

An Interpretation of Q.S. Al-Waqi'ah (56) Verse 79: The Perspective of *Ma'na-Cum-Maghza*

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Abstract

Cases of intolerance of certain groups have recently increased, particularly in the glorifying of the Qur'anic *mushaf*. These cases result from differing interpretations of the Qur'an. This study focuses on Surah Al-Waqi'ah: 79, which discusses touching the Qur'an in a state of purity. The community has numerous perspectives on the meaning of pure in the verse, resulting in an ongoing debate. This study employed a qualitative method, with the *ma'na cum maghza* hermeneutic approach serving as the analytical tool. The *ma'na-cum-maghza* is an interpretation approach that uses the original literal meaning (historical or explicit meaning) as the foundation for understanding the text's main message (implied meaning). The *ma'na cum maghza* approach begins with the meaning (*ma'na*) of a Quranic text as understood by the first audience and progresses to significance (*maghza*) for contemporary situations. According to the findings of this study, the meaning of *al-muthahharun* is more than just a human being free of *hadas* (impurities). Therefore, touching the Qur'an does not always require prior ablution.

Keywords: *Ma'na Cum Maghza, al-Muṭahharun, Ablution*

Introduction

The exaltation of the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims frequently results in phenomena within the community. Some take extra care when holding, carrying, and reading the book. Some believe that it is not permissible to hold the Qur'an unless it is free of minor and major *hadas* (impurities). Therefore, those with minor impurities must perform ablution before touching it.¹ For major *hadas*, such as menstruation,

¹ Abdullah Saeed, *Pengantar Studi Al-Qur'an*. (Yogyakarta: Baitul Hikmah Press, 2018).

postpartum, or after sexual intercourse, the *ghusl* (full-body ritual purification) is required. This is done about the hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidzi and Baihaqi: "Let not the *junub* and menstruating woman read anything from the Qur'an." Unfortunately, some scholars, such as Imam Bukhori and Imam Nawawi, claim that this hadith is *dhaif* (weak) due to its chain of transmission. As a result, the hadith should not be considered evidentiary.²

This is not the only hadith that claims to be the foundation for touching the Qur'an. The words of Allah in Surah Al-Waqi'ah verse 79, "*La Yamassuhu Illal Muthahharun*," are also considered to have the same context. It is not permissible to touch the Qur'an unless one is free of minor and major *hadas*. Most Muslims today, particularly in Indonesia, follow the Shafi'i Madzhab. Imam Syafi'i believes that anyone who wishes to touch, carry, or read the Qur'an should be pure. As a result, in this madzhab, women who are menstruating, postpartum, and *junub* are not permitted to do so.³

However, not all ulema agree that "*Al-muṭahharun*" refers to individuals free of impurity. Ath-Thabari's interpretation explains various perspectives on the phrase "*Al-muṭahharun* ." Ibn Abbas, Said bin Jubair, Ikrimah, and Mujahid believed *Al-muṭahharun* was an angel. The second opinion states that *Al-muṭahharun* is responsible for carrying the Torah and Gospel. The third opinion argues that *Al-muṭahharun* are sinless individuals, comparable to angels and apostles. The fourth opinion believes that *Al-muṭahharun* are human beings who are free from sins. Ath-Thabari also explained that the *dhamir 'hu'* in the word *yamassuhu* refers to the Qur'an, which is the one on the side of Allah. The Qur'an that we have today is permissible to be touched by unclean magi and hypocrites.⁴

The number of ulema's perspectives on this issue causes it to be questioned and discussed in various studies, such as research that interprets QS. Al-Waqi'ah: 79 from the perspectives of Al-Azhar and Tafsir Al-Ibriz.⁵ Furthermore, research was conducted comparing Wahbah Zuhaili's opinion with that of other interpretation

² An-Nawawi, *Al-Majmu' Syarhul Muhaddzab*. (Jeddah: Maktabul Irsyad, Jilid II, 2010), 388.

