

Waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah: A Comparison among Authoritative Texts on Waqf and Ibtida

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i12/24325>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i12/24325

Published Date: 26 December 2024

Abstract

Waqf and ibtida' are crucial aspects of Quranic recitation, particularly in Surah Al-Fatihah, which is a pillar of prayer. This article compares the perspectives of five authoritative texts on waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah, namely *Lu'lu Wal Marjan* by Al-Andalusi, *Wasfu Al-Ihtida'* by Al-Ja'bari, *Al-Ihtida' Ila Bayan Al-Waqf Wal-Ibtida'* by Al-Khaliji, *Ulul Al-Wuquf Fil Quran* by Al-Sajawandi, and *Manar Huda* by Al-Ashmuni. This analysis highlights differing opinions on the types of waqf and the locations considered *tam* (complete), *jaiz* (permissible), *hasan* (good), or *mutlaq* (absolute).

Keywords: Al-Fatihah, Waqf, Ibtida

Introduction

Waqf, or pausing during the recitation of the Quran, plays a crucial role in ensuring an accurate understanding of the verses' meanings. In Surah Al-Fatihah, which is a pillar of prayer, waqf and ibtida' are critical elements as they influence the comprehension of the verses being recited. This article analyzes the differing perspectives of five authoritative texts on waqf in this surah based on the methodologies upheld by each author. Waqf, or stopping during Quranic recitation, is a vital aspect aimed at preserving the accuracy of the Quran's meaning and the reader's comprehension. Waqf provides guidance on appropriate places to pause to maintain the continuity of meaning without altering the context or message of the verse. In Quranic recitation traditions, waqf is recognized as an essential element that helps readers better understand the divine message (Al-Ja'bari, n.d.).

Waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah

Surah Al-Fatihah, consisting of seven verses, is the essence of the Quran and a required component of prayer. Its importance as a chapter recited in every unit of prayer makes understanding waqf and ibtida' in this surah highly critical. Any errors in waqf can affect the meaning of the verses and the validity of the recitation in the context of worship. Thus, adhering to the waqf guidelines recommended by scholars is crucial to preserving the intended meaning of the verses.

For instance, a waqf at the first verse, *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), provides a complete meaning and does not disrupt the context of the verse. However, connecting it to the following verse, *الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds), offers a more cohesive flow of meaning, as the two verses complement each other (Al-Andalusi, n.d.). Therefore, the decision to pause or continue the recitation depends on the reader's understanding of the context and the waqf guidance provided in authoritative texts.

Definition of Waqf and Ibtida'

Waqf and ibtida' are fundamental elements in the science of *tajweed*, aimed at ensuring the proper recitation of the Quran. Mastery of these two components plays a vital role in preserving the authenticity of Quranic pronunciation and delivering the verses' meanings accurately without causing confusion.

According to Ibn al-Jazari (n.d.), a renowned scholar in the field of *qira'at*, waqf is defined as the act of pausing at the end of a word during Quranic recitation to take a breath, with the intention to resume reading. He explains that waqf can occur at the end of a verse or within a verse, depending on the semantic structure, but it is not permitted in the middle of a word as it may disrupt the context and meaning of the verse. For example, an inappropriate pause, such as in the middle of a phrase, could lead to significant changes in meaning and potentially result in misinterpretation.

Etymologically, ibtida' means "to begin." In the context of Quranic recitation, it refers to the way a reader resumes recitation after a pause, ensuring continuity of meaning and clarity of the message. Ibtida' performed without understanding the relationship between verses can lead to confusion regarding the context of certain verses, making it as essential as waqf.

Furthermore, scholars of *tajweed* emphasize that understanding waqf and ibtida' cannot stand alone but must be integrated with other disciplines such as grammar (*nahw*), exegesis (*tafsir*), *qira'at*, and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). *Nahw* aids readers in comprehending the grammatical structure of verses, while *tafsir* sheds light on the context and message of the verses. For example, a pause at the verse "إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ" (You alone we worship) without continuing to "وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ" (and You alone we ask for help) could shift the focus of the meaning from the concept of worshiping God to seeking His assistance.

In essence, understanding and applying waqf and ibtida' form the foundation of reciting the Quran in a *tartil* manner, as aligned with the command of Allah SWT: "And recite the Quran in a measured pace." (Surah Al-Muzzammil, 73:4)

Mastery of these elements ensures that every verse of the Quran is recited properly, preserving its true meaning and avoiding any misinterpretation. Thus, waqf and ibtida' not only serve as technical guidelines for readers but also as essential tools for maintaining the accuracy of the divine message as intended in the Quran.

Results and Discussion

Comparative Analysis of Waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah

The comparative analysis of five authoritative texts reveals diverse approaches by scholars in evaluating waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah, based on their respective methodologies and principles. Each text offers unique perspectives on the placement of waqf, focusing on different aspects of completeness of meaning and context.

