., the modulation, resonance, or melodic repetition of sound]. He further cites a narration of the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding Abu Musa [al-Ash'ari]:

"لقد أوتي هذا مزمارا من مزامير آل داود"[29]

Definitely, He has been given one of the flutes of the family of David.

Al-Qurtubi notes that many jurists (fuqaha) favored the practice of reciting [the Quran] with embellishment and melodic modulation (tarji'):

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"القراءة بالتزيين والترجيع"[30]

Reciting with embellishment and melodic modulation.

B. Exegetical Extrapolation

Text of the verse: Allah bestowed a favor upon David (peace be upon him) and commanded the mountains and the birds to join him in glorifying [Allah]. The verse itself does not explicitly mention the voice. *Regarding the Exegetes:* Al-Tabari remains silent on the matter of the voice; Ibn Kathir connects the term to its linguistic root; and Al-Qurtubi highlights the preference held by the jurists. *Inference:* The verse establishes only that "tarjee" refers to the reverberation or echoing of the voice implying, for instance, that a beautiful voice raised in the praise of Allah is a positive thing. The glorification of Dawud (peace be upon him) was not the recitation of the Quran, and the account concerning Abu Musa is a hadith, not a Quranic verse. This verse does not, in any way, lead to the concept of maqamat.

2. Surah Fatir, Verse 1

"يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ"

He adds to the creation whatever He wills.

A. Citations from Notable Exegetes

According to Imam Al-Tabari, this "addition" directs to the wings of the angels; he makes no mention of voice[31]. Ibn Kathir first mentions the wings, then cites an alternative interpretation attributed to al-Zuhri and Ibn Jurayj:

"يعني حسن الصوت"[32]

Meaning: a beautiful voice.

Al-Qurtubi adopts this same interpretation from the aforementioned two authorities. He also notes the view presumed by the majority of exegetes that the reference is to angels along with several other possibilities and links the matter to a dream experienced by Haitham al-Farsi[33]. Under the commentary for Surah Saba' (verse 10), he had previously stated:

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"وَحُسْنُ الصَّوْتِ هِبَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَتَفَضُّلٌ مِنْهُ"[34]

A beautiful voice is a gift from Allah the Exalted and an act of His grace.

B. Exegetical Extrapolation

The text of the verse: It conveys a general concept; there is no explicit mention of the voice. *Regarding the exegetes:* The interpretation identifying it as a "beautiful voice" is held by a minority and is not found in the work of al-Tabari[35]. *Inference:* The only general inference that can be drawn from the verse and even then, only according to the interpretation of that minority is that a beautiful voice is one of Allah's blessings. As for the account of the dream, it does not constitute evidence in the technical sense of Islamic law; therefore, it has not been utilized as proof. The verse offers no guidance on how the voice should be employed.

3. Surah Al-Muzzammil, Verse 4

"وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا"

And recite the Qur'an with measured recitation

A. Citations from Notable Exegetes

Al-Tabri:

"وبين القرآن إذا قرأته تبيينا، وترسل فيه ترسلا"[36]

Recite the Quran clearly and distinctly and do so with measured deliberation.

He cites the view of Mujahid that one part should follow another [in a measured sequence][37] and that of Qatadah makes it clear [and distinct][38]. Ibn Kathir:

"اقرأه على تمهل فإنه يكون عونا على فهم القرآن وتدبره"[39]

Recite it with deliberation, for these aids in understanding the Quran and reflecting upon it. He narrates an account from Anasؓ regarding the manner of the Prophet's (ﷺ) recitation:

"كانت مدا"[40]

It was characterized by elongation. He also mentions the counsel of Ibn Mas 'udؓ: do not scatter the Quran [hastily] like sand, nor recite it rapidly like poetry[41.] Al-Sa 'di explains the purpose of tartil:

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"فإن ترتيل القرآن به يحصل التدبر والتفكر، وتحريك القلوب به، والتعبد بآياته"[42]

For it is through the measured recitation of the Quran that reflection and contemplation are achieved, hearts are stirred, and worship is performed through its verses.

