THE INFLUENCE OF AL-QIRĀ’ĀT AL-ASYR ON THE EXEGESIS OF LEGAL VERSES IN TAFSIR MARAH LABĪD BY NAWAWI AL-BANTANI: A HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT
Interpretation of the Qur’an often involves a multitude of instruments to uncover its hidden meanings. Among these instruments are linguistic analysis, historical context, qirā’āt (variant readings), and others. These instruments significantly influence the outcomes of any given interpretation. This article aims to elucidate the impact of the ten qirā’āt on legal verses in Nawawi Al-Bantani’s exegesis, Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd. The study employs a qualitative method with a content analysis approach. The primary source used is the Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd by Nawawi Al-Bantani. The findings reveal that in the realm of Qur’anic exegesis, various qirā’āt are frequently utilized as tools for interpreting Qur’anic verses, and this is no exception in Nawawi Al-Bantani’s exegesis. Nawawi Al-Bantani, a prominent scholar from the Nusantara region who adhered to the Shafī’i school of thought in jurisprudence, was significantly influenced by the ten qirā’āt (al-Qirā’āt al-‘Asyr) when interpreting legal verses. This influence is particularly evident during legal debates among scholars. In such instances, Nawawi often favored qirā’āt that aligned with the legal rulings of the Shafī’i school. Nonetheless, his approach deserves recognition, as he consistently chose źāḥiḥ (authentic) qirā’āt that conformed to the Uthmanic script.

Keywords: Influence of Qirā’āt, Qirā’āt Ten, Nawawi Al-Bantani, Legal Verses.

ABSTRAK

Kata Kunci: Pengaruh Qirā’āt, Qirā’āt Sepuluh, Nawawi Al-Bantani, Ayat Hukum.
INTRODUCTION

Islamic scholars will continue to interpret the Qur’an. One key motivation behind their exegesis is the desire to make the Qur’an relevant and applicable in contemporary contexts. The majority of Muslims believe that the phrase “Ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wa makān” signifies that the Qur’an remains perpetually relevant, regardless of time and place. Consequently, scholars must continually engage with and interpret the Qur’anic text. This practice has been upheld by exegetes from the classical period to the present day. Numerous tafsir works have been authored, printed, and distributed worldwide to be read, studied, and applied in daily life.

Various tools and methods are employed by exegetes to elucidate the meanings of Qur’anic verses, all based on several tafsir texts that have been widely disseminated. One such method is the use of qirā’āt (variant readings) in interpreting the Qur’an. Scholars regard qirā’āt as different modes of Qur’anic recitation adhered to by an imam whose scholarly lineage traces back to Prophet Muhammad (Sitorus 2018, 75). Scholars in the field of Qur’anic studies assert that several Qur’anic verses can be recited in multiple ways, according to narrations attributed to Prophet Muhammad. These various readings can help clarify ambiguous words. For instance, the portion of the hand that should be cut off for theft, as explained in Q.S Al-Maidah verse 38. In a narration from Ibn Mas’ud, he recites the word aidiyahumā (both hands) as aimānahum, which means the right hand (Basri and Hamdani 2020, 175). This qirā’āh from Ibn Mas’ud has been used by jurists to specify that only the right hand should be cut off.

The scholars’ use of qirā’āt in exegesis underscores its necessity. As-Suyūṭī even considers mastery of qirā’āt a prerequisite for becoming a mufassir (exegete) (Al-Suyūṭī 1974, 4: 215). Among the exegetes who extensively utilize qirā’āt in their interpretations is Nawawi Al-Bantani. The tafsir by Nawawi Al-Bantani is authored by a scholar born in the Nusantara region. Researchers have varied opinions on the characteristics of Nawawi’s tafsir. Ali Iyazi (1382, 3: 1075) describes it as Sufistic, considering Nawawi was a Sufi and a leader of the Tariqa in Nusantara. Bahary (2015) describes it as linguistic, whereas Mufidah and Hasyim (2021, 156) categorize it as a jurisprudential tafsir adhering to the Shafi’i school of thought. The Sufistic characteristic is attributed to the dominant presence of Sufism in his interpretations. Similarly, when interpreting legal verses, he frequently employs linguistic analysis.

