

THE POWER OF *QIRĀ'ĀT*: DISSECTING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL POWER OF *QIRĀ'ĀT* IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'ĀN

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Received: 01-01-2026 | Revised: 01-03-2026 | Accepted: 30-06-2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the epistemological role of *qirā'āt* in Qur'ānic interpretation, focusing on the maxim “*ba'd al-qirā'āt tu'aththiru fī ikhtilāf al-tafsīr*.” Unlike prior studies that mainly situate *qirā'āt* within historical and transmission-based frameworks, this research adopts an integrative approach by repositioning *qirā'āt* as an analytical instrument in *tafsīr* and legal derivation. The study employs a descriptive-analytical method on selected Qur'ānic verses. The findings reveal that *qirā'āt* variations operate within a functional spectrum: some directly affect meaning and generate differences in legal, theological, and narrative interpretations, while others remain purely phonetic without interpretive impact. The main contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing *qirā'āt* as a selective epistemological system, in which only certain variants produce interpretive differentiation. A limited “coding” analogy is employed to illustrate how micro-level changes in recitation may influence interpretive outcomes, although not all variations yield semantic effects. Thus, *qirā'āt* is understood as a dynamic framework that preserves textual precision while enabling measured interpretive plurality.

Keywords: Epistemology; *qirā'āt*; Qur'ānic exegesis; *sab'at aḥruf*.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on *qirā'āt* in the global context are not limited to historical and transmission aspects but have also developed toward epistemological and exegetical analysis, as reflected in recent scholarship. The Qur'ān and the science of *qirā'āt* are two entities that possess an inseparable organic relationship, where *qirā'āt* functions as an authenticity validation system for the sound of revelation transmitted through continuous (*mutawātir*) chains of transmission (*sanad*). Terminologically, this study is not solely limited to pronunciation dialects but also touches upon genealogical aspects and strict classifications to distinguish between accepted (*maqbul*) and rejected (*mardud*) recitations. The urgency of this discipline is highly significant, considering that every reading variation—whether related to phonetic differences or sentence structures—represents the richness of the Qur'ān's miracles, whose purity must be safeguarded from all forms of historical distortion.¹

A review of prior literature indicates that the discourse on *qirā'āt* is often mapped into various fragmented focuses. In terms of historical aspects, detailed tracking of the developmental history and classification of *qirā'āt* from the formative period to its codification has been extensively conducted,² along with in-depth methodological examinations comparing the

¹Khairunnas Jamal and Afriadi Putra, *Pengantar Ilmu Qira'at* (Yogyakarta: Kalimedia, 2022), 2-3.

²Abdullah Hadani and Ah. Nasich Hidayatulloh, “Melacak Sejarah Perkembangan Ilmu Qir ā ' at Dan Klasifikasinya,” *Hamalatul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al Qur'an* 5, 1 (2024), 71.

transformation of primary reference texts within this tradition.³ Within the Nusantara context, academic attention has also been devoted to analyzing the transmission networks of local scholars' *sanad* that preserve this oral tradition,⁴ as well as bibliometric mapping that demonstrates a high level of scholarly interest in the textual dimensions of *qirā'āt*.⁵

Although these studies contribute significantly to the field, there remains a need for further exploration of the functional correlation between *qirā'āt* and legal derivation as well as Qur'ānic interpretation in an integrated framework. The strategic role of *qirā'āt* in the extraction (*istinbāt*) of Islamic law has been addressed in several studies,⁶ as has its influence on the interpretation of specific legal verses.⁷ However, this article seeks to offer a more comprehensive analysis by repositioning the ontological definition of *qirā'āt* while simultaneously highlighting its practical relevance. It argues that *qirā'āt* should not be understood merely as variations in recitation, but rather as a methodological instrument that shapes the dynamism of meaning within the Qur'ān.

The relationship between *qirā'āt* and *tafsīr* has long been an integral part of the Islamic scholarly tradition. Classical exegetes frequently relied on variant readings to explain lexical meanings, grammatical structures, legal implications, and theological nuances of Qur'ānic verses. As a result, *qirā'āt* developed beyond a purely technical discipline of recitation and became an important interpretive tool. Variations in accepted readings often generate different semantic possibilities, influencing exegetical conclusions while preserving the overall message of the Qur'ān. Contemporary scholarship likewise recognizes *qirā'āt* as not only a record of textual transmission but also a significant source of interpretive diversity that contributes to the construction of meaning within the Qur'ānic text.

Although a number of studies have examined the relationship between *qirā'āt* and *tafsīr*, significant areas of inquiry remain underexplored. Most previous research has tended to focus on linguistic aspects, the classification of readings, or comparisons among *qirā'āt* variants, while their implications for the construction of meaning in the interpretive process have not been analyzed in depth. Consequently, the mechanisms through which variations in recitation contribute to the emergence of interpretive diversity and the formation of Qur'ānic meaning still require a more comprehensive explanation.⁸

This study examines the maxim *ba'd al-qirā'āt tu'aththiru fī ikhtilāf al-tafsīr* ("some recitations influence differences in interpretation"), arguing that not all variants of Qur'ānic recitation have exegetical consequences. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, it analyzes selected Qur'ānic verses with recognized recitational variants by comparing their linguistic structures, semantic implications, and exegetical interpretations. The findings show that while

³Istiqomah, Aqillah Hawwa Nasywa, and M. Sirojjudin, "Transformasi Metodologis Ilmu Qiraat dalam Asy-Syathibiyyah dan Tayyibatun-Nasyr Karya Asy-Syathibi dan Ibn Al-Jazari," *Al-Tadabbur: Ilmu Al-Quran dan Tafsir* 10, 2 (2025), 327.