B. Exegetical Extrapolation

Text of the verse: It contains a command for tartil, yet the verse itself does not provide a definition for it. *Regarding the exegetes:* They interpret this as: clear recitation, measured pacing, proper sequencing, and according to Ibn Kathir and Al-Sa'di comprehension and reflection[43]. The term "madd" as mentioned by Anasؓ refers to the elongation of sound; it is not the name of any specific melodic tune[44]. *Inference:* This is the most definitive criterion established for the manner of reciting the Quran. It precludes haste, and any form of embellishment must be evaluated against this standard: does it preserve the clarity of the words, and does it facilitate reflection? Any style that prioritizes the melodic structure over the clarity of the words deviates from the injunction of this verse. However, nothing in the exegesis prohibits a beautiful or sustained voice. The verse provides a standard; it takes no position for or against specific regional or stylistic variations.

4. Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 121

"الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ"

Those to whom We have given the Book recite it as it ought to be recited

A. Citations from Notable Exegetes

Al-Tabari concludes that this verse refers to the Kuffar (People of the Book, Ahl e-Kitab).

"هذا القول أولى بالصواب من القول الذي قاله قتادة"[45]

This view is more correct than the view expressed by Qatadah. Regarding the phrase (as it ought to be recited), he cites a statement from Ibn Abbas narrated via Ikrimah which interprets it as:

"يتبعونه حق اتباعه"[46]

They follow it as it ought to be followed. Ibn Kathir cites a narration from Ibn Mas'ud—the chain of transmission of which is deemed weak:

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"والذي نفسي بيده إن حق تلاوته أن يحل حلاله ويحرم حرامه ويقرأه كما أنزله الله"[47]

By Him my soul is in Whose hand, the 'right' of recitation is that one deems its lawful as lawful, its unlawful as unlawful, and recites it exactly as Allah revealed it. Al-Hasan al-Basri explains it as acting upon clear verses and believing in the complex verses[48].

B. Exegetical Extrapolation

Text of the verse: It praises those who recite the Book by fulfilling the 'right' of its recitation and who believe in it. *Exegetes:* The phrase has been interpreted to imply following and acting upon the Book. The addition—"recites it exactly as Allah revealed it"—appears only in a weak narration [49]. *Inference:* This verse serves as a weak basis for establishing rules regarding the vocal aspect of recitation. At most, it yields a general principle: the recitation that is praised is one accompanied by faith and action. This applies to any style of recitation, including those involving melodic modes.

5. Surah Al-Zumar, Verse 23

"اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ"

Allah has descended the best word, a book whose chapters are similar and whose words are continual over and over again. It causes the hair of those people who fear their Lord to stand up, then their bodies and their hearts soften towards the remembrance of Allah.

A. Citations from Notable Exegetes

Al-Tabari links the "standing of the hair" (goosebumps) to the act of listening to the Book, and the "softening" (of the skin/heart) to acting upon it:

"إلى العمل بما في كتاب الله، والتصديق به"[50]

Towards acting upon what is in the Book of Allah and believing it to be true.
Ibn Kathir states that:

"هذه صفة الأبرار، عند سماع كلام الجبار"[51]

This is the characteristic of the righteous (al-abrar) when they hear the Word of the Almighty (al-Jabbar). He contrasts them with the evildoers, who listen to:

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"نغمات الأبيات من أصوات القينات"[52]

Melodic verses sung by female entertainers (slave-girls). Regarding the Companions (Sahaba), he states:

"ولم يكونوا يتصارخون ولا يتكلفون بما ليس فيهم"[53]

They would neither shriek nor scream, nor would they feign a state that was not truly within them. He also cites Qatadah, noting that the verse does not imply that believers fall unconscious or lose their senses:

"إنما هذا في أهل البدع، وهذا من الشيطان"[54]

This is merely the state of those who introduce innovations into the religion and it is from Satan.

Al-Qurtubi:

"تَضْطَرِبُ وَتَتَحَرَّكُ بِالْخَوْفِ مِمَّا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ"[55]

They tremble and stir due to the fear of the warnings contained therein.

Al-Sa'di:

"أي: عند ذكر الرجاء والترغيب"[56]

Meaning: when mention is made of hope and encouragement.

B. Exegetical Extrapolation

Text of the verse: The Book itself is the cause of the effect. The verse does not specify any particular sound or melody. *Exegetes* link the resulting effect to the meaning: the sensation of skin prickling (goosebumps) arises from warnings, while a softening of the heart stems from [divine] mercy or the act of following the Book[57]. Ibn Kathir adds that the righteous listen to the recitation of the Book, whereas the wicked listen to poetic songs[58]. *Inference:* The verse provides a criterion against which any style of recitation can be evaluated. The question is whether the style serves the meaning thereby affecting the heart or whether it competes with it. A style that draws more attention to the melody than to the words runs counter to this established paradigm. However, the verse does not prohibit beauty in the voice, nor can it be interpreted as imposing such a restriction. Ibn Kathir's comparison focuses on what is being heard and the state in which it is heard; it does not constitute a definitive ruling on any specific style though critics often use it. His observation that the

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Companions (Sahaba) neither shrieked nor feigned spiritual states serves as a warning against affectation the very term Ibn al-Qayyim uses to describe rehearsed or artificial melodies[59].