Moreover, Nawawi Al-Bantani extensively utilizes various Qur’anic readings in his exegesis. When interpreting legal verses, he refers to the ten recognized qirā’āt, and even includes qirā’āt shadhīhah (rare readings) as additional information. For example, when discussing the permissibility of a husband approaching his wife after her menstruation, as explained in Q.S Al-Baqarah verse 222, he asserts that it is permissible once the wife’s menstrual blood has stopped and she has performed a major ablution. This conclusion is derived from the qirā’āt of Syu’bah, Hamzah, Al-Kisa’i, and Khalaf Asyr. In other instances, he frequently employs the
ten qirā’āt, particularly when interpreting legal verses.

This reality invites deeper investigation to understand the legal status of the ten qirā’āt in Qur’anic exegesis and their influence on the interpretation of legal verses in the Nusantara tafsir tradition, particularly in Nawawi Al-Bantani’s exegesis. Extensive research has been conducted on the influence of qirā’āt in tafsir. Muhammad Esa and Ahmad Yusam (2021), Muhammad Irham (2020), Basri and Fikri (2020), and Umi Khusnul Khotimah (2023) have studied the implications of qirā’āt in Qur’anic interpretation. Additionally, focused research on individual qirā’āt exists, such as the studies by Mukhlish (2022) and Aqilatul Jannah (2023) on the implications of Ibn Kathir’s and Āṣim’s qirā’āt on Qur’anic exegesis.

However, among the numerous studies, only a few share similarities with this work. For instance, Mas’udi’s (2022) work titled: “The Use of Various Qira’at in the Tafsir Marah Labid Likasyfi Ma’na Al-Qur’an Al-Majid by Nawawi Al-Bantani and Its Implications for Interpretation (Study of Legal Verses in Surah Al-Baqarah),” and Muhammad Bayhaqi’s (2019) work titled: “The Method of Imam Nawawi in Unveiling Qira’at Differences in the Tafsir Marah Labid on Surah Al-Baqarah Verses 197-236.” The difference lies in that both studies focus solely on Surah al-Baqarah, while this study also examines Surah al-Maidah. Furthermore, M. Fathurrozi’s (2023) study titled: “Qira’at in Tafsir Marah Labid: An Analytical Study on the Use and Implications of Qira’at on Law” differs in the scope of qirā’āt used. Fathurrozi does not limit the number of qirā’āt as he examines them based on what he found, whereas this study is confined to the ten qirā’āt. Thus, this research can complement the existing literature by addressing its gaps.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper explores the implications of Al-Qirā’āt Al-Asyr on the legal verses in the tafsir by Nawawi Al-Bantani, also known as Tafsir Marāḥ Labīḍ. The research employs a qualitative method using a content analysis approach, focusing on Nawawi Al-Bantani’s interpretations of legal verses. The specific verses examined are the verse on the permissibility of marital relations after menstruation in Q.S Al-Baqarah [2] verse 222 and the verse on washing the feet up to the ankles in Q.S. Al-Maidah [5] verse 6. Although there are numerous legal verses scattered throughout the Qur’an, this study is limited to these two verses due to their significant discussion in Islamic jurisprudence and the controversies they generate within the community. The primary reference for this research is the Tafsir Marāḥ Labīḍ by Nawawi Al-Bantani.

Secondary references include books on qirā’āt, which provide extensive information on the various readings used in Qur’anic recitation. The research steps are as follows: first, inventorying the legal verses in the Qur’an; second, collecting Nawawi Al-Bantani’s interpretations of these legal verses; third, analyzing the various qirā’āt found in the legal verses under study, as well as analyzing Nawawi’s interpretation of the specific verses; and fourth, summarizing the results of the analysis.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Legitimacy of Qirā‘āt Studies in Tafsir