⁴Muhim Nailul Ulya et al., "An Analysis of the Sanad Transmission by K.H. Muhammad Arwani (1905 – 1994) and His Role in the Dissemination of Qiraat Sab'ah Knowledge in Indonesia," *Qof: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 7, 2 (2023), 247.

⁵Zaini Hafidh, Yayah Rahyasih, and Arfan Muchammad Agfirlana, "Analisis Bibliometrik Tentang Qiraat Sab' Ah Menggunakan VOSViewer Berbasis Data Google Scholar," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 2, 1 (2023), 63.

⁶Sufiani Zahra, Halimah Basri, and Nasrullah Bin Sapa, "Peran Ilmu Qira'at Al-Qur'an dalam Pengambilan Hukum," *Tafaqquh: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah dan Ahwal Syahsiyah* 9, 2 (2024), 153.

⁷Nur Ramdani Awaluddin, "Dampak Ragam Qiraat Terhadap Penafsiran Al-Qur'an" (Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2022), 2.

⁸Feni Tamimul Ummah, Tri Tami Gunarti, and Mubarak Ahmadi, "The Impact of Qira'at on Interpretation: An Analytical Study of Farsh Al-Hurūf in Tafsir Marāh Labīd of Surah Al-Baqarah," *AL-ITQAN: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 10, 1 (2024), 49.

some *qirā'āt* affect only phonetic articulation, others influence meaning, legal implications, and interpretive conclusions.

The study's main contribution is its conceptualization of *qirā'āt* as a selective epistemological system in which only certain variants possess the linguistic and semantic capacity to generate significant exegetical differences, thereby offering a more precise understanding of the relationship between recitational diversity, interpretive plurality, and the preservation of the Qur'ān's unity of meaning.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design using a library research approach. In line with the characteristics of qualitative research, the study is conducted within its natural context, adopts a descriptive orientation, emphasizes the process and interpretation of meaning, and applies an inductive mode of analysis.⁹ The research examines the epistemological role of *qirā'āt* in Qur'ānic interpretation by focusing on selected Qur'ānic verses that contain recognized variants of recitation and have been discussed by Muslim exegetes as generating differences in interpretation. As a textual study, the research relies exclusively on documentary sources and does not involve field observations or human participants.

The primary sources of this study consist of classical works on *qirā'āt* and Qur'ānic exegesis, particularly *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr* by Ibn al-Jazarī and selected *tafsīr* works discussing variant readings and their interpretive implications. Secondary sources include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant academic studies. Data were collected through systematic document analysis and examined using qualitative content analysis involving classification, interpretation, and synthesis of recitational variants. The analysis focuses on identifying variants that influence semantic meaning and contribute to differences in Qur'ānic interpretation.

This study adopts a *tahlīlī* (analytical-exegetical) approach and is theoretically grounded in the principle *ba'd al-qirā'āt tu'aththiru fī ikhtilāf al-tafsīr* ("some recitations influence differences in interpretation"). Through this framework, *qirā'āt* is examined not merely as a mechanism for preserving textual authenticity but also as an epistemological instrument that contributes to the construction of Qur'ānic meaning.¹⁰

RESULT

Terminology and Ontological Analysis of the Science of Qira'at

The science of *qirā'āt* occupies a central position in understanding how divine revelation is articulated and transmitted orally. Etymologically, *qirā'āt* is the plural form of *qirā'ah*, which is a verbal noun (*maṣdar sam'ī*) derived from the verb *qara'a* (to read) – *yaqra'u* – *qirā'ah*. In this context, it refers to the established modes of reciting the Qur'ān.¹¹ Terminologically, however, al-Zarqānī defines it as:

"According to the terminology, qirā'āt is a school of thought adopted by an imam from the qirā'āt imams that differs from others in the pronunciation of the Noble Qur'ān, but is uniform in

⁹Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika* 21, 1 (2021), 37.

¹⁰Shady Hekmat Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur'an: The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādh* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2.

¹¹Manna' al-Qaththān, *Mabāhith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, Manshūrāt al-'Aṣri al-Hadīth*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub : 1973), 170.

narration and path (*ṭarīq*), regardless of whether the difference lies in the pronunciation of the letters or their dialect (*lahjah*).¹²

Abu Syamah defines *qirā'āt*:

"*Qirā'āt* is the science of how to pronounce the sentences of the *Qur'ān* and their variations by attributing them to their narrators."¹³

Ibn al-Jazarī's Perspective: Imam Ibn al-Jazarī, recognized as the highest authority in the intellectual lineage of *qirā'āt* experts, formulated a highly technical yet comprehensive definition. In his book *Munjid al-Muqri' in wa Murshid al-Ṭālibīn*, he stated that the science of *qirā'āt* is the science to know the ways of pronouncing the sentences of the *Qur'ān* and their differences by attributing these readings to their narrators.¹⁴

The science of *qirā'āt* is built on three main pillars: pronunciation (*kaifiyyat al-adā'*), which concerns rules of articulation; variation (*al-ikhtilāf*), which studies differences among canonical readings; and attribution (*al-'azw*), which relies on authenticated transmission chains back to the Prophet. In essence, it examines how Qur'anic verses are recited in their various transmitted forms based on reliable sanad. Although rooted in the Prophet's teachings, *qirā'āt* developed as a formal discipline during the Tābi'īn period, with early codification by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām and efforts to classify authentic and irregular readings pioneered by Hārūn ibn Mūsā al-Qārī'. Subsequently, the classification of the seven types of readings, or *al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*, was popularized by Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid.¹⁵

