

The relationship between two letters based on La'ali' al-Bayān

When any two letters come together in writing, there is a certain relationship or connection between them. This relationship could be one of four types:

- 1) *Mithlān* – They share the same *makhraj* (exit point) and *ṣifāt* (characteristics).
- 2) *Mutajānisān* – They share the same *makhraj* but have different *ṣifāt*.
- 3) *Mutaqāribān* – They are close in *makhraj* and have different *ṣifāt*.
- 4) *Mutabā'idān* – They are distant in *makhraj* and have different *ṣifāt*.

Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Samannūdī says:

إِنْ يَجْتَمِعُ حَرْفَانِ خَطًّا قُسِمَا * عَشْرِينَ قِسْمًا بَعْدَ وَاحِدٍ نَمَا

If two letters meet in writing, they are divided into twenty types, after adding one (21 types).

The first relationship defined by Samannūdī is *mithlān*: two letters which agree in *makhraj* and *ṣifāt*. If two letters exit from the same *makhraj* and share the same *ṣifāt*, it is obvious that they are identical letters. This is the strongest relationship between two letters. Samannūdī explains it as follows:

فَمُتَمَاثِلَانِ إِنْ يَتَّحِدَا * فِي مَخْرَجٍ وَصِفَةٍ كَمَا بَدَا

So, (the two letters are) *mutamāthilān* if they unite in *makhraj* and *ṣifāt*, as is clear.

Sheikh Sulaymān Jamzūrī explains them as follows:

إِنْ فِي الصِّفَاتِ وَالْمَخَارِجِ اتَّفَقَ * حَرْفَانِ فَالْمِثْلَانِ فِيهِمَا أَحَقُّ

If in *ṣifāt* and *makhārij* two letters agree, then it is more befitting that they be *mithlayn*.

The second relationship defined is *mutajānisayn*: two letters coming from the same *makhraj* but differing in *ṣifāt*. Sheikh Samannūdī says:

وَمُتَجَانِسَانِ حَيْثُ اتَّسَلَفَا * فِي مَخْرَجٍ وَفِي الصِّفَاتِ اخْتَلَفَا

And (the two letters are) *mutajānisān* when they agree in *makhraj* and in *ṣifāt* they differ.

Jamzūrī says:

... أَوْ يَكُونَا اتَّفَقَا * فِي مَخْرَجٍ دُونَ الصِّفَاتِ حَقَّقَا

بِالْمُتَجَانِسِينَ، ... * ...

Or the two letters agree in *makhraj* but not in *ṣifāt*, they are confirmed as *mutajānisān*.

The third relationship is *mutaqāribayn*: 2 letters which are close in *makhraj* and/or *ṣifāt*.

Samannūdī defines *mutaqāribayn* as:

وَمُتَقَارِبَانِ حَيْثُ فِيهِمَا * تَقَارُبٌ أَوْ كَانَ فِي أَيِّهِمَا

And (two letters are) *mutaqāribān* when in both of them (*makhraj* and *ṣifāt*) there is closeness, or in either one of the two (*makhraj* or in *ṣifāt* there is closeness).

And Jamzūrī says:

وَإِنْ يَكُونَا مَخْرَجًا تَقَارِبًا * وَفِي الصِّفَاتِ اِخْتَلَفًا يُلَقَّبَا
مُتَقَارِبَيْنِ، . . . * . . .

And if the two letters are close in *makhraj*, and in *ṣifāt* they differ, then they are named *mutaqāribayn*.

The definitions offered by Sheikh Samannūdī for *mithlayn* and *mutajānisayn* are the same as those given by Jamzūrī, but his definition of *mutaqāribayn* differs somewhat, dividing *mutaqāribayn* into 3 categories:

1. Those letters which are close in *makhraj* and *ṣifāt*.
2. Those letters which are close in *makhraj* but not in *ṣifāt*.
3. Those letters which are close in *ṣifāt* but not in *makhraj*.

Samannūdī adds another relationship not discussed by Jamzūrī, *mutabā'idayn*. He says regarding it:

وَمُتَبَاعِدَانِ حَيْثُ مَخْرَجًا * تَبَاعُدًا وَالْخُلْفُ فِي الصِّفَاتِ جَا

And two letters are *mutabā'idān* when in *makhraj* they are distant and difference comes in (their) *ṣifāt*.

Jamzūrī does not mention *mutabā'idayn* in his *Tuḥfah*. *Mutabā'idayn* comes from the word *بُعْد*, which means far or distant. If two letters are distant in their *makhraj* and differ in their *ṣifāt*, then they will be *mutabā'idayn*. An example of this will be the *ḥā'* and the *mīm* in *تَحْمِيلُونَ*. They *ḥā'* which comes from the throat is far from the *mīm* which is pronounced from the lips. They also differ in *ṣifāt* since the *ḥā'* has *hams*, *rikhwah*, *istifāl* and *infitāḥ* whereas the *mīm* only shares *istifāl* and *infitāḥ* with the *ḥā'*. No *idghām* takes place in *mutabā'idayn*.

In order for *idghām* to take place there has to be some type of relationship between the two letters. If this relationship – whether *mithlayn*, *mutajānisayn* or *mutaqāribayn* – is established, then *idghām* will take place. This *idghām* will either be *jā'iz* (permitted) or *wājib* (compulsory). If no relationship is established, then *idghām* will not be made and the two letters may be considered to be *mutabā'idayn*. Since no *idghām* takes place in *mutabā'idayn*, many writers, including Jamzūrī, do not discuss it in their books. This is because no *idghām* actually takes place in *mutabā'idayn*. Other authors, on the other hand, discuss *mutabā'idayn* since it results in a better understanding of the different types of relationships between two letters, as well as *idghām* itself.

