



Interpretation of *Āyāt al-Aḥkām* for Muslim Minorities (A Case Study of Pork Trading by Muslims in Wamena City)

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Abstract. Pigs hold significant economic, social, and religious value in the Wamena community, becoming an integral part of their customary law. However, the Muslim minority in Wamena faces unique challenges, as they struggle to balance local traditions with Islamic law. This study aims to explore the interpretation of *Ahkām* verses among minority Muslims in Wamena and analyze the Islamic laws regarding the sale and purchase of pigs in this context. The research is qualitative, combining observations and literature studies. It examines the issues surrounding pig transactions in Wamena and reviews relevant *Ahkām* verses along with scholarly opinions. The study identifies four patterns in the religious understanding of Wamena Muslims: traditional religion, formal religion, rational religion, and a precursor method that combines traditional practices with reasoning and revelation. Tafsir *Ahkām* offers solutions for minority Muslims by considering the systematic approach to *Ahkām* verses, hadith, and the school of jurisprudence. Despite the prohibition of pigs in the Qur'an and hadith, Wamena Muslims' engagement in pig transactions can be analyzed using *fiqh aqalliyāt* principles, such as *ijtihād tarjīhi* and *ijtihād ibdā'i*, with an emphasis on gradual implementation and accommodating Islamic and customary laws for minority Muslims in Wamena.

Keywords: *Ahkām* Verses; *Fiqh Aqalliyāt*; Minority; Sale and Purchase of Pigs; Wamena.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam fundamentally provides solutions to the various problems of human life, as clearly articulated in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Islam serves as the primary source of law in Muslim life; therefore, every Muslim is obliged to continuously seek knowledge in order to broaden understanding, respond to the complexities faced by the ummah, and apply legal principles appropriately. Through such efforts, Islam is manifested as a mercy not only for its adherents but also for the entire universe.

One of the cities in Indonesia characterized by strong customary traditions and a highly valued sense of social solidarity is Wamena, located in Jayawijaya Regency, which has officially become part of the Central Highlands Province. Wamena lies within the Baliem Valley alongside eleven other districts, surrounded by towering mountains and steep rocky cliffs. The alluvial valley stretches across an area situated approximately 1,855 meters above sea level, with a population of 273,291 based on the 2022 census and an average air temperature of 14°C (Jayawijaya, 2022). According to Muhammad Rais, there are several challenges in disseminating Islam within the Wamena (Dani) community, arising from various factors: (1) dominant customary paradigms, (2) death rituals (warekma), (3) interpretations of clothing and attire, (4) polygamy, (5) the role of traditional animals, (6) gender inequality, (7) competing ideological doctrines, (8) sustainable guidance for converts, and (9) internal *da'wah* challenges (Rais, 2009).

The name Wamena itself carries deep cultural significance: *wam* means pig, while *ena* means small; thus, Wamena literally translates to “small pig” or “tame pig” (Wikipedia, 2023). This etymology reflects the exceptional status of pigs within Wamena society, where they serve multiple customary functions. Indeed, pigs are regarded as irreplaceable traditional animals, whose value cannot be substituted by any other livestock regardless of quantity or price for instance, in customary ceremonies, a single pig cannot be replaced even by one hundred cattle (Kehdipan et al., 1994).

Pigs are inseparable from the lives of the Baliem people in Wamena. Nearly every aspect of their existence economic, social, and religious is influenced by the presence of this animal. Pigs commonly roam the streets of Wamena, and it is not unusual to encounter women carrying piglets in their arms or in their *su (noken)*. During traditional rituals such as initiation ceremonies, marriages, and funerals, pigs are always presented either as sacrificial animals or as communal meals. Even during Christmas and Easter celebrations, pork is served as part of collective festivities. Historically, pigs have often triggered conflicts among community members; yet, paradoxically, pigs also play a central role in reconciliation rituals (Heriyanto, 2018).

Muslims in Wamena constitute a small minority compared to followers of other religions. Their minority status differs significantly from Muslim minorities in Europe or South America. In Wamena, minorities have limited alternatives, as customary law functions as the supreme legal framework governing social life. Geographic isolation further exacerbates the challenges faced by Muslims in Wamena, placing them in particularly difficult circumstances. In contrast, Muslim minorities elsewhere generally retain greater freedom to practice their cultural traditions without violating Islamic law (Moh Wahib, 2021).

