

AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-BASED INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'ANIC LAW ON HAND-CUTTING

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ABSTRACT

Homo digitalis is a term that describes the relationship between humans and digital technology. This relationship provides humans with easier access to information, while also allowing certain human tasks to be replaced by digital applications. One of the key developments in the digital era is Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI can serve as a practical tool for obtaining information, including interpretations (tafsir) of the Qur'an. This study is a library research. The primary data source is AI-generated interpretations of Q.S. al-Mā'idah verse 38, while the secondary sources are classical and contemporary tafsir works on the same verse. The objectives of this study are: first, to examine the interpretations of Q.S. al-Mā'idah verse 38 produced by ChatGPT, Meta AI, and Gemini AI; second, to compare these AI-based interpretations with traditional tafsir sources. The findings indicate that AI-generated tafsir provides only summarized and basic information. The references used by AI are diverse, but the content remains in the form of summaries. Therefore, in-depth interpretation still requires reference to classical and contemporary tafsir works.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, tafsir, hand-cutting*

Introduction

Digital disruption has permeated the boundaries of tradition, shaking the foundations of religion and culture in ways previously difficult to imagine. Like a massive wave crashing upon the shore, this change is not only visible on the surface but also seeping into the roots of values that have long been the basis of human life. The struggle between imitative reasoning and the current of digital disruption resembles a pendulum swinging ceaselessly, guiding us to abandon old ways while simultaneously forcing a rethinking of meaning and essence that are starting to fragment and blur in this hyper-connected world. In the vortex of digital globalization, local cultures and religious teachings that were once robust now appear fragile, like walls slowly eroded by time. Values inherited with sincerity are now carried away by the strong current of information, blurring the lines between what is fundamental and what is temporary. Instead of becoming a space for freedom, the digital world actually traps humanity in uniformity and distances us from genuine cultural roots. The fast-paced and instant lifestyle has shifted human attention away from the depth of meaning and traditional wisdom. The endless flow of information through digital media creates a new ecosystem that is often misleading, giving rise to distortions of truth. Misinformation grows behind the screen, muddling the understanding of religion and culture, and leading to social polarization that threatens harmony (Abror, 2025).

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In this condition of a fragmented society, humans seem to be adrift between losing their identity and searching for selfhood. Technology certainly opens a window to new knowledge, but on the other hand, it also dulls critical consciousness, encouraging humans to trade a part of their humanity for digital convenience. Amidst this massive change, religion and culture can no longer stand alone in the face of rapid technological advancement, especially with the emergence of imitative reasoning or Artificial Intelligence (AI). The advancement of AI poses a profound ethical dilemma: on one hand, it has the potential to shift spiritual and cultural values, yet on the other, it opens up new opportunities for interreligious dialogue and the understanding of sacred texts through large-scale data analysis. The greatest threat at the intersection of technology and religion is the loss of spiritual depth of meaning. When algorithms and machines begin to determine the measure of religious and cultural "truth," the personal and transcendental dimensions of religious experience become reduced (Abror, 2025).

The diminishing role of religious scholars (ulama) in the digital era further exacerbates this situation, as the religious authority that was once strictly maintained is now starting to erode. In a world dominated by imitative reasoning, faith risks losing its transcendent touch, and spirituality can be reduced to mere data processed and predicted by a system. This reality encourages humans to review the true meaning of religious and cultural practices amidst the automation of life. Nevertheless, behind these threats lies the hope for the wise use of technology. Technology is capable of enriching religious and cultural expression, opening up space for more inclusive global collaboration. AI can become a tool for deeper exploration and understanding of religious texts across traditions, expanding interfaith dialogue and tolerance. Technology also provides an opportunity to revive cultural traditions threatened by modernization. However, the dominance of digital platforms in the flow of knowledge demands vigilance, especially in preserving the purity of the religious scholars' authority so that it is not absorbed into the larger technological system. This complexity demonstrates that preserving the purity of religion and culture in the digital era is not about rejecting technology, but rather managing it with awareness and wisdom (Abror, 2025).

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly concerning specific legal provisions such as hand amputation (*qath' al-yad*), presents a complex intersection between technology and Islamic jurisprudence (Baroroh et al., 2025). Recent scientific investigations reveal that although AI offers unprecedented capabilities in processing and analyzing Qur'anic texts, its application to sensitive legal matters requires strict theological and methodological oversight (Salim & Aditya, 2025). The fundamental challenge lies in AI's capacity to grasp the nuanced hermeneutical principles employed by classical jurists when interpreting penal provisions in the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 38 concerning theft and its legal consequences (Abror, 2025).