The Qur’an, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), initially employed a single qira‘at (recitation). However, given the diversity of Arab tribes at that time, each with its own distinct accent or dialect, some tribes found it challenging to recite the Qur’an in a dialect other than their own. Consequently, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) requested Allah to reveal the Qur’an in additional qira‘at. This request was eventually granted by Allah, resulting in multiple qira‘at of the Qur’an (Khotimah 2023, 52). A comprehensive account of this story can be found in a hadith narrated by Muslim and other scholars. According to the hadith, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was at the pond of Bani Ghifar, he was visited by the angel Jibril (Gabriel), who said:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to recite the Qur’an to your people in one harf (letter). The Prophet (peace be upon him) responded, ‘I seek Allah’s mercy and forgiveness; indeed, my people cannot do that.’ Jibril then returned a second time and said, ‘Indeed, Allah commands you to recite the Qur’an to your people in two huruf.’ Again, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, ‘I seek Allah’s mercy and forgiveness; indeed, my people cannot do that.’ Jibril came a third time, saying, ‘Indeed, Allah commands you to recite the Qur’an to your people in three huruf.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) again replied, ‘I seek Allah’s mercy and forgiveness; indeed, my people cannot do that.’ Finally, Jibril came a fourth time and said, ‘Indeed, Allah commands you to recite the Qur’an to your people in seven huruf, whichever they find easiest to recite, they are correct’ (An-Naisaburi n.d., 1: 562, no. 821).”

The terms “one letter,” “two letters,” “three letters,” up to “seven letters” in the hadith have various interpretations. Mana‘ Al-Qaththan mentioned that there are 35 different opinions regarding the meaning of the seven huruf. Despite the differing opinions, Ibn Al-Jazari, based on his observations, concluded that the seven huruf refer to the diverse recitations of the Qur’an, commonly termed qirā‘āt. In simple terms, qirā‘āt, according to later scholars, refers to the recitations attributed to one of the qirā‘āt imams, whose chain of transmission traces back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Bizawie 2022, 37).

The existence of diverse recitations of the Qur’an is, on one hand, a manifestation of Allah’s mercy, allowing Muslims to recite the Qur’an in a manner easiest for them. On the other hand, it serves as a tool for interpreting the Qur’anic verses. This consensus among tafsir scholars led As-Suyuthi to consider mastery of qirā‘āt as a prerequisite for anyone attempting to interpret the Qur’an (Al-Suyuthi 1974, 4: 215). This agreement stems from the fact that the Qur’anic verses can be understood from multiple perspectives using various approaches. Ibn Abbas stated that the Qur’an has at least four dimensions: firstly, verses that can be understood through the language of the Arabs at that time; secondly, verses that everyone can comprehend; thirdly, verses that only scholars can understand; and fourthly, verses that no one can understand except Allah (Al-Qardhawi 2000, 201). These various dimensions indicate that multiple
approaches, including qirā‘āt studies, can be employed to interpret the Qur’anic verses.

In essence, tafsir heavily relies on qirā‘āt studies. Several Qur’anic verses are often used as references to interpret other verses. Hence, if an exegete employs only one qirā‘, it is as though they disregard other recitations, which could otherwise elucidate certain verses. For instance, consider the following verse from Surah At-Takwir (81:24):

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَىٰ أَلْفَيْنِ بِضَنِينِ

Ibn Kaṣīr, Amr, and Al-Kisā‘ī recite the word with the letter ẓā, while other imams recite it with the letter ẓād as found in the mushaf. The recitation with the letter ẓā conveys the meaning of “accuser,” thus the verse would mean: “and Muhammad is not an accuser.” In contrast, the recitation with the letter ẓād implies “stingy,” making the verse mean: “and Muhammad is not stingy” (Ibrahim 2011, 34). Ahsin Sakho also emphasizes that the science of qirā‘āt cannot be separated from the science of tafsir. This is because variations in qirā‘āt can provide explanations and can lead to different meanings, although it must be acknowledged that not all variations in qirā‘āt result in different meanings (Muhammad 2019, 29). Thus, it becomes clear that the diversity of recitations or qirā‘āt can serve as a significant instrument in interpreting Qur’anic verses.

The Historicity of Al-Qirā‘āt Al-Asyr

The history of the formation of Al-Qirā‘āt Al-’Asyr, or the ten modes of recitation, can actually be traced back to the time of Prophet Muhammad, although the term Al-Qirā‘āt Al-’Asyr had not yet emerged among Muslims. The historical emergence of Al-Qirā‘āt Al-’Asyr can be divided into five stages:

First, the growth phase. This period began during the time of Prophet Muhammad, who frequently taught the recitation of the Qur’an to his companions in various ways to ensure they memorized and practiced it. These methods included teaching the Qur’an in a tartil manner (slow and rhythmic), teaching it in small increments, and teaching various modes of recitation. The latter method is often cited as the basis for the existence of different modes or qirā‘āt of Qur’anic verses. According to one narration:

“O Muhammad, I have been sent to a people who are unlettered; among them are the elderly, the weak, children, female slaves, and those who are entirely illiterate.” Gabriel replied, “O Muhammad, indeed the Qur’an has been revealed in seven dialects.” (Al-Tirmidhī 1998, 5: 60, no. 2944).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) met Jibril and said: Scholars differ in interpreting the term “seven letters” in the hadith. Some suggest it refers to the seven primary dialects such as Quraysh, Hudzail, Tamīm, Adz, and others, while others claim it refers to the seven variations of recitation known today as qirā‘āt. In this regard, Ahsin Sakho Muhammad asserts that both interpretations might be correct. The hadith implies that the

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Prophet taught his companions multiple modes of recitation, encompassing both the dialects of various tribes and more than one reading variation (Muhammad 2019, 42).

Secondly, the developmental period. This era occurred during the time of the Prophet's companions, the tabi’in, and their students. The proliferation of Qur’anic recitation variations was marked by the spread of the Prophet’s companions to different regions. For instance, Abu Musa Al-Asy’ari in Basrah, Ibn Abbas in Makkah, Ibn Mas’ud in Kuffah, Zaid bin Thabit in Madinah, and Abu Darda in Sham. They taught the Qur’an in their respective locations, leading to the emergence of Qur’anic communities and their scholars, such as Sa’id Al-Musayyab, Urwah bin Az-Zubair, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz in Madinah; Ubad bin Umair, Thawus, Atha’ in Makkah; Aswad bin Yazid, Masruq, Al-Qamah in Kuffah; Amir bin Abd Qais, Nashr bin Ashim, Yahya bin Ya’mur in Basrah; and Mughirah bin Abi Shihab and Khulaid bin Sa’d in Sham. This period saw the rise of qirā’at experts who significantly contributed to the development of this science, including notable figures in each region such as Abu Ja’far Yazid bin Al-Qa’qa and Nafi in Madinah; Abdullah bin Kathir and Humaid bin Qais in Makkah; ‘Ashim, Hamzah, and Al-Kisa’i in Kuffah; Abu ‘Amr bin Al-‘Ala, Ya’qub, and Isa bin Umar in Basrah; and Yahya bin Al-Harith, Abdullah bin Amir, and Adh-Dhimmari in Sham. These scholars played a crucial role in solidifying the science of qirā’at (Khotimah 2023, 42-43).

Thirdly, the codification period. During this time, the development of qirā’at advanced to the stage of formal codification. Some experts argue that the first scholar to codify qirā’at into a standardized science was Yahya bin Ya’mur (d. 90 AH), a student of Abu Al-Aswad Ad-Du’ali from the late first century Hijri. Following this, numerous books on qirā’at emerged, authored by figures such as Abdullah bin Amir (d. 118 AH), Abu ‘Amr bin Al-‘Ala Al-Bashri (d. 156 AH), Harun bin Musa Al-A’war (d. 170 AH), Al-Kisa’i (d. 189 AH), and Abu Ubaid Qasim bin Salam (d. 224 AH), among others. There is also a viewpoint that credits Abu Ubaid Qasim bin Salam as the first to comprehensively document the science of qirā’at, covering the readings of 25 imams, including the seven recognized imams (Muhammad 2019, 44).

Fourthly, the standardization of qirā’at into the seven readings. After various scholars documented qirā’at, which included many readings attributed to numerous imams and mixed authentic and weak narrations, Ibn Mujahid Al-Baghdadi (d. 324 AH) sought to authenticate the narrations and isolate the genuinely mutawatir (widely transmitted) ones representative of each region. His research culminated in the recognition of seven readings, known as qirā’ah sab’ah, attributed to each imam. These readings were accepted and endorsed by the inhabitants of their respective regions, such as Ibn Kathir’s reading in Makkah and Ibn ‘Amir’s in Sham. Ibn Mujahid’s book, known as “As-Sab’ah,” details these seven readings. The seven imams are Nafi bin Abi An-Najud (d. 169 AH) from Madinah; Abdullah bin Kathir (d. 120 AH) from Makkah; Abu ‘Amr bin Al-‘Ala Al-Bashri (d. 154 AH) from Basrah; Abdullah bin Amir (d. 118 AH) from Sham; Ashim bin Abi
An-Najud (d. 127 AH) from Kuffah; Hamzah bin Habib (d. 156 AH) from Kuffah; and Ali bin Hamzah Al-Kisa’i (d. 189 AH) from Kuffah (Sitorus 2018, 44-45).