For example, in Islam, intoxicants and gambling are explicitly prohibited; nevertheless, Allah acknowledges that both may contain limited benefits. These minimal benefits may become a form of mercy for Muslims living under circumstances tolerated by Islamic law, provided such situations are guided by scholarly opinions and authoritative religious interpretations.

Similarly, Muslims in remote areas who remain minorities and are still at an early stage of development in various aspects knowledge, education, economy, politics, and social life already demonstrate remarkable commitment merely by maintaining sound faith. This illustrates that Islamic legal discourse allows room for tolerance, ensuring that fundamental principles remain preserved while gradual progress toward religious completeness continues. Without passing judgment on minority Muslim communities still undergoing growth, the

author contends that this discussion is crucial for academically untangling complex issues while remaining grounded in established legal evidences. This study aims to provide a firm scholarly response to situations in which Islamic law appears to yield to customary law. Accordingly, the author presents this case as a thesis entitled “*Interpretation of Āyāt al-Aḥkām for Muslim Minorities (A Case Study of Pork Trading by Muslims in Wamena City)*.”

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method (Sugiyono, 2014), utilizing field observation and literature review. Field observations were conducted through direct engagement and interviews with various stakeholders to explore the issues surrounding pork trading practices in Wamena City. These informants included mosque imams, the head of the Jayawijaya branch of the Indonesian Ulema Council, and representatives of the Wamena City Traders Association.

The literature review focused on examining Qur’anic verses related to the legal status of pork trading, alongside the diverse scholarly opinions on the matter. This was complemented by an analysis of written sources, including previous academic papers addressing related themes.

The primary data sources consisted of field data collected from individuals with relevant authority and expertise, namely business actors as well as religious and customary leaders. These data were strengthened by classical references on *tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām*, such as *Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām* by Imam al-Rāzī, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* by al-Ṭabarī, and *al-Jāmi‘ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* by al-Qurṭubī. In addition, works on minority *fiqh* were consulted, including *Fiqh al-Nawāzil li al-Aqalliyyāt al-Muslimah* by Muhammad Yusri Ibrahim and *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt al-Muslimah* by Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

Secondary data sources comprised the jurisprudential perspectives of the four Sunni schools of law, foundational *fiqh* texts from each school, collections of *kutub al-sunan*, *al-Mumti‘ fī al-Qawā‘id al-Fiqhiyyah* by Muslim bin Muhammad bin Majid al-Dawsari, as well as other scholarly works relevant to the core theme of this research.

Data were collected through interviews and systematic examination of documentary sources. All gathered data were subsequently analyzed qualitatively and synthesized to form the conclusions of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of *Āyāt al-Aḥkām*

‘Alī bin Sulaymān al-‘Ābid states: “*Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām* is an exegetical work that compiles the legal verses of the Noble Qur’an and interprets them in a separate, independent volume.” (Al-‘Ābid, 2010)

Thus, *tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām* may be understood as a form of Qur’anic exegesis that focuses on deriving Islamic legal rulings from the Qur’an. It aims to formulate legal principles (*qawā’id*) and foundational rulings based on Qur’anic verses and to systematically present them in a dedicated work. This field represents an effort to uncover the richness and authority of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and legislation (*tashrī’*) embedded within the Noble Qur’an. Consequently, *Tafsīr al-aḥkām* is also commonly referred to as *legal exegesis (tafsīr fiqhī)* (Al-‘Ābid, 2010).

The central subject of this discipline concerns the legal verses (*Āyāt al-Aḥkām*). Scholars differ regarding their scope and number, forming two principal views. The first view holds that the number of legal verses is limited and countable, based on the argument that not all Qur’anic verses address legal rulings, nor do all serve as direct foundations for jurisprudence. However, scholars who adopt this view differ concerning the exact number. Some estimate that the legal verses number approximately 150 (Ibn al-Qayyim, n.d.), others suggest 200 (al-Bukhārī, 2003), while al-Zarkashī (1391 H) estimates 500 verses. Ibn al-Mubārak reportedly identified 900 legal verses, and Abū Yūsuf suggested the number reaches 1,100 (Al-‘Anzī, 2004). This diversity of opinions indicates that there is no definitive agreement regarding a fixed number of legal verses.