Recent literature suggests that AI systems, including advanced language models like ChatGPT, can efficiently process and summarize information related to Qur'anic legal texts (Madadzadeh, 2024). They can identify relevant verses, provide linguistic analysis of key terms such as "*sāriq*" (the thief) and "*faqtha'ū*" (cut off), and even cross-reference with classical exegesis works. However, studies comparing AI-generated interpretations with classical exegetical methodologies reveal significant limitations (Madadzadeh et al., 2024). AI lacks the capacity to engage with crucial interpretive elements such as *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), the relationship between specific provisions and the broader *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), and the historical evolution of juristic opinions concerning the conditions for implementing *ḥudūd* punishments (Rohmah et al., 2025).

The application of AI to interpret Qur'anic penal law raises substantial ethical and methodological concerns (Mehmood, 2024). Algorithmic bias presents a critically significant issue, as the training data may reflect the orientation of a specific school of thought (*madhhab*) or a contemporary perspective that could steer the interpretation

toward being unduly lenient or overly strict (Mehmood, 2024). Furthermore, AI systems operate without the moral reasoning and spiritual discernment employed by human jurists when dealing with sensitive legal matters concerning fundamental human rights and dignity (Mehmood, 2024). The risk of decontextualized interpretation is particularly prominent in the case of hand amputation, where classical jurists established numerous prerequisites and restrictions that AI might fail to adequately comprehend or apply.

Recent research emphasizes the necessity of developing a specialized AI framework for Islamic legal interpretation that incorporates the methodology of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) classical. Such a framework would require the integration of several critical components: historical context analysis, a *maqāṣid*-based reasoning module, a comparative *fiqh* database, and a mechanism for identifying scholarly consensus (*sijmā'*) and differences of opinion (*sikhtilāf*) on specific legal rulings. The Islamic Studies AI Integration Model (ISAIIM) proposed in contemporary literature suggests a hybrid approach where AI serves as an analytical tool under the supervision of qualified jurists, particularly for complex legal provisions such as penal codes.

The AI-driven interpretation of the hand amputation law in the Qur'an also highlights significant research gaps in the landscape of digital Islamic studies. There is a palpable absence of empirical studies examining how AI-driven interpretations of Islamic penal law might influence Muslim communities' understanding and acceptance of these provisions. Furthermore, technical research is necessary to develop AI models capable of handling the complex conditional reasoning applied by classical jurists in *ḥudūd* implementation, including exceptions for poverty, the value threshold (*niṣāb*), and standards of evidence. The challenge of algorithmically representing diverse *madhhab* perspectives remains largely unresolved, potentially leading to homogenized interpretations that overlook the rich variety of Islamic legal thought.

Future research directions should focus on developing context-aware AI systems that can differentiate between theoretical provisions and their practical implementation conditions. This requires sophisticated natural language processing capabilities to identify and analyze the qualifying statements within classical exegetical literature that determine when punishments apply and when alternative approaches should be considered. Furthermore, ethical guidelines must be established to ensure that AI interpretations of Qur'anic penal law do not contribute to the misunderstanding or misuse of Islamic legal principles (Mehmood, 2024). Collaborative efforts between computer scientists and Islamic jurisprudence specialists are crucial for creating AI tools that enhance, rather than oversimplify, the complex interpretive tradition surrounding Qur'anic legal provisions.

Method

Comparative-Analytical Method

This method emphasizes the side-by-side comparison and critical analysis of the AI-generated content.

1. **Data Sourcing:** Primary data is collected by inputting identical prompts regarding the verse on hand-cutting for theft into three AI models: ChatGPT, Gemini, and Meta. Secondary data consists of established classical exegesis (*tafsir*) from recognized scholars.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** The explanations from the three AI applications are systematically compared and contrasted. This analysis identifies points of convergence, divergence, nuance, and potential bias in their interpretations.
3. **Critical Validation:** The results of the comparative analysis are critically evaluated against the authoritative benchmarks provided by the classical exegesis. This step assesses the accuracy, depth, and reliability of the AI-generated interpretations.

Descriptive-Qualitative Method with Cross-Referencing

This method focuses on describing the AI's output and then verifying it through a structured cross-referencing process.

