



Reassessing Women's Obligation in Friday Prayer on *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in the Perspective of Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA)

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Abstract: This study investigates the interpretation of the Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) regarding the obligation of Friday prayers for women, employing the analytical frameworks of *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. MTA adopts a literal exegesis of QS. al-Jumu'ah: 9, asserting its universal applicability irrespective of gender. The study critically reevaluates the traditionally understood Hadiths to exempt women, interpreting them as providing legal flexibility rather than categorical exclusion. By applying *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matan* (text-content) analysis, MTA integrates classical methodological rigor with contextual reasoning, thereby advocating a reformist yet tradition-conscious stance. This research highlights MTA's inclusive perspective as a significant contribution to contemporary Islamic legal discourse, aiming to promote enhanced religious participation and social cohesion. Nonetheless, the study identifies ongoing challenges, including contextual limitations and restricted mosque access for women. The findings underscore how MTA's interpretive model embodies a progressive rethinking of Islamic obligations in response to evolving social realities.

Keywords: Friday prayer, Women, Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, *Maqasid al-Shariah*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji interpretasi Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) terkait kewajiban salat Jum'at bagi perempuan dengan menggunakan kerangka *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* dan *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. MTA mengadopsi pembacaan literal terhadap QS. al-Jumu'ah: 9, dan berpendapat bahwa ayat tersebut berlaku secara universal tanpa pengecualian gender. Hadis-hadis yang secara tradisional dianggap mengecualikan perempuan dievaluasi ulang oleh MTA, dan ditafsirkan sebagai bentuk fleksibilitas hukum, bukan larangan mutlak. Dengan memadukan analisis sanad dan matan, MTA mengintegrasikan metodologi klasik dengan pendekatan kontekstual guna mengusung posisi yang reformis namun tetap berakar pada tradisi. Studi ini menyoroti perspektif inklusif MTA sebagai kontribusi terhadap wacana hukum Islam kontemporer yang mendorong partisipasi keagamaan yang lebih luas dan kohesi sosial. Meskipun demikian, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tantangan seperti keterbatasan konteks dan akses perempuan terhadap masjid. Secara keseluruhan, riset ini

menegaskan bahwa model interpretatif MTA merepresentasikan pemikiran ulang yang progresif terhadap kewajiban Islam dalam menghadapi dinamika realitas sosial.

Kata kunci: Shalat Jum'at, Perempuan, Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, *Maqasid al-Shariah*

Introduction

Friday prayer is central to Islamic ritual life, functioning as a spiritual obligation and a social instrument of cohesion. The Qur'anic verse in Surah al-Jumu'ah (62:9), "O you who have believed, when (the call) is made for prayer on the day of Jumu'ah (Friday), then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew,"¹ which commands believers to hasten to the remembrance of God when the call to prayer is made on Friday and to cease all trade. Classical Islamic jurisprudence has traditionally interpreted this directive as binding only upon adult Muslim men, further substantiated by a ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd that exempts women, enslaved people, children, and the ill from this obligation.² Scholars such as al-Nawawī, Ibn Qudāmah, and al-Māwardī considered this exemption a *rukḥṣah* (legal concession), granted based on contextual factors such as safety, accessibility, and prevailing socio-cultural norms. However, women were not prohibited from attending if they wished. This view has been institutionalized across the four primary Sunni legal schools (Shāfi'ī, Ḥanafī, Mālikī, and Ḥanbalī) and profoundly shaped by patriarchal structures that historically confined women's roles in public religious spaces.³ However, contemporary transformations in gender dynamics,⁴ religious literacy, and urban religious participation have led to increasing numbers of Muslim women in Indonesia, Malaysia, and beyond to engage in Friday prayers, challenging the enduring applicability of classical exemptions.⁵

The *Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (MTA), an Islamic organization in Indonesia recognized for its literalist approach to Qur'anic and ḥadīth interpretation, presents a distinctive case. MTA contends that the obligation to perform Friday prayer extends equally to women,⁶ grounding their position in the universal address of QS: al-Jumu'ah:9 and a critical reappraisal of ḥadīths seemingly excluding women. As documented in Sholikhin's sociological account of MTA, such interpretations have stirred debate⁷ due to their divergence from mainstream jurisprudence.⁸ This article thus investigates how

¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: With Colour Coded English Translation* (New Delhi: Farid Book Depot Pvt Ltd, 2022).

² Abu Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, ed. Muhammad Muhy al-Din 'Abd Al-Hamid (Beirut: Dar a-Fikr, n.d.) 275.

³ Muhyiddin Al-Nawawi, *Al-Majmū': Sharh Al-Muḥaḥḥab*, vol. IV (Kairo: Maktabah Al-Turath, 1995); Ibnu Qudamah Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Mughni: Sharh Mukhtaṣar Al-Khirāqī*, vol. II (Riyāḍ: Dar Al-Ālam Al-Kutub, 1997).