Fifthly, the formation of the ten readings (Al-Qirá‘át Al-’Ashr). Ibn Mujahid’s work was widely appreciated by scholars for authenticating narrations and separating them from weak ones. However, because it still included numerous transmitters for each imam, subsequent scholars aimed to condense the transmitters to just two per imam. These imams and their transmitters are Nafi with transmitters Qalun and Warsh; Ibn Kathir with transmitters Al-Bazzi and Qunbul; Ibn ‘Amir with transmitters Hisham and Ibn Dhakwan; Abu ‘Amr Al-Bashri with transmitters Ad-Duri and As-Susi; Ashim with transmitters Shubah and Hafs; Hamzah with transmitters Khalaf and Khalad; and Al-Kisa’i with transmitters Abu Al-Harith and Ad-Duri Al-Kisa’i. Later, a charismatic scholar convinced the scholarly community to accept the inclusion of three additional readings, forming the ten readings (qirā‘át ‘ashr), namely Abu Ja‘far bin Yazid bin Al-Qa’qa (d. 130 AH) with transmitters Ibn Wardan and Ibn Jammaz; Khalaf bin Hisham Al-Bazzar (d. 229 AH) with transmitters Ishaq Al-Waraq and Idris Al-Madda; and Ya‘qub Al-Hadhrami with transmitters Ruwais Muhammad bin Mutawakkil and Ra‘uh bin Abdul Mu‘min (Muhammad 2019, 46; Sitorus 2018, 78).

Nawawi Al-Bantani’s Social Setting and Tafsir Maraḥ Labid

Nawawi Al-Bantani, whose full name was Abū ‘Abdul Mu‘ti Muhammad Nawawi bin Umar bin Arabi bin Ali al-Tanara al-Bantani, was born in Tanara, a village in Serang Banten, in 1815 CE (Burhanuddin 2020, 23–24). His lineage traces back to Prophet Muhammad through Husain bin Ali bin Abi Thalib (Badruzaman 2005, 7). Nawawi hailed from the 12th sultanate of Sunan Gunung Djati, descending from Maulana Syarif Hidayatullah, and was also a descendent of Sunyararas, the son of Maulana Hasanuddin, the first sultan of Banten. His mother’s name was Zubaidah binti Muhammad Singaraja. Nawawi was the eldest of seven siblings: Ahmad Syihabuddin, Tamim, Sa’id, Abdullah, Shaqilah, and Syariah (Burhanuddin 2020, 25).

Nawawi’s education began under his father, where he studied grammar, morphology, jurisprudence, theology, and exegesis. His father was a chief judge in the Dutch administration. Nawawi also studied under Kiai Sahal from Banten and Kiai Haji Yusuf from Purwakarta (Burhanuddin 2020, 25). He performed the Hajj pilgrimage at fifteen, seizing the opportunity to study under renowned scholars from the Indonesian peninsula, such as Ahmad Khatib Sambas, Abdul Ghani Bima, Ahmad An-Nahrawi, Ahmad Dimyathi, and Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, learning various disciplines including theology, language, Arabic literature, exegesis, jurisprudence, mysticism, and recitation. Nawawi resided in Mecca for approximately three years (Parhani 2013, 8–9). After acquiring extensive knowledge, he returned to Indonesia to teach at his father’s pesantren. Many students from different regions came to study under him, which worried the Dutch colonialists about potential rebellions similar to the Diponegoro uprising of 1825–1830.
CE. After five years, Nawawi decided to return to Mecca to further his education, resisting the Dutch by doing so. He settled in Syi’b Ali, near Jabal Abi Qubais in Mecca. During his quest for knowledge, he studied under Muhammad Khathib Al-Hanbali in Medina and later under Egyptian and Syrian scholars such as Sheikh Ahmad al-Mirshafi, Sheikh Yusuf al-Sunbulawini, and Abdul Hamid al-Daghastani (Parhani 2013, 9).