Epistemological Fundamentals: The Evidence of *Qira'at*

Linguistic variation in pronunciation among Arab tribes existed prior to Islam, reflecting the ethnic and dialectal diversity of the Arabian Peninsula. In response to this reality, the Prophet Muhammad supplicated for the *Qur'ān* to be revealed in multiple dialects.¹⁶ *Qirā'āt*, as defined above, is the way to read the sentences of the *Qur'ān* with different variations in accordance with the recitation of the Prophet Muhammad SAW narrated by the scholars. In the *Qur'ān*, there is no explicit explanation regarding the seven letters (*Sab'at Aḥruf*). However, the fact that the *Qur'ān* is read using various *qirā'āt* variations across the world to this day serves as strong evidence for the existence of *qirā'āt* variations, specifically the *mutawātir qirā'āt*. In addition to this evidence or proof, there are many *ḥadīths* that strongly demonstrate the existence of these *qirā'āt*. The following are Prophetic *aḥādīth* explaining *qirā'āt*.¹⁷

"From Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb r.a., he said: I heard Hisham ibn Hakim reciting Surah Al-Furqan during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah SAW. I listened to his recitation, and suddenly he read it with many variations of readings that I had never received from the Messenger of Allah SAW. I almost confronted him during the prayer, but I patiently waited until he said the salām (finished the prayer). Then, I grabbed his cloak and asked: 'Who taught you to read this Surah that I just heard you reading?' Hisham replied: 'The Messenger of Allah SAW taught it to me.' I said: 'You are lying. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah SAW taught me this Surah differently than how you read it.' Then I took him, leading him to the Messenger of Allah SAW. I said: 'Indeed, I heard this man reciting Surah Al-Furqan with several reading variations that you did not teach me.' Then the Messenger of Allah SAW said, 'Let him go. Recite, O Hisham.' Then Hisham read with the

¹²Muḥammad Abd al-Aẓīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Maṭba'ah 'Isa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, t.t.), Juz 1, 28.

¹³Abdur Rokhim Hasan, *Qiraat al-Quran dan Tafsirnya*, (Jakarta : PTIQ Jakarta, 2020), 1.

¹⁴Abu Nasir, "Qiraat dalam al-Quran," *Moderation* 4, 01 (2024), 54.

¹⁵Abu Nasir, "Qiraat dalam al-Quran," *Moderation*, 56.

¹⁶Siti Khodijah, Iffah Muzammil, and Moch. Rafly Try Ramadhani, "The Politics of Qirā'āt: State Power and the Canonization of Qur'anic Recitation in Early Islam," *At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an dan Tafsir* 10, no. 1 (2025), 18–19.

¹⁷Hasan, *Qiraat al-Quran dan Tafsirnya*, 5-7.

recitation that I had heard him read. Then the Messenger of Allah SAW said, 'Thus it was revealed.' Then he said: 'Recite, O Umar.' I then read with the recitation he had taught me. Then the Messenger of Allah SAW said, 'Thus it was revealed as well. Verily, this Qur'an was revealed upon seven letters (variations), so recite whichever of it is easy.'¹⁸

"O Ubayy, a messenger was sent to me (telling me) to recite the Qur'an in one letter, but I refused it so that my ummah would be relieved. He then returned to me a second time, saying: recite it in two letters. I refused it again so that my ummah would be relieved. He then returned to me a third time, saying: recite it in seven letters, and for every time I turned you back, you have a request to ask of me. So I prayed: O Allah, forgive my ummah, O Allah, forgive my ummah, and I saved the third (request) for a day when all creations will eagerly turn to me, even Prophet Abraham a.s."¹⁹

Based on these ḥadīth and the support from other narrations, it can be concluded that the Qur'an was revealed in seven letters (*Sab'at Aḥruf*). In the context of the Arabic language and the Qur'an's stylistic usage, the term "seven" (*sab'ah*) can refer to a definite exact number, but it is also frequently used to denote a large or infinite quantity. Meanwhile, "letters" (*aḥruf*) is the plural form of *ḥarf*, which means side or face. Thus, *Sab'at Aḥruf* can be interpreted as variations or faces of Qur'anic reading, whether strictly amounting to seven types or signifying a broad diversity of reading methods.²⁰

The discussion concerning *al-Sab'ah al-Aḥruf* within the discourse of Qur'anic sciences is one of the most complex topics, given the broad spectrum of interpretations that have emerged among jurists (*fuqahā'*) and *qirā'āt* experts. This phenomenon is reflected in al-Zarkashī's notes, which cite the findings of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ḥatīm ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī regarding the existence of thirty-five different perspectives in defining the terminology.²¹ Among the various interpretations of the *aḥruf sab'ah*, al-Zarqānī preferred the view of al-Imām Abū al-Faḍl al-Rāzī, who argued that the seven letters do not represent seven types of *qirā'āt* but rather seven categories of linguistic variation underlying the diversity of Qur'anic recitations.

These differences encompass morphological variations in nouns (number and gender), verb conjugations across different tenses and moods, syntactic diversity through inflectional structures (*i'rāb*), and textual modifications involving omission (*naqṣ*) or addition (*ziyādah*). They also include changes in word order (*taqdīm wa ta'khīr*), substitutions of linguistic elements (*ibdāl*), and dialectal or phonetic variations (*lughah/lahjah*) reflected in recitational features such as *imālah*, *fath*, *tarqīq*, *tafkhīm*, *iẓhār*, and *idghām*.²² All these elements form a comprehensive classification system that maps how Qur'anic reading variations are accommodated within a systematic linguistic framework. Variations in *qirā'āt* (*al-wajh al-qirā'ī*) basically have diverse impacts on a verse's meaning. According to Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, the influence of these reading differences can be simplified into the following three typologies.²³

First, there are differences that are purely technical in phrasing but their meanings remain identical, so the different reading methods do not change the conveyed message. Second, there are differences encompassing both wording and meaning, yet both remain harmonious and complementary, thus enriching the interpretative dimension without any contradiction. Third, there

¹⁸Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar Ibn Katsir, 1407), juz 6, 184.