***Summary**:* From Surah Saba' (verse 10), we find the linguistic roots ta'wib and tarji'; from Surah Fatir (verse 1) according to some interpretations a general reference to a beautiful voice; from Surah Al-Muzzammil (verse 4), the command for tartil (measured recitation); from Surah Al-Baqarah (verse 121), the link between accurate recitation and adherence to the Book; and from Surah Az-Zumar (verse 23), the connection between the Book's impact and its meaning. None of these verses mention any specific maqam or anything else regarding it.

5. Part Two: The Opposing Verses and the Response

1. Surah Luqman, Verse 6

"وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ
And among the people, there are those who purchase 'lahw al-hadith' (frivolous, nonsensical discourse) to lead others astray from the path of Allah without any knowledge and to make a mockery of it. For such people, there is a humiliating punishment.

The verse condemns the individual who "purchases 'lahw al-hadith' to lead others off track from the path of Allah without knowledge and to make a mockery of it." The interpretation provided by Ibn Mas'ud, as cited by Ibn Kathir, is explicit:

"هو والله الغناء"[60]

By Allah, it refers to singing. Al-Tabari reports the same from Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn Abbas; however, he favors a broader interpretation of the term "purchasing," encompassing anything that distracts from the path of Allah examples of which include singing and associating partners with Allah[61]. Al-Qurtubi references a chapter heading from Sahih al-Bukhari linked to the condition "to lead others astray" which states:

"كل لهو باطل إذا شغل عن طاعة الله"[62]

Every form of frivolous diversion is false if it distracts one from the obedience of Allah.

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Response: The conditions specified in the verse are "leading others astray" and "making a mockery." The verse speaks of "purchasing" frivolous discourse in place of the Word of Allah; none of the aforementioned exegetes apply this to the act of recitation of the Quran. While it is often invoked in arguments against music as many have done it cannot be directly applied to the act of reciting the Quran with melodic intonation. If a particular style of recitation evolves into a form of "singing" where the words become subservient to the melody then the question arises: has it crossed into the territory condemned by this verse? The verse itself does not provide the verdict on this; The criterion of tartil (recitation with measured cadence) and Tadabbur (deep reflection) will determine this.

2. Surah Al-Najm, Verse 59-61

"أَفَمِنْ هَـٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ ۝ وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ۝ وَأَنتُمْ سَامِدُونَ"

Do you, then, marvel at this matter? And do you laugh while failing to weep, remaining 'samidun' (heedless, or occupied with singing)?

The verse rebukes those who laugh instead of weeping, while they are "samidun." Al-Tabari offers his interpretation:

"وأنتم لاهون عما فيه من العبر والذكر، معرضون عن آياته"[63]

You are heedless of the lessons and admonitions contained therein, and you turn away from His signs. Citing Ibn Abbas via 'Ikrimah he notes that in the Yemeni dialect, the term implies "singing"; elsewhere, he records that Ibn Abbas, Ali, and al-Hasan interpret it as "heedless"[64]. Ibn Kathir cites the view of al-Hasan and Ali:

"غافلون"[65]

Regarding the interpretation of "singing" mentioned by al-Qurtubi, it is noted that some would sing specifically to drown out the recitation of the Quran[66].

Response: Regardless of how the term is interpreted, those being described were actively suppressing the Quran rather than engaging with it. The more direct meaning is "heedless" a term that carries no implication regarding how a believer ought to approach the recitation of the Quran.

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3. Surah Al-Isra, Verse 64

"وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُم بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِم بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ"

And seduce whomever of them you can seduce with your voice and bring upon them an army of your horsemen and footmen. In the verse, Iblis is told to seduce whoever he can "with his voice". Tabari quotes Mujahid as saying:

"باللهو والغناء"[67]

Sport through spectacles and song. And the broad meaning of Ibn Abbas, that is, "everyone who calls to disobedience to Allah"[68]. Ibn Kathir cites Tabari's conclusion:

"والأولى أن يقال إن الآية تعم ذلك كله"[69]

It is better to say that the verse includes all of them. Qurtubi's conclusion against instruments and singing is, in plain words, "according to Mujahid's view" [70].

