

Riwayah of Hafs and Warsh Recitation Methods: The Case of Maqam Ibrahim

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ABSTRACT

The recitation of *riwayah Hafs* and *Warsh* are two methods of reciting the Quran that are common in contemporary Muslim society. Both methods of recitations have an important relationship in *fiqh*. This paper reviews the position of the two *riwayah Qiraat Mutawatirah*, which are recitation of *riwayah Hafs* and *Warsh* in *fiqh*. Analysis is based on *wajh Qiraat* to examine the differences that have impact on matters of *fiqh* among the four schools of thoughts. This paper relies on resources such as books of *tafsir*, hadith, *fiqh* and history, scientific journals, working papers and other relevant academic materials. The findings indicate the validity of *Qiraat* as a discipline, and the differences of reciting the Quran that can bring about a significant impact on Quranic interpretations and Islamic legal rulings. This means that differences in reciting the Quran can lead to differences of opinion among Muslim jurists and their rulings, as in the case of *Maqam Ibrahim*.

Keywords: Hafs, maqam Ibrahim, Qiraat, Warsh

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INTRODUCTION

The science of *Qiraat* (Quranic recitation) explores the similarities and differences of opinion found among reciters of the Quran, from the basis of *hazaf* (absence), *ithbat* (presence), diacritical marks, dissimilation and assimilation processes, types of pronunciation such as *ibdal*, *tashil* and *raum* and the like, which are taken from *talaqi*

mushafahah from past *Qiraat* scholars going back to the time of the Prophet, the Companions, the Successors, the *tabiin* and subsequently, the inheritors of the Quran (Al-Banna, 1996).

Among the notable figures in *Qiraat* is Hafs bin Sulaiman, who learnt recitation from his teacher, Asim bin Bahdalah Abi al-Najud al-Asadi. The recitation of *riwayah Hafs* is the most common method of reading in the Muslim community, particularly in Malaysia. However, there is also another type of *Qiraat* found in some Muslim societies known as the recitation of *riwayah Warsh*; this is linked to Abu Said 'Uthman al-Misr, who learnt it from his teacher, Nafic bin Abu Ruwaym (Al-Qadi, 1991). It is widely used among Muslims today.

Presently, the development of the science of Quran as a field of study, in particular the science of *Qiraat*, is gaining public attention in Malaysia. This development has grown as a result of the establishment of various *tahfiz* (Quranic memorisation) centres throughout Malaysia. This is also proof that the public are now aware of the importance of *Qiraat* and esteem it highly in the same way that scholars in the past did.

Therefore, the Malaysian government has taken various measures to ensure that the alternative methods of reciting the Quran are made known, especially among contemporary students. This is evident through the establishment of the Islamic Centre under the Tahfiz Institute, such as the various *maahad tahfiz al-Quran* in the country, as well as the privately-owned

tahfiz institutes that are rapidly growing in number.

Despite the increasing appreciation of *Qiraat*, it appears, however, that there is insufficient research conducted in this area. This includes a lack of research in areas such as *Qiraat Asim riwayat Hafs* despite its wide use in Malaysia and *Qiraat Nafi riwayat Warsh* that is currently gaining public acceptance. The study of *Qiraat* is important because the differences in reciting the Quran can lead to differences in rulings and interpretations. Comparing the two methods of *Qiraat*, (*riwayah Hafs* and *riwayah Warsh*) shows that there are some differences in the recitation of a particular Quranic verse, which, in turn, contributes to a debate on the issues of Islamic *fiqh*.

METHODS

This paper is a qualitative study and relied on primary and secondary sources such as books of *tafsir*, *Hadith*, *fiqh* and history, scientific journals, working papers and other relevant academic materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Meaning of *Qiraat* and *Al-Quran*

Qiraat and the Quran have an intimate relationship with one another. Thus, it is appropriate that the linguistic definition and its relationship to one another are first highlighted before delving into the discussion.

Qiraat or in Arabic, *al-Qiraat*, is derived from *lafaz jamc* (plural) *qira'ah*, which

means the methods of Qur'anic recitation such as *Qiraat Sab'ah* (seven methods of reading) (Muhyi Al-Din Sabir, 1999). This means الجمع أو الإجتماع, collectiveness. It is a derivative word from قرأ - يقرأ - قراءة (Ibn Manzur, 1999). In terminology, *Qiraat* is a branch of science that explores similarities and differences among people who recite the Quran in terms of *hadhaf* (absence or omission), *ithbat* (present), diacritical marks and the like. In addition, it takes into account aspects such as *ibdal*, *tashil*, *raum* and the like which were taken from the chain of transmitters who learnt it from the Prophet (Al-Banna, 1996). *Qiraat* also refers to the recitation narrated by seven or 10 Qurra' (scholars in *Qiraat*), while *riwayah* refers to the recitation of a narrator taken from the respective Qurra' (Qabah, 1999).

