



Between Tradition and Scripture: A Contemporary Reinterpretation of Qur'anic Verses on Women

Dian Malinda^{1*} , Akhmad Fadhilah Kartono²

¹ Alauddin State Islamic University, Indonesia

² University of Muslim Indonesia, Indonesia

Received : March 21, 2025

Revised : June 22, 2025

Accepted : July 28, 2025

Online : July 31, 2025

Abstract

Women have been mistreated for decades; before the Prophet Muhammad (*PBUH*) came with Islamic teachings, they were traded like commodities, and baby girls were buried alive. Centuries after, in this modern era, women also face harassment due to the misinterpretations and distorted interpretations of the *Qur'an* and the Prophet's (*PBUH*) *hadith*. This paper discusses the true value of women and how Islam honors women as enlightened in the *Qur'an*. The aforementioned misinterpretations and distorted interpretations triggered the deviant and erroneous paradigms about women; therefore, seeking out the verses about women in the *Qur'an* is essential. This study utilizes a qualitative, literature-based approach, focusing on the collection and thematic analysis of *Qur'anic* verses, *hadiths*, and scholarly sources related to women. The method involves systematically reviewing and interpreting relevant texts to explore beliefs, behaviors, and perceptions within both individual and social contexts. The research found that the *Qur'an* has mentioned the word of women in 145 verses spread from *surah al-Fātihah* to *surah an-Nās*, and it has clearly explained their rights and their fundamental roles in the family and, what is more, in society. Islam maintains the honor and dignity of a woman, distinct from the laws of ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and the traditions of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period; the *Qur'an* guarantees the right to a decent and honorable life for all human beings, including women. This study identifies a previously unexplored aspect of *Qur'anic* interpretation of women and their roles in family and society.

Keywords *Qur'an, Islamic Feminism, Islamic Social Studies*

INTRODUCTION

Islam provides a holistic perspective on life, addressing both bodily and spiritual demands. The five pillars of Islam serve as the framework for developing a deep spiritual connection with Allah. The *Qur'an* emphasizes the value of spirituality, urging self-reflection, awareness, and contemplation to help humans better understand their purpose and relationship with Allah ([Hamisu & Kumo, 2024](#)). Allah has created human beings with various diversity, including diversity in the forms of men and women. Diversity that complements each other with their respective duties, functions, rights, and obligations. The discussion of women is then interesting to discuss and raise, especially considering the many misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Islamic teachings in matters that relate to women.

Allah *SWT* has revealed the *Qur'an* as the best guidance and enlightenment for mankind. However, there are many deviant and erroneous paradigms in global Muslim society about women based on misinterpretations and distorted interpretations of the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* of the Prophet (*PBUH*), such as the assumption that Islam does not give complete rights to women. It makes the validity of divorce only on the part of the husband, as well as the assumption that Islam is oppressive to women because it only gives them half of the share given to men in terms of inheritance. These are some of the accusations that have been leveled against Islam, so it is



interesting to elaborate on how Islam attends to and protects women as well as their rights, especially as stated in the verses of the Qur'an. Misinterpretations of Qur'anic verses, such as *An-Nisā'* (4):34, also have perpetuated gender biases in Muslim societies by giving male supremacy markers, rather than addressing their responsibilities towards women ([Ābduh, 1927](#)).

The debate about all of the roles also rights of women within Islam is a topic that has lately become so increasingly relevant and important within a modern context. The Islamic feminist movement arose as an attempt at a reinterpretation of religious teachings. Women's rights became more inclusive because Islamic traditions were reinterpreted. Aminah Wadud does indeed challenge customary patriarchal interpretations and also, she does highlights verses for gender equality. She makes a call with regard to a re-examination of the Qur'an so as to then reveal its potential in the upholding of rights for women ([Wadud, 1999](#)). Asma Barlas also gives a critique of patriarchal readings inside *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, since those readings marginalized women throughout history; she argues the Qur'an has no endorsement for gender inequality ([Barlas, 2003](#)). These works ignited a vital discussion among Muslims globally, so these works cultivated talks about women's roles within Islam.

Existing interpretations tend to focus on general aspects of the rights of women. Islamic law faces patriarchal critiques. In the same vein, a certain aspect of the issue of women is still lacking in-depth and specific outlining of the rights and roles of women that are related to the daily family and society, which are often considered as the place where women receive discrimination or limitations the most. This study addresses these gaps by relying on the interpretations of the Qur'an, which are inclusive and progressive, and elaborating in detail on the rights and the course for women in the Muslim families and societies.

Furthermore, to provide a more complete and more motivating understanding, this research therefore points out the necessity of exemplifying a few female figures in the Qur'an, like Maryam (*Mary* [may Allah be pleased with her]), Mecca's most respected virgin. *Mary* (may Allah be pleased with her), is the only woman in the Qur'an whose name is mentioned there directly, and she is a highly honored figure and a model of perseverance, faith, and independence. The cycle of *Mary's* life told and the extent of her virtues from the angle of the Holy Qur'an will give a contemporary Muslim woman a good dig as a spiritual being, gender is not the limit, and that women can go to the highest posts in society without violating the Islamic values. Therefore, this research is designed to close the gap by looking into *Al-Qur'an* and bringing out the good examples of female figures like *Mary* (may Allah be pleased with her), in the Qur'an as a source of inspiration for Muslim women in their quest to realize their full potential at all levels of life.

Hence, the research questions of this study are:

1. What do Qur'anic verses reveal about women's roles in family and society?
2. How do Qur'anic verses portray *Mary* (may Allah be pleased with her)?

This study analyzes how Qur'anic verses enhance women's rights in family and society by correcting common misconceptions. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the unidentified value and broader aspects of Qur'anic understanding of women and the roles they play in family and society, as well as to investigate how a *surah* in the Qur'an is named after a woman. Thus, to give much to the contribution of fertilizing the notion of women in Islam, and it will fire the application of the principles of equality and of gender justice that are rooted in the Qur'anic teachings in the actual lives of the communities of Muslims.