Response: Against recitation it is the weakest of the three. The voice is of Iblis; The singing commentary is one of several commentaries; And Tabari himself prefers the general meaning. The voice of the reciter calling people to the Qur'an is not a call to disobedience.

Summary*:* In each of these verses, "singing" appears only as a reported interpretation (attributed to Ibn Mas‘ud regarding Luqman 6, to ‘Ikrimah regarding An-Najm 61, and to Mujahid regarding Al-Isra’ 64); in every instance, the exegetes broaden the scope to encompass any form of frivolous activity, heedlessness, or incitement to disobedience. None of them specifically mention the recitation of texts or specific musical modes.

The answer that founds: It has been proved through the defined explanation of these three verses that these verses cannot be presented as evidence against the maqamat system, nor can the melodious recitation be justified through it. The possibility remains that any style which effectively transforms the recitation into a musical performance where the words serve the melody would fall under the scope of the concerns expressed in these verses. The verses define the boundaries of this concern. Whether a specific instance of recitation falls within or outside these limits is determined by factors such as measured, rhythmic

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recitation, the preservation of the actual words, contemplation and the impact derived from the meaning of the text.

6. Discussion

1. Principles and Limits

Four principles emerge repeatedly: measured pacing and composure, the preservation of the text, reflection and contemplation and the impact of the meaning upon the heart. Each principle also serves as a boundary. Reading too hastily violates the first principle. Altering the wording or extending sounds beyond the established rules violates the second [71]. Shifting one's focus from the meaning to the melody runs counter to the third. Furthermore, the example of Companions serves as a warning against ostentation or an artificial demeanor[72]. These boundaries apply to every style of recitation, whether simple or melodic. They do not target specific maqamat in isolation; therefore, these principles can neither be used to condemn nor to defend the maqamat themselves.

2. Where the Exegetes Differ or Are Silent

The interpretation involving a "beautiful voice" in relation to Fatir 1 is a view held by few. Regarding Al-Baqarah 121, Al-Tabari understands the verse as referring to the People of the Ahl al-Kitab), though the single relevant tradition is weak. Concerning the verses that appear to suggest the opposite, exegetes are divided into two camps: those who interpret them as referring to singing, and those who adopt a more general interpretation[73]. In none of these three interpretations is there an explicit discussion of specific locations; therefore, any claims made based on these interpretations regarding locations are merely inferences.

3. The Place of the Maqam System

Three points can be made. First, this system is not inherent to the Quran itself, and none of the exegetes discussed here make any mention of it. Second, nothing in the Quranic verses prevents a reciter from employing melody, provided that rhythmic recitation, the integrity of the words, and reflection or contemplation are maintained. Third, the verses do not endorse this system either: any melody that obscures the clarity of the words or shifts the

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focus of attention toward the tune itself, falls outside the permissible limits. Furthermore, the verses do not clarify whether this system aligns with the "natural" form of melodic recitation described by Ibn al-Qayyim, or with the "learned" (cultivated) melodies that were disapproved of by the early generations[74]. Since this system is taught, it points toward the latter category. However, as Nelson has demonstrated, many reciters learn it by ear practice that points toward the former category[75]. A definitive judgment on this matter depends on the realities of actual practice, as well as a more detailed examination of the Hadith literature and the works of the jurists.

7. Conclusion

The answer consists of two parts. The first part is negative: none of the eight verses in question nor any exegete interpreting them explicitly categorize the system of maqamat as either permissible or impermissible. Furthermore, the verses often cited against the practice of melodic recitation actually pertain to frivolous pursuits, mockery, the suppression of the Quran, or incitement to disobedience not to the act of reciting the Quran itself. The second part is affirmative: the verses establish certain principles and boundaries. Recitation should be in order and measured, with no alteration or changes in the words, the reciter and listener should engage in contemplation and what creates impact on their heart should be through the meaning and message of the verse. Depending on this interpretation, the concept of maqamat can be defendable in a way only when it remains dependent on the rules of phonetics and contemplation. As far as this question that the entire system of maqamat comes under the same category, although few of the exegetes have rejected it too, cannot be answered merely reviewing at the verses or exegesis.

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