⁴ Ali Muhammad Bhat and Afroz Ahmad Bisati, "Rationality in the Qur'an: Integrating Reason and Revelation for Contemporary Islamic Education," *Dirasah International Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 16, 2025): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v3i1.40>.

⁵ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2003); Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Agency, and Commodification on The Landscape of The Indonesian Public Sphere," *Contemporary Islam* 3, no. 3 (May 28, 2009): 229–50, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-009-0096-9>; Zainul Mun'im et al., "Revisioning Official Islam in Indonesia: The Role of Women Ulama Congress in Reproducing Female Authority in Islamic Law," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (June 30, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v24i1.34744>.

⁶ Siti Hanna et al., "Woman and Fatwa: An Analytical Study of MUI's Fatwa on Women's Health and Beauty," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (June 30, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v24i1.37832>; Mala Komalasari, Rantika Dwi Maharani, and Ahmat Nurulloh, "Studies on Ulama's Flow in The Modern Era from an Islamic Perspective," *Dirasah International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 SE-Articles (April 11, 2023): 11–17, <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v1i1.2>.

⁷ Syamsul Wathani, Habib Ismail, and Akhmad Mughzi Abdillah, "Reconstruction of Women's Fiqh: An Analysis of Muhammad Shahrūr's Contemporary Reading in a Hermeneutic Perspective," *JIL: Journal of Islamic Law* 3, no. 2 (August 11, 2022): 159–75, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v3i2.860>.

⁸ Muhammad Sholikhin, *Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Gerakan Dakwah, Tafsir Literal, dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Prenada Media,

MTA's literal hermeneutics translate into actual worship practices within its community⁹ and how these practices challenge dominant paradigms in Islamic legal thought.

This inquiry employs a descriptive qualitative method grounded in *fiqh al-ḥadīth* as its primary analytical lens. Rather than treating *ḥadīths* as static legal pronouncements, this approach interrogates their transmission chains (*isnād*), textual content (*matn*), and historical contexts to discern interpretive integrity and social applicability.¹⁰ Primary sources for this analysis include canonical *ḥadīth* collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, along with their commentaries by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī and al-Nawawī. MTA's official literature, including pamphlets, recorded sermons, and digital media, is scrutinized for institutional doctrinal framing.

In contrast, this article is based on library research to trace legal opinions from classical works such as *al-Mughnī* and *al-Majmū'*. Complementing this, fieldwork involved semi-structured interviews with MTA clerics and congregants to capture the lived expressions of their interpretive commitments.¹¹ Additionally, non-participant observations of women's presence during Friday congregational prayers provided an ethnographic perspective to the study.¹² By triangulating textual, empirical, and interpretive data, the research comprehensively explains how a literalist paradigm negotiates gendered ritual spaces within Indonesia's pluralistic Islamic context.¹³

This study is particularly relevant in exploring how literalist interpretations, often dismissed as rigid, can manifest in progressive and inclusive ways when mediated through *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law). By analyzing the MTA's approach through this dual theoretical frame of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* and *maqāṣid*, this research highlights the potential of reinterpretation within the bounds of tradition to address contemporary social realities.

MTA's Legal Interpretation of Women's Obligation in Friday Prayers

The Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) articulates its stance on the obligation of Friday prayers by reaffirming the primacy of the Qur'an and Sunnah as foundational sources of worship jurisprudence. In Surah Al-Jumu'ah (62:9), Allah commands, "O you who have believed, when (the call) is made for prayer on Friday, then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew." MTA adopts a literal exegesis of this verse, arguing that it imposes an obligation

2017); Sunarwoto Sunarwoto, "Gerakan Religio-Kultural MTA Dakwah, Mobilisasi Dan Tafsir- Tanding," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (May 28, 2012): 103–18, <https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2012.0009.103-118>; Muh Nashirudin, "Pandangan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) Tentang Makanan Halal Dan Haram (Kajian Usul Fikih)," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (May 28, 2016): 235–52, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v10i2.936>; Sulastri Caniago et al., "Gender Integration in Islamic Politics: Fiqh Siyasah on Women's Political Rights since Classical to Contemporary Interpretations," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 2 (December 30, 2024): 411–31, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i2.9962>.

⁹ Salman Faris, "Sunnah as a Bridge between Theological and Practical Dimensions," *Dirasah International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (August 2, 2024): 120–35, <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v2i2.31>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Ajjaj Al-Khatib, *Uṣūl Al-Ḥadīth* (Damaskus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1989); Jonathan A C Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Universitas Michigan: Oneworld, 2009).

¹¹ Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Mughni: Sharh Mukhtaṣar Al-Khiraqī*; Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews* (SAGE, 2018).

¹² Michael Angrosino, *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research* (SAGE, 2007); Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, vol. 37 (University of Chicago press, 1971).