The research presented here offers a substantial practical contribution by deliberately reinterpreting Qur'anic passages on women in order to improve community attitudes toward women as well as challenge persistent gender bias. The study challenged traditional patriarchal interpretations of these verses by contextualizing them through a contemporary hermeneutical

approach based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and social justice principles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemporary reinterpretations of Qur'anic passages about women reflect a growing scholarly commitment to challenging patriarchal interpretations and emphasizing gender justice as an essential Qur'anic morality. Throughout the literature, scholars have underlined the contrast between traditional *exegesis*, which is typically formed by medieval patriarchal requirements, and the Qur'an's ethical purpose, which many modern scholars believe encourages justice, compassion, and equality.

Several recent studies discuss how Indonesian female Muslim scholars (*ulama*) actively engage in Islamic preaching (*da'wah*) using social media platforms. Despite traditional views that limit women's public roles, these *ulama* have gained substantial followings and influence, indicating that digital platforms may empower women in religious leadership. These women serve not only as religious leaders but also as educators, organizers, and moral advisers in their communities. Their involvement in digital *da'wah* reflects both the continuation of earlier contributions by female scholars and a response to current challenges (Uyuni et al., 2023).

Other research highlights historical barriers that have limited women's involvement in the transmission of the Qur'an and seeks to address these using the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law). Feminist perspectives applied to classical biographical, *fiqh*, and historical sources show that women's absence from *sanad* (transmission chains) and public recitation of the Qur'an stems from restrictive interpretations regarding seclusion, gender interaction, travel without a male guardian, and considering the female voice as *'awrah*. In response, women have pursued informal and familial education, used kinship ties, relied on legal guardianship strategies, and engaged in remote learning platforms. These restrictions are critically examined in light of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, especially the balance between preserving religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) and safeguarding women's dignity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) (Edi & Fathiyaturrahmah, 2025). While such studies provide valuable insights through *maqāṣid*-based approaches, this research focuses directly on the Qur'anic text itself as a primary source.

Some scholars explore gender equity from the perspective of contemporary *'ulamā'*, addressing debates over gender roles, responsibilities, divorce, polygamy, testimony, and inheritance. While differentiation in roles is often viewed as inequity by secular standards, Islamic perspectives frame them as spiritually equal before God, with distinct social roles understood as divinely guided justice (Begum et al., 2024).

Research also examines how working Muslim women balance their responsibilities as wives, mothers, professionals, and community members, illustrating how they contribute to family resilience across legal, economic, physical, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions. Using Islamic concepts such as *mubāḍalah* (reciprocity), these women promote gender equality in their domestic and public lives (Hidayati et al., 2022).

Studies in Southeast Asia analyze feminist movements that challenge patriarchal interpretations of Islam, which restrict women from occupying public leadership roles. Through interviews and fieldwork, these movements demonstrate that leadership should be based on competence rather than gender. By utilizing ethical, contextual, and historical methods, feminist scholars argue that Islam honors and protects women's rights (Muqtada et al., 2024).

Other research has investigated the varying stances within Islamic educational institutions regarding female leadership. Some institutions prohibit women from leadership roles based on *qawli* (textual-literal) interpretations, while others permit it using the *manhājī* (contextual-methodological) approach, which considers minority scholarly opinions and modern social realities (Hannan et al., 2024).

Although these studies emphasize women's contributions and leadership in contemporary Islamic contexts, most of them do not engage directly with Qur'anic verses. Their focus lies on practical aspects such as digital *da'wah*, leadership, or legal reasoning, rather than exploring the meanings and implications of the verses themselves. Some mention selected verses that support equality in piety but lack comprehensive linguistic, thematic, or *exegetical* analysis.

Moreover, many studies do not fully apply a *hermeneutical* approach, which is essential for uncovering nuanced meanings within Qur'anic language, especially concerning women. Without this method, interpretations risk remaining superficial or biased. Few works consider the historical and cultural settings in which the Qur'anic verses were revealed, an understanding that is crucial to accurate interpretation.

There is also a scarcity of deep analysis on female figures in the Qur'an, such as *Mary* (may Allah be pleased with her). Her story, when thoroughly examined, offers powerful spiritual and social models for Muslim women. Unfortunately, theological reflections on such figures are rarely linked meaningfully to the lived experiences of contemporary women, resulting in interpretations that are often detached from practical realities.

Thus, there remains a significant research gap concerning direct, in-depth engagement with Qur'anic verses related to women, whether from legal, spiritual, thematic, or social dimensions. This gap presents a crucial opportunity to explore the meanings, contexts, and contemporary relevance of such verses in addressing the challenges Muslim women face today. A rigorous textual analysis of the Qur'an, combined with contemporary hermeneutical tools, can enhance our understanding of women's roles and statuses in Islam, grounded in divine guidance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method employed in this research is a literature review, which involves collecting verses from the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet, as well as references related to the topic ([Ábidāt et al. 2015](#); [Ibrahīm, 1986](#); [Syahza, 2021](#)). The data collected is then analyzed to reveal how the Qur'an describes the rights and roles of women in the family, marriage, and society, as well as to explain why Mary is the only woman whose name is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. Utilizing a library research method by focusing on the collection of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and scholarly references relevant to the research theme. Given the textual nature of the data, this method is considered appropriate. Library research involves gathering information from books, academic literature, documents, and previous research findings ([Mahmud, 2011](#); [Nazir, 2003](#)).

In this research, the primary objective was to compile Qur'anic verses related to the topic, which were then examined in depth to produce research notes and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques ([Zed, 2008](#)). The process commences with selecting a central theme, which may include equity, women's rights, family, or societal issues. The researchers compile Qur'anic verses that relate to this topic, both directly and indirectly. Verses were purposively selected using Qur'anic concordances for terms like *an-nisā'*, *unṣa*, *mukminah*, *imroāh*, *ibnat*, and *banāt* using thematic relevance in the whole Qur'an, ensuring comprehensive coverage ([Ibrahīm, 1986](#)). This phase entails using concordances, classical *tafsīr* literature, and digital tools to ensure a comprehensive collection of verses. To avoid decontextualized interpretations, each verse undergoes contextual analysis that takes into account historical background (*asbāb an-nuzūl*), textual placement, and broader narrative context. Researchers analyze significant Arabic vocabulary, grammatical constructs, and literary strategies in the verses during the linguistic and rhetorical analysis phase. This stage reveals the depth of meaning and rhetorical intent underlying the Qur'anic discourse.