During Nawawi’s lifetime, the Dutch fully controlled the socio-cultural conditions in Indonesia. From his youth, the Sunan Gunung Djati kingdom in Cirebon had already fallen into Dutch hands. Despite this, many Indonesians pursued education in the Middle East, and some became Nawawi’s students, later becoming national figures. Notable among them were Kiyai Haji Hasyim Asy’ari, founder of Nahdatul Ulama, K.H Khalil Bangkalan Madura, K.H Asyari from Bawean, and many others (Burhanuddin 2020, 31).

In addition to his pursuits in learning and teaching, Nawawi was a prolific writer, authoring numerous works, estimated to be in the hundreds (Bahary 2015, 180), though other researchers mention about 34 works (Anas Mujahiddin 2021, 84). Despite differing counts, it is widely acknowledged that Nawawi authored many significant texts across various fields of knowledge. In jurisprudence, he wrote “Fatḥ al-Mujib,” “Nihāyah al-Zayn,” “Mīrqāt Ṣu’ūd al-Taṣdiq Syarḥ Sullam al-Taufiq,” and “Uqūd al-Lujain Fī Bayān Ḫuqūq al-Zaijain.” In linguistics, he produced “al-Fuṣūs al-Yaqūtiyyah Syarḥ al-Rauḍal al-Bahiyyah Fī al-


His tafsir “Marāḥ Labīl” is considered his magnum opus in the field of exegesis. Nawawi named this tafsir himself (Al-Bantani 1417, 1: 5). He wrote it at the request of his peers, initially hesitating due to concerns about the Prophet’s warnings, but ultimately deciding to fulfill their request. One of his goals was to follow the tradition of past scholars in maintaining a legacy of written knowledge and to benefit himself and those in need of Qur’anic exegesis (Al-Bantani 1417, 1: 5).

In his tafsir, Nawawi frequently referenced earlier scholars, mentioning five
The Influence of Al-Qirāṭ Al-Asyr on the Interpretation of Legal Verses in Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd

The influence of Al-Qirāṭ Al-Asyr on the interpretation of legal verses in Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd is profound. The various qirā’āt allowed different Arab tribes to embrace the Qur’an by selecting recitations that resonated with their linguistic preferences. These qirā’āt also play a crucial role in elucidating the meanings of Qur’anic verses, particularly those related to Islamic law, known as ayat ahkam. As defined by Al-Mubadi (2014, 12), ayat ahkam include both prescriptive laws (covering obligatory, recommended, forbidden, disliked, and permissible actions) and declarative laws (those not directly related to human actions). Therefore, ayat ahkam address all facets of law, from worship and social transactions to marriage and politics.

This paper, however, will narrow its focus to the legal verses regarding marital relations post-menstruation in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 222 and the requirement of

procedure follows the order of verses and surahs as presented in the mushaf. The ijmālī method interprets Qur’anic verses in a concise manner. This method aims to elucidate the meanings of Qur’anic verses with brief explanations and language that is easy to understand for both intellectuals and laypeople. The explanations follow the order of verses and surahs as found in the Uthmani mushaf. The muqāran method explains Qur’anic verses by using the thoughts of scholars and comparing the views of different scholars. It involves comparing the tendencies (iṭnijāḥāt) of each interpretation or discussing Qur’anic verses that appear to be contradictory with other verses or with the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. It also includes comparing the contents of the Qur’an with other revealed scriptures. The maudhū’ī method is a form of interpretation that involves collecting Qur’anic verses that are related to each other or have the same thematic objective and then interpreting them.

1 The term “characteristic” in this context refers to the dominant school of thought employed in interpreting the verses of the Qur’an, consistently or frequently. Its equivalent in Arabic is “al-Laun,” which means color, signifying something that characterizes or influences a particular interpretation.

2 The term ‘method’ here corresponds to the Arabic word al-Ṭāriqah, which refers to the approach taken by a mufassir (exegete) in interpreting Qur’anic verses. According to the standardized formulation by Al-Farmawi, there are four types of methods: tahlīlī, ijmālī, muqāran, and maudhū’ī. The tahlīlī method involves explaining Qur’anic verses by examining all their aspects and uncovering their meanings, starting with the explanation of vocabulary, sentence meanings, the intent of each expression, the correlation between verses, and interpretation based on hadiths, the opinions of companions, and followers. This
washing the feet up to the ankles in Q.S. Al-Maidah [5]: 6. The interpretation of these verses is deeply influenced by the ten canonical recitations (qirā’āt asyrah), including the exegesis provided by Nawawi Al-Bantani in his tafsir, Maraḥ Labīd. This influence will be detailed in the subsequent analysis below.