¹⁹Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥya at-Turats al-Arabi, n.d.), juz 2, 202.

²⁰Abdur Rokhim Hasan, *Qawā'id At-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir Al-Quran*, (Jakarta : PTIQ Jakarta, 2020), 81.

²¹Al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī Ulum al-Qur'an*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub, 1376 H), juz 1, 212.

²²Uthman bin Sa'id bin Uthman bin Umar Abu Amr Al-Dānī, *al-Aḥruf al-Sab'ah li al-Qur'an*, (Makkah al-Mukarramah: Maktabah al-Manarah, 1408 H), juz 1, 14.

²³Hasan, *Qawā'id at-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, 82.

are conditions where differences in wording produce contrastingly different meanings that cannot be compromised or unified under the same contextual understanding.²⁴

Ibn 'Āshūr classified Qur'ānic *qirā'āt* into two functional categories: the first category encompasses reading variations that are purely technical and linguistic without affecting the interpretation (*tafsīr*) dimension, while the second category of *qirā'āt* has correlations in terms of interpretation (Qur'ānic *exegesis*). Al-Suyūṭī affirmed that the mastery of sciences in interpreting the Qur'ān is a prerequisite for an exegete (*mufasssīr*). According to al-Suyūṭī, the science of *qirā'āt* holds a crucial position among the fifteen scientific disciplines that must be mastered to interpret the Qur'ān.²⁵

The urgency of this discipline lies in its function as an instrument to validate textual articulations while simultaneously dissecting the semantic diversity contained within. Thus, *qirā'āt* is not merely a linguistic variation but an essential epistemology that enables a researcher or exegete to uncover the semantic depth and legal nuances embedded in the redaction of the revelation.

DISCUSSION

The Analogy of *Qira'at* and “Coding” in Software

Viewed from a contemporary perspective, *qirā'āt* variations can be likened to a coding system where small changes produce different outputs. In the Qur'ān, variations in vowelization or word form may alter meaning and legal implications without affecting the text's integrity. For example, QS. al-Baqarah: 125 shows how a shift from past tense to imperative can lead to different legal rulings, such as recommendation (*sunnah*) or obligation (*wājib*), highlighting *qirā'āt* as a precise system that preserves revelation while allowing interpretive diversity. Irham further identifies several interpretive patterns of *qirā'āt*, including *al-takhyīr* (choice of meaning), *bayān al-lafẓ al-gharīb aw al-mubhām* (clarifying obscure terms), *sabab wa musabbab* (causal relations), *ishārah laṭīfah* (subtle indications), and *'āmm wa khāṣ* (general and specific meanings).²⁶

Furthermore, the sixth pattern is *al-tanawwu' fī al-'ibādah*, denoting variations in worship practices. Seventh, *al-tanawwu' fī al-syarī*, which is the diversity in the prerequisites of an act of worship. Eighth, *al-tanawwu' fī al-ḥāl*, depicting variations in conditions or circumstances. Ninth, *yufassiru ba'ḍuhu ba'ḍan*, meaning one *qirā'āt* can explain another *qirā'āt*. Lastly, *ikhtilāf fī masā'il al-kalām*, which relates to differences in theological aspects. Overall, these ten patterns reaffirm that *qirā'āt* differences contribute positively to enriching the interpretation of the Qur'ān, rather than contrarily causing contradictions.²⁷

However, not all *qirā'āt* differences possess implications for the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Certain *qirā'āt* indeed directly affect the meaning, giving rise to variations in interpretation, particularly in verses concerning law, theology, or practical aspects of worship. Yet, on the other hand, there are also *qirā'āt* that only differ in phonetic aspects or technical pronunciation, such as elongation variations (*madd*), *imālah*, or *idghām*, which do not substantially alter the verse's

²⁴Al-Dānī, *al-Ahruf al-Sab'ah li al-Qur'ān*, 11.

²⁵Hasan, *Qawā'id at-Tafsīr: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsīr Al-Qur'an*, 83.

²⁶M. Irham, “Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Al-Qur'an,” *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 5, 1 (2020), 54.

²⁷Irham, “Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Al-Qur'an,” 54.

meaning.²⁸ Thus, *qirā'āt* differences can be classified into two main categories, namely *qirā'āt* that impact exegesis (*ta'thīr tafsīrī*) and *qirā'āt* that do not impact meaning (*ghayr mu'aththirah*). This classification reveals that the diversity of *qirā'āt* is not always identical to meaning differences, but rather acts as a mechanism that balances wording accuracy with the expansiveness of understanding in the Qur'ān.

In conclusion, *qirā'āt* variations resemble code variations in that small structural changes can affect meaning and resulting legal or interpretive “outputs,” making the analogy useful for modern understanding. However, *qirā'āt* cannot be equated with software code, since they are not creative or error-prone human constructs but rather authoritative, mutawātir transmissions of divine revelation, where all valid variants serve specific purposes such as facilitation (*taysīr*) and semantic enrichment. Moreover, unlike software changes that usually produce functional differences, many *qirā'āt* variations are purely phonetic and do not alter meaning, showing that their nature is more nuanced than the coding analogy suggests.