The second step is to do a comparative exegetical analysis, evaluating interpretations from ancient and modern scholars such as *al-Tobarī* (At-Tobarī, 2001), *Ibn Kaṣīr* ([Ibnu Kaṣīr, 1999](#)), *al-*

Qurtubī ([Al-Qurtubī, 1964](#)), *Asy-Sya'rōwī* ([Asy-Syārōwī, 1991](#)), *As-Saādī* ([As-Saādī, 2000](#)), and *Muhammad Ābduh* ([Ābduh, 1927](#)). Data source triangulation in this research involves comparison of interpretations from different times and contexts, such as classical *tafsīr* (*al-Tobarī* ([At-Tobarī, 2001](#)), *Ibn Kaśir* ([Ibnu Kaśir, 1999](#)), *al-Qurtubī* ([Al-Qurtubī, 1964](#)), modernist commentaries (*Asy-Sya'rōwī* ([Asy-Syārōwī, 1991](#)), *As-Saādī* ([As-Saādī, 2000](#)), and contemporary modernist interpretation ([Ābduh, 1927](#)), which includes interdisciplinary collaboration. These strategies of triangulation, which underscore the research's reliability, attest to the complexity of the contemporary interpretation of the Qur'anic verses concerning women. This examination enables researchers to trace the evolution of *tafsīr* across intellectual traditions and discover interpretive tendencies or differences.

After gathering these elements, the findings are synthesized to create a coherent thematic framework. This synthesis emphasizes the Qur'anic worldview on the subject, demonstrating how multiple verses combine to form a holistic vision that may include ethical, legal, and spiritual components. In the final stage, thematic discoveries are examined to ensure the relevance of the topic to present social realities, ethical debates, and global issues. *Tafsīr mauḍū'ī*, or thematic analysis techniques, is a tool for engaging with the Qur'an as a dynamic and living text that remains relevant over time and circumstance. The study then adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, which is aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thought patterns at both the individual and group levels ([Sukmadinata, 2008](#)).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Centuries before Islam, women had been mistreated; as children, women were entitled to the right to live and even protection from their parents, rights that were denied to girls in ancient Rome and Greece as well as in pre-Islamic Arabia and even China. Women in those times were not treated with respect and dignity as in the Greek tradition; for example, a daughter was the property of her guardian, where she belonged to her father or brother before marriage and belonged to her husband when married. She was treated like an inanimate object that could not move according to her will. As for the Roman, a woman is treated like a baby or an insane person; she can be bought and enslaved at will, and the guardian can sell her or exile, torture, and even kill her ([Asy-Syārōwī, n.d.-b](#)). Even in the Arabian Peninsula during the pre-Islamic era, it was customary for men to bury their baby girls alive because only sons were important to them ([Amīn, 2003](#)).

Islam came with humanist treatises and became a blessing for the universe, including women. The Qur'an has mentioned the word of women in 145 verses spread from *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* to *sūrah an-Nās*: 54 verses use the phrase *an-nisā'*, meaning the woman, and in some conditions, wife; 26 verses use the phrase *unṣā*, which means female ([Ābdul, n.d.](#)); 24 verses use the word *mukminah*, meaning the female believers; 4 verses use *muslimah*, or female Muslim; 23 verses use the phrase *imro'āh*, meaning wife; and 14 verses use the phrase *ibnat* and *banāt*, meaning daughter. From those 145 verses, several verses were selected, and the verses that were relevant to the themes were classified, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Verses of Qur'an

Theme	Sub-Theme	Qur'anic Verses	Key Message and Focus
Women's Rights and Roles in the Family and Society	Marriage	Al-Baqoroh (2) :232, An-Nisā' (4) :3, An-Nisā' (4) :19, Ar-Rūm (30) :21.	Consent within marriage, consideration for wives, restrictions on polygamy, and safeguarding women's rights.
	Motherhood	Al-Baqoroh (2) :233, Luqmān (31):14, Al-Ahqāf (46):15.	Respect for women who are mothers, childbearing and nursing responsibilities, and maternal devotion.
	Divorce	Al-Baqoroh (2) :226–232, At-Talāq (65):1–7.	Equitable allotment of maternal support during divorce, 'iddah or waiting periods, upkeep entitlements.
	Inheritance	An-Nisā' (4) :7, An-Nisā' (4) :11–12, An-Nisā' (4) :176	Stipulated portions for women under inheritance, equality within intra-household wealth allocation.
	Violence and Protection	An-Nisā' (4): 34, An-Nūr (24):4, An-Nūr (24):6–9, At-Takwīr (81):8-9,	Protective measures against defamation, safeguards within conflict, and contending over verse discipline.
	Leadership and Testimony	Al-Baqoroh (2) :282, At-Taubah (9): 71, Al-Ahzāb (33): 35.	Ethical leadership of believing women and men, collective obligation, and standards of evidence for testimony.
	Legal Capacity and Rights	Al-Baqoroh (2) :282, An-Nisā' (4) :19,	Right over real estate, legal obligations within contracts, autonomous in rites and law.
	Social Participation	At-Taubah (9): 71, Al-Qasas (28):23, Al-Ahzāb (33): 35, Al-Mumtahanah (60):12.	Women's roles in social reforms, pledging allegiance, and participation in religious affairs.
Women's Spirituality and Their Role Model	Modesty and Dress	An-Nūr (24):30–31, Al-Ahzāb (33): 33-59	Framework for public and private modesty for men and women, public behaviour, and attire of hijab.
	Prophetic Women	Āli Īmran (3): 33-50, Al-Qasas (28):7–13, Al-Ahzāb (33): 30-31, At-Tahrīm (66): 10-12.	Empowered women in sacred histories.
	Spiritual Equality	Āli Īmran (3): 195, An-Nisā'(4): 124, At-Taubah (9): 72, An-Nahl (16): 97, Al-Ahzāb (33): 36, Gāfir (40):40.	Faith, worship, and moral conduct are the domain of both, and both share the responsibilities and rewards.

