

# THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

From Revelation To Recitation & Beyond

*STOP SIGNS IN THE QUR'AN*

Published By:



**DARUL IHSAN**  
HUMANITARIAN CENTRE  
GUIDANCE • UBUNTU • EMPOWERMENT

## RUMUZ AL-AWQAF - STOP SIGNS IN THE QUR'AN

Another useful step taken to facilitate recitation and phonetically correct pronunciation (Tilawah and Tajweed) was to provide verses with signs to indicate pauses. These signs are known as the Rumuz (signs) or Alamat (symbols) of Awqaf (stops). Their purpose is to help a person who is not conversant with the Arabic language to stop at the correct spot during recitation and thus avoid changing the meaning of the verse. Most of these signs were first invented by Allamah Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Tayfur al-Sajawandi. (*Al-Nasbr fil-Qira'at al-Asbr* 1:225)

The details of these signs are as follows:

ط : An abbreviation of the word Waqf Mutlaq (universal stop). It implies that the statement stands completed at this point. Therefore, it is better to stop here.

ج : An abbreviation of the word Waqf Ja'iz (permissible stop) and it implies that it is permissible to stop here.

ز : An abbreviation of Waqf Mujawwaz (permitted stop), which implies that stopping here is permissible but that it is better not to.

ص : An abbreviation of Waqf Murakhkhas (dispensation stop), which implies that the statement has not yet been completed but that, because the sentence has become long, this is the place to breathe and stop rather than elsewhere. (*Al-Minbul Fikriyyah*)

م : An abbreviation of Waqf Lazim (mandatory stop), which means that if a stop is not made, a distortion in the meaning of the verse is possible. Some phoneticians of the Qur'an have also called this type of stop a Waqf Wajib (obligatory stop). Note that Wajib here is not a legal term and therefore does not entail sin if it is foresaken. The purpose of the term is to stress that stopping here is the most preferable of all stops. (*Al-Nasbr*)

لا : An abbreviation of 'la taqif' (literally means do not stop). It indicates that one should not stop at this sign, but does not imply that stopping is completely impermissible, since there are certain places bearing this sign where stopping entails no harm and resuming from the following word is also permissible. Therefore, the correct meaning of this sign is: "If a stop is made here, it is better to go back and read over again. Initiation from the next word is not preferred. (*Al-Nasbr*)

As far as the origin of these signs is concerned, it stands proven beyond doubt that they were invented by Allamah Sajawandi. In addition to these, however, there are also other signs that appear in Qur'anic manuscripts. For instance:

**مع** : An abbreviation of the word Muanaqah. This symbol is inserted at a place where a single verse has two possible explanations. According to one explanation, the stop will be made at one given place while according to another explanation the stop will be made at another place. Therefore, a stop can be made at either one of the two places, but once a stop has been made at one place it is not correct to stop at the other. However, if a stop is not made at both places it will be correct. This is also known as Muqabalah. It was first pointed out by Imam Abul Fadl Razi. (*Al-Nasbr - Al-Itqan*)

**سكتة** : This is a symbol for Saktah (pause), which means that one should stop here by breaking the sound but not the breath. This is generally inserted at a place where assimilated reading is likely to cause an erroneous projection of meaning.

**وقفة** : At this sign, called a Waqfah, one must stop a little longer than at a Saktah (pause) but the breath should not break here as well.

**ق** : An abbreviation of Qila Alayhil Waqf. It means that some phoneticians of the Qur'an identify a stop here while others do not.

**قف** : This symbol is the word qif which means 'stop' (the imperative word-form) and is inserted where the reader may possibly think that a stop was not correct.

**صلى** : This is an abbreviation of Al-waslu Awla, which means that 'it is better to recite here in assimilated continuity'.

**صل** : This is an abbreviation of Qad Yusalu which means that 'some stop here' while others like to recite on in assimilated continuity.

**وقف النبي** : This is marked at places where a Hadith proves that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stopped here while reciting.



**CONTACT US**

031 577 7868

[www.darulihisan.com](http://www.darulihisan.com)

[disc@darulihisan.com](mailto:disc@darulihisan.com)

@discdbn

/darulihisancentre

70 Joyce Road,  
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For your Business Queries, Zakah Calculations, Estate Planning - Contact our Fatwa Department

[fatwa@darulihisan.com](mailto:fatwa@darulihisan.com)

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