Examples of *Qira'at* Differences and Their Implications in Interpretation

1. *Qira'at* Differences and Their Implications in the Realm of Islamic Law

One concrete example of the influence of *qirā'āt* variations in the realm of Islamic law can be found in Surah al-Baqarah verse 125.²⁹

“(Remember) when We made the House (the Kaaba) a resort for mankind and a place of security. (Remember when I said,) “Take the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer.” (Remember when) We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, “Purify My House for those who walk around it, those who stay there for worship, and those who bow and prostrate (in prayer)!” (QS. al-Baqarah :125).

In this verse, regarding the word *wa'ttakhidhū*, there are two reading versions that each bring different legal implications. The first version, narrated by Imam Nāfi' and Ibn 'Āmir, pronounces it with a *fathah* vowel on the letter *khā'* (*wattakhadhū*). Grammatically, this form is a past tense verb (*fi'l māḍī*) recounting an event, so scholars like Imam Mālik, Imam Aḥmad, and Imam al-Shāfi'ī in one of his opinions concluded that the command to pray behind the Station of Abraham is recommended (*sunnah*)³⁰

Conversely, the majority of scholars (*jumhūr*) read it with a *kasrah* vowel on the letter *khā'* (*wa'ttakhidhū*). This vowel alteration transforms the word's status into an imperative verb (*fi'l amr*). The presence of this commanding element forms the basis for Imam Abū Ḥanīfah and Imam al-Shāfi'ī's opinions to rule that performing prayer behind the Station of Abraham is obligatory (*wājib*). The difference of a single vowel mark clearly demonstrates how *qirā'āt* diversity becomes a source of *ijtihād* wealth in determining a jurisprudential ruling.³¹

Next, concerning the nullification of *wuḍū'* (ablution) due to skin contact with a non-*maḥram*, which is found in QS. al-Nisā': 43:

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying or in a state of janābah, except those passing through [a place of prayer], until you have washed [your whole body]. And if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean

²⁸ Hasan, *Qawa'id At-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir Al-Quran*, 82.

²⁹ Asep Sulhadi, “Pengaruh Perbedaan Qiraat Terhadap Penafsiran al-Qur'an”, *Samawat* 5, 1 (2021), 4.

³⁰ Al- Qurṭubī, *al-Jami' li Ahkamil Qur'an*, (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 1998 M), juz 6, 439.

³¹ Al- Qurṭubī, *al-Jami' li Ahkamil Qur'an*, 439.

earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it. Indeed, Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving.” (QS. al-Nisā': 43).

The verse discusses the theological and legal implications of tayammum (dry ablution), especially regarding whether physical contact with the opposite sex nullifies purification. A key issue is the difference in Qur'anic readings (*qirā'ah*) of the terms “لامستم” (*lāmastum*) and “لمستم” (*lamastum*), as recited by different Qur'an readers. This variation is not merely phonetic but affects legal interpretation (*istinbāt*) in Islamic jurisprudence.

Some scholars distinguish the meanings: “لامستم” is understood as mutual interaction such as kissing or reciprocal contact, while “لمستم” refers more to one-sided physical touch. However, the majority of scholars interpret both expressions broadly in three main ways: sexual intercourse, direct skin-to-skin contact, or a combination of both meanings.³²

The implication of this *qirā'āt* difference ultimately birthed two major currents in Islamic legal *ijtihād*. The first group, pioneered by Ibn 'Abbās, al-Ḥasan, Mujāhid, Qatādah, and Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, understands the term metaphorically (*majāzī*) as an allusion to marital relations. On the other hand, the second group consisting of Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, al-Nakha'ī, and Imam al-Shāfi'ī understands it literally (*ḥaqīqī*) as skin contact in a broad sense, whether occurring through intimate relations or merely ordinary physical contact. This reinforces that the variety of *mutawātir* readings has a direct correlation to the dynamization of jurisprudential laws practiced by the *ummah*.³³

Furthermore, the ruling on washing the feet during ablution in the Qur'anic Verse (QS. Al-Ma'idah: 6):

“O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of janabah, then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it.”

The main point of discussion in this verse relates to the *qirā'āt* difference on the words *wa arjulakum* and *wa arjulikum*, which impacts the ruling of *wuḍū'*, particularly whether the feet must be washed or if wiping is sufficient. Some *qirā'āt* imams like Ibn Kathīr, Ḥamzah, and Abū 'Amr read it with a *kasrah* (*arjulikum*). Meanwhile, Nāfi', Ibn 'Āmir, Ḥafṣ, and al-Kisā'ī read it with a *fathah* (*arjulakum*). In the *arjulakum qirā'ah*, the word is conjoined with *wujūhakum* (faces), thereby yielding the understanding that feet are among the body parts mandatory to be washed during *wuḍū'*. Thus, the legal consequence is that the feet must be washed when performing ablution.³⁴

In QS. al-Baqarah: 222, the ruling on menstruation states that marital relations are prohibited during menstruation until purity is attained, but the phrase *hattā yaṭhurna* contains a *qirā'āt* difference that affects legal interpretation. The reading *yaththahharna* (with *tashdīd*) indicates complete purity after menstruation followed by ritual *ghusl* (غسل), while *yathhurna* (without *tashdīd*) may allow intercourse once bleeding stops even before bathing. This difference leads to divergent juristic views: Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī, and al-Awza'ī require *ghusl* first, whereas Abū Ḥanīfah

³²Sulhadi, “Pengaruh Perbedaan Qiraat Terhadap Penafsiran al-Qur'an,” 5.