¹³ Achmad Maimun, "The Conversion of Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) Affiliated People To Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA): A Case Study From Traditional to Puritan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 21, no. 1 (May 28, 2021): 101–16, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v0i0.5784>; Sunarwoto Sunarwoto, "Model Tafsir Al-Qur'an MTA (Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an) Di Antara Tafsir Dan Ideologi," *Refleksi: Jurnal Kajian Agama Dan Filsafat* 13, no. 2 (May 28, 2012): 137–56, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v13i2.896>.

on every *mukallaf* (legally accountable individual), irrespective of gender. They assert that the verse contains no clause explicitly restricting this command to men alone.¹⁴

Hadith literature is also critically examined within MTA's interpretive framework.¹⁵ A frequently cited tradition states: "Friday prayer in congregation is an obligation for every Muslim except four: a slave, a woman, a child, and a sick person."¹⁶ However, MTA interprets this narration not as an absolute exemption but as an indication of legal flexibility (*rukhsah*). Employing *sanad* criticism, they question the reliability of certain transmitters, particularly Abbas bin Abdul Azim, whose integrity has been challenged. On this basis, they argue that such hadiths lack the epistemic authority to override a Qur'anic directive.¹⁷

Supporting their view, MTA draws upon the opinion of Ibn Hazm, who affirms that Friday prayer is obligatory for all Muslims without gender distinction. In *Al-Muḥallā*, he writes, "There is no explicit Shari' evidence that excludes women from this obligation. Friday prayer is a worship obligation upon all *mukallaf*."¹⁸ In practical terms, MTA ensures that its mosques have facilities to accommodate female worshippers.¹⁹ It promotes Friday prayer as a means for women to attain spiritual benefit, receive religious instruction through the *khutbah*, and participate in communal solidarity. These views are frequently reiterated in MTA's official publications and media content.²⁰

The application of *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* theory further elucidates MTA's methodological approach. Their use of *sanad* criticism, contextual analysis, and reevaluation of hadiths within their historical milieu reflects a nuanced interpretive model. MTA contends that hadiths exempting women from Friday prayer were articulated within a socio-cultural context where women's public roles were limited. In today's society, where women actively participate in public,²¹ educational, and professional domains, MTA argues that exemptions no longer hold universal applicability. Thus, the obligation to perform Friday prayers becomes contextually valid for contemporary Muslim women who meet the criteria of *taklīf* (accountability).²²

This integrative method, blending literal exegesis with contextual sensitivity, reflects MTA's commitment to maintaining doctrinal authenticity while embracing the evolving realities of Muslim communities. The combination of textual fidelity with contemporary relevance exemplifies a dynamic model of Islamic legal reasoning.

According to MTA, this blended framework situates their interpretation squarely within the broader objectives of Islamic law, or *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Citing scholars such as Jasser Auda, they

¹⁴ Yayasan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, "Risalah Shalat Jum'at 1" (Yayasan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA), 2024).

¹⁵ Yayasan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, "Risalah Shalat Jum'at 4" (Yayasan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA), 2021).

¹⁶ Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, I:345.

¹⁷ Al ibn Ahma Ibn Hazm, *Al-Muḥallā* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1988), 200.

¹⁸ Yayasan Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA), "Sholat Jumat Bagi Wanita," 14 Juni 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/>.

¹⁹ Al-Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh Al-Sunnah*, cet. 1 (Cairo: al-Shirkah al-Dawliyyah li al-Tiba'ah, 2004), 150.

²⁰ Abu Abdullah Al-Ḥakīm Al-Naisaburi, *Ma'rifah 'Ulūm Al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1997), 145.

²¹ Abdul Rahim Hakimi et al., "Legal Policy for Women Workers in Indonesia: A Review of Contemporary Islamic Law," *MILRev : Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 1 (April 4, 2024): 66, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i1.9023>; Faquiddin Abdul Kodir et al., "Maqāṣid Cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for Gender-Just Fiqh," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 2 (January 25, 2025): 519–45, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i2.16617>; Tri Wahyu Hidayati, Ulfah Susilawati, and Endang Sriani, "Dynamics of Family Fiqh: The Multiple Roles of Women in Realizing Family Resilience," *Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 22, no. 2 (December 14, 2022): 219–38, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v22i2.219-238>.

²² Jasser Auda, *Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid: Ināṭat Al-Aḥkām Al-Shar'iyyah Bimaqāṣidiḥā* (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2006), 89.

maintain that legal rulings must align with the overarching goals of Sharia, including justice, welfare (*maṣlahah*), and communal cohesion.²³ They argue that facilitating women's attendance at Friday prayers fulfills these aims. MTA also highlights the Prophet Muhammad's statement: "Do not prevent the female servants of Allah from going to the mosques of Allah,"²⁴ interpreting it as a prophetic endorsement of inclusive communal worship. This hadith underscores the legitimacy of women's mosque attendance and, by extension, their participation in Friday congregational prayers.