1. **Data Collection and Description:** The research begins by gathering and descriptively presenting the outputs on the specified Islamic legal ruling from each AI application (ChatGPT, Gemini, Meta). The focus is on understanding each AI's narrative.
2. **Cross-Referencing:** The described AI outputs are systematically cross-referenced with each other to map the landscape of AI-generated interpretations. Subsequently, they are cross-referenced with the primary source (the Qur'anic verse) and the secondary sources (classical tafsir).
3. **Gap Identification and Conclusion:** The cross-referencing process is used to identify gaps, inaccuracies, or modern biases in the AI explanations compared to the traditional scholarly consensus, leading to the research's conclusions.

Library Research-Based Validation Method

This method frames the AI outputs as a new type of source to be validated within the traditional framework of library research.

1. **Source Identification and Extraction:** The first stage involves identifying AI platforms as non-traditional primary sources. Data is extracted from them through targeted queries. Traditional secondary sources (books of tafsir) are also gathered.
2. **Content Analysis and Synthesis:** The content from both primary sources (AI outputs) and secondary sources (classical tafsir) is analyzed. The AI data is synthesized to create a composite view of the "AI perspective."
3. **Triangulation and Verification:** The synthesized AI perspective is triangulated with the established interpretations from the classical tafsir. This verification process determines the validity and scholarly alignment of the machine-generated content, forming the core of the research findings.

Result

1. The History of Artificial Intelligence

The history of AI (Artificial Intelligence) began with Alan Turing, a brilliant mathematician, who was one of the pioneers in the history of AI. In 1950, he introduced the concept of the Turing Test, a test to determine whether a machine could imitate human behavior indistinguishably (Pohan et al., 2023). Research on AI was then gradually developed, starting from the 1950s to the 1970s, which marked the genesis of modern AI, characterized by the Dartmouth Conference, which heralded AI's birth as an academic discipline. The late 1970s to the 1990s saw AI development and research enter a period of stagnation (known as an 'AI Winter') due to slow progress and funding obstacles. A golden age of AI development then emerged in the late 1990s through the 2010s, known as the 'Deep Blue era.' It began with IBM's Deep Blue computer, which was able to defeat the world chess champion Garry Kasparov, marking the initial sign that computers could defeat humans (Pohan et al., 2023).

The development of generative artificial intelligence in recent years has been dominated by fierce competition among several tech giants, with OpenAI, Google, and Meta as the main players (Pohan et al., 2023). OpenAI's ChatGPT was the first to capture massive global attention. Launched in November 2022, ChatGPT is a chatbot built on the third series of the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) model, which was later upgraded with GPT-3.5 and GPT-4. Its phenomenal success is inseparable from its training approach using Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF), which made its interactions feel more natural and guided. According to reports from OpenAI, this innovative approach is what allowed ChatGPT to understand context and generate

responses that are more coherent and safer than its predecessors. The success of ChatGPT triggered an "AI Arms Race" in the technology industry.

Following the success of ChatGPT, Google, which had long been a pioneer in AI research with the Transformer model, felt challenged. Prior to this, Google already possessed large models such as LaMDA (Language Model for Dialogue Applications) and PaLM (Pathways Language Model). In direct response, Google launched Bard in February 2023, which was initially built on a lightweight version of LaMDA. However, to compete more fiercely, Google later consolidated its AI research strength under the Google DeepMind team and in December 2023 launched Gemini, a multimodal model that was designed from the outset to natively understand and process various types of information such as text, code, audio, images, and video. According to the whitepaper and official blog of Google DeepMind, Gemini was designed to be a superior model in complex understanding and reasoning compared to its predecessors (Jiang et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, Meta has a different historical path. As a company holding one of the world's largest data repositories, Meta has long invested heavily in AI. They released the LLaMA (Large Language Model Meta AI) model in February 2023, shortly after the ChatGPT boom (Rahman et al., 2025). Unlike ChatGPT and Gemini, which are aimed at general users through a chatbot interface, Meta's strategy with LLaMA is open-source. They released the base model to the research and developer community. This decision, as announced by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his AI team, is based on the philosophy that openness will create a healthier and more advanced ecosystem. Subsequent LLaMA variants, such as Llama 2 (released July 2023), which can be used for chat, and Llama 3 (April 2024), further solidify Meta's position as a powerful and openly accessible provider of foundation models, serving as a strong alternative to closed models like GPT and Gemini (Kalla et al., 2025).

The development of AI provides options for society and serves as an alternative in its use for accomplishing tasks. Some literature indicates the respective strengths and weaknesses of existing AIs according to the features they offer (Kalla et al., 2025). In this research, the focus will be on three AIs, namely ChatGPT, Gemini, and Meta (LLaMA).