³³Hasanuddīn A.F., *Anatomi al-Qur'an: Perbedaan Qirā'āt dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Istinbāt Hukum dalam al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 1995), 206.

³⁴Alī al-Shawkānī, *Fath al-Qādir*, juz 2 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1414 H), 20.

allows it after bleeding ends. However, the dominant opinion is that full purity after ghusl is required.³⁵

Furthermore, *qirā'āt* differences in verses regarding punitive laws (*ḥūdūd*) also possess an influence on interpretation. Namely in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219. Allah says: “*They ask you about wine and gambling. Say: In them is great sin and [some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit...*”

In this verse, there is a *qirā'āt* difference on the word related to the word *ithm* (sin). Hamzah and al-Kisā'i read it as *إِثْمٌ كَثِيرٌ* with the meaning “many sins”, whereas the majority of reciters (*jumhur qari*) read it as *إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ* as “a great sin.”³⁶

Abdur Rokhim, quoting from Muḥammad al-Ḥabshī's book, *al-Qirā'āt al-Mutawātirah wa Atharuhā fī al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah wa al-Aḥkām al-Sharʿiyyah wa al-Rasm al-ʿUthmānī*, relays that this *qirā'āt* difference influences interpretation. According to Ḥamzah and al-Kisā'ī's reading, wine and gambling are comprehended as acts containing many sins. Meanwhile, according to the majority, both are categorized as major sins. Nevertheless, this difference is not overly significant in meaning, because inherently wine and gambling are indeed acts that encompass many sins while simultaneously being classified as major sins. Contextually from the verse, the reading *kabīr* (great) is more suitable with the comparison “their sin is greater than their benefit,” while the reading *kathīr* (many) is more tied to the mention of benefits for humanity.³⁷

2. *Qirā'āt* Differences and Their Implications in the Interpretation of Theological and Creedal Verses

Subsequent research results indicate that the impact of *qirā'āt* differences is not only limited to legal establishments but also extends to the interpretation of other verses, both those relating to theological aspects and moral values. Thus, *qirā'āt* variations also influence the way one understands, and can even mold, a Muslim's beliefs. In relation to the function of *qirā'āt* on Qur'ān interpretation, there are at least ten patterns. One of them is *takhyīr*, which is the availability of choice for Muslims to follow the *qirā'āt* whose interpretation is deemed most suitable for their condition and level of faith, as observed in the *qirā'āt* difference when reading QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 4. “*Master (King) of the Day of Judgment*” Some *qirā'āt* imams like Āṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd and Al-Kisāī, Ya'qub, and Khalaf read it with *mad* becoming *māliki* (مَالِكِ), while other imams read it without *mad*, namely *maliki* (مَلِكِ).³⁸

According to Moh'd Abdullah Shalash and Fawaz Farhan Al Doumani, several canonical and non-canonical variants have been reported for the phrase *Māliki yawmi al-dīn* in Q. 1:4. Abū Ṣāliḥ recited it as *Māliki* (with an *alif*), a reading also transmitted by Ḥamd ibn al-Samī' and regarded as an acceptable recitation.³⁹ Meanwhile, Abū Ḥaywah recited it as *Malikan* (without an *alif*), while 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was reported to have read it as *Malaka yawma al-dīn*, transforming the expression into a verbal construction (*fī'l*) that emphasizes the temporal aspect of divine

³⁵Hasan, *Qawa'id at-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 97-98.

³⁶Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Anṣārī, *al-Mukarrar fī Mā Tawātara min al-Qirā'āt al-Sab' wa Taḥarrara* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2001), 57.

³⁷Hasan, *Qawa'id at-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 99.

³⁸Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-ʿAshr* (Miṣr: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, 1920), 1.

³⁹ Moh'd Abdullah Shalash and Fawaz Farhan Al Doumani, “Contemplating the Meaning of Al-Fatihah Through the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān,” *Journal of Ma'alim Al-Quran Wa Al-Sunnah* 17, Special Issue (2021), 181.

judgment.⁴⁰ In addition, a narration from Abū 'Amr through 'Abd al-Wārith records the reading *Maliku yawmi al-dīn* with a lighter pronunciation, a variant also attributed to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz.⁴¹

Abd. Muin Salim attempted to combine the meanings of both *qirā'āt*. According to him: A person leaning towards power will be more devout if reading *malik* (Supreme King). Whereas a person more inclined towards wealth will be more touched if reading *mālik* (Supreme Owner). This meaning imparts the lesson that: By reading *malik*, someone is reminded that supreme and eternal power belongs only to Allah. By reading *mālik* elongating the letter *mim*, someone is made aware that all earthly wealth and enjoyments ultimately belong to Allah. From this *qirā'āt* difference, philosophical and moral values relating to self-restraint against power ambitions and the love for wealth can be extracted.⁴² The form "*Malaka / Malaka yawma*," which has a verbal (*fi'il*) structure, conveys a sense of action or event. It can therefore be understood as an affirmation that Allah actively "rules" or "decrees" on that particular Day.

Other lighter pronunciation variations (such as the narration of Abu 'Amr) generally do not significantly alter the meaning, but they still demonstrate the phonetic flexibility within the *qirā'āt*. Overall, these differences are not contradictory but complementary, as they enrich the understanding that Allah is simultaneously the absolute Owner and Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. This serves as an example that some qira'at have interpretive implications (*ta'thīr tafsīrī*), while others are purely phonetic in nature.

