Indeed, this Qur’an has been revealed in seven different ways, so recite it in the way that is easy for you

‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard Hishām ibn Hakīm recite Sūrat al-Furqān during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). I listened to his recitation and noticed that he recited it in many ways which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had not taught me. So I was about to jump upon him during the prayer, but I waited till he finished the prayer, whereupon I seized him by either his upper garment or mine and asked him: "Who taught you how to recite this Sūrah?" He replied: "The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) taught me how to recite it." So I said to him: "You have told a lie! By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) taught me this Sūrah which I have heard you recite." So I set forth, leading him to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). I said: "O the Messenger of Allah, I heard this man recite Sūrat al-Furqān in ways which you have not taught me, and you taught me how to recite it." On that, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "O ‘Umar, let go of him! Recite, O Hishām." So Hishām recited before him in the way I had heard him recite. the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "It was revealed like this." Then the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Recite, O ‘Umar!" So I recited it. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "It was revealed like this." And then he added: "Indeed, this Qur’an has been revealed in seven different ways, so recite it in the way that is easy for you."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

It is reported that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) heard Hishām ibn Hakīm (may Allah be pleased with him) recite Sūrat al-Furqān during the lifetime of the Prophet. His recitation differed from Umar's recitation in several words. ‘Umar had recited this Sūrah before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) so he thought that Hishām was reciting it incorrectly. So he was about to leap upon Hishām and take him by the head in the prayer. However, he waited until Hishām finished his prayer. Then ‘Umar seized him by his clothes from around his neck and asked him who had taught him how to recite this Sūrah. Hishām said that it was the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who had taught it to him. On that, ‘Umar belied him, swearing by Allah that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) taught him the same Sūrah in a way that was different from Hishām's recitation. Then ‘Umar dragged him to the Messenger of Allah, as he was a man with a fiery temperament regarding the matters that pertained to Allah, the Almighty. ‘Umar told the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's

peace and blessings be upon him) that he heard Hishām recite Sūrat al-Furqān in words which he did not hear from the Messenger of Allah, although he taught him how to recite it. Hence, the Prophet asked him to let go of Hishām and asked Hishām to recite Sūrat al-Furqān. When Hishām read it, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) confirmed that this Sūrah was revealed by Allah as Hishām recited it. Hishām was not mistaken as ‘Umar thought. Then the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked ‘Umar to recite the same Sūrah. When ‘Umar recited it, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) confirmed that this Sūrah was revealed by Allah as ‘Umar recited it, just as it was revealed in accordance with Hishām's recitation. Then the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Indeed, this Qur’an has been revealed in seven different ways, so recite it in the way that is easy for you." Thus, both ‘Umar and Hishām were correct in their recitation, for the Qur’an was revealed in more than one way of recitation. It was indeed revealed in seven different ways of recitation. Hishām's recitation did not include more verses than that of ‘Umar. The difference was only confined to the manner of recitation. For this reason, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) told each of them, having listened to their recitation, that the Sūrah had been revealed in that way. He explained that by saying: "Indeed, this Qur’an has been revealed in seven ways, so recite it in the way that is easy for you." This means: do not commit yourself to one way of recitation, for Allah, the Almighty, has given you more options and made it easy for the Muslims to recite the Qur’an in seven ways of recitation, out of His mercy and bounty. So praise and gratitude are due to Him. The scholars held different opinions on identifying the seven ways. It seems — and Allah knows best — that these ways refer to the aspects of the language of the Arabs. The Qur’an was revealed in accordance with those aspects for facilitation purposes at the beginning of Islam. The Arabs lived in different places and had different dialects. One tribe might have linguistic facets that other tribes did not have, yet with the advent of Islam they became united and harbored no more animosity toward each other. Thus, each became familiar with the language of the others. At this point, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (may Allah be pleased with him) gathered the people around one of the seven ways of recitation and burned the copies of the Qur’an that were written according to the other ways of recitation so that no difference would occur in this regard.

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