³ Habib Hasan, *Haid, Nifas dan Istihadah*, (Terengganu: Ikon Syabab Resource, 2018).

⁴ Ibu Jarir At-Tabari, *Jami' Al-Bayan fi At-Tafsir al-Qur'an*. (Bairut: Muassasah ar-Risalah, 2000)

⁵ Miftahudin, Hafidz Sentot, "Makna QS Al-Waqi'ah ayat 79 Perpektif Tafsir Al-Azhar dan Tafsir Al-Ibriz" (IAIN SALATIGA, 2024), 62.

scholars regarding the regulation of touching the *Mushaf* by analyzing QS. Al-Waqi'ah: 77-80.⁶ Also, research was conducted on QS. Al-Waqi'ah: 79, which addresses the law of touching and reading the Qur'an while menstruating or *junub*.⁷ According to the literature, this research focuses solely on the perspectives of classical *tafsir* scholars. As a result, the researchers attempted to reinterpret Surah Al-Waqi'ah: 79 through the perspective of Sahiron Syamsuddin's contemporary interpretation method, *ma'na cum maghza*.

Methods

The researchers employed a descriptive analysis method with library study to achieve the study's objectives. Furthermore, Sahiron Syamsuddin's theory, *ma'na cum maghza*, is consistent with this study. This theory is broadly divided into three types of meaning exploration: historical meaning (al-*ma'na* al-*tarikhi*), historical phenomenon significance (al-*maghza* al-*tarikhi*), and contemporary dynamic phenomenal significance (al-*maghza* al-*mutaharrik* al-*mu'asir*). Sahiron divides the method into two stages to facilitate the search for meaning. The initial stage is determining historical meaning by analyzing text language, intratextuality, intertextuality, historical context, and significance reconstruction. The second stage seeks to understand the significance of historical phenomena by categorizing verses, contextualizing their meaning, interpreting symbolic meaning, and developing and strengthening arguments from a broad perspective. In order to provide a clearer understanding of the method, the following table outlines its framework:

Table 1: Outlines its framework

No	Meaning of Exploration	Two Methodological Steps
1.	Historical Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Textual Language Analysis• Intratextuality• Intertextuality

⁶ Nety Ruhama, "Perbandingan Pendapat Wahbah Az - Zuhaili dengan Ulama lainnya tentang hukum menyentuh *mushaf* Al - Qur'an : Studi Analisis Terhadap penafsiran Q.S Al - Waqi'ah 77-80", (Medan: UIN Sumatera Utara, 2019), 65.

⁷ Zainal Arifin, "Haid Dan Junub Menyentuh Dan Membaca Al-Qur'an Kajian Terhadap Qs. Al-Waqi'ah ayat 79," *Al-kaffah jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 3, no. 1, (2015): 18.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical Context• Reconstruction of Significance
2.	Historical Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying the Category of the Verse
3.	Contemporary Dynamic Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contextualizing the Verse's Meaning• Deriving Symbolic Meaning• Expanding and Strengthening Arguments

Ma'na Cum Maghza

Sahiron Syamsuddin was born on August 11, 1968, in Cirebon. His formal education began in 1981 when he enrolled at the Raudhatu al-Thalibin Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon, where he also attended Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high school) and Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high school). He continued his religious education at Nurussalam Islamic Boarding School. After graduating in 1987, Sahiron pursued his education at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in Hadith Interpretation. Furthermore, he studied in Canada, specifically at McGill University, with a concentration in Islamic studies. Also, he studied Islamic studies, orientalism, Arabic philosophy, and Arabic literature at Bamberg University, and in 2006 where he received his doctorate. He is currently a professor of tafsir at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.⁸

Several figures, including Hans Georg Gadamer and Georg Gracia, influenced Sahiron's hermeneutical thinking during his extensive studies. Furthermore, Muslim intellectual figures, such as Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Abdullah Saeed, have influenced his thinking in the field of interpretation, which is still relevant today.⁹ His academic journey prompted him to redevelop the hermeneutical concepts

⁸ Abdullah. "Metodologi Penafsiran Kontemporer (Telaah Pemikiran Sahiron Syamsuddin Tahun 1990-2013". (Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2013), 16.