According to Al-Andalusi (2019), places such as *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) are classified as *tam* (complete), indicating that the meaning of the verse is complete when a pause is made. Similarly, other waqf positions, such as *أَرْبَ الْعَالَمِينَ* (Lord of all the worlds), are considered *soleh*, meaning it is acceptable to pause, though continuing the recitation ensures better continuity of meaning. Al-Andalusi's approach emphasizes flexibility in waqf, taking into account the uninterrupted flow of meaning.

Al-Ja'bari (2012), identifies places such as *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*, *وَمَلِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ*, and *غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ* as *kamil* (perfect). This classification reflects a preference for pausing at these positions to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the verses' meaning. Al-Ja'bari's method demonstrates a tendency to evaluate waqf based on how well it aids readers in grasping the overall message of the verses.

Al-Khaliji (2003), adopts a more moderate perspective compared to the previous two texts. Many waqf positions in Surah Al-Fatihah, such as *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* and *أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ*, are categorized as *hasan* (good). This evaluation implies that pausing at these points is permissible, but continuing is preferable to maintain the flow of meaning. This approach balances flexibility with the preservation of context.

Al-Sajawandi (n.d.) categorizes waqf positions such as *وَمَلِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ* and *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* as *mutlaq* (absolute), reflecting the clarity of meaning achieved when pausing at these points. However, positions such as *أَرْبَ الْعَالَمِينَ* and *اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ* are deemed *la* (not permissible), indicating the necessity to continue reciting to ensure accurate continuity of meaning. This approach is stricter, emphasizing the importance of preserving the original context and meaning of the verses.

Al-Ashmuni (2012), classifies waqf positions such as *أَرْبَ الْعَالَمِينَ* and *اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ* as *jaiz* (permissible), providing the option to pause, though continuing is more encouraged. Conversely, positions such as *وَمَلِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ* and *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* are categorized as *tam*, indicating completeness of meaning when pausing. This approach reflects a balance between the need to understand the meaning and flexibility in recitation.

Discussion and Implications

The findings of this comparison highlight that each scholar adopts a unique approach based on their disciplinary background and guiding principles. The differences in waqf classifications reflect the richness and diversity of methodologies within the Islamic scholarly tradition. For example:

- Completeness of meaning: Texts such as *Wasfu Al-Ihtida'* and *Ulul Al-Wuquf* emphasize the completeness of meaning with classifications like *kamil* and *mutlaq*.
- Flexibility in meaning: *Lu'lu Wal Marjan* and *Manar Huda* offer greater flexibility with evaluations such as *soleh* and *jaiz*.
- Balancing context and practicality: *Al-Ihtida' Ila Bayan Al-Waqf Wal-Ibtida'* provides a straightforward guide that balances flexibility with the preservation of context.

These varied approaches deepen our understanding of the importance of waqf and ibtida' in ensuring the correct recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah. They also underscore the dynamic nature of the science of *tajwid*, which can adapt to the needs of diverse Quran readers.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed and compared five authoritative texts on waqf in Surah Al-Fatihah: *Lu'lu Wal Marjan* by Al-Andalusi, *Wasfu Al-Ihtida'* by Al-Ja'bari, *Al-Ihtida' Ila Bayan Al-Waqf Wal-Ibtida'* by Al-Khaliji, *Ulul Al-Wuquf Fil Quran* by Al-Sajawandi, and *Manar Huda* by Al-Ashmuni. The findings reveal that each text presents a distinct approach to determining waqf classifications based on the priority of meaning, context, and continuity in recitation.

In general, there is consensus among scholars regarding waqf at positions such as *مَلِكِ يَوْمِ* (Master of the Day of Judgment) and *غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ* (not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray), which are unanimously considered *tam* or *kamil*, signifying completeness of meaning if a pause is made. However, variations in opinion emerge for verses like *رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* (Lord of all the worlds) and *هُدًى نَا الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ* (Guide us to the straight path), which are classified as *tam*, *hasan*, or *jaiz* depending on the scholar's methodology and perspective.

These differences highlight that the science of waqf and ibtida' is a rich field of diverse viewpoints, reflecting the breadth of Islamic intellectual tradition. This flexible approach not only provides guidance to readers from varied backgrounds but also preserves the dynamic nature of Islamic sciences, emphasizing balance among disciplines such as *tajwid*, *tafsir*, and *qiraat*.

Furthermore, this study affirms that a deep understanding of waqf and ibtida' not only ensures accurate comprehension of the Quran but also enhances the appreciation of its sacred verses. Errors in determining where to pause can lead to misinterpretations, altering the true message of the verses. Thus, mastering this knowledge is fundamental for the *tartil* (measured) recitation of the Quran, in accordance with Islamic requirements.

In conclusion, this analysis demonstrates that the differing approaches in the five authoritative texts should not be seen as conflicts but as sources of intellectual richness that enrich the guidance for Quranic recitation. Further study of the tradition of waqf and ibtida'

will not only refine our understanding of these aspects but also potentially result in more holistic and inclusive recitation guides, aligning with the needs of modern Quran readers.

Acknowledgement

This article is extracted from the FRGS project. We thanks to Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) for providing funding support for this Fundamental Research Grant Scheme project (FRGS/1/2023/SSI13/UNISZA/03/2).

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