

Investigating the Scholarly Performance of Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b Qarṣī, and Ḥasan Baṣrī, as Mawālī Exegetes of the Followers Era

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Abstract

After Islam expanded beyond the land of Hijaz during the era of conquests, various tribes and races converged upon it and became subjects of the Islamic caliphate. Consequently, extensive interactions took place between the people of the conquered lands and the Arabs. Among them, individuals who embraced Islam were placed under the protection of an Arab patron and thus, became integrated into Arab society under the title of "Mawālī." Utilizing this privilege, the Mawālī progressed in various political, social, and especially Islamic fields, including asceticism, Islamic jurisprudence, and interpretation, and authored prominent works. In this regard, the question arises as to why the works of Mawālī commentators such as Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b Qarṣī, and Ḥasan Baṣrī were significant during the Followers Era. The hypothesis suggests that by engaging in the science of interpretation, they were able to produce simpler interpretations compared to Arab commentators, making their study less burdensome for people and enabling them to derive greater benefits from it in life. This article meticulously examines the dimensions and aspects of this subject using a historical research approach based on description and analysis. The research findings indicate that although the Mawālī did not have a deep familiarity with the Arabic language, their performance led Shia commentators, alongside Sunni scholars, to produce good and simpler works, thereby contributing to the growth of this science in Islam.

Keyword: Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b Qarṣī, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Followers, Interpretation Science.

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Introduction:

This article explores the scholarly contributions of Mujahid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi, and Hasan al-Basri, renowned Mawali commentators during the era of the Tabi'in. The reason for choosing this topic is that some recent converts to Islam with Shia tendencies, after being supported by prominent Arab tribes, attained significant positions in various fields within the Islamic community. Consequently, some of them delved into Islamic sciences, including Quranic exegesis, and authored important works. These commentators, by focusing on details and conducting extensive analyses, provided a significant service to the science of exegesis, which is noteworthy because they meticulously addressed ambiguities. Although each had a different method of interpretation, these differences did not lead to major conflicts in sources or confuse the public. In this context, the question arises: why were the works of Mawali commentators like Mujahid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi, and Hasan al-Basri significant during the Tabi'in era? The answer and the hypothesis of this research suggest that they, as non-Arab individuals, created simpler interpretations compared to Arab commentators. This made studying exegesis less tedious for people, allowing them to benefit more from it in their lives.

Research Method:

The hypothesis is that Mawali commentators, such as Mujahid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi, and Hasan al-Basri, through their focus on Quranic exegesis, were able to produce simpler interpretations than Arab commentators, which were more accessible and less tiring for people, thereby making the study of exegesis more beneficial in their daily lives. This article uses a historical research method based on description and analysis to examine the dimensions and aspects of this topic thoroughly.

Research Findings:

The findings show that although the Mawali did not have a deep familiarity with the Arabic language, their contributions enabled Shia commentators to produce excellent and simpler works alongside Sunni ones, thus aiding the growth of this field in Islam. Most of those who carried religious knowledge during the Tabi'in period were Iranian Mawali with Shia inclinations, such as Mujahid ibn Jabr, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi, and Hasan al-Basri. These Mawali were considered captives, and their ransom was to seek knowledge based on religious laws to gain freedom for the sake of God. Moreover, the Mawali were among the most patient and strong people in daily tasks, seeking knowledge according to religious laws, worship, and Quran recitation, and they engaged in charitable deeds.



Results:

Therefore, the most important findings of this research are as follows:

- The Tabi'in who were Mawali and Shia had more influence and ijthad in exegesis than other Tabi'in.
- Some Mawali avoided Isra'iliyat, while others, like Mujahid, narrated many of them, leading others to distance themselves from his interpretations.
- Mujahid made many errors in his interpretations, deviating from the correct path, despite being one of the most specialized Mawali in exegesis and making significant efforts in this field.
- Hasan al-Basri was one of the Mawali who focused more on admonitory and advisory exegesis, being the first to adopt this approach during the Tabi'in period.
- Most of what has been narrated in exegesis is attributed to Hasan because he was lenient in narration and eager to spread knowledge.
- After Qatada, Hasan was one of the Tabi'in who interpreted the Quran according to the Sunnah more than others.
- Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi preferred to work in secrecy and had no desire for fame or being seen in public. He did not like having many students seeking knowledge around him and was not fond of many questions and inquiries. This nature and his introverted disposition and aversion to fame negatively impacted his prominence, ironically making him more well-known.

Ultimately, the simple interpretations of the Mawali allowed non-Arab converts to Islam to better understand Quranic concepts and fostered a greater interest in learning among them, seeing their compatriots engage in such efforts.

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