The second view maintains that no verse of the Qur’an can be entirely separated from legal implications that contribute to Islamic jurisprudence. According to this perspective, legal dimensions may be implicit and not readily understood by all readers. Consequently, verses recounting stories of previous communities, warnings, and parables may also contain legal guidance and jurisprudential significance (Al-‘Anzī, 2004).

The Law of Sale and Purchase in Islamic Law

Linguistically, the term *sale and purchase (bay’)* derives from the root *bā’ahu bay’atan wa mabī’an*, referring to something sold (*mabī’*), while *al-biyā’ah* denotes the commodity being traded, and *ibtā’uḥu* means purchasing or offering something for sale (Ābādī, 2007). Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, in *al-Sharḥ al-Mumtī’ ‘alā Zād al-Mustaqni’*, defines sale linguistically as a general form of exchange (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, 2004).

From a juristic perspective, some scholars define sale as a contractual exchange of wealth that results in the permanent transfer of ownership of an object or its benefit (Al-Faifi, n.d.).

The Qur'an does not explicitly specify particular commodities or contractual forms that are prohibited in commercial transactions; rather, it mentions trade in general terms. Classical scholars, including Imam al-Shāfi'ī, explain that this general permissibility is later qualified by the sayings and guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (al-Shāfi'ī, 2006), as prophetic traditions function as explanations and interpretations of Qur'anic verses.

This clarification is evident in the hadith narrated by Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, recorded by Muslim, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared during the Conquest of Mecca: "Indeed, Allah and His Messenger have forbidden the sale of wine, carrion, pigs, and idols."

When asked about the use of fat from dead animals for practical purposes, the Prophet replied that it remained unlawful. He further stated that Allah cursed the Jews who, when animal fat was forbidden to them, melted it down, sold it, and consumed its price (Muslim).

This hadith clearly establishes the prohibition of certain forms of trade, including the sale of pork. Another prophetic tradition narrated by Ibn 'Abbas reinforces a fundamental legal principle: "When Allah forbids something, He also forbids its price." (Reported by Abu Dawud; authenticated by al-Albani)

These traditions demonstrate that not only is consumption prohibited, but commercial transactions involving prohibited items are likewise unlawful in Islamic law.

Minority Fiqh (*Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt*)

In the Indonesian dictionary, *minority* refers to a social group whose population is significantly smaller than that of other groups within a society and which is therefore subject to discrimination (KBBI Online, n.d.). Ahmad Imam Mawardi defines minorities as groups sharing common cultural, racial, or religious characteristics who reside in areas where the majority population differs from them (Mawardi, 2010).

Fiqh al-aqalliyyāt consists of two terms: *fiqh* and *aqalliyyāt* (minorities). Linguistically, *fiqh* signifies understanding (*al-fahm*) and knowledge of something; thus, any comprehension of a matter may be termed *fiqh* (Makram, 1882). Technically, *fiqh* is defined as knowledge of practical Sharī'ah rulings derived from detailed evidences.

The purpose of *Fiqh al-Nawāzil* or *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt* is to enable Muslim minorities to fulfill their obligations toward themselves, their religion, and the broader Muslim community (Ibrahim, 2013).

According to al-Qaradawi (2001), minority *fiqh* is founded upon nine principal bases:

- a. A person is not considered proficient in *fiqh* unless they comprehend contemporary *ijtihād* appropriate to their time. Addressing modern issues requires valid *ijtihād* by qualified scholars, whether in the form of selective (*tarjihī intiqa'ī*) or creative (*ibdā'ī inshā'ī*) reasoning.
- b. Minority *fiqh* is constructed upon universal legal maxims (*al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah al-kulliyah*).
- c. It emphasizes understanding lived realities (*fiqh al-wāqi'*) by comprehending both social conditions and divine rulings.
- d. It prioritizes social jurisprudence over purely individual concerns, focusing on the needs of minority communities and facilitating their religious practice within non-Muslim societies.
- e. It is grounded in the principle of facilitation (*at-taysīr*), provided such ease aligns with religious guidance.
- f. It recognizes that fatwas may change according to changing circumstances (*taghayyur al-fatwā bi taghayyur mujibātihā*).
- g. It adopts gradual implementation (*at-tadarruj*) in applying Sharī'ah, considering societal conditions and remoteness from Muslim communities.
- h. It acknowledges essential human needs, concentrating on actual realities rather than hypothetical scenarios.
- i. It avoids rigid adherence to a single legal school, allowing jurists to engage the broader scope of Islamic law.

