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GENDER EQUALITY IN QUR'AN SURAH AL-NISĀ' (4):34: A STUDY OF TAFSIR AL-MUNIR

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Abstract: This study examines the concept of gender in the perspective of the Qur'an, with a focus on QS. An-Nisā' verse 34 and an analysis of Wahbah al-Zuhaili's interpretation in *Tafsīr al-Munīr*. The research employs a qualitative method through library research with an adabi ijtima'i exegetical approach, drawing from the Qur'an, classical tafsir works, and scholarly literature on gender studies. The findings indicate that the Qur'an acknowledges the differences between men and women; however, these differences are not hierarchical or discriminatory in nature, but are intended to establish balance and social harmony. Verses such as QS. Ar-Rūm: 21, QS. An-Naḥl: 97, QS. Al-Baqarah: 30, and QS. Al-Mu'min: 40 affirm human equality before God as servants and vicegerents who share equal opportunities in righteous deeds and achievements. In QS. An-Nisā' verse 34, the concept of *qiwāmah* is understood as a responsibility assigned to men within the family, related to financial maintenance and protection, rather than a form of absolute superiority. Wahbah al-Zuhaili emphasizes that although there is a distribution of roles within the family structure, both men and women possess balanced rights and obligations according to their respective capacities. Thus, gender equality in Islam is understood as a proportional distribution of roles aimed at achieving justice, harmony, and values consistent with the Qur'an.

Keywords: gender, Qur'an, QS. An-Nisā' 34, qiwāmah, Wahbah al-Zuhaili, adabi ijtima'i interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

Gender has long been an important topic of study examined from diverse perspectives, across various academic disciplines, and through different analytical approaches.[1] Generally, the Qur'an recognizes distinctions between men and women, yet such distinctions should not be understood as a form of discrimination that privileges one group at the expense of the other.[2] Instead, such differences reflect complementary roles and responsibilities within human existence. Gender-related issues emerge when societies interpret biological distinctions between men and women as the foundation for establishing inflexible social norms. For example, women's biological capacity for childbirth is frequently invoked to confine their roles

[1] Al-Imam Abu Fida Isma'il Ibnu Katsir Ad-Dymasyqi, *Lubaabut Tafsiir Min Ibni Katsiir Jilid 2 Terj. M. Abdul Ghoffar, Pentahqiq: Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Abdurrahman Bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh*, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, 2001.

[2] Lubis Sri Sari Bulan, "Konsep Gender Menurut Nasaruddin Umar Dalam Buku Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Journal UINSUKