

Legal Verses and Various *Mutawatirah Qira'at*: Implications for Interpretation

Umarul Faruq^{1*}, Mohd Syakir², Pateemoh Meedeng³

Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Suratthani Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email : faruqumarul353@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33650/ic-esteh.v1i1.16825>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Implications, Qiraah
Mutawatirah, Legal
Verses

*Corresponding Author

This article discusses the implications of the variety of mutawatirah qiraah on the interpretation of legal verses. The Qur'an, viewed from a historical perspective, cannot be separated from the various ways of reading or aspects of qiraah. Starting from the emergence of different versions of readings that were influenced by differences in Arab dialects at that time, then Uthman bin Affan took steps to copy the Qur'an as a form of maintaining the authenticity of the manuscript. History records that the differences in the readings of the companions at that time were in accordance with what was taught by the Prophet Muhammad Saw. However, scholars agree that there are several qualifications for the quality of qiraah, such as mutawatirah qiraah, masyhurah qiraah, and syadzah qiraah. The diversity of qiraah cannot be denied its existence which indirectly has implications for interpretation. Both determine the quality of an interpretation-deriving of fiqh law. This research uses a literature study model.

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Faruq, U., Syakir, M., & Meedeng, P. (2026). Legal Verses and Various Mutawatirah Qira'at: Implications for Interpretation. *IC-ESTEHE: International Conference on Education, Social Studies, Technology and Health*, 1(1), 70-75.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an and qiraah are inseparable aspects of the revelation of the Qur'an, as the term *al-Qur'an* is closely associated with the act of reading or recitation. Scholars, however, have expressed different opinions regarding the etymological origin of the word *al-Qur'an*. In this regard, two major views can be identified. The first group maintains that the word *al-Qur'an* is not derived from a root containing a hamzah and therefore should not be written or pronounced with a *hamzah*. This view was expressed by several scholars from different backgrounds, including Al-Imam al-Syafi'i (d. 204 H), al-Farra' (d. 207 H), and Abu Musa al-Asy'ari (d. 324 H). The second group, represented by al-Zujjaj and al-Lihyani, argues that the word *al-Qur'an* is derived from its *musytaq* or lexical root and is therefore understood according to its derivational form (al-Zarqani, 2001; al-Suyuthi, 1998).

The recitation of the Qur'an was transmitted directly from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the process of *talaqqi*, in which the Prophet received the revelation from Gabriel and subsequently taught its recitation to his Companions. Historical accounts indicate that the recitations transmitted by the Prophet were not limited to a single mode of reading. The existence of various forms of recitation was therefore part of the historical transmission of the Qur'an. During the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan, efforts were undertaken to standardize the written copies of the Qur'an in order to prevent disputes among Muslims concerning its recitation. The compilation and reproduction of the Uthmani Mushhaf were associated with the Quraysh dialect, while the other modes of recitation were not represented in the same manner in the written copies (al-Zarkasyi, 1988).

The characteristics of the early Qur'anic script, which did not yet contain the complete system of diacritical marks and vowel signs found in later manuscripts, nevertheless allowed certain words to be read in more than one way. This condition contributed to the preservation and transmission of various accepted forms of Qur'anic recitation. Consequently, differences in qiraah did not merely concern the manner of pronunciation, but could also involve variations in words, grammatical forms, and meanings. Such variations became particularly important in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses because differences in recitation may produce differences in semantic understanding. Thus, the study of qiraah is closely related to the study of *tafsir*, particularly when the verses being interpreted contain legal implications (al-Syathibi, 1338).

As various forms of recitation became widespread within Muslim communities, concerns emerged regarding which readings could be legitimately attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. These concerns encouraged scholars of qiraah to examine, evaluate, and establish criteria for determining the validity and authenticity of Qur'anic readings. From the second half of the first century to the first half of the second century, scholars increasingly engaged in the study and verification of the various transmitted readings. This scholarly process subsequently contributed to the classification and recognition of particular recitations as authoritative forms of Qur'anic reading.

One significant result of this scholarly development was the recognition of seven renowned qiraah traditions as *mutawatirah* readings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. These are the readings associated with Nafi', Ibn Kathir, Abu 'Amr, Ibn 'Amir, 'Ashim, Hamzah, and al-Kisa'i, which subsequently became widely known as *qiraah sab'ah mutawatirah* (al-Sabuni, 1987). The recognition of these readings demonstrates that the diversity of Qur'anic recitation is not simply a matter of linguistic variation, but also represents an important dimension of the transmission and interpretation of the Qur'an.

The diversity of *qiraah mutawatirah* can have significant implications for the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, particularly verses containing legal provisions. Variations in recitation may influence the grammatical structure, lexical meaning, and semantic interpretation of a verse. When such differences occur in legal verses, they may consequently affect the understanding and determination of the legal meaning contained within those verses. Therefore, the study of qiraah is not only relevant to the sciences of Qur'anic recitation but also to *tafsir* and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), especially in understanding how variations in recitation contribute to differences in legal interpretation.

Based on this background, this research focuses on the implications of various *qiraah mutawatirah* for the interpretation of legal verses in the Qur'an. The study seeks to examine how differences among recognized mutawatir readings may contribute to variations in the interpretation of legal verses and how such variations relate to the formulation and understanding of Islamic law. Accordingly, the scope of this research encompasses both the interpretation of Qur'anic legal verses and their relationship to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Through this approach, the research is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between *qiraah mutawatirah*, Qur'anic interpretation, and the formulation of legal meaning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a historical approach to examine the development and transmission of *qiraah mutawatirah* and its relationship to the interpretation of Qur'anic legal verses. The historical approach is used to trace the development of Qur'anic recitation, the scholarly process through which various readings were examined and recognized, and the subsequent relevance of these readings to Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic jurisprudence.

The data for this research were collected through library research. The primary sources of data consist of relevant books and other written sources that discuss the Qur'an, qiraah, Qur'anic interpretation, and Islamic jurisprudence. These sources were examined to obtain information concerning the historical development of qiraah mutawatirah and its implications for the interpretation of legal verses. The use of library research enables the study to analyze the relevant scholarly discussions without relying on primary field data (Sugiono, 1987).

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. This technique was employed to identify, classify, and interpret relevant information concerning the relationship between *qiraah mutawatirah* and the interpretation of legal verses. The analysis focuses on the content of the selected literature in order to identify how variations in qiraah influence the meaning and interpretation of legal verses and how these interpretations relate to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Through this analytical process, the research seeks to systematically describe the implications of *qiraah mutawatirah* for the interpretation and understanding of Qur'anic legal provisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Qiraah

Etymologically, *qiraah* is the *masdar* form of the root word *qara'a*, which means “to read” or “to recite.” The term is closely related to the activity of reading and reciting the Qur'an. Therefore, qiraah cannot be separated from the Qur'an itself, particularly from the various forms of recitation that have been transmitted and preserved throughout Islamic history. The diversity of Qur'anic recitations reflects the richness of the oral transmission of the Qur'an and constitutes an important aspect of Qur'anic studies.

From an ontological perspective, *qiraah* refers to various forms of Qur'anic reading transmitted through recognized scholars of recitation. These variations are not merely individual differences in pronunciation but are associated with established traditions of Qur'anic recitation. From an epistemological perspective, qiraah refers to a form of recitation attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and transmitted through a continuous and reliable chain of transmission. Thus, the validity of a qiraah is closely related to its transmission and its connection to the prophetic tradition.

The classification of qiraah can be viewed from several perspectives. In terms of quantity, qiraah is commonly discussed through classifications such as *Sab'ah*, *Asyrah*, and even *Arba'a Asyar*. In terms of quality and authenticity, qiraah may also be classified into *qiraah mutawatirah*, *masyhurah*, and *syadzah*. These classifications demonstrate that the study of qiraah involves not only the number of recognized readings but also the degree of their transmission and acceptance among Qur'anic scholars.

Terminologically, *qiraah* can be understood as a variation in the pronunciation of Qur'anic words or expressions, whether the variation concerns individual letters or the structure of a particular phrase. Such differences may include forms such as *takhfif* (lightening) and *tastqil* (heaviness or *tasydid*), among other variations in pronunciation. These differences constitute recognized forms of Qur'anic recitation and demonstrate the linguistic and phonetic diversity that exists within the transmitted readings of the Qur'an (al-Zarkasyi, 1984).

In another sense, *qiraah* refers to a particular school or method of Qur'anic recitation followed by a recognized imam based on chains of transmission (*sanad*) connected to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The imam of qiraah does not establish the reading solely on the basis of personal preference; rather, the reading is based on an established transmission that connects the recitation to earlier authorities and ultimately to the Prophet Muhammad. Consequently, the sanad constitutes an

important element in determining the authenticity and legitimacy of a particular qiraah (al-Sabuni, 1987).

The broadest definition of *qiraah* refers to a school of Qur'anic recitation followed by a particular imam of qiraah whose method differs from those of other imams in the pronunciation and reading of the Qur'an, as well as in the agreement of the transmitted narrations and chains of transmission. Such differences may concern the pronunciation of letters or other forms of recitation. Therefore, qiraah encompasses a structured and transmitted system of Qur'anic reading rather than merely variations in individual pronunciation. This understanding emphasizes that the diversity of qiraah is rooted in established scholarly traditions and transmitted narrations (al-Zarqani, 1980).

History of the Qiraah

The history of the Qiraah goes hand in hand with the rapid development of Islam. The ever-expanding Muslim territories led to the arrival of people from various ethnic groups outside the Middle East, flocking to study the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) specifically instructed his companions and all his followers to recite the Quran according to the Arabic script, ensuring that the Quran's recitation would be preserved among Muslims throughout the world, not just Arabs. Therefore, during this period, Khalaf ibn Hisham began to write and compile the Qiraah he received from Sulaiman ibn 'Isa, the Qiraah of Imam Hamzah al-Kufi. Abdullah ibn Dzakwan, the narrator of Imam Ibn 'Amir, also wrote and compiled the Qiraah he received from Ayyub ibn Tamim. Imam Hafs bin 'Umar ad-Duri wrote from Yahya al-Yazidi the qiraah of Imam Abu 'Amr al-Basri, Imam Ahmad al-Bazzi got Imam Ibnu Katsir's qiraah from Wahab bin Wadih and many other narrators who got the qiraah then wrote and recorded it. (al-Qaththan, 1972).

Scholars from all over the world competed to hunt and travel to various centers of Qur'anic learning, so that by the third century they had collected various guidebooks that had been compiled by previous qira'ah experts. In this century, the enthusiasm for book-making also peaked, as Abu Bakr ibn Mujahid succeeded in collecting seven qira'ah of Imam Qurra'. In his book as-Sab'ah, Ibn Mujahid initially listed the qira'ah of Imam Ya'qub as one of the seven readings, but he later removed it and replaced it with Imam 'Ali al-Kisa'i. After that, over time new names emerged who were involved and competent in the field of qiraah such as Abu 'Amr al-Dani with his al-Taisir Fi Qiraat al-Sab'ah, which was then followed by Imam al-Qasim bin Fairuh who was more popular with the nickname Imam al-Syathibi summarizing various explanations of qiraah with nazham patterns which was named Hirz al-Amani Wa Wajh al-Tahani, which ultimately emerged Imam Ibnu al-Jazari perfecting al-Syatibi's work by presenting a book entitled Tayyibah al-Nasyr. (al-Akh, 1986) (al-Razi, 1910).

Implications of Various Qiraah for the Interpretation of Legal Verses

Implications for the interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah verse 222.

They ask you about menstruation. Say: "Menstruation is dirt." Therefore, you should keep away from women during menstruation; and do not approach them, until they are pure. When they are pure, then mix with them where Allah has commanded you. Indeed, Allah loves those who repent and loves those who purify themselves (Al Baqarah: 222)

The verse above discusses the issue of sexual relations between husband and wife, where in this verse husband and wife are prohibited from having intimate (sexual) relations as long as the wife is in a state of impurity (menstruation). The qiraah imams differ in reading the verse. Imam Nafi', Ibn Kathir, Abu 'Amr, Ibn 'Amir and Hafs read it with yathurna through a mutawatir history. Meanwhile,

Imam Hamzah, al-Kisa'i and Syu'bah read it with yat tahnuna and also with mutawatir history. (Sakho Muhammad, 2018)

The difference in qiraat in this verse has an impact on different interpretations of the verse, namely with qiraat yat tahnuna, the husband is allowed to have sex with his wife after menstrual blood stops even though he has not bathed. With qiraat yat-tah-nuna which is interpreted as yaghtasilna (bathing) by Al-Tabari, a husband is not allowed to have sex with a wife who is menstruating until the menstrual blood stops and she is purified. (al-Tabari, 1995). Seeing these differences in qiraat, we can take legal istinbath, namely qiraat yat-tahnuna according to Al-Sabuni, as the reason for Imam Abu wa Arjulakum Hanifah in allowing a husband to have sex with his wife after menstrual blood stops without having to bathe first. With qiraat yat-tah-nuna, Imam Malik and Al-Shafi'i are of the opinion that a husband can only have sexual intercourse with his wife after the wife stops menstrual blood and bathes. (Somad, 2023). Second, it is found in al-Maidah verse 6

O you who believe, when you want to pray, then wash your face and your hands up to the elbows, and sweep your head and (wash) your feet up to the ankles, and if you are junub then bathe, and if you are sick or on a journey or returning from the toilet (toilet) or touch a woman, and you do not get water, then do tayammum on good (clean) ground; sweep your face and hands with the soil. Allah does not want to make things difficult for you, but He wants to purify you and complete His blessings upon you, so that you will be grateful (al-Maidah: 6).

The verse above explains that someone who wants to pray if he has hadas is required to perform ablution. The method is to start by washing your face, then washing your hands up to your elbows, wiping your head, and washing your feet up to your ankles. Meanwhile, scholars have different opinions about whether it is mandatory to wash both feet during ablution or just wipe them with water. This is because there are two versions of qiraat. It was read wa arjulakum by qiraat Nafi', Ibn 'Amir, Hafsa, and Al-Kisa'i and wa arjulikum was read by qiraat ibn Katsir, Abu 'Amr, Syu'bah and Hamzah.

The difference in the phenomena of the implications of this reading was traced by Abu Fida from the sources of the hadith narrations of the Prophet Muhammad. That the command of the Prophet Muhammad regarding the wording of arjulakum, namely to make the letter lam, contains the meaning of washing (gusl), namely as washing the face and both hands following the wording of the beginning of the verse. As for those who read arjulikum as meaning wiping, by following the word wiping part of the head is valid, because also in certain cases it is rukhsah, meaning the practice of ablution on the feet is able to wash and there is relief by wiping. This is where the difference in qiraat provides alternative choices in the legal istinbath. The difference in qiraat in this verse has an impact on the difference in interpretation of the verse, namely, from qiraat wa arjulakum it can be understood that both feet must be washed with water. This word is di'athafkan with wujuhakum and from qiraat wa arjulikum it can be understood that both feet must be wiped with water. This word is understood to be di'athafkan with wamsahu bi ru'usikum. The wisdom of the differences in qiraat, especially those related to legal verses, can actually broaden insight and enrich alternatives for Muslims in understanding and practicing Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the Qur'an, it has had quite varied characteristics in the variety of qiraah, which over time has emerged as experts writing and trying to record the variety of qiraah with various evaluations and reviews until there is a consensus on qiraah categorized as mutawatir, masyhur, and syadz. Differences in qiraah also have implications for the interpretation of scholars of tafsir, according to the inclination of the qiraah that the exegetes use. In addition, the implications of

the variety of qiraah do not stop at an interpretation, but have further implications related to matters related to the laws in certain cases such as in al-Baqoroh which discusses the period when a woman or content may be intimate with a husband, as well as in other verses such as al-Maidah: 6, regarding the procedures for purification.

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