Profile of Wamena City

Wamena is the capital of Jayawijaya Regency in Papua and serves as the urban center of the highland rural region with the largest population in Papua, accommodating approximately 200,000 residents in the Baliem Valley and its surroundings. The majority of Wamena's inhabitants belong to indigenous ethnic groups, primarily the Dani, Lani, and Yali communities (Jayawijaya, 2022).

According to the 2021 population census, Jayawijaya Regency had a total population of 269,553, comprising 140,584 males and 128,969 females. Compared to the 2019 population projection, this represents a growth rate of 23.70 percent. The sex ratio in 2021 reached 109.01, indicating a higher male population. Population density stood at 19.4 persons per square kilometer, with an average household size of four individuals. Density varies significantly across the forty districts, with the highest concentration in Wamena District at 260.6 persons

per square kilometer and the lowest in Koragi District at 4.2 persons per square kilometer (Jayawijaya, 2022).

Table 1. Population by Subdistrict and Religion in Jayawijaya Regency, 2019.

	Islam	Protestant	Catholic	Hindu	Buddha	Others
Wamena	9,548	29,811	5,682	–	80	–
Asolokobal	378	3,224	2,854	–	–	–
Walelagama	5	1,350	3,731	–	10	–
Trikora	–	–	–	–	–	–
Napua	145	5,600	–	–	–	–
Walaik	–	920	–	–	–	–
Wouma	665	1,038	–	–	–	–
Walesi	695	617	3,050	–	–	–
Asotipo	386	1,117	–	–	10	–
Maima	–	384	–	–	–	–
Hubikosi	453	4,910	3,641	–	–	–
Pelebaga	–	5,427	–	–	–	–
Ibele	–	2,241	–	–	–	–
Tailarek	–	555	–	–	–	–
Hubikiak	375	4,271	–	–	28	–
Asolagaima	256	5,625	4,270	–	–	–
Musatfak	–	–	3,500	–	–	–
Silo Karno Doga	–	1,067	–	–	–	–
Pyramid	9	6,373	–	–	–	–
Muliama	–	2,977	–	–	–	–
Jayawijaya	12,992	437,332	34,427	–	–	–

Population Data of Wamena City

Based on the statistical data issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2022 (Jayawijaya, 2022), the population of Wamena City totals 45,121 people. Of this number, 9,548 residents adhere to Islam, 29,811 are Protestant, 5,682 are Catholic, and 80 are Buddhist. These figures indicate that Muslims constitute a significantly smaller proportion of the population compared to Protestants in Wamena.

Interpretation of *Āyāt al-Aḥkām* for Muslim Minorities

The Qur'an mentions pigs explicitly in four passages:

Surah al-Baqarah (2): 173

Allah prohibits carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered in the name of other than Allah. However, in situations of necessity, consumption is permitted provided it is not driven by desire and does not exceed the limits of necessity.

This verse identifies four prohibited items: carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered in the name of other than Allah.

Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān explains that the explicit reference to “pork” in this verse and in Surah al-An‘ām (6):145 appears, textually, to apply only to the meat. Nevertheless, scholarly consensus (*ijmā‘*) holds that the prohibition encompasses all parts of the pig, including its fat, except its hair. The specification of meat reflects its primary use for consumption (Khan, 1963).

Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Mālikī further clarifies that mentioning meat implicitly includes fat, as fat is part of flesh, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the prohibition (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 2003).

Muhammad ‘Alī al-Sāyis adds that pork is prohibited due to the impurity of the animal’s diet, rendering its flesh harmful. Medical research has demonstrated that pork carries dangerous pathogens, and consumption may influence negative behavioral traits associated with pigs (al-Sāyis, 2002).