The Legal Ruling on Intercourse with a Wife After Menstruation in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 222

Islamic jurists have divergent opinions regarding the permissibility of intercourse with a wife post-menstruation. The crux of their debate centers on whether a wife can be approached immediately after her menstrual bleeding ceases or only after she has also performed the ritual purification (ghusl). Abu Hanifah opines that if a woman’s menstrual bleeding has stopped and ten days have passed, her husband is permitted to engage in intercourse with her even if she has not performed ghusl. Conversely, scholars such as Imam Malik, Al-Shafi’i, and Al-Tabari assert that a woman is only permissible for intercourse once her bleeding has ceased and she has completed the ghusl with water (Al-Qurtubi 1964, 3: 88). This debate hinges on the phrase “وَلَا تَطَهَّرْنَ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ” (“and do not approach them until they are pure”) in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 222.

The variance in interpretation among scholars stems from the different readings (qira’at) of the term “يَطْهُرْنَ” (تَطَهَّرْنَ). This word is subject to multiple qira’at: Imam Khalaf, Imam Shu‘bah, Hamzah, and Al-Kisa’i pronounce it with a fathah on the letter ṭa and a shaddah on the letter ha, rendering it as “yaṭṭahharna” (يَطَّهَّرْنَ). Other reciters pronounce it with a sukun on the letter ha and a dhammah on the letter ṭa, reading it as “yaṭṭūṛharna” (يَطْعُرِنَ). Additional qira’at beyond the ten canonical ones exist. For example, in the mushaf of Ubaid bin Abdullah, the letters ṭa and ha are both emphasized with a shaddah, resulting in the reading “yaṭṭahharna” (يَطَّهَّرْنَ), while in the mushaf of Anas bin Malik, it is read as “yataṭṭahharna” (يَتَطَهَّرْنَ) (Al-Mujahid 1972, 227).

These differences in recitation naturally lead to divergent interpretations. Scholars who read the term without a shaddah on the ṭa (يَطْطَرْنَ) interpret it to mean that a woman whose menstrual bleeding has ceased is permissible for intercourse even if she has not yet performed ghusl. They argue that since menstruation is a natural process decreed by Allah, not by human will, a husband is allowed to engage in intercourse with his wife as soon as her bleeding stops, regardless of whether she has performed ghusl. On the other hand, scholars who read it with a shaddah on the ṭa (يَطَّطَرْنَ) interpret it to mean that a woman’s menstruation has ceased and she has completed the required purification (ghusl). This implies that intercourse is only permissible after the woman has both ceased bleeding and performed ghusl. The second group’s argument aligns with the following phrase “فَإِذَاٍتَطَهَّرْنَ” (فَإِذَاٍ تَطَهَّرَنَ), which clearly implies purification through ghusl (Al-Khalaāwaih 1979, 96).

In this context, Nawawi Al-Bantani acknowledges the multiple qira’at of the term “يَطْطَرْنَ” and explains:
The phrase "وَلا تَقْرَبُوهُنِّ" translates to "do not approach them." The following clause, "حَتَّىٍ يَطْهُرْنٍَّ," serves as an emphasis on the ruling to avoid them. Scholars such as Ibn Kathir, Nafi', Abu Amr, Ibn Amir, Hafs, and Ya'qub Al-Hadrami recite the phrase "حَتَّىٍ يَطْهُرْنٍَّ" with a sukun on the letter ṭa and a dammah on the letter ha, which means "until their bleeding stops." In contrast, Shu'bah, Hamzah, and Al-Kisa'i recite it with a tashdid on both the letters ṭa and ha, indicating "until they have bathed." The phrase "فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنِّ" means "when they have purified themselves," which can refer to either taking a full ritual bath or performing tayammum (dry ablution) if water is unavailable (Al-Bantani 1417, 1: 77).

On the surface, it appears that Nawawi does not show a preference for any particular qira'at (variant readings). He simply presents the various qira'at along with their respective meanings. However, his inclination becomes apparent in the subsequent paragraph, where he states:

"Walaf Ma'lik and the azari and the tauri and the shafii: He says: If a cut has been made, the woman is not permissible until after the的日班尼 her husband until she has performed the ritual purification bath (ghusl) (Al-Bantani 1417, 1: 77)."