2. Artificial intelligence interpretation of Q.S. al-Mā'idah verse 38

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a phenomenon in the digital world. Humans use it across various fields of knowledge, including for obtaining religious understanding. The religious understanding presented by artificial intelligence is determined by the sources available on the internet. The more sources available, the richer the answer will be to religious problems. In addition, there are various types of AI that have been used by the public, including ChatGPT, Meta AI, and Gemini AI. These three examples are the artificial intelligence systems being used. This research attempts to obtain answers using artificial intelligence exegesis (tafsīr) with the keyword: "interpretation of the verse regarding the punishment for theft in the Qur'an".

The results obtained from artificial intelligence are as follows: First, ChatGPT explains that the verse regarding the punishment for theft is found in Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 38:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Meaning: "As for the male thief and the female thief, cut off their hands as a recompense for what they have committed, a deterrent punishment from Allah. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise."

Textually, this verse establishes the punishment of hand amputation for thieves (both male and female). This punishment is known as ḥadd sariqah. Classical exegetes (mufasssīrūn\$ such as Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Ṭabarī explain: The punishment of hand amputation is definitive for safeguarding communal wealth. However, this punishment is not absolutely applicable but is subject to conditions detailed in the ḥadīth and fiqh: firstly, the stolen item must reach the niṣāb (minimal threshold, according to the majority of jurists, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ gold dinar or equivalent to

pm1.06 grams of gold); the item must be taken from a safe place of custody (hīrz); the act must be done intentionally, not out of necessity or coercion; and not during a state of severe hunger or general famine (darūrah). If these conditions are not met, a *ta'zīr* punishment (an alternative penalty determined by a judge) may be imposed. Several modern thinkers, such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, Fazlur Raḥmān, and Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī, emphasize: The verse affirms the protection of property rights as a principle of social justice. Hand amputation is a maximum sanction applied only when the crime is highly disruptive, the society is secure, and basic needs are guaranteed. In the modern context, the state can interpret this punishment with alternative penalties (imprisonment, rehabilitation, fine) as long as the *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law)—namely protecting wealth and upholding justice—are maintained. Some contemporary scholars consider this verse to demonstrate the principle of deterrent effect, meaning its form can be adaptive to the prevailing legal system. From a *maqāsid* perspective, the primary aim of the verse is *ḥifz al-māl* (protection of wealth). Physical punishment like hand amputation was effective in early Islam because it suited the social context and culture of Arab society at that time. In the present era, some scholars believe the same objective can be achieved with a modern legal system, provided it upholds justice, deterrent effect, and public protection. The interpretation of the Qur'anic verse on the punishment for theft shows that: Textually: Allah prescribes hand amputation as the punishment. In terms of *fiqh*: This punishment has many strict conditions. In terms of *maqāsid*: The punishment aims to protect wealth and establish justice, thus its application can be contextual according to the era.

Secondly, Gemini AI explains that, in brief, the primary verse discussing the punishment for theft is Surah Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) verse 38. The punishment mentioned is the cutting off of the hand, however, scholars (jurists/experts in Fiqh) have established very strict conditions for its application. This punishment functions more as a deterrent and is a measure of last resort within the Islamic penal system, which aims to protect the security of property in society. The central verse that serves as the legal basis (dalil) for the punishment of theft (known in Fiqh as *sariqah*) is: Surah Al-Ma'idah (5): 38

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

As for: the thief, the male and the female, cut off their hands in recompense for what they committed, as a deterrent punishment from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.."

"Although the verse above sounds straightforward, exegesis scholars (ulama tafsir) and jurists (ahli fiqh) do not interpret it literally without context. They detail a stringent set of conditions that must be met before the punishment of hand amputation (*qath'ul yad*) can be imposed. If even a single condition is not met, this punishment is voided and replaced with another form of penalty called *Ta'zir* (a discretionary punishment determined by a judge, such as imprisonment or a fine). The following are the main conditions: Proof is Established Lawfully and Without Doubt The evidence must be absolute and without doubt (*syubhat*). This can be achieved through: Confession from the perpetrator without any coercion. Witness testimony, which requires a minimum of two just and trustworthy adult male witnesses who directly observed the act of theft. Any slight doubt will invalidate this punishment, in accordance with the Fiqh maxim: 'The hudud punishments are dropped due to the existence of doubt (*syubhat*). The Stolen Item Must Reach a Minimum Value (Nisab) The stolen goods must possess a value that reaches a certain minimum threshold (*nisab*). Scholars agree that stealing items of very little value is not subject to this punishment. The measure of Nisab: Based on the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the *nisab* for theft is one-quarter of a gold dinar or three silver dirhams. This value is equivalent to several grams of gold, which is quite significant. The Theft Must Be From a Secure and Locked Place of Custody (Hirz) The theft must have occurred from a safe and locked place of custody (*hirz*). Examples of Hirz: A locked house, a safe, a padlocked cupboard, or a guarded warehouse. Not Hirz: Stealing fruit that has fallen from a tree in the street, or taking an