Source: The Holy Qur'an ([Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm, n.d.](#))

Women's Rights and Roles in the Family and Society

These verses describe the noble and protected position of women in Islam, whether as daughters, wives, or mothers. Islam strictly forbids the killing of daughters, as reflected in the words of Allah:

فَقُتِلَتْ ذُنُوبُ بَايٍ سُلَيْمٍ الْمُؤَدَّةُ وَإِذَا

"And when baby girls, buried alive, are asked, for what crime they were put to death" (QS At-Takwīr [81]: 8–9) ([Khattab, n.d.](#)).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, during the pre-Islamic era, a woman would dig a hole in anticipation of giving birth; if she bore a daughter, she would bury the child immediately, but if it was a son, he would be raised ([Al-Baghawī, 1997](#); [At-Ṭabarī, 2001](#)). This cruel act was primarily motivated by fear of poverty or shame. The question in the verse serves as a form of rebuke and condemnation for those who commit such heinous acts ([Al-Khuttubī et al., 2012](#); [As-Sa'dī, 2000](#)).

As girls grow up, Islam grants them significant rights, including the freedom to choose their life partners, to own and manage wealth, to engage in trade, and to receive their rightful share of inheritance. Islamic law explicitly mandates that a woman's consent must be obtained before marriage, and this is confirmed by the marriage officiant to ensure the absence of coercion. Furthermore, Islam requires that a husband give a dowry (mahr) to his wife, and that two witnesses be present during the marriage contract (['Abduh, 1927](#)). These measures are meant to ensure the dignity and agency of women. The dowry serves as a symbol of honor and value, while the presence of witnesses and a formal reception reinforces a woman's status and protects her from mistreatment (['Abduh, 1909](#)).

Within marriage, Islam further strengthens the position of women by clearly outlining mutual responsibilities. Allah assigns men the role of guardians and financial providers, and women are expected to uphold family dignity and maintain fidelity. Allah says:

...النِّسَاءُ عَلَى قَوَّامُونَ الرِّجَالِ

"Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with..." (QS An-Nisā' [4]: 34) ([Khattab, n.d.](#)).

This verse elaborates on the reciprocal roles in marriage. Men are tasked with providing for and guiding their families, while women are entrusted with maintaining their honor and upholding family values ([Ibn Kašīr, 1999](#)). Historical sources mention that the verse was revealed in response to a situation involving the wife of Sa'd ibn ar-Rabī', who experienced marital conflict. The Prophet (PBUH) initially instructed for justice to be served until this verse clarified the matter ([Al-Qurtubī, 1964](#)).

The term qawwāmūn has been widely debated in the context of gender roles. Classical exegetes interpret it as "maintainers" or "guardians," based on the sociocultural reality of men being primary providers and protectors. Scholars such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kašīr ([At-Ṭabarī, 2001](#); [Ibn Kašīr, 1999](#)) attributed male authority to economic responsibility and presumed natural or intellectual differences, which supported the traditional hierarchy in family and society.

In contrast, modern Muslim thinkers and feminist scholars have reinterpreted this verse. Muḥammad 'Abduh argues that qawwāmūn does not imply male superiority, but rather refers to a context-specific obligation based on financial responsibility. He critiques the overinterpretation of this verse through a cultural lens and advocates for a clear distinction between the Qur'an's

message of equality and the societal meanings imposed upon it by patriarchal traditions.

Contrary to classical tafsir that often interprets verse An-Nisā' (4:34) as affirming male authority, this study adopts Muḥammad 'Abduh's egalitarian perspective, which emphasizes the mutual responsibilities of men and women rather than male superiority. Furthermore, the Qur'anic values should be distinguished from patriarchal cultural norms that have historically influenced interpretations. In line with this view, 'Abduh advocated for the inclusion of women in education and encouraged schools and universities in Egypt to open their doors to female students ([Suwahyu, 2022](#)). As a result, educational institutions gradually became accessible to both men and women, including Al-Azhar University, which established its first women's college in 1962.

In marital life, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) set a clear example of how a husband and father should conduct himself. Every command revealed by Allah was first implemented within his own household before being conveyed to the broader community ([Al-Bukhārī, 2002](#); [Badriddīn, 2001](#); [Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, 2005](#); [Muslim, 2015](#)). This includes not only the instruction to wear the hijab but also the broader command to uphold noble character and speak with kindness. As Allah said:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النِّسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ اِنْ اَتَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْاُولٰٓئِ وَاقِمْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَتِينَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِعْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ لَطِيْفًا خَبِيْرًا

"O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women: if you are mindful of Allah, then do not be overly effeminate in speech with men or those with sickness in their hearts may be tempted, but speak in a moderate tone. Settle in your homes, and do not display yourselves as women did in the days of pre-Islamic ignorance. Establish prayer, pay alms-tax, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove all impurity from you, O members of the Prophet's family, and purify you completely. Always remember what is recited in your homes of Allah's revelations and prophetic wisdom. Surely Allah is Most Subtle, All-Aware." (Qur'an, Al-Ahzāb [33]: 32–34) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

This verse emphasizes the importance of moral conduct, modesty, and piety for women, particularly those in positions of influence, such as the Prophet's wives. It also affirms that a woman's piety is central to her standing before God.

Allah warns that the righteousness of a husband does not necessarily ensure the salvation or well-being of his wife in this world or the hereafter (['Abduh, 1988](#)). The Qur'an provides examples through the wives of the prophets Lūṭ (Lot) and Nūḥ (Noah), who were not spared despite their husbands being messengers of God, and conversely, the story of Pharaoh's wife, who attained high status due to her faith despite being married to a tyrant. Allah says:

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا اِمْرَاَتُ نُّوحٍ وَامْرَاَتُ لُوْطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا صٰلِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيْلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدّٰخِلِيْنَ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اِمْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ اِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ اِنِّىْٓ اِنِّىْٓ لِيْ عِنْدَكَ نَبِيًّا فِى الْغَنَةِ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَوَعْدِهٖ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

"Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So, their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, "Enter the Fire, along with the others!" And Allah sets forth an example for the believers: the wife of Pharaoh, who prayed, "My Lord! Build me a house in Paradise near You, deliver me from Pharaoh and his evil doing, and save me from the wrongdoing people." (QS At-Tahrīm (66): 10-11) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

Allah made a parable for the disbelievers, Noah's wife and Lot's wife. Although both were under the supervision of two pious servants, both betrayed their husbands; Noah's wife used to share the identities of the new believers so that the disbelievers could torture them, and Lot's wife used to reveal the good looks of her husband's male visitors to the men so that they could approach them ([As-Sajastānī, 1996](#); [At-Tarmizi, 2014](#); [Hanbal, 1995](#)).