This statement implies that Nawawi favors the qira'at of Imam Khalaf, Imam Shu'bah, Hamzah, and Al-Kisa'i, who recite the phrase with a fathah on the letter ṭa and a tashdid on the letter ha (يَطَّهَّرْنِّ). Additionally, he supports a qira'at found in the Mushaf of Ubaid bin Abdullah, which also reads the letters ṭa and ha with tashdid (يَطَّهَّرْنِّ).

The Legal Ruling on Washing Feet Up to the Ankles in Q.S. Al-Maidah [5]: 6

Washing the feet is a requisite for the validity of ablution (wudu). However, scholars have differing opinions on whether the feet should be washed in the same manner as the face and hands or merely wiped over like the head. Al-Hajjaj holds that the feet should be wiped, whereas Anas bin Malik contends that the feet must be washed, not wiped (‘Āsyūr 1984, 6: 130). This debate stems from the wording of the verse: "وَامْسَحُواٍٍ بِرُؤُوسِكُمٍْوَأَرْجُلَكُمٍْإِلَىٍالْكَعْبَيْنٍِ (and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles) in Q.S. Al-Maidah, verse 6.

The contested term is "وَأَرْجُلَكُمٍْ" (wa arjulakum). This word has multiple readings (qirā’at). Imams Nafi, Ibn Amir, Ya’qub,
Hafs, and the narration of Al-A’msy from Abu Bakr from Imam Asim recite this term with a fathah on the letter lam, rendering it as “وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ” (wa arjulakum), as seen in the standard Mushaf of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Other scholars read it with a kasrah, making it “وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ” (wa arjulikum) (Ali 2010, 3: 189). In the narration of al-Walid bin Muslim from Nafi, the term is recited with a dammah, thus as “وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ” (wa arjulukum) (Al-Ṭabārī 2000, 6: 222).

The interpretation and ruling are significantly influenced by these variant readings. Scholars who read “وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ” with a fathah on the lam interpret it as being conjoined with the phrase “فَاغْسِلْوا وَجُوهَكُمْ” (then wash your faces), implying that the feet must be washed. This reading is adopted by Muhammad bin Idris Asy-Syafi’i, Ibn Abbas, and Ibn Mas’ud (Al-Khalāwaih 1979, 129). Conversely, scholars who read “وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ” with a kasrah on the lam interpret it as being conjoined with the phrase “وَأَمْسِخْوا بِرُؤْوسَكُمْ” (and wipe your heads), suggesting that the feet should be wiped (Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Al-Azhari 1993, 1: 326).

Nawawi Al-Bantani, after explaining the various qirá’āt of the term “وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ” asserts that the correct and accountable qirá’āt are those of Nafi, Ibn Amir, and Asim in the narration of Hafs, which recite it with a fathah on the lam, thus as “وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ” (wa arjulakum). Consequently, this interpretation mandates washing the feet as one washes the face and hands up to the elbows. He argues that although the placement of the term might seem irregular, it is permissible according to Arabic linguistic principles (Al-Bantani 1417, 1: 254). Thus, the choice of meaning for a term with various qirá’āt is also based on the grammatical structure used. Nawawi employed this approach in interpreting the Quran.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, in the field of Quranic exegesis, the various readings or qirá’āt are often employed as tools to interpret several verses of the Quran. This practice is not an exception in the context of Nusantara exegesis, particularly in the works of Nawawi Al-Bantani, who also utilizes qirá’āt to interpret certain verses. The interpretation using qirá’āt may serve to elucidate ambiguous meanings or to seek meanings deemed more relevant according to the perspectives of individual exegetes, aligned with their respective inclinations.

Secondly, Nawawi Al-Bantani, as a Nusantara scholar adhering to the Shafi’i school of jurisprudence, is significantly influenced by the ten canonical readings (al-Qirá’āt al-Asyr) when interpreting legal verses. This influence is especially evident during legal debates among scholars. In such instances, Nawawi tends to prefer qirá’āt that align with the legal rulings of the Shafi’i school. Nevertheless, his approach deserves appreciation as he consistently selects qirá’āt that do not diverge from the Uthmani script, which is the agreed-upon standard in the religious community.

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