item left in a public place does not fall under this category. The Perpetrator Must Be Mukallaf and Not Under Duress The perpetrator must be a mukallaf (of sound mind and puberty) and commit the theft of their own free will without coercion. Not in a State of Necessity/Emergency: This punishment does not apply to a person compelled to steal by extreme circumstances, such as life-threatening hunger. A famous case is when Caliph Umar bin Khattab suspended the punishment of hand amputation during a time of famine. The primary goal of establishing this punishment is not to cause harm, but rather to achieve the noble objectives of Islamic Law (Maqashid ash-Shari'ah), which are: Preservation of Wealth (Hifzh al-Mal): Protecting private property rights and maintaining the economic stability of society. Creating a Deterrent Effect (Zawajir): The severe nature of the punishment is intended to prevent anyone from attempting to steal, thereby guaranteeing social security. Atonement for Sins (Jawabir): For a believing perpetrator, the execution of the punishment in this world is considered atonement for their sin, so they are not held accountable for the same act in the Hereafter. Due to these extremely strict conditions, the punishment of hand amputation has been very rarely applied in practice throughout Islamic history. Judges are more inclined to search for reasons or doubts to avoid it and replace it with the Ta'zir punishment, which is deemed more relevant to the circumstances of the perpetrator and the community."

"Thirdly, the Meta AI exegesis explains that the verse regarding the punishment for theft in the Qur'an is found in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), verse 38, which states: '\$\$As for\$\$ the thief, the male and the female, cut off their hands in recompense for what they committed, as a deterrent \$\$punishment\$\$ from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.' Classical Exegesis (Tafsir) Tafsir Ibn Kathir: The punishment of hand amputation is applied to male and female thieves who secretly take the property of others without permission. The amount of stolen property must reach one-quarter of a dinar or more. Tafsir Quraish Shihab: The punishment of hand amputation aims to prevent theft and serve as a lesson for others. The value of the stolen property is an important factor in determining the punishment. Tafsir Al-Jalalayn: The punishment of hand amputation is applied to a thief who secretly takes the property of others without permission, provided the stolen property reaches one-quarter of a dinar or more. Conditions for the Punishment of Hand Amputation The conditions and provisions for the punishment of hand amputation include: Nisab (Minimum Threshold): The value of the stolen property must reach one-quarter of a dinar or three dirhams. Secured Property: The stolen property must have been kept in a secure place of custody (hirz). Confession or Evidence: The punishment of hand amputation can be applied if there is a confession from the thief or strong evidence. Differences of Scholarly Opinion The differences of opinion among the scholars (ulama) include: Imam Malik: The nisab for the punishment of hand amputation is three pure dirhams. Imam Shafi'i: The nisab for the punishment of hand amputation is one-quarter of a dinar. Imam Abu Hanifah: The nisab for the punishment of hand amputation is ten dirhams." "This can be detailed in the table below:

Table 1. Comparison of Interpretations from ChatGPT, Gemini, and Meta

Chat GPT	Gemini	Meta
Prompt: Interpretation of the Qur'anic verse regarding the punishment for theft	Prompt: Interpretation of the Qur'anic verse regarding the punishment for theft	Prompt: Interpretation of the Qur'anic verse regarding the punishment for theft
Systematics/Structure: The verses in question, the literal meaning, classical scholarly interpretation, contemporary contextual interpretation, the principles of Maqasid al-Sharia (objectives of Islamic law), and conclusion.	Systematics/Structure: The verse on the punishment for theft in the Qur'an found in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5): 38, Classical Scholarly Interpretation of the Hand Amputation Punishment, and Differences of Scholarly Opinion	Systematics/Structure: The Qur'anic Verse on the Punishment for Theft, Interpretation and Conditions for the Application of the Punishment, and the Philosophy Behind the Punishment (Maqasid ash-Sharia).
Source Texts/References: The Tafsir works of Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Ṭabarī.	Source Texts/References: Tafsir al-Jalālain, Tafsir Ibn Kathīr, and Tafsir Quraish Shihab.	Source Texts/References: Not displayed in written form
Figures/Scholars: Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Ṭabarī; Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Ridha, Fazlur Rahman, Yusuf al-Qaradawi.	Figures/Scholars: Quraish Shihab, Ibn Kathīr, Imam Mālik, Imam Shāfi'ī, and Abū Ḥanīfah.	figures:-