Mithlāyn, mutajānisayn, mutaḡāribayn and *mutabā'idayn*, are each divided into 3 types:

1. *Ṣaghīr*.
2. *Kabīr*.
3. *Muṭṭlaq*.

Samannūdī says:

وَحَيْثُمَا تَحَرَّكَ الْحَرْفَانِ فِي * كَلِّ فَسَمِّ بِالْكَبِيرِ وَاقْتَفِ
وَسَمِّ بِالصَّغِيرِ حَيْثُمَا سَكَنَ * أَوْلَهَا وَمُطْلَقٌ فِي الْعَكْسِ عَنُ

And whenever two letters have a ḡarakah in all these types (*mithlān, mutajānisān, mutaḡāribān* and *mutabā'idān*), then name it *kabīr* and follow (its application).

And name it *ṣaghīr* whenever the first of these (types) has a *sukūn*, and (these types are) *muṭṭlaq* when the opposite occurs.

Jamzūrī says:

... ثُمَّ إِنْ سَكَنَ * أَوْلُ كُلِّ فَالصَّغِيرُ سَمِيْنُ
أَوْ حُرَّكَ الْحَرْفَانِ فِي كُلِّ فَقُلْ * كَلِّ كَبِيرٌ وَاقْتَفِ بِأَلْمَثَلِ

Then if the first of each is *sākin*, then be sure to name it minor.

Or the two letters have a ḡarakah in each (of these three groups), then say all (of them) are major and understand it with examples.

Jamzūrī discusses *ṣaghīr* and *kabīr*, but not *muṭṭlaq*. *Ṣaghīr* is when the first letter is *sākin* and the second *mutaḡarrik*. *Kabīr* is when both letters are *mutaḡarrik*. *Muṭṭlaq* is the opposite of *ṣaghīr* i.e. when the first letter is *mutaḡarrik* and the second letter is *sākin*. Another rational combination between two letters would be if both are *sākin*, which results in two *sākin* letters meeting together (*ijtimā' al-sākinayn*). The latter is generally not allowed in the Arabic language.

Counting all these categories, the following is found:

- *Mithlāyn*:
 - *Ṣaghīr*
 - *Kabīr*
 - *Muṭṭlaq*
- *Mutajānisayn* (agree in *makhraj* but not in *ṣifāt*):
 - *Ṣaghīr*
 - *Kabīr*
 - *Muṭṭlaq*

○ Mutaqāribayn (close in *makhraj* and in *ṣifāt*):

- *Ṣaghīr*
- *Kabīr*
- *Muṭlaq*

○ *Mutabā'idayn*:

- *Ṣaghīr*
- *Kabīr*
- *Muṭlaq*

Only 12 are counted, and 21 are mentioned by Samannūdī. The obvious question is: where are the other missing categories? It should be recalled that Samannūdī gave 3 definitions of *mutaqāribayn*. If we add the other two definitions then it will result in 18 categories:

○ *Mutaqāribayn* (close in *makhraj* but not in *ṣifāt*):

- *Ṣaghīr*
- *Kabīr*
- *Muṭlaq*

○ *Mutaqāribayn* (close in *ṣifāt* and not in *makhraj*):

- *Ṣaghīr*
- *Kabīr*
- *Muṭlaq*

We are still 3 categories short from the 21 mentioned by Samannūdī. The missing categories are explained by Samannūdī in his commentary of *La'ālī' al-Bayān, Riyāḍah al-Lisān*, where he offers another definition to *mutajānisayn* not mentioned in the text: two letters which agree in *ṣifāt* but not in *makhraj*. This is different to our previous definition of *mutajānisayn* i.e. two letters which agree in *makhraj* but not in *ṣifāt*. By adding this category, there will be a total of 21 types:

○ *Mutajānisayn* (agree in *ṣifāt* but not in *makhraj*):

- *Ṣaghīr*
- *Kabīr*
- *Muṭlaq*

It does not make sense why Sheikh Samannūdī mentions 21 types in his text, yet only discusses 18. His student, Sheikh Sa'īd Yūsuf Samannūdī states that in his teacher's later works, like *Tuḥfah al-Samannūdiyyah*, he only mentions 18 types, retracting his earlier opinion of 21 types. It may be assumed that the reason this category – two letters which agree in *ṣifāt* but not in *makhrāj* – is related by Samannūdī in the first place, is due to Mar'ashī mentioning it in his book, *Juhd al-Muqill*. Mar'ashī states that no name or group has been given to this latter type, and therefore the different categories in the relationship between two letters are therefore not comprehensive.

By adding this definition many letters which are considered as *mutaqāribayn*, will be included in this 'new' category of *mutajānisayn*, like the *lām* and the *rā'*, or the *jīm* and the *dāl*. It would also make the *kāf* and the *tā'* *mutajānisayn*, yet no *idghām* is established between the *kāf* and the *tā'* by any of the *qurrā'*, making them in actual fact *mutabā'idayn*. On the other hand, when discussing the reasons for *idghām* of the *nūn* into the *mīm*, many *qurrā'* consider them as *mutajānisayn* based on this 'new' definition: they agree in *ṣifāt* but not in *makhraj*. And Allah knows best.

by

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