⁹ Abdullah, Metodologi Penafsiran Kontemporer...,23.

and theories he had learned, resulting in the birth of a theory known as *ma'na cum maghza*.¹⁰

Ma'na and maghza are Arabic words. Ma'na denotes intention or meaning, whereas maghza comprises the letters ghayn, zay, and waw. Ghaza has a similar meaning to qasada, which means "to intend." *Cum* comes from Latin, which means "together." *Ma'na cum maghza* seeks to reveal history's meaning (*ma'na*) and main message/significance (*maghza*), which are both understood by the author and the reader.

To find *ma'na* and *maghza*, researchers must investigate three factors. First is the historical meaning (*al-ma'na al-tarikhi*), which is the linguistic meaning that Allah may have intended when conveying His words to the Prophet Muhammad, or the understanding of the Prophet and his companions, who were the first audience. Second is the significance of historical phenomena (*al-maghza al-tarikhi*), specifically the message Allah intended to convey to the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. The main message comprises *maqasid sariyyah*, *I'lat al-hukm*, and *'ibrah*. Third, the importance of contemporary dynamic phenomenal (*al-maghza al-mutaharrik al-mu'asir*), which is the result of *mufasir's ijtihad* (interpreter's efforts) efforts to develop *al-maghza al-tarikhi* through the process of actualizing, defining, and implementing in the current period of life or where the interpretation is carried out in a specific time and space.¹¹

Historical Meaning of Q.S Al-Waqi'ah (56): 79

a. Linguistics Analysis

لَا يَمْسِكُهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

Meaning: "None shall lay hands upon it, except the purified servants of Allah."

¹⁰ Asep Setiawan. "Hermeneutika Al-Quran "Mazhab Yogyakarta (Telaah atas Teori Ma'na Cum Maghza dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an)" *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 17, no. 1, (2016): 235.

¹¹ Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Pendekatan Ma'Na-Cum-Maghza Atas Al-Qur'an: Paradigma, Psinsip, Dan Metode Penafsiran." *Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar Dalam Bidang Ilmu Tafsir UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta* (2022). 255.

The term "*Al-muṭahharun*" is a *jamak mudzakar salim* derived from the word "*tha-ha-ra*," meaning holy. According to the wazan, *Al-muṭahharun* falls under *isim maf'ul*, which refers to words that serve as objects. *Al-muṭahharun* refers to purified or multiple objects.¹² According to Al-Aufi's interpretation of Ibn Kathir, "*Al-muṭahharun*" (holy servants) refers to God's creatures, specifically angels.¹³ Some scholars argue that the meaning of *thahhir* is free of major *hadas* or impurities; therefore, they tolerate those who are not in a state of ablution.¹⁴

b. Intratextuality Analysis

Linguistic analysis reveals that "*Al-muṭahharun*" appears only in verse 79 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah. However, the original word, '*tha-ha-ra*,' appears in 24 verses of the Qur'an. Here are the meanings in several verses: In Surah Al-Baqarah: 25, the word مطاهرة means chaste wives. According to Ibn Abbas, chaste means free of blemishes and filth.¹⁵ Second, in Surah Al-Baqarah: 125, the word أَنْ طَهَرَا means clean, which, according to Mujahid and Sa'id bin Jubair, is "Cleaned from idols, abominable speech, false words, and filth."¹⁶ Third, in Surah Al-Imran: 55, the word مطهّرٌ is translated as cleanse and can also mean to keep you away.