In further defending their position, MTA applies the legal method of *qiyās* (analogical reasoning). They compare Friday prayer to other obligatory acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan, which apply equally to both men and women. In their view, excluding women from Friday prayer without incontrovertible textual evidence would constitute a legal inconsistency. This reasoning parallels Imam Al-Shafi'i, who in *Al-Risālah* advocates for using *qiyās* to extrapolate rulings from shared legal rationales (*'illat*).²⁵ Thus, MTA's application of analogy reinforces the universality of Friday prayer obligations for all *mukallaf*.

Field observations reveal the practical implementation of this inclusive stance. MTA mosques provide women with designated prayer spaces and facilitate their khutbah engagement. Video documentation and public lectures underscore their message that Friday prayer is a communal responsibility open to both genders. MTA's advocacy for gender-inclusive religious spaces illustrates a holistic commitment to Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) and spiritual empowerment.²⁶

Analyzing this approach through the lens of *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*, MTA's interpretive model balances *sanad* and *matan* criticism, linguistic exegesis, and socio-legal contextualization. Rather than relying exclusively on textual literalism, they incorporate insights from historical, social, and linguistic analysis to ensure that their rulings resonate with contemporary ethical sensibilities. As Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī affirms, "The Sunnah of the Prophet is a primary source of Sharia that must be understood within its historical, social, and ultimate purpose contexts for the welfare (*maṣlahah*) of the Muslim community."²⁷

MTA's interpretation of women's obligation to attend Friday prayers exemplifies a harmonization of tradition and modernity. MTA models a rooted and reformative approach by grounding their legal views in Qur'anic injunctions, validated hadiths, maqāṣid-oriented jurisprudence, and contemporary needs. Their perspective demonstrates that Islamic law can evolve without compromising its foundational principles, offering a compelling paradigm for gender inclusion within Islamic ritual life.

***Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*: Concepts, Indicators, and the MTA Approach**

Fiqh al-ḥadīth is a composite term that merges "*fiqh*," meaning deep comprehension, with "*al-ḥadīth*," referring to the sayings, actions, tacit approvals, and personal traits of the Prophet

²³ Muhammad bin Ismail Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. II (Beirut: Dar Tawq Al-Najah, 2001); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. I (Beirut: Dar Ihya Al-Turaāth Al-'Arabī, 2003).

²⁴ Al-Qur'an, "Risalah Shalat Jum'at 4."

²⁵ Muhammad bin Idris Al-Syāfi'i, *Al-Risālah* (Kairo: Maktabah Al-Khanji, 1987), 45.

²⁶ MTATV, "Sholat Jumatnya Wanita," May 28, 2021; Compare with Siti Nurjanah and Iffatin Nur, "Gender Fiqh: Mobilization of Gender-Responsive Movement on Social Media," *Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 22, no. 1 (May 31, 2022): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v22i1.1-18>.

²⁷ usuf Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1998), 89.

Muhammad, thereby constituting a discipline that moves beyond literalism toward contextual and interpretive understanding of prophetic traditions.²⁸ Etymologically, it emphasizes grasping the intent and contextual depth of the *matan* (textual content) of hadiths, as explained by Ibn Manẓūr, who defines *fiqh* as *al-‘ilm bi al-shay’ wa al-fahm lahu*, the knowledge and deep understanding of a matter.²⁹ Al-Sakhāwī reinforces this by noting that *ḥadīth* encompasses all attributions to the Prophet, including his speech, actions, tacit endorsements, and characteristics.³⁰ This interpretive dimension is further underscored by Sufyān ibn ‘Uyainah’s admonition for hadith scholars to prioritize understanding over memorization: “O people of hadith, seek to understand the hadith deeply, and do not be disheartened by the advocates of reasoning.”³¹ Al-Ḥākim al-Naisābūrī elevates *fiqh al-ḥadīth* as the pinnacle of hadith sciences, arguing in *Ma’rifah ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* that it unveils both the meanings and legal consequences embedded in prophetic traditions.³² Al-Qādī ‘Iyāḍ describes this field as encompassing the scholarly ability to extract meanings, resolve ambiguities, and reconcile seemingly conflicting narrations into coherent legal frameworks.³³ In the contemporary context, al-Qaraḍāwī expands this framework by proposing a contextual reading of hadiths, including historical, sociological, and teleological dimensions, distinguishing between literalist readings and substantive objectives to preserve ethical and societal relevance.³⁴