Discussion

"Based on the AI results, several Tafsir (exegesis) works are referenced, including: Tafsir Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, al-Ṭabarī, Tafsir al-Jalālain, and Tafsir al-Mishbah. First, Tafsir al-Jalālain explains Q.S. al-Mā'idah (5): 38, which states: 'The male who steals and the female who steals.' The alif-lām (al-) present in both words indicates them as ism mawṣūl (relative pronoun) and functions as the mubtada' (subject). Since al is similar to a conditional particle, the khabar (predicate) is preceded by the particle fa' (then), meaning: 'then cut off their hands. The commentary continues: Their right hand, each from the wrist. It is stated by the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) that the cutting punishment is carried out only if the stolen item is worth one-quarter of a dinar or more. If the act is repeated, then the left foot is cut off from the ankle, followed by the left hand, then the right foot, and after that, the punishment becomes ta'zīr (discretionary judicial penalty).' As a recompense' (balasan), which is manṣūb (in the accusative case) as a Maṣdar (verbal noun), 'for what they earned, and as an exemplary punishment' (siksaan)—meaning a punishment for them from Allah. 'And Allah is Exalted in Might' (Maha Perkasa), meaning He has mastery over all affairs. 'And Wise' (Maha Bijaksana) toward His creation.

"Secondly, Tafsir al-Mishbah explains Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), verse 38 as follows: After previously explaining the sanction for robbers, the Qur'an now clarifies the punishment for the thief: both the male and the female who are proven to have stolen must have their hands cut off as a form of worldly punishment for their deed and as a warning to others not to commit a similar act. Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise in establishing His laws. However, if the thief regrets, repents, and reforms themselves, such as by returning the stolen goods or their value to the owner, then Allah will accept their repentance and erase their punishment in the Hereafter. Indeed, Allah is Oft-

Forgiving, Most Merciful. The word *as-sāriq* (the thief) in this verse suggests someone who has stolen repeatedly, making them deserving of the title 'thief.' With this understanding, a person who has only committed the act once is not yet worthy of being called a thief and would not immediately be subjected to the punishment mentioned in the verse. Nevertheless, the majority of scholars understand *as-sāriq* to mean 'the person who steals,' implying that even if the person is proven to have stolen only once, the punishment still applies.

"The explanation regarding Allah's attribute *Al-Ghaffār* (The Oft-Forgiving) signifies that Allah conceals the faults of His servant. Often, a person has stolen repeatedly, but Allah covers their shame. Only when they fail to stop does Allah expose their deed, leading to their capture. Therefore, even though they appear to be caught only once, they have in fact stolen repeatedly. It is mentioned in a narration that Sayyidina Ali still cut the hand of a person who swore he had only stolen once, saying: 'Allah would not disgrace a person who had sinned only once.' After the punishment was carried out, the person confessed that he had indeed stolen multiple times. This affirms the truth of the verse's wording and the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in applying the law for a thief. The specific mention of the 'female thief' in the verse aims to rectify the views of the pre-Islamic (Jahiliyyah) society, which was reluctant to punish a female thief due to their low view of women's status. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself upheld the law against a noblewoman from the Banu Makhzum tribe, *Murrah bint Sufyan*, and rejected the request to cancel the punishment. He declared: 'Even if [my daughter] *Fatima* stole, I would still cut off her hand,' demonstrating the impartiality of the law. The order of mentioning the male thief before the female thief suggests that men are generally more daring in committing theft. Similarly, in the case of adultery (*Zina*), the female is mentioned first because the event often originates from their boldness in displaying forbidden adornments. Scholars also explain that the theft referred to in this verse is different from corruption, robbery, or fraud. Theft (*Sariqah*) is the taking of another person's property secretly from a secured location (*hirz*) without permission. Therefore, a treasurer who embezzles money, a person who takes communal property, or a person who takes from an unsecured place (such as an open house or an unguarded shop) is not included in the category of thief subject to the hand amputation punishment. Thus, besides prohibiting theft, Islam also teaches property owners to reasonably safeguard their belongings so as not to tempt those with weak faith into sin."