3. *Qirā'āt* Differences and Their Implications in the Interpretation of Narrative Verses

In the story of Prophet Adam AS, there are several *qirā'āt* versions that have an influence on interpretation. One of them is in Surah al-Baqarah: 36.

But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been (paradise). And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time."

In the verse regarding the story of Prophet Adam and Eve, there is a *qirā'āt* difference on the words فَازَلَّاهُمَا and فَارَزَّاهُمَا. The majority of reciters read *fa azallahumā* deriving from a word meaning "caused to slip," while Hamzah reads it *fa azālahumā* which means "removed" or "eliminated."

Both of these readings are equally authentic (*mutawātir*). From this difference, it can be understood that the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise was not merely a physical slip, but also indicated that they were distanced from paradise both physically and spiritually due to Iblis's temptation. *Qirā'āt* differences can also exhibit cause-and-effect relationships in a verse, such as in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 37.⁴³

Then in the subsequent verse QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 37: *...Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance...*

In this instance, Ibn Kathīr reads the word *Ādam* with a *naṣab* (accusative) case and *kalimāt* with a *rafa'* (nominative) case, whereas the other *qirā'āt* read it the opposite way as found in the *muṣḥaf*.

If following the general reading, the meaning is because Adam received words from Allah, Allah forgave him. However, according to Ibn Kathīr's *qirā'āt*, the meaning shifts to because Allah

⁴⁰Shalash and Al Doumani, "Contemplating the Meaning of Al-Fatihah Through the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān," 182.

⁴¹Shalash and Al Doumani, "Contemplating the Meaning of Al-Fatihah Through the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān," 182.

⁴²Irham, "Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Alquran," 55.

⁴³Irham, "Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Alquran," 56.

forgave Adam, Adam received words from Him. Thus, *qirā'āt* differences can influence the direction of cause-and-effect relationships in verse interpretation.⁴⁴

Discussion of Interpretive Maxims and the Influence of Certain *Qirā'āt* on Variations in Interpretation

The maxim “some *qirā'āt* influence interpretive variations” highlights that authentic, *mutawātir* recitations are not merely differences in pronunciation, but can also affect meaning and Qur'ānic interpretation. Thus, *qirā'āt* are an essential source in *tafsīr* because each reading has a strong prophetic transmission, and ignoring them means overlooking an important dimension of the Qur'ān. Since its revelation, the Qur'ān has been preserved through standardized canonical recitations, including the well-known seven and ten *qirā'āt* traditions.

Throughout different historical phases, Muslim scholars have worked to establish a unified textual tradition, both in written manuscripts (*maṣāḥif*) and in oral transmission. An examination of key turning points in the canonization process demonstrates that the formal recognition and religious authorization of this standardized corpus played a significant role in shaping evolving norms of transmission and interpretation.⁴⁵

The validity of an authentic *qirā'āt*: In *qira'at* science terminology, a *mutawātir qirā'āt* is a reading that fulfills three conditions or pillars established by scholars. These conditions are: the authenticity of the *sanad*, alignment with the Uthmanic *muṣḥaf*, and not violating Arabic language grammatical rules.⁴⁶ These three conditions were expounded by Abdul Rahim Dani quoting Ibn al-Jazari's view from his monumental work *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*. Meanwhile, Subhi al-Salih categorized Al-Qur'ān *qirā'āt* differences into seven forms, encompassing *i'rāb* differences, letter differences, singular and plural forms, synonym usage, sequence shifts (*taqdim* and *ta'khīr*), additions and subtractions (*ziyādah–nuqṣān*), as well as dialectal differences.

From this explanation, it can be grasped that *qirā'āt* variations are divided into two massive categories. First, linguistic differences, such as *i'rāb*, *takhfīf*, *tasydīd*, and *mad*, which represent the most dominant form. Second, differences impacting interpretation (*tafsīrī*), namely *qirā'āt* that bring forth differing meanings when comprehending Qur'ān verses, although their number is relatively minor.⁴⁷ This shows that *qira'āt* has a significant role in determining interpretative directions, not merely serving as phonetic variations. Therefore, classical exegetes like Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, and al-Qurṭubī paid immense attention to *qirā'āt* in their exegesis works.

The implications of *qirā'āt* differences are not constrained to linguistic elements, but also stretch to the fields of law (*fiqh*), theology (*'aqīdah*), and morals. In the field of law, *qirā'āt* differences can yield variations in legal derivations, such as in the case of the obligation to wash or wipe the feet during wudu. In theology, *qirā'āt* can affect the understanding of Allah's attributes, such as in the debate over إمكانية رؤية الله (the possibility of seeing Allah). Meanwhile in moral aspects, *qirā'āt* can enrich the meaning of ethical values housed within a verse. Consequently, *qirā'āt* acts as one of the factors broadening the Qur'ān's semantic scope and offering flexibility in grasping divine messages.

Nevertheless, not all *qirā'āt* differences possess a significant impact on interpretation. Stemming from scholars' studies on the array of *qirā'āt*, Mufida Afiya quoting Ibn Jazari in his

⁴⁴Irham, “Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Alquran,” 57.

⁴⁵Sirojiddin Shodmonov, “Theoretical and Historical Foundations of Qira'at in the Science of Tafsir,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Human Studies* 2, 5 (2026), 53.

⁴⁶Abdul Rahim Dani, *Pengantar Ilmu Qira'at*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: One Peach Media, 2025), 109.