Surah al-Mā’idah (5): 3

This verse reiterates the prohibition of carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered without invoking Allah’s name, as well as animals that die by strangulation, beating, falling, goring, or predation. It also forbids divination practices. The verse concludes by affirming the completion of Islam as a religion and allows exceptions in cases of extreme hunger without sinful intent.

Surah al-An‘ām (6): 145

Allah instructs the Prophet to declare that only carrion, flowing blood, pork (described as impure), and animals slaughtered in the name of other than Allah are forbidden. The pronoun *innahu rijṣun* (“indeed, it is impure”) refers directly to the pig itself, confirming its inherent impurity (Khan, 1963; al-Sāyis, 2002).

Surah al-Naḥl (16): 115

This verse again prohibits carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered in the name of other than Allah, while permitting consumption in situations of necessity within prescribed limits. The Qur’an mentions pigs explicitly in the singular only in these four verses. The plural form appears in Surah al-Mā’idah (5):60 in a different context, describing divine punishment.

Legal Analysis of Pork Trading among the Muslim Minority in Wamena

Considering the circumstances of Muslim minorities in Wamena and the dominance of customary law, the legal evaluation of pork trading may be approached through several juristic methodologies:

Ijtihād tarjīhī Intiqāʿī

This method involves examining classical scholarly opinions and their evidences, conducting comparative analysis (*muqāranah*), and selecting the view most strongly supported and most relevant to contemporary conditions. Preference is given to opinions that:

- a. Align with present realities,
- b. Reflect mercy in human life, and
- c. Do not impose undue hardship.

Ijtihād ibdāʿī Inshāʿī

This approach formulates new legal conclusions for issues not previously addressed or where contemporary scholars differ from earlier rulings due to changing circumstances. It prioritizes realizing the objectives of *Sharīʿah* (*maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah*), promoting public benefit (*maṣlahah*), and preventing harm.

***Uslūb al-tadarruj* (Gradualism)**

Gradualism recognizes phased implementation of Islamic law based on societal conditions and distance from Muslim communities. It reflects both cosmic and legal divine principles (Zaenudin, 2018).

***Uslūb al-taysīr wa al-ḍarūrah* (Facilitation and Necessity)**

Islam avoids imposing hardship. When believers face genuine difficulty, divine law provides concessions proportional to necessity (*tuqaddaru bi-qadarihā*), emphasizing mercy and practicality in religious observance.

Legal Solutions for Pork Trading among Muslim Minorities in Wamena

The prohibition of pork is established by definitive (*qaṭʿī*) Qurʿanic texts, reinforced by prophetic traditions that also prohibit its trade. All four Sunni legal schools agree on this ruling. However, in Wamena, pigs constitute a central cultural commodity: they function in customary ceremonies, dispute resolution, dowries, and economic exchange. Customary law holds supreme authority, and abandoning tradition may lead to severe social consequences.

Through the lens of minority *fiqh*, temporary concessions may be granted using *al-tadarruj* and *al-taysīr wa al-ḍarūrah*. Muslims may engage in pork trading only under necessity, strictly limited in scope, and not as commercial enterprise. Efforts by religious leaders and authorities are essential to gradually integrate Islamic principles with local customs. Ultimately, such allowances are transitional, aiming toward eventual full compliance with Islamic law as faith and societal conditions improve.

4. CONCLUSION

After examining the condition of Muslim minorities in Wamena and analyzing Qur'anic legal verses and scholarly opinions on pork trading, the study concludes that religious practice among Wamena Muslims reflects four patterns: traditional religiosity constrained by custom; formal religiosity vulnerable to social influence; rational religiosity emphasizing reason; and prophetic-method religiosity grounded in knowledge, practice, and *da'wah*. *Tafsīr al-aḥkām* provides a framework for addressing minority Muslim needs through systematic Qur'anic interpretation, hadith analysis, and jurisprudential schools. While pork consumption and trade are categorically prohibited, minority *fiqh* permits temporary concessions via *ijtihād tarjīhī*, *ijtihād ibdā'ī*, *al-tadarruj*, and *al-taysīr wa al-ḍarūrah*, provided sustained efforts are made to harmonize Islamic law with local customs. These measures enable Muslim minorities in Wamena to observe Islamic principles while navigating customary obligations until conditions allow full implementation of *Sharī'ah*. *Wallāhu a'lam*.

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