"Thirdly, *Tafsir al-Qurṭubī* explains the words of Allah, 'The male thief and the female thief, cut off their hands,' indicating that Islam establishes a firm punishment for the perpetrator of theft committed without warfare or violence. During the time of *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance), the punishment of hand amputation was already known, and Islam then affirmed it with fairer and more measured provisions. The first thief to be punished during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was *Khiyar bin 'Adi* from the men and *Munnah binti Sufyan* from the women of the Banu Makhzum tribe. Similar punishments were also upheld by the Caliphs, such as *Abu Bakar* and *Umar bin Khaṭṭab*. Textually, the verse appears to be general, but the practice (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shows that there is a minimum threshold of value for the stolen goods that would necessitate the punishment of hand amputation. It is mentioned in an authentic Hadith that the hand should not be cut off except for a theft valued at one-quarter of a dinar or more. Consequently, this provision does not apply to every act of theft without considering the value of the item."

The scholars hold different opinions regarding this minimum value threshold (*Nisab*). *Umar*, *Uthman*, *Ali*, *Umar bin Abdul Aziz*, *Ash-Shafi'i*, *Al-Laith*, and *Abū Thawr* hold the opinion that the punishment applies to theft valued at one-quarter of a dinar or more, or its equivalent value. *Imam Mālik* set the minimum threshold at three dirhams or one-quarter of a dinar, depending on the type of asset (gold or silver). *Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal* and *Ishāq* stated that for gold, the minimum is one-quarter of a dinar, while for

other goods, the value must be equivalent to one-quarter of a dinar or three dirhams. Abū Ḥanīfah and Ath-Thawrī require a value of ten dirhams as the minimum threshold. Umar bin Khaṭṭab, Abū Bakar, and some of the tābi'īn (successors) are mentioned as having set the limit at five dirhams, while Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī mentioned four dirhams. Abdullāh bin az-Zubayr is even recorded to have decided the punishment for a theft valued at one dirham. The Khawārij and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (in one narration) understood the verse literally, meaning the punishment applies to every theft without a minimum value threshold. These differences in opinion stem from the varying interpretations of the different Hadith narrations concerning the value of stolen goods during the Prophet's time. Nevertheless, the strongest opinion among the majority (Jumhūr) of scholars is that the hand is only cut off for theft with a minimum value of one-quarter of a dinar or its equivalent. This approach reflects a balance between legal justice and the protection of human rights in the application of Islamic Law Sharia.

"Fourthly, Tafsir al-Ṭabarī explains that, according to Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī), the words of Allah, 'The male thief and the female thief, cut off their hands,' demonstrate the strictness of the law for every perpetrator of theft, whether male or female. The linguistic structure of this verse affirms the marfū' form (nominative case/subject) of the words as-sāriq (male thief) and as-sāriqah (female thief), indicating them as active perpetrators defined by the act of stealing. The phrase 'their hands' is understood to mean the right hand, in accordance with the legal practice during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Regarding the minimum value threshold (Nisab) of the stolen goods that warrants the hand amputation punishment, the scholars differed in opinion: The Scholars of Madinah like Imam Mālik held that the punishment applies to theft valued at three dirhams, based on the Hadith about the thief of the coat of mail, which had that value. Al-Awzā'ī and some other scholars stated the threshold is one-quarter of a dinar, citing an authentic Hadith from 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). Abū Ḥanīfah held that the minimum value is ten dirhams, based on narrations from Ibn 'Amr and Ibn 'Abbās. Other scholars interpreted the verse generally, arguing that every theft—both major and minor—is subject to the hand amputation punishment, on the grounds that there is no strong evidence to exclude the apparent meaning (zāhir) of the verse. However, Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī) judged the strongest opinion to be that the hand amputation punishment is only applicable to theft valued at one-quarter of a dinar or more, as this is supported by authentic Hadith from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Concerning the words of Allah, 'as a recompense for what they committed, and as an exemplary punishment from Allah,' Abū Ja'far explains that this punishment is the direct consequence of the act of disobedience (ma'siyah) and violation of Allah's law. 'Umar bin Khaṭṭab himself affirmed the strict application of this punishment against the thief, involving the alternating cutting of the hand and foot if necessary. The conclusion of the verse, 'And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise,' indicates that Allah's Power and Wisdom are present in all of His legal decisions. Allah imposes the punishment with perfect justice and without excess, based on a wisdom that aims to safeguard the public interest (maṣlaḥah) and fairness within society."