Allah SWT issued warnings and guidance to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), urging them to consistently perform righteous deeds and refrain from all forms of sin. Allah said:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ مَنْ يَّاتِ مِنْكَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيَّنَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ۚ وَمَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنْكُمْ لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صٰلِحًا نُؤْتِيْهَا اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ وَاَعَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيْمًا

"O wives of the Prophet! If any of you were to commit blatant misconduct, the punishment would be doubled for her. And that is easy for Allah. And whoever of you devoutly obeys Allah and His Messenger and does good, We will grant her double the reward, and We have prepared for her an honourable provision." (QS Al-Ahzāb (33): 30–31) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

Due to the vital role of women in society, particularly within the household, the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were presented as exemplary models. Khadijah (RA) was a wise and intelligent woman, a prominent businesswoman who ran her enterprise with strong principles and ethical values. She was the wealthiest woman in Mecca at that time and used her wealth to support the mission of Islam and her husband, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ([Ibn Khaldūn, 2010](#); [Ibn Qutaibah, 2008](#)). Aisha (RA) was among the most prolific transmitters of hadith and a well-known scholar. The Prophet's daughter, Fatimah (AS), was also renowned for her obedience and piety. In some narrations, the Prophet called her *az-Zahrā* (the shining one), as she shone among the inhabitants of the sky like the moon shines on the earth. This title was attributed to her devotion and perseverance in worship ([Amin, 2003](#)).

Islam provides comprehensive guidance on household affairs, both in the Qur'an and in the Hadith of the Prophet. This includes regulations concerning women's rights in the event of divorce, such as the right to file *ilā'* (a form of separation request) if they suffer harm in marriage, and provisions for their rights in the case of divorce or the death of a spouse. The Qur'an also outlines the responsibilities of women when they become mothers.

In contrast, Jewish law historically treated women as property, denying them inheritance rights if a male heir existed. If a woman's husband died without a son, she could be forced to marry her brother-in-law. Similarly, in England between the fifth and eleventh centuries AD, men were allowed to buy and sell their wives freely. Ancient church law even permitted men to lend their wives to others, with or without compensation, for a specific period—practices that persisted until eventually abolished ([Asy-Syārōwī, n.d.-a](#)).

Islam, in contrast, upholds the dignity and humanity of women. When a woman becomes a mother, her status is elevated, and she is honored three times more than the father, regardless of whether her child is male or female. Contrary to the misconceptions often spread by Orientalists, who claim that Islam restricts women's participation in society, Islam permits women to engage actively within certain ethical and moral boundaries. These boundaries are intended to safeguard their dignity and honor.

Allah SWT created men and women to complement each other and collaborate in fulfilling their responsibilities: to worship Him and serve as stewards (*khalifah*) on earth. Islam emphasizes that men and women have distinct, yet equally valuable roles based on their natural dispositions. This differs significantly from Western concepts of emancipation, which promote absolute equality. Instead, Islam advocates proportional equity rooted in justice and mutual benefit ([Al-'Āqōd, 2003](#)).

Men and women are endowed with different dominant traits: men generally tend to rely more on logic, while women are often more emotionally attuned ([Asy-Syārōwī, n.d.-b](#)). These complementary tendencies are not limitations, but rather serve to enrich human relationships and social harmony.

Shaykh Mutawalli Ash-Syārōwī has given an example that women who work for their families are not a disgrace or a mistake, as the Qur'an has told about the story of two women who left the house to give water to their livestock because their father was old:

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ ۖ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ ۚ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ

“When he arrived at the well of Midian, he found a group of people watering their herds. Apart from them, he noticed two women holding back their herd. He asked them, “What is the matter?” They replied, “We cannot water our animals until the other shepherds are done, for our father is a very old man” (QS Al-Qasas (28):23) ([Khattab, n.d.](#)).

From this narrative, it can be concluded that women are allowed to work outside the home due to urgent circumstances that compel them to do so. In addition, when examined carefully, one can draw the wisdom that when a woman is outside the home, she should not be alone, just as the two daughters of Prophet Shu'ayb went out together. Furthermore, women should not mingle directly with groups of men; the two women in the story waited at a distance until the group of men had finished their business ([Asy-Syārōwī, 1991](#)). The teachings of Islam, as outlined in both the Qur'an and the Hadith, always protect women.

The role of women in society is not solely measured by their work outside the home, as their role within the home is equally, if not more, crucial. A woman, both as a wife and a mother, plays a fundamental role in the welfare and happiness of her family depends upon her. Moreover, she plays an essential role in the progress of a nation. Therefore, it is customary for a father to provide the best education for his daughter, as she will become the first and primary educator for his children and grandchildren. Likewise, a husband, in addition to providing material support, should always offer good guidance and direction to his wife.

Allah commands people, especially believers, to always obey the commands of Allah SWT, as He said:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا

“It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger decree a matter, to have any other choice in that matter. Indeed, whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has gone far astray” (QS Al-Ahzāb (33):36) ([Khattab, n.d.](#)).

Among the provisions that Allah has set for humankind, both men and women, is the obligation to perform righteous deeds by obeying His commands and refraining from His prohibitions. Allah makes no distinction between the two in the rewards granted for their respective actions, as stated in the following verse:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

“But those who do good, whether male or female, and have faith will enter Paradise and will never be wronged even as much as the speck on a date stone”. (QS An-Nisā'(4): 124) [Khattab,](#)

[n.d.](#))

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ اُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ

“Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, we will surely bless them with a good life, and we will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds”. (QS An-Nahl (16): 97) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ اِلَّا مِثْلُهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ اُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ اِلَّا بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ

“Whoever does an evil deed will only be paid back with its equivalent. And whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, they will enter Paradise, where they will be provided for without limit”. (QS Gāfir (40): 40) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِيْ جَنَّتٍ عَدْنٍ وَّرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ

“Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever, and splendid homes in the Gardens of Eternity, and, above all, the pleasure of Allah. That is truly the ultimate triumph”. (Surah At-Taubah (9): 72). ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

The principle that men and women are fundamentally equal has inspired women to participate in social movements. Allah has promised, as stated in the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, that He created both men and women to cooperate in fulfilling the obligations of life, both in worship and in daily affairs ([Chaerowati et al., 2021](#)). A woman is a mother, a daughter, a sister, and a wife. Thus, women constitute half of society and are responsible for the upbringing, guidance, and reformation of the next generation, both male and female.