Synthesizing classical and modern perspectives, *fiqh al-ḥadīth* emerges as a multi-dimensional science that critically interrogates textual, contextual, and normative aspects of hadith, requiring linguistic precision, historical awareness, legal reasoning, and interdisciplinary insight to ensure Islamic law’s continued relevance. As a specialized subfield within hadith studies, its indicators emphasize deriving actionable objectives and social applications from hadiths. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī asserts in *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam* that a deep understanding of *asbāb wurūd al-ḥadīth* (occasions of narration), the intents of the *sharī‘ah*, and practical outcomes is essential.³⁵ Al-Suyūṭī’s *Tadrīb al-Rāwī* highlights linguistic fluency, rhetorical knowledge (*balāghah*), awareness of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, intertextuality between hadith and Qur’ān, and historical sensitivity as markers of authentic *fiqh al-ḥadīth*.³⁶ Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, in *Fath al-Bārī*, insists on thorough analysis of both *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matan*, advocating for comparisons with Qur’anic principles and other authentic narrations to avoid theological discrepancies and reinforce epistemic credibility.³⁷ Al-Shāṭibī, in *Al-Muwāfaqāt*, anchors *fiqh al-ḥadīth* in a *maqāṣid*-driven methodology aimed at achieving *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit) by fulfilling five universal objectives: preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.³⁸ Complementing this, al-Qaraḍāwī emphasizes the necessity of accounting for modern developments such as scientific progress, global justice, and cultural transformation in

²⁸ Ibnu Mandhūr, *Lisān Al-‘Arab*, vol. XI (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1986), 131-33.

²⁹ Mandhūr, 210.

³⁰ Muhammad bin Abdurrahman Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth Sharḥ Alfiyah al-Ḥadīth* (Kairo: Maktabah Al-Sunnah, 2003), 22.

³¹ Al-Naisaburi, *Ma’rifah ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 66.

³² Al-Naisaburi, 63.

³³ Al-Qādī ‘Iyāḍ bin Musa Al-Sibtī, *Al-Ilmā’ ilā Ma’rifat Uṣūl Al-Riwāyah wa Taqyīd Al-Simā* (Kairo: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1998), 77.

³⁴ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata’amal ma’a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah*, 89.

³⁵ Ibnu Rajab, *Jāmi’ Al-‘Ulūm wa Al-Ḥikam* (Kairo: Maktabah Al-Qahirah, 2004), 21-2.

³⁶ Jalāluddīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb Al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb Al-Nawāwī* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2003), 93-4.

³⁷ Ibnu Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dar Al-Rayyān, 1996), 3-4.

³⁸ Abu Ishaq Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul Al-Syari’ah*, ed. Abdullah Darraz (Riyad: Wizarah al-Syu’un al-Islamiyyah wa al-Awqaf wa al-Da’wah wa al-Irsyad, n.d.), 287-89.

maintaining hadith relevance today.³⁹ Collectively, these insights reveal that the indicators of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* encompass rigorous textual validation, purposive interpretation (*maqāṣid* orientation), adaptability to social change, and integration with broader disciplines like sociology, psychology, and economics to form context-sensitive and ethically grounded legal responses. Therefore, *fiqh al-ḥadīth* must not be reduced to a technical verification of authenticity; instead, it should be embraced as a holistic paradigm that bridges prophetic wisdom with dynamic human experiences, sustaining the integrity and universality of the Prophet's message across temporal and cultural boundaries.

The interpretation of the obligation of Friday (Jumu'ah) prayers for women, particularly as advocated by the Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA), presents a valuable case for critical engagement through the framework of *fiqh al-ḥadīth*. The theory of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* transcends mere textual interpretation, requiring a multi-dimensional approach that considers not only the authenticity and content of a *ḥadīth* but also the circumstances of its transmission (*asbāb wurūd al-ḥadīth*), the objectives of the *sharī'ah* (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), and the evolving socio-cultural contexts in which Islamic rulings operate.

According to the classical scholar Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, a proper application of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* entails the integration of textual criticism, legal reasoning, and contextual analysis.⁴⁰ In line with this, the MTA has demonstrated commendable efforts in evaluating the authenticity and interpretation of hadiths related to the exemption of women from the obligation of Friday prayers. Specifically, they engage in *isnād* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (textual content) criticism, employing methodological tools traditionally used in hadith sciences.

One of the hadiths examined by the MTA is narrated by Abū Dāwūd, which states: "Friday prayer is an obligation for every Muslim except four groups: slaves, women, children, and the sick."⁴¹ The MTA subjects this narration to *isnād* analysis, questioning the reliability of certain transmitters, including 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-'Aẓīm, whom they argue demonstrates weakness in memory retention. This evaluative stance reflects the methodological emphasis of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, who prioritizes the integrity and precision of transmitters in determining hadith authenticity.⁴²

Beyond the *isnād*, the MTA extends its critique to the *matn* level. Rather than interpreting the hadith as an absolute exclusion of women from Friday prayers, the MTA perceives the hadith as offering legal flexibility contingent on contextual factors. This aligns with the view of al-Suyūṭī in *Tadrib al-Rāwī*, who emphasizes that the *matn* must cohere with overarching Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*) and public interest (*maṣlaḥah*).⁴³ This interpretative framework also correlates with the holistic vision of Islamic law advanced by al-Shāṭibī in *al-Muwāfaqāt*, where legal rulings are deemed valid when they promote human welfare and accommodate societal needs.⁴⁴

This interpretive flexibility is further evidenced in MTA's reading of the Qur'anic verse al-Jumu'ah (62:9): "O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business." The MTA adopts a literal reading of this verse as being inclusive of both men and women, arguing that there is no explicit textual indication that women are

³⁹ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah*, 72-5.