In other Surah, the Qur'an mostly mentions the term purified people with the phrase عباد الله المخلص صي, as in Surah As-Saffat: 74. According to Ibn Kathir, they are the believers whom Allah gives salvation, helped, and glory. Then, in verse 128, it is interpreted as people who are chosen based on their sincerity and saved by Allah from the fire of hell. The following verse, 160, is about those who glorify Allah, believe

¹² Muhammad Abdullah Salam, "Makna Al-Muthahharun Perspektif Ibnu Katsir Dan Al-Maraghi (Studi Komparatif)," (Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2022). 23.

¹³ Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh, *judul indonesia Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 8, tarjamah M. Abdul Ghaffar. Abu Ihsan al-Atsari*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2005), 28.

¹⁴ Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*. (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 381.

¹⁵ Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh, *judul indonesia Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 8, tarjamah M. Abdul Ghaffar . Abu Ihsan al-Atsari*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2005), 93.

¹⁶ Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh, *judul indonesia Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 8, tarjamah M. Abdul Ghaffar . Abu Ihsan al-Atsari*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2005), 93.

in Him, but do not reject His attributes. Finally, in the same Surah, verse 169 contains a pledge that those who falsified Allah's verses will become pure servants.¹⁷

c. Intertextuality Analysis

Some examinations of hadith texts reveal a number of *tha-ha-ra* words with different *wazan*. However, the words are translated similarly to what was discussed in previous Qur'anic verses. For example, Imam Tabrani's hadith in Mu'jam Al-Auwsath, number 4057, uses the words "*thahhiru*" (clean) and "*thuthahhiru*" (clean).

طَهُرُوا أَفْيَتُكُمْ ، إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ لَا تُطَهِّرُ أَفْيَنَتُهُ

Meaning: "Clean your courtyards, for indeed the Jews do not clean theirs." (HR. Tabrani authenticated by al-Bani in Silsilah Shahihah)

Then the hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidhi which explains the significance in prayer is "*ath-thuhuru*" which means ablution.

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ الْطُّهُورُ

Abu Sa'id reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The key to prayer is ablution." (HR. At- Tirmidzi: 221)

d. Historical Analysis

Surah Al-Waqi'ah: 79 was revealed along with several preceding and following verses, specifically verses 75–82. Ibn Abi Hatim, narrated from Abu Hazrah, stated, "These verses were revealed concerning a man from the Ansar during the Battle of Tabuk. They stopped and alighted at al-Hijr, where the Prophet instructed them not to drink water. Then, they continued their journey and arrived at another location without water supplies. They complained about it to the Prophet. Then he stood, prayed two rak'ahs, and made a supplication. Then Allah sent a cloud over them, raining down to provide them with water. Then, a man from Anshar said to another man from his people who was suspected of being a hypocrite, "Wretched you, did you not see the Messenger of Allah praying and then Allah sent down rain on us from the sky." The individual responded: "The rain that fell on us was because of such and such a *nau'*." Then Sūrah al-Waqi'ah verses 75-82 were revealed.¹⁸

¹⁷ Muhammad Abdullah Salam, "Makna Al-Muthahharun Perspektif Ibnu Katsir Dan Al-Maraghi (Studi Komparatif)," (Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2022), 26.

¹⁸ Wahbah Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, jilid 14. Terjemah Abdul Haiyyie al-Kattani, dkk. (Jakarta: Gama Insani, 2014), 308.

The *asbabun nuzul* of the verses means that when Allah sent rain to the apostle and his people, there were hypocrites who did not believe that Allah sent the rain but rather that the stars did. As a result, Allah revealed this verse to him, telling him about the glory of the Qur'an, which is so well preserved that only His purified servants can touch it. Because the Qur'an is noble, Allah warns about the incident in this *asbabun nuzul*, stating that it is appropriate for someone to deny its verses, just as they do not believe that rain comes from Allah.