It is widely acknowledged that women instill values and faith within the soul of the nation. Women are not merely members of society; their existence significantly shapes the direction of social change. History shows how women’s responsibilities have evolved across generations ([Uyuni et al., 2023](#)).

The Qur’an also clearly outlines who is considered *maḥram* to a woman in several verses, which serves to protect her from potential harm. The interpretation of Qur’anic verses aligns with the five *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and the principles of social justice, ensuring that women are granted appropriate rights and responsibilities in both domestic and communal spheres.

The Woman Whose Name is Mentioned in the Qur’an.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) conveyed new teachings to the early Muslims by relating them to tangible examples, things that could be perceived directly through the five human senses. This approach was necessary because what the Prophet introduced required a clear and comprehensive explanation, as faith must be deeply rooted in the heart of every Muslim. It is therefore compelling to examine and analyze several of the Prophet’s *ḥadīths* that contain elements of permissibility (*ibāḥah*).

One exemplary figure mentioned in the Qur’an is a woman whose name is explicitly stated, not merely about her husband, such as the wife of Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him), the mother of Prophet Mūsā (peace be upon him), the wife of Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him), or the disobedient wife of Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him). Her name, Maryam (may Allah be pleased with her), the daughter of ‘Imrān, is mentioned 32 times in the Qur’an. Remarkably, her name also

titles an entire chapter: *Sūrat Maryam*. She was a chosen woman through whom Allah gave birth to Prophet 'Īsā al-Masīḥ (peace be upon him) as Allah says:

وَمَرْيَمَ إِبْنَتْ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُنْتِ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ

“There is also the example of Mary, the daughter of 'Imrān, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her womb through Our angel Jibril (AS). She testified to the words of her Lord and His Scriptures and was one of the sincerely devout”. (QS At-Taḥrīm (66):12) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

Allah SWT made Maryam (may Allah be pleased with her) a sign (*āyah*) and a proof for all creation, demonstrating the greatness of Allah's power as the Creator. Through her, Allah created Prophet 'Īsā al-Masīḥ (peace be upon him), just as He created Prophet Ādam (peace be upon him), without a father, as a manifestation of His will and absolute authority ([Asy-Syāl, 2011](#)). Allah said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ إِذْ قَالَتْ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَئِنَّ الذَّكَرَ كَأَلْأُنْثَىٰ ۖ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ بِمَرِّمَ أَنْتِ لَكَ هَذَا ۖ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ فَعَلْ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۖ قَالَ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ نَاسًا ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا نُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْرًا ۖ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعُشِيِّ وَالْإِكْبَارِ ۖ إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ لِمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ لِمَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَتُهُمْ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ۖ إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ لِمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ۖ وَنُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۖ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۖ وَبُعِثْنَاهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۖ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ إِنِّي أَخْلَقْتُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَانْفُخْ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَابْرَأُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْإِبْرَصَ وَأُخِي الْمَوْئِي بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَكْسِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“Indeed, Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imrān above all people of their time. They are descendants of one another. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Remember when the wife of 'Imrān said, “My Lord! I dedicate what is in my womb entirely to Your service, so accept it from me. You alone are truly the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” When she delivered, she said, “My Lord! I have given birth to a girl”, and Allah fully knew what she had delivered—“and the male is not like the female. I have named her Mary, and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring from Satan, the accursed.” So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing, entrusting her to the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He exclaimed, “O Mary! Where did this come from?” She replied, “It is from Allah. Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without limit.” Then and there Zachariah prayed to his Lord, saying, “My Lord! Grant me, by Your grace, righteous offspring. You are certainly the Hearer of all prayers.” So the angels called out to him while he stood praying in the sanctuary, “Allah gives you good news of the birth of Yahya, who will confirm the Word of Allah and will be a great leader, chaste, and a prophet among the righteous.” Zachariah exclaimed, “My Lord! How can I have a son when I am very old and my wife is barren?” He replied, “So will it be. Allah does what He wills.” Zachariah said, “My Lord! Grant me a sign.” He said, “Your sign is that you will not be able to speak to people for three days except through gestures. Remember your Lord often and glorify Him morning and evening.” And remember

when the angels said, "O Mary! Surely Allah has selected you, purified you, and chosen you over all women of the world. O Mary! Be devout to your Lord, prostrate yourself in prayer, and bow along with those who bow down." This is news of the unseen that We reveal to you, O Prophet. You were not with them when they cast lots to decide who would be Mary's guardian, nor were you there when they argued about it. Remember when the angels proclaimed, "O Mary! Allah gives you good news of a Word from Him; his name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and he will be one of those nearest to Allah. And he will speak to people in his infancy and adulthood and will be one of the righteous." Mary wondered, "My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has ever touched me?" An angel replied, "So will it be. Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He simply tells it, 'Be!' and it is. And Allah will teach him writing and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel, and make him a messenger to the Children of Israel to proclaim, 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I will make for you a bird from clay, breathe into it, and it will become a real bird—by Allah's will. I will heal the blind and the leper and raise the dead to life, by Allah's will. And I will tell you what you eat and what you store in your houses. Surely in this is a sign for you if you truly believe.'" (QS Āli 'Imrān [3]: 33–50) ([Khattab, n.d.](#))

This verse was revealed when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was engaged in a dialogue with a delegation of Christians from Najran. They harbored doubts regarding his message, and thus, these verses were revealed as guidance, evidence, and a rebuttal to their misconceptions.

Allah SWT commanded Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) to worship with sincerity and submission before entrusting her with an extraordinary mandate, becoming the mother of Prophet Messiah (peace be upon him) ([Asy-Syārōwī, 1991](#)).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once said, "*Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) surpassed all the women of my nation, just as Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) surpassed all women of the world.*" ([At-Tabarī, 2001](#))

Mary (may Allah be pleased with her) stands as a noble example of piety and virtue. She descended from a righteous lineage, the daughter of 'Imrān and kin to Prophet Zachariah (peace be upon him), and became the mother of Prophet Messiah (peace be upon him). Her unwavering devotion and acceptance of Allah's command make her a model of obedience and faith for all generations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Qur'an references women in 145 verses using various pronouns, which this study analyzes under two overarching themes: their responsibilities within the family and community, and the Qur'anic construction of exemplary female role models. Unlike the legal systems of ancient Greece, Rome, or the pre-Islamic Arab tradition, the Qur'an guarantees women and girls the right to a dignified and honorable life. Moreover, in contrast to English common law and the doctrines of the ancient Church, Islam upholds the dignity and honor of women. All Islamic rulings concerning women are rooted in their welfare and the benefit that returns to them.