⁴⁰ Ummu Salamah, *Sosialisme Tarekat: Menjejaki Tradisi dan Amaliah Spiritual Sufisme* (Bandung: Humaniora, 2005).

⁴¹ Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, I:345.

⁴² Dawud.

⁴³ Al-'Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 3-4.

⁴⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib Al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb Al-Nawāwī*, 93-4.

excluded from its command. At the same time, they incorporate the principle of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to justify accommodations for women who face genuine obstacles in attending communal prayers. This position is again consonant with al-Shāṭibī's thesis that legal rulings must account for variable human conditions to fulfill the higher objectives of the law.⁴⁵

Moreover, the MTA contextualizes its approach within contemporary social realities. In a modern world where women actively participate in public life, the obligation of Friday prayers, according to MTA, serves a ritualistic purpose, strengthens *ukhūwah Islāmiyyah* (Islamic solidarity), and encourages spiritual inclusion. This socially attuned methodology parallels the thought of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī in *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, where he argues that interpretation of the Sunnah must be responsive to cultural shifts, evolving roles of women, and new societal norms without compromising the essence of Islamic teachings.⁴⁶

However, the MTA's interpretive framework is not without limitations. One key critique lies in its underdeveloped engagement with the socio-historical context in which the relevant hadiths were formulated. The exclusion of women from Friday prayers, as stated in some hadiths, may reflect the socio-cultural dynamics of seventh-century Arabian society, where women's roles were predominantly confined to the domestic sphere. Understanding these hadiths in light of their historical backdrop is crucial to appreciate their contingent nature and to prevent static applications in vastly different contemporary contexts. As emphasized by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, the theory of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* mandates consideration of the historical environment in which a hadith emerged to ensure its proper application across time and space.⁴⁷

The need for this contextual sensitivity is further supported by al-Qaraḍāwī, who insists that Islamic legal hermeneutics must account for modern transformations in gender roles, educational opportunities, and women's public engagement.⁴⁸ Similarly, al-Shāṭibī asserts that the adaptability of Islamic law is central to its durability and universality. Legal rulings are not ends in themselves but tools to uphold the holistic well-being of the community.⁴⁹ Hence, rulings related to women and Friday prayers must be reevaluated in light of contemporary realities while maintaining fidelity to the core principles of Islam.

Additionally, although the MTA's application of *isnād* criticism is rigorous, their analysis of *matn* could be expanded to include comparative textual studies. For example, other hadiths highlight the encouragement, rather than obligation, of women's participation in congregational prayers. An integrated approach that compares various narrations, evaluates their consistency with the Qur'ān, and applies principles of equity and inclusivity, as recommended by Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bārī*, would enrich the analysis.⁵⁰ Therefore, a more robust *matn* analysis, supported by *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, can enhance the relevance and flexibility of MTA's position. Such a holistic approach would serve as a valuable model in balancing tradition with contemporary sensibilities. It allows for retaining the authoritative status of religious texts while ensuring their applicability to modern societal contexts.

⁴⁵ Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul Al-Syari'ah*, 287-89.

⁴⁶ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah*, 72-5.

⁴⁷ Salamah, *Sosialisme Tarekat: Menjejaki Tradisi dan Amaliah Spiritual Sufisme*.

⁴⁸ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah*, 74.

⁴⁹ Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul Al-Syari'ah*, 288-89.

⁵⁰ Al-'Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 4.

The MTA's interpretation of the obligation of Friday prayers for women embodies several strengths grounded in the methodology of *fiqh al-ḥadīth*, particularly in the areas of *isnād* verification, Qur'anic exegesis, and attention to present-day social roles. Nonetheless, the approach could be more comprehensive by integrating a deeper contextual understanding of hadiths and extending the scope of *matn* analysis. A refined framework incorporating classical legal theory and contemporary sociological insight is indispensable for ensuring the continued relevance and integrity of Islamic legal discourse. In doing so, *fiqh al-ḥadīth* remains a dynamic and evolving interpretative science capable of addressing the moral and legal demands of a changing world.