The word *al-Quran*, from the linguistic perspective, is derived from the root word with the letter *hamzah*, namely, قرأ, يقرأ, قراءة (Al-Zarqani, 1942; Muhyi al-Din Sabir, 1999). Nonetheless, some argue that it is read without *the hamzah* (قران) according to Imam Ibn Kathir as narrated by Imam Shafi'i (Ibn Manzur, 1999). This pronouncement (قران) is a reading (*warid*) based on the Prophet Muhammad and is agreed on by scholars. Imam Shatibiyy explained that (Al-Shatibiyy, 1990):

انؤاود نأرقلاب نأرق لقنو

Moving the pronouncement of نأرق (hamzah) to نأرق (i.e. before the sakin letter ر) by Ibn Kathir.

The Rules Governing *Qiraat Mutawatirah*

Qiraat mutawatirah is considered *sahih* (authentic). Both the *salaf* and *khalaf* scholars have determined that *Qiraat mutawatirah* has three basic conditions. If the *Qiraat* does not fulfil one or all of its conditions, it is regarded as *Qiraat shadhdhah* (unusual) (Muhammad, 1999). The rules are:

- i The *Qiraat* must comply with the requirements of Arabic linguistics, at least in its singular reading.
- ii The *Qiraat* is compatible with the 'Uthmani script through the *ithimal* (read with two or more methods of recitation).
- iii The *Qiraat* must have an authentic chain of narrators (*Mutawatirah* according to Imam al-Shatibiyy).

Qiraat is considered *sunnah muttab'ah*, which means it is transmitted through the *talaqqi mushafahah*, a process that traces its narrators from one teacher to another until the chain is linked to the Prophet. This is a difficult process that cannot be achieved unless the chain is authentic. Through rigorous analysis of the chain of transmitters, the *qurra'* scholars have found that only *Qiraat mutawatirah (al-Sab'ah)* and (*al-Asharah*) have met the requirements of having an authentic chain. These two are considered as being part of the Quran and part of the *Ahruf Sab'ah* (seven methods of recitation) that were authentically revealed to the Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h.

Analysing the Fiqh Debate on *Maqam Ibrahim* as a Place of Prayer

There are many verses in the Quran that are related to the sciences of *Qiraat* and *fiqh*. However, this paper will only discuss one example that is related to the functions of *Qiraat* and the ensuing debate surrounding Islamic jurisprudence. Only one verse will be discussed in this paper and it is a verse related to *Maqam Ibrahim* as a place of prayer.

وَأَذِّنَا لِلنَّبِيِّتِ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

And when We made the House (Kaabah) a place of return for the people and a place of security. And take from the standing place of Abraham (*maqam Ibrahim*) a place of prayer.

(*Surah al-Baqarah* 2: 125)

The first aspect: The rules of reading and its link to the chain of narrators. The Farsh letters in this verse are in the word (واتخذوا) (Al-Rajam, 1994):

Hafs: These words are read with *kasrah* on the *kha* ' of واتخذوا .

Warsh: These words are read with *fathah* on *kha* ' namely واتخذوا .

The second aspect: Observing the readings based on the interpretations. According to *Qiraat Asim riwayat Hafs*, these words are read with *kasrah* on the

kha ' , that is واتخذوا , which indicates it is the imperative verb (*fiil al-Amr*). The command is to take the *maqam* of Prophet Ibrahim as a place of prayer (al-Habs, 1999) as found in the imperative word خذوا contained in the Prophet's utterance خذوا عني مناسككم (Al-Asqalani, 2000) where he read the verse above and subsequently prayed at *maqam Ibrahim* (Al-Qawi, 1997).

According to *Qiraat Nafi riwayat Warsh*, on the other hand, the word is pronounced with a *fathah* on *kha* ' , that is واتخذوا , which indicates the past tense verb (*fi'il al-Madi*). The past tense in the sentence واتخذوا is further strengthened because of its association with the word *fi'il al-Madi* located before جعلنا and after وعهدنا where the sentence describes the act of praying at *maqam Ibrahim* and the act of cleansing the Kaabah, which took place at the time of Prophet Ibrahim (al-Habs, 1999).