Allah SWT created human beings as men and women to complement and collaborate in fulfilling their shared responsibilities: to worship Allah and to act as His vicegerents (khalīfah) on Earth, each within their respective roles and capacities. Women play a vital role in society, contributing meaningfully both within the home and in the broader public sphere. This study thus explores how the Qur'an supports gender equity and informs legal reforms in Muslim-majority societies, especially in matters of family law.

A prime example offered in the Qur'an is Maryam (Mary), may Allah be pleased with her, whose name appears explicitly 32 times and who is the only woman to have a chapter named after

her. She stands as a universal role model for women, praised for her noble lineage and her exemplary obedience. Allah SWT made her a sign (āyah) and a testimony to His supreme creative power, as He created Prophet Isa (Jesus, peace be upon him) through her just as He created Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) without a father.

This study contributes to the field of thematic exegesis (tafsīr mauḍūʿī) by re-reading Qurʾanic texts on women through a contemporary, gender-sensitive lens. It avoids reductionist, atomistic, and sequential interpretations and instead employs a synoptic and integrative methodology that links verses across surahs, particularly regarding women's roles in marriage, leadership, legal rights, spiritual capacity, and social engagement. The study uncovers the ethical coherence embedded within the Qurʾanic discourse on women, offering a corrective to fragmented readings that often render the verses as disconnected directives.

In addition, this study incorporates feminist hermeneutics and the objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharīʿah) into its thematic analysis, thereby providing critical perspectives grounded in justice, equity, and historical awareness. It reinterprets contentious verses such as QS An-Nisā' (4):34, often cited to justify male authority, and QS Al-Baqarah (2):282, which has been read to indicate female legal inferiority. These verses are reclaimed within a broader Qurʾanic vision rooted in mutuality, compassion, and moral equivalence.

With its interdisciplinary and thematic orientation, this research enhances the methodological rigor of tafsīr mauḍūʿī while situating the Qurʾan as a living document engaged in contemporary conversations on gender, ethics, and reform within Muslim communities. The findings have important implications for Islamic education and daʿwah, especially in the Indonesian context. By integrating gender-sensitive tafsir into madrasah curricula, the study informs the development of equitable gender policies and provides theological grounds to revise discriminatory provisions in family law, such as restrictions on women's mobility, leadership, and decision-making.

This reinterpretation also equips religious educators and preachers with tools to present Islam as a religion that upholds gender justice, moral agency, and compassion. It challenges patriarchal readings that alienate women and younger generations, particularly in pluralistic societies where Islam is often scrutinized for its stance on women's rights. From a public policy perspective, especially in Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia, gender-aware exegesis grounded in the Qurʾan supports reforms in family law, inheritance, education, and political participation, not through imported legal systems, but via an indigenous, faith-based paradigm more likely to gain societal acceptance.

Ultimately, this study offers a significant scholarly contribution by advancing a gender-conscious, ethically rooted reinterpretation of Qurʾanic verses concerning women. It emphasizes underexamined concepts and narratives by applying a holistic approach that combines feminist hermeneutics, maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, and historical contextualization, moving beyond traditional frameworks that isolate verses or rely exclusively on classical jurisprudence. Through this approach, it reexamines terms like *qawwāmūn* (QS An-Nisā' 4:34), often used to justify gender hierarchies, and instead interprets them through the lenses of reciprocity, justice, and ethics. It also highlights marginalized female figures in the Qurʾan, such as the moral courage of the wife of Pharaoh (QS At-Tahrim 66:11) and the spiritual autonomy of Maryam (QS Āli 'Imrān 3:33-50), portraying women as active moral agents, not passive subjects.

Furthermore, this study critically engages with androcentric tendencies in traditional tafsir by analyzing structural silences and narrative placements that shape the depiction of women. It transcends legalistic confines to examine the ethical and spiritual vision of gender justice within the Qurʾanic framework. In doing so, it opens new interpretive horizons for tafsīr mauḍūʿī, bringing to light neglected themes and voices, and positioning Islamic thought to contribute meaningfully to

contemporary discourse on women's rights and ethical reform.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The scope of this study is intentionally delimited to ensure analytical depth and methodological coherence within a qualitative thematic framework. This research focuses on selected Qur'anic verses to examine the position and value of women in Islam, emphasizing the religion's principle of equal dignity and respect for both men and women. Verses were chosen based on their relevance to key issues affecting women's spiritual and social roles, such as marriage, leadership, inheritance, and moral agency, while verses that refer to women only peripherally or metaphorically were excluded. This selection was necessary to maintain thematic focus and avoid diluting the analysis.

The study does not compare interpretations across sectarian traditions (e.g., Sunni vs. Shi'i exegesis) or between religious scriptures, as such comparisons would require different theoretical frameworks and would fall outside the intended epistemic scope. The exclusion of classical comparative tafsir reflects the study's aim to prioritize contemporary interpretations rooted in feminist hermeneutics and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, rather than re-examining well-established legal discourses.

As a literature-based study employing qualitative thematic analysis, this research is limited by its methodology. While it facilitates close textual engagement and ethical reinterpretation, it does not incorporate empirical inquiry (e.g., ethnographic interviews or narratives of Muslim women), which could have enriched the analysis with lived socio-cultural perspectives. Likewise, the absence of corpus-based linguistic analysis restricts exploration of quantitative trends in Qur'anic terminology or semantic patterns related to women.

Importantly, this study does not aim to resolve all interpretive debates but rather to illuminate key tensions, ethical ambiguities, and overlooked narratives within selected verses. These scope limitations are intentional, designed to ensure clarity of purpose, manageable data, and methodological rigor in engaging a sensitive and complex area of Qur'anic discourse.

Future research is encouraged to explore other thematic areas using the method of *tafsīr mauḍū'ī* (thematic interpretation of the Qur'an). Incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives in Qur'anic studies could further deepen analysis and contribute meaningfully to the evolving field of Islamic scholarship.