⁴⁷Irham, “Implikasi Perbedaan Qiraat terhadap Penafsiran Alquran,” 60.

book *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr* formulates that *qirā'āt* differences encompass the following several aspects.⁴⁸

1. Differences in vowel marks (*harakat*) without altering the meaning or written form. An example is found in Qur'an Surah An-Nisa verse 37, on a word that holds several reading variations, such as (البَّحْلُ، البَحْلُ، البُّحْلُ، البُحْلُ). Out of these variations, some fall under *mutawātir qirā'āt*.
2. Vowel mark differences that trigger meaning alterations, but do not change the written form. For instance, on the word “كلمات” which can be read with differing variations so its meaning shifts from “Adam received some words from his Lord” to “Adam was given some words by his Lord”.
3. Differences in letters within a word impacting meaning alterations, while the written form remains unchanged. This is visible in reading variations narrated by several reciters, like the difference between “نُنَجِّيكَ” and “نُنَجِّيكَ”.
4. Differences in sentence arrangement in the form of *taqdim* (advancing) and *ta'khir* (delaying), namely the alteration of word sequences in a verse without discarding its base meaning.
5. Other differences tied to phonetic reading aspects, such as elongation (*madd*), *izhār* and *idghām*, *imālah*, *tafkhīm*, *tarqīq*, *tashīl*, *taḥqīq*, *jahr*, and so forth. This type of difference does not significantly affect the wording or the meaning

Additionally, Ibn al-Jazarī also cited the views of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Ibn Qutaybah positing that *qirā'āt* variations can also be observed from:⁴⁹

1. Differences in word forms, such as singular (*mufrad*), dual (*tathniyah*), plural (*jam*), masculine (*mudhakkar*), feminine (*mu'annath*), as well as exaggeration forms (*mubālaghah*).
2. Differences in the shape of additions (*ziyādah*) or omissions (*nuqṣān*) of words within a sentence structure.

This maxim also indicates that interpreting the Qur'ān cannot be conducted partially or solely based on a single aspect. An exegete (*mufasssir*) must consider diverse factors, including *qirā'āt*, the Arabic language, the context of the verse's revelation, and Prophetic *ḥadīths*. By doing so, the produced interpretation will be more comprehensive and closer to the actual intent of the verse. In this context, *qirā'āt* operates as an important auxiliary tool in unearthing the Qur'ān's meaning profoundly.

Furthermore, this maxim affirms that differences in interpretation are normal and inevitable occurrences. Because *qirā'āt* inherently holds variations, differing in comprehending a verse becomes a logical consequence of such diversity. Variations in *qirā'āt* (*al-wajh al-qirā'ī*) basically exert diverse impacts on verse conceptualizations.⁵⁰ This shows that Islam allows room for *ijtihād* and scholarly disagreement as long as it remains grounded in authentic sources, making interpretive differences a source of intellectual richness rather than weakness. Methodologically, it also requires exegetes to be more critical and careful by not relying on a single *qirā'āt* alone, but considering other authenticated readings to avoid interpretive errors. Therefore, an integration between the

⁴⁸Mufida Afiya Nur Fadhillah, “Pengaruh Perbedaan Qira'at terhadap Makna Ayat dalam Kitab Tafsir *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*,” *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, 2 (2025), 13872.

⁴⁹Mufida Afiya Nur Fadhillah, “Pengaruh Perbedaan Qira'at terhadap Makna Ayat dalam Kitab Tafsir *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*,” 13873.

⁵⁰Hasan, *Qawa'id At-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir Al-Quran*, 82.

sciences of *qirā'āt* and *tafsīr* is necessary to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'ān.

Scholars have engineered various approaches to accommodate *qirā'āt* differences in exegesis. Some select a single *qirā'āt* deemed strongest, while others fuse several *qirā'āt* to generate broader meanings.⁵¹ This latter approach is frequently utilized as it is considered more capable of mirroring the richness of the Qur'ān's meaning. Thus, *qirā'āt* is not merely grasped as reading variations, but also as a fount of diverse meanings.

In conclusion, the maxim “بعض القراءات تؤثر في اختلاف التفسير” exhibits that *qirā'āt* possesses a profoundly important role in Qur'ān interpretation. *Qirā'āt* differences can influence a verse's meaning and produce variations in interpretation, whether in legal, theological, or moral spheres. However, these disparities do not manifest contradictions, but rather enrich the comprehension of the Qur'ān. Therefore, understanding *qirā'āt* becomes one of the essential keys in extracting the Qur'ān's meaning profoundly and comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the material, the science of *qirā'āt* is a discipline studying the pronunciation techniques of the Qur'ān verses along with their reading variations originating from narrations interconnected up to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Epistemologically, the validity of these variations is established on the principle of ease (*taysīr*) for the *ummah*, as affirmed in the *ḥadīths* regarding the descent of the Qur'ān in seven letters (*sab'ah aḥruf*). The interpretive maxim “*ba'ḍ al-qirā'āt tu'aththiru fī ikhtilāf al-tafsīr*” asserts that *qirā'āt* is not simply a phonetic difference, but a vital instrument capable of influencing verse meanings and yielding interpretative variations in legal, theological, and moral domains.

The tangible implications of these *qirā'āt* differences are evidently visible in the realm of *fiqh*, such as the differing determinations of the obligatory or recommended ruling for praying behind the Station of Abraham, as well as the *wuḍū'* nullification criteria resulting from skin contact or menstrual conditions. Additionally, reading variations also enrich theological dimensions and narrative accounts, such as the cause-and-effect relationship dynamics in the story of Prophet Adam AS. Consequently, mastering the science of *qirā'āt* acts as a crucial prerequisite for an exegete to unveil the semantic depth and legal nuances embedded in the revelation text comprehensively without engendering contradictions.

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⁵¹Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 2006), juz 1, 52.

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