Fifthly, Tafsir Ibn Kathīr explains that Allah the Almighty established the punishment of hand amputation for men and women who commit theft as a form of His decree and command. Al-Thawri narrated from Jābir bin Yazīd Al-Ju'fī, from 'Āmir bin Sharāḥīl Ash-Sha'bī, that Ibn Mas'ūd once recited this verse with the additional wording: 'cut off both their right hands.' This recitation is considered a qirā'āt shādhah (an unmutawātir/irregular reading), although its meaning aligns with the general understanding of the scholars that the right hand is what should be amputated. This law was actually known since the time of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance), then recognized and perfected by Islam with the addition of specific conditions to realize the public interest (maṣlaḥah), similar to the laws of qiṣāṣ (retaliation), diyah (blood money), and qirāḍ (profit-sharing contract). Some narrations mention that the Quraysh tribe was the first to implement the law of hand amputation in the pre-Islamic era, when a man named

Duwayk from the Banu Khuzā'ah tribe had his hand cut off for stealing property from the Ka'bah. The Zāhirī school of thought opines that every act of theft, without regard to the value of the item, must be subject to the hand amputation punishment, based on the general wording of the verse in Surah Al-Mā'idah (5): 38. They reject the existence of a nisab (minimum threshold) provision or any consideration of the security of the storage location (ḥirz). Ibn 'Abbās, as narrated by Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, is also interpreted as taking a general view of this verse.

However, the majority of scholars (Jumhūr ulama) established a minimum threshold (nisab) for the execution of this punishment. Imam Mālik determined three dirhams as the minimum value, citing an authentic Hadith about the theft of a shield valued at three dirhams for which the amputation punishment was applied. Imam Shāfi'ī established one-quarter of a dinar as the nisab, based on a Hadith narrated by 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) which states that the hand is cut off for stealing one-quarter of a dinar or more. This difference in value is not considered contradictory, as the value of one-quarter of a dinar was equivalent to three dirhams at that time. Imam Abū Ḥanīfah set the nisab at ten dirhams, basing his opinion on a Hadith that mentioned the price of a shield reached this value. These differences in opinion indicate variations in understanding the economic context and currency values during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Zāhirī school which rejects the nisab is supported by the Hadith of Abū Hurayrah regarding the thief of an egg and a rope. However, the Jumhūr ulama interpreted this Hadith metaphorically—the "egg" being interpreted as a metal helmet and the "rope" as a ship's rope—or understood it as a form of allegory to show the stages in the application of the law. The wisdom (ḥikmah) behind the hand amputation punishment is explained by scholars as a form of justice and deterrence. In the context of criminal injury (jināyah), the value of the hand is set high so that people will not arbitrarily cause harm. Conversely, in the case of theft, the nisab threshold is set low so that society will be reluctant to steal, demonstrating a balance between public interest (maṣlahah) and justice.

"Based on the explanations derived from the Tafsir works, the excerpts provided by Gemini, ChatGPT, and Meta are very concise summaries from the perspective of exegesis. These explanations need to be deepened by consulting their original sources. The understanding derived from these AI outputs is therefore only provisional. A comprehensive study of the referenced Tafsir works is necessary. Consequently, AI interpretations cannot provide religious authority. Such authority is grounded in the classical Tafsir texts and supporting Islamic scholarship."

Conclusion

The research findings indicate that AI-based exegesis systems are only capable of presenting information that is summarized or generally descriptive regarding the interpretation of a verse. Although the AI refers to various classical and contemporary Tafsir sources, its presentation tends to be limited to the core meaning or the outline of the verse's explanation, without providing the depth of linguistic, historical, or theological analysis found in authoritative Tafsir works. Thus, AI can serve as a preliminary tool to gain a general overview of an exegesis, but it cannot replace the process of ijtihād (independent reasoning), sanad (chain of narration) verification, and the in-depth semantic exploration that characterizes the works of classical and modern mufasssīrūn (exegetes). Therefore, this study affirms that the depth and validity of Tafsir must remain grounded in the direct study of classical Tafsir literature such as Tafsir al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, as well as contemporary Tafsir works that integrate philological, contextual, and thematic approaches.

Acknowledgments

This study, which critically examines the capabilities of Artificial Intelligence in Qur'anic exegesis, has affirmed a crucial conclusion: while AI can provide a useful summary, the depth of *tafsir*—rooted in *ijtihād*, *sanad*, and intricate linguistic and historical analysis—remains the exclusive domain of dedicated scholars. Therefore, the

researcher wishes to acknowledge the immense intellectual heritage of the *mufassirūn*, from the classical masters like al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr to contemporary scholars. Their works are the true foundation of Islamic scholarship, and this research stands as a humble tribute to their contributions.

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