The macro context or global situation, which became a social factor in the revelation of this verse, can be seen in the narration of Ibn Jarir, who narrated from Qatadah that "No one can touch it except those who have been purified." In the world, the Qur'an has been touched by unclean magi and dirty hypocrites." According to Ibn Zayd, some Quraish disbelievers claim that the Qur'an was revealed by the devil (*Shaytans*). As a result, Allah instructs us that only those who have been purified should touch the Qur'an. As a result, Allah instructs us that only those who have been purified should touch the Qur'an. According to scholars, the phrases in Sūrat al-Waqi'ah verse 79 mean news, which refers to demand, and the Qur'an in this context is the *Mushaf*. According to a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim from Ibn Umar, the apostle of Allah forbade traveling with the Qur'an to enemy lands for fear that it would be seized.¹⁹

The Significance of the Historical Phenomenon of Q.S Al-Waqi'ah (56): 79

Following the historical analysis, there are several insights from verse 79 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah regarding the main message. The researchers created this main message by elaborating on and considering the previous explanation. The first point is that this verse is a response to Quraysh disbelievers who questioned the Qur'an's authenticity. Through this verse, Allah reaffirms the Qur'an as noble, pure, and free of Satan's contamination, as they claim among their people so that it is preserved and cannot be touched except by Allah's purified servants.

Second, while scholars disagree on the law of purifying from *hadas* when touching the noble Qur'an, surah Al-Waqi'ah verse 79 suggests that it is preferable to

¹⁹ Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh, *judul indonesia Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 8, tarjamah M. Abdul Ghaffar . Abu Ihsan al-Atsari*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2005), 28.

touch the Qur'an when it is pure or clean as a Muslim's manner in honoring the Qur'an. Third, suppose the Prophet previously prohibited the Companions from carrying the Qur'an for fear of being taken by the enemy (non-Muslims). In that case, it serves as a lesson for us to not carelessly carry or place the Qur'an because we are concerned that it will be touched by people unsure whether they are pure from *hadas*.

The Significance of Contemporary Dynamic Phenomena

At the stage of assessing contemporary dynamic significance (*al-maghza al-mutahrik al-mu'assir*), QS. Al-Waqi'ah verse 79 can be examined through the process of contextualization of significance. One of the current social issues in Indonesia is the glorification of the *Mushaf* al-Qur'an, whether through touch or reading. Some groups strictly prohibit carrying or touching the Qur'an in an impure state. Hence, women who memorize during their impure state, such as menstruation or *nifas*, have fewer opportunities to interact with the Qur'an. To maintain Qur'anic memorization, intensive interaction between the memorizer and the Qur'an is required.

Some groups, however, believe that it is permissible to read or touch the Qur'an while performing ablution. Differently, some santri (boarding school students) communities, though not all, have certain practices besides ablution before touching or reading the Qur'an, such as kissing it, reading it on a mat, opening it carefully, and reading it in the direction of the qiblah. To balance problems in Islamic society, it is important to understand the meaning of *Al-muṭahharun*, as mentioned in Surah Al-Waqi'ah:79.

Conclusion

Finally, this study addressed three major questions raised at the beginning: historical meaning, historical significance, and dynamic significance. First, the historical meaning of the word *Al-muṭahharun* in Surah Al-Waqi'ah verse 79 does not only mean humans who are pure from impurity, but some say it is addressed to angels and messengers. According to this interpretation, humans can interact with the Qur'an even if it is impure. Second, QS. Al-Waqi'ah verse 79 is historically significant in at least three ways. First, Allah responds to those who deny the Qur'an, particularly the disbelievers of Quraysh. Second, it is preferable to read or touch the Qur'an while in a

state of purity and cleanliness, as this is a form of manner. Third, paying attention to the Qur'ān as it should not be held carelessly, especially by non-Muslims. Third, the dynamic significance that can be drawn in the contemporary context is that it is permissible to touch the Qur'an in a state of purity or not because both are equally valid depending on which perspective one interprets the *Al-muṭahharun*, whether human or only limited to angels and messengers. However, it is not right to position the law as haram to interact with the Qur'an in an impure state.

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