The third aspect: The rulings and its effects according to the jurists. The debates surrounding the two methods of recitation have indirectly affected the way the rules are extracted by the jurists. According to the *Qiraat Asim riwayat Hafs*, reciting it with the imperative verb (واتخذوا) is done by four sects. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, praying behind *maqam Ibrahim* is obligatory because of the imperative verb (*fiil amr*) (Al-Qawi, 1997). This is supported by the Prophet's act after he performed the *tawaf* in the Kaabah, after which he prayed behind *maqam Ibrahim*.

Further supporting this is the Prophet's utterance as narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah:

عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال : قال عمر رضي الله عنه، وافقت الله في ثلاث أو وافقتي ربي في ثلاث فقلت: يا رسول الله لو اتخذت من مقام إبراهيم مصلى؟ فنزلت:وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى (إلى آخر الحديث

From Anas: 'Umar said, Allah has ordained three things or that my Lord has accepted my request in three things, I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Why did you not take *maqam Ibrahim* as a place of prayer? Then the following verse was revealed: *وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى*. (Al-Bukhari, n. d., Al-Asqalani, 2000)

On the other hand, in the recitation of *Qiraat Nafi riwayat Warsh*, Imam Malik, Ahmad bin Hambal and Shafi'i recommended praying behind *maqam Ibrahim*. This is because only the five daily prayers are mandatory. This opinion is based on the story of an Arab Bedouin (Al-Shaukani, 1994) who asked the Prophet p.b.u.h. about the types of prayer,

قال النبي (ص): "خمس صلوات في اليوم و الليلة"، فقال الأعرابي: هل علي غيرها؟ قال: لا، إلا أن تطوع فقال الرجل: "والذي بعثك بالحق لا أزيد عليها ولا أنقص منها،" (فقال النبي ص) : "أفلمح إن صدق

The Prophet said, "Pray five times every day (night and day)." Then the Arab Bedouin said, "Are there other obligatory practices?" The Prophet replied: "None except that you do the recommended." The Bedouin said again, "By Allah who sent you with the

truth, I will not add nor lessen them (the five daily prayers)." The Prophet said, "He will succeed if he speaks the truth." (Al-Bukhari, n. d., Al-Asqalani, 2000)

A further example is that of the Prophet's p.b.u.h. utterance to Muaz bin Jabal when he was sent to Yemen to inform the inhabitants about the five obligatory prayers. Another is the saying narrated by Bukhari and Muslim about the obligatory prayers that were originally set as 50 before Allah reduced it to five only. This religious obligation on the Muslims was made on the night of Isra'. Regardless, the different rulings extracted from the two methods of recitation have not impelled the jurists to call an end to the debate. In fact, they have even agreed on its importance. The interpretation came down to whether praying behind *maqam Ibrahim* is mandatory or recommended. The various recitations indicate that *maqam Ibrahim* has indeed been a place of prayer dating back to the time of Prophet Ibrahim until today.

CONCLUSION

According to the aforementioned arguments, the researchers believe that praying at *maqam Ibrahim* is recommended but not mandatory. This is based on three pieces of evidence: first is the imperative verb (*fill amar*) that would cause an act to become mandatory unless another interpretation of the rule is brought to bear by another verse that changes its meaning, for example the presence of *fiil madi*; second is the Prophet's p.b.u.h. first utterance that would discount the second and third utterances, which is that there is no other mandatory prayers except

for the obligatory five daily prayers; third is that a majority of the jurists, including Imam Malik, Ahmad and Shafi'i, said that it is only recommended. Only Imam Hanafi argued that it is mandatory because of the *fil amr*.

In considering these differences methods of recitation, it is important to highlight the point of consensus reached by the jurists; none issued a ruling against praying behind *maqam Ibrahim*. This is further proof that there is congruence between the science of *Qiraat* and *fiqh* in the interpretation of the Quran.

As for the *Qiraat Sab'ah* and *Asharah*, these are the readings that do exist and none can on its credibility. The detailed analyses by the scholars indicate the effort taken to preserve the Quran in its original form. There is also a clear relationship between the *Qiraat* and the science of *fiqh* from its *Qiraat*, *lughah* and *fiqh*. In terms of Quranic interpretation, the *Qiraat* indeed plays a major role in it and has helped deepen the interpretation of the Quran. Thus, more effort is needed to deepen and broaden the scope of this discipline in order to enrich the sources and references for the study of *Qiraat*.

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