REFERENCES

- Ábduh, M. (1909). *Al-Islām wa ar-Raddu 'alā Muntaqidihī*. Kairo: Matba'ah al-Sa'ādah.
- Ábduh, M. (1927). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm*. Kairo: Maktabah al-Manār.
- Ábduh, M. (1988). *Al-Islām wa an-Naṣrāniyyah ma'a al-'Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah*. Kairo: Dār al-Ḥadāthah.
- Ábdul Qōdir Ar-Rōzī, M. bin A. B. (n.d.). *Mukhtār aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*. Beirut: Maktabah Lubnān.
- Ábīdāt, Z., Ábdul Haq, K., & Ádas, A. (2015). *Al-Baḥṣ al-'Ilmī*. Oman: Dār al-Fikr.
- Al-Áqōd, Á. M. (2003). *Al-Mar'ah fī al-Qur'ān*. Kairo: Nahḍah Miṣr.
- Al-Baghawī, A.-H. bin M. (1997). *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār Ṭayyibah.
- Al-Bukhārī, A. A. M. (2002). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Kaṣīr.
- Al-Khaṭṭābī, ar-Rummānī, & al-Jurjānī. (2012). *Ṭhalās Rasā'il fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān*. Kairo: Dār al-Minhāj.
- Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. (n.d.).
- Al-Qurṭubī, M. bin A. (1964). *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah.
- Amīn, A. (2003). *Fajr al-Islām*. Kairo: Maktabah al-Ussrah.
- As-Sa'dī, 'Á. (2000). *Taysīr al-Karīm ar-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān*. Kairo: Mu'assasah ar-

Risālah.

- As-Sajastānī, A. D. S. (1996). *Sunan*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah.
- Asy-Syāl, S. S. (2011). *Al-Mar’ah fī al-Qur’ān*. Uni Emirat Arab: Maktabah Dār al-Bashīr.
- Asy-Syārawī, M. M. (1991). *Tafsīr*. Kairo: Mu’assasah Akhbār al-Yaum.
- Asy-Syārawī, M. M. (n.d.-a). *Al-Mar’ah fī al-Qur’ān*. Kairo: Mu’assasah Akhbār al-Yaum.
- Asy-Syārawī, M. M. (n.d.-b). *Fiqh al-Mar’ah al-Muslimah*. Kairo: Maktabah at-Taufiqiyyah.
- At-Tirmizī, A. I. M. (2014). *Al-Jāmi’ al-Kabīr*. Kairo: Dār at-Ta’šīl.
- Aṭ-Ṭabarī, M. bin J. (2001). *Jāmi’ al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy al-Qur’ān*. Kairo: Dār Hijr.
- Badrudīn, A. M. M. (2001). *‘Umdah al-Qārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah.
- Barlas, A. (2003). “Believing Women” in Islam: Unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur’an. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Begum, M. S. I., Ismail, I., Yaakob, Z., Razick, A. S., & Abdullah, M. M. A. (2024). Gender equity in Muslim family law: Modern and contemporary ‘Ulamā’s view. *Al-Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 34(2), 221–256. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2024.34.2.20773>
- Chaerowati, D. L., Umar, T. M., & Drajat, M. S. (2021). The practice of ‘Aisyiyah women’s community in communicating during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Islamic Studies*, 1(2), 28–39. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeis.v1i2.711>
- Edi Wibowo, S., & Fathiyaturrahman. (2025). Women and the transmission of the Quran: Marginalization, legal strategies, and *maqāsid al-sharī‘ah*-based resolution. *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v25i1.37944>
- Hamisu, S., & Kumo, A. A. (2024). Upliftment of spirituality and its impacts on the life of Muslim. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 41–53. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeis.v4i1.2386>
- Hanbal, A. bin M. (1995). *Al-Musnad*. Kairo: Dār Al-Hadīś.
- Hannan, N., Huda, M. S., Firdaus, M. A., Afabih, A., & Musthofa, Y. (2024). Between adherence to *madhhab* and adaptation to context: *Fatwās* on female leadership in Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated Islamic higher education institutions. *Journal of Islamic Law*, 5(2), 269–287. <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i2.2725>
- Hidayati, T. W., Susilawati, U., & Sriani, E. (2022). Dynamics of family *fiqh*: The multiple roles of women in realizing family resilience. *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan*, 22(2), 219–238. <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJTIHAD.V22I2.219-238>
- Ibnu Hajar Āsqolānī, A. bin Ā. (2005). *Fathu al-Bārī*. Riyadh: Dār Toyibah.
- Ibnu Kaśir, A. A.-F. I. (1999). *Tafsīr al-Qur’an al-‘Aẓīm*. Beirut: Dār Toyibah.
- Ibnu Khaldūn, Ā. (2010). *Muqaddimah*. Kairo: Dār Al-Fajr.
- Ibnu Qutaibah, Ā. bin M. (2008). *Uyūn al-Akhhbār*. Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islamī.
- Ibrahīm, Ā. W. (1986). *Kitābat al-Baḥṭh al-‘Ilmī*. Jeddah: Dār Asy-Syurūq.
- Khattab, M. (Trans.). (n.d.). *The clear Quran: A thematic English translation*. <https://www.theclearquran.com>
- Mahmud. (2011). *Metode penelitian pendidikan*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.
- Muqtada, M. R., Istianah, Mustapha, A. S. bin, & Mufid, A. (2024). Fiqh contestation on women’s public leadership in Indonesia and Malaysia: Reproducing Qur’anic and Hadith interpretations. *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial*, 19(1), 221–248. <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i1.13163>
- Muslim, A. A.-ḥasan. (2015). *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Riyadh: Dār Al-Hadoroh.
- Nazir, M. (2003). *Metode penelitian*. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2008). *Metodologi penelitian pendidikan*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Suwahyu, I. (2022). Telaah terhadap konsep pembaharuan pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh. *Jurnal Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah*, 7(1).

- Syahza, A. (2021). *Metodologi penelitian* (Revisi). Pekanbaru: UR Press.
- Uyuni, B., Arief, K. M., & Adnan, M. (2023). Contribution of woman *ulama* in the digital era. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Islamic Studies*, 3(1), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeis.v3i1.1239>
- Wadud, A. (1999). *Qur'an and woman: Rereading the sacred text from a woman's perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zed, M. (2008). *Metode penelitian kepustakaan*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.