MTA and the Gender Discourse on Friday Prayer

This study highlights the distinctive interpretation of the Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) concerning the obligation of Friday prayers for women. MTA's literal reading of QS. al-Jumu'ah:9 serves as the primary basis for asserting this obligation, emphasizing the absence of explicit gender based exclusion within the text. Their position is further reinforced by a critical evaluation of the hadiths that exempt women, particularly those whose *isnād* are considered weak, such as the narration found in *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* No. 1067. Nonetheless, the MTA's approach is not without challenges. Its literalist methodology tends to overlook the historical and social contexts of these hadiths, contexts that could enrich the understanding of Islamic law's inherent flexibility. As Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī notes, the interpretation of Islamic law must account for societal changes to maintain its relevance in the contemporary era. By incorporating contextual analysis, MTA could further substantiate its claim that obligating women to perform Friday prayers expresses Islam's inclusive spirit.⁵¹

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, MTA's emphasis on the obligation of Friday prayers for women aligns with the objectives of promoting justice and the active participation of women in both the spiritual and social spheres of Muslim life. Al-Shāṭibī, in *Al-Muwāfaqāt*, asserts that the primary aim of the *sharī'ah* is to achieve human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). Within this framework, the presence of women in Friday congregational prayers strengthens *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic solidarity) and fosters a more inclusive communal life.⁵² However, practical challenges persist. In many Muslim communities, mosque facilities remain inadequate for women, inhibiting their ability to engage in Friday prayers fully. Imtiyaz Yūsuf emphasizes that structural barriers often restrict women's access to congregational worship.⁵³ Consequently, the MTA must articulate a theological framework for women's participation and advocate for improving mosque infrastructure to ensure equal spiritual and communal access.

An integrative model that synthesizes literalist readings, contextual sensitivity, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* principles would provide a robust framework for reforming Islamic law. In this sense, MTA's approach is relevant to Indonesian Muslim communities and contributes to global discourses on gender inclusivity within Islamic jurisprudence. This study demonstrates that *fiqh al-ḥadīth* offers a critical methodological foundation for addressing contemporary challenges while remaining rooted in the classical Islamic tradition. The discussion underscores the need for a holistic interpretive

⁵¹ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawīyyah*, 72-5.

⁵² Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul Al-Syari'ah*, 287-89.

⁵³ Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Ismail Al-Faruqi's Contribution to the Academic Study of Religion," *Islamic Studies* 53, no. 1/2 (May 28, 2014): 99-115.

approach to Islamic law, particularly concerning gender and worship practices. By strengthening its contextual engagement and advancing advocacy for women's inclusivity, MTA has the potential to serve as a model for Islamic legal reform that upholds the enduring principles of *sharī'ah* while responding to contemporary realities.

Moreover, this discussion invites further scholarly development, particularly regarding the obligation of Friday prayers for women viewed through the lens of *fiqh al-ḥadīth*. As a critical discipline within *hadith* studies, *fiqh al-ḥadīth* emphasizes not only the examination of *isnād* and *matn* and the integration of textual analysis with contextual realities. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, in *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, underscores that a sound understanding of *hadith* requires consideration of the *asbāb wurūd* (circumstances surrounding the *hadith*) and alignment with the broader objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid*).⁵⁴ In this regard, future research could explore the socio-historical background of relevant *hadiths*, particularly concerning women's roles during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad.

Additionally, it is vital to compare MTA's approach with the positions of the classical Islamic legal schools (*madhāhib*). The dominant views of the Hanafī, Mālikī, Shafī'i, and Hanbali traditions, which generally exempt women from Friday prayer obligations, were often shaped by contextual interpretations reflective of their socio-cultural milieus. Al-Suyūṭī, in *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, highlights the necessity of integrating linguistic understanding, social context, and legal objectives when assessing the applicability of Islamic law across different eras.⁵⁵ Such comparative and integrative analyses would deepen the discourse on women's participation in Friday prayers and illuminate the dynamic interplay between tradition and contextual reinterpretation within Islamic legal thought.

Islamic Legal Renewal and Gender Inclusion: The MTA Model for Women's Friday Prayer

The interpretation advanced by Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA), which emphasizes the obligation of Friday prayers for women, holds considerable relevance in the context of contemporary Islamic thought, particularly regarding the global discourse on gender inclusivity and legal reform. As women continue to assume more active roles across public domains ranging from education and governance to commerce and religious life Islamic legal frameworks are increasingly expected to respond constructively to this evolving socio-cultural landscape.⁵⁶ In this regard, the MTA's position can be understood as a significant endeavor to realign traditional rulings with contemporary realities, reinforcing Islam's enduring relevance across time and space.

Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī's legal methodology offers critical support for such reinterpretations. He insists Islamic law must remain anchored in its foundational principles while evolving to address modern societal transformations. In *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, al-Qaradāwī underscores that legal interpretations must consider changing circumstances without compromising the integrity of the *sharī'ah*. The MTA's assertion that Friday prayers should be obligatory for women aligns with this adaptive framework. It not only affirms gender equity in religious obligations but

⁵⁴ Salamah, *Sosialisme Tarekat: Menjejaki Tradisi dan Amaliah Spiritual Sufisme*.

⁵⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb Al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb Al-Nawāwī*, 93-4.

⁵⁶ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 98-101.

also reinforces the broader Islamic ideal of universal moral responsibility.⁵⁷ In this light, their stance represents an opportunity to renew Islamic legal discourse that upholds tradition and responds to contemporary calls for justice and inclusion.⁵⁸

However, for such interpretations to have tangible social resonance, the MTA must extend its theological vision into practical advocacy. A crucial step in this direction involves improving the accessibility and inclusivity of mosques for women. Despite theological advancements, many mosque environments continue to be structurally and culturally unwelcoming to women. Facilities are often inadequate, opportunities for women to listen to Friday sermons are limited, and participation in mosque-based religious programs remains minimal. A study by Indah Nur Shanty Saleh highlights these ongoing disparities, noting that physical barriers and institutional neglect often marginalize women in religious settings, thereby obstructing their meaningful participation in communal worship.⁵⁹

To address these limitations, the MTA should champion reforms that ensure equitable access to religious infrastructure. This could include developing well-equipped prayer spaces for women, the provision of female religious educators and khatibahs, and integrating women into mosque governance structures. By making such changes, the MTA would demonstrate consistency between its theological claims and practical initiatives and actively contribute to the empowerment of Muslim women. Such reforms would underscore that the obligation of Friday prayers for women is not merely a legal claim, but a transformative pathway toward spiritual and communal inclusion.

From a theological standpoint, the MTA's reasoning is firmly rooted in the paradigm of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*—the objectives of Islamic law. As articulated by al-Shāṭibī, these objectives include preserving religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property. Central to these goals is the pursuit of justice (*'adl*) and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*).⁶⁰ By arguing that women's presence in Friday congregational prayers strengthens communal bonds, promotes spiritual awareness, and upholds the ethical aims of Islam, the MTA situates its position within a framework that prioritizes both individual and collective well-being. The theological inclusivity inherent in this view challenges rigid interpretations and affirms the dynamism and adaptability of Islamic law in contemporary life.

Practically, the affirmation of this obligation invites a reimagining of the role of Muslim women in religious spaces. Women attending Friday prayers fulfill a spiritual duty and cultivate environments for inter-gender dialogue, collective worship, and mutual understanding. These communal interactions can serve as a platform for dismantling long-standing gender hierarchies and promoting a shared vision of *ummah* that values all its members equally. The visibility of women in mosques symbolizes a shift towards a more egalitarian and participatory model of Islamic religiosity that reflects the pluralistic and inclusive values embedded within the *sharī'ah* tradition.

In sum, the MTA's approach to the obligation of Friday prayers for women reflects a multi-

⁵⁷ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawīyyah*, 72-5.

⁵⁸ Amina Wadud, "Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam," *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, no. 08 (2013): 249-62; Compare with Naufal Cholily et al., "Bridging Fiqh and Religious Practice: Actualizing the Function of Ḥāshiyah as a Form of Worship in the Scribal Traditions of Madurese Pesantren Literature," *Journal of Islamic Law* 6, no. 1 (February 2, 2025): 21-45, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v6i1.3749>. traditionally serving as an explanatory tool for words requiring further exploration, underwent a transformation in its application by kiai (local religious leader)

⁵⁹ Indah Nur Shanty Saleh, "Indah Nur Shanty Saleh, 'Keadilan Peran Serta Perempuan Dan Urgensinya Bagi Penataan Ruang Yang Partisipatif,'" *Gloria Justitia* 2, no. 1 (May 28, 2022): 101-23, <https://doi.org/10.25170/gloriajustitia.v2i1.3435>.

⁶⁰ Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul Al-Syari'ah*, 287-89.

dimensional attempt to bridge classical Islamic jurisprudence with modern social realities. Through its rigorous critique of *isnād* and *matn*, its reliance on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and its responsiveness to contemporary gender dynamics, the MTA exemplifies an innovative model for Islamic legal interpretation. Nonetheless, to maximize the impact and acceptance of this model, the MTA should engage in strategic advocacy to improve women's access to religious institutions and conduct empirical research into Muslim women's lived experiences with regard to Friday prayers. Furthermore, future scholarly efforts could include comparative analyses across various schools of Islamic jurisprudence, assessments of regional implementation, and sociological studies on the effect of this obligation on community dynamics. The MTA contributes to the broader project of Islamic legal renewal by combining theological rigor with practical reform. This endeavor seeks to preserve the timeless values of Islam while making them accessible and applicable in the modern world.

Conclusion

This study examined the interpretation of Friday prayer obligations for women by Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) through *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. MTA adopts a literal yet reformist approach, asserting that QS. al-Jumu'ah: 9 applies universally to all *mukallaf*, including women. By critiquing the *sanad* and *matan* of hadiths that exempt women, MTA challenges traditional limitations using contextual analysis and legal objectives such as *ʿadl*(justice) and *maṣlaḥah* (welfare). This positions MTA within both tradition and contemporary legal reform. However, their view requires deeper engagement with the historical context of hadiths and more institutional support, including mosque accessibility for women. Ultimately, MTA demonstrates how *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth* can mediate between normative texts and social realities. Future research should explore madhhab-based comparisons, local applications, and sociological impacts of gender-inclusive Friday worship in shaping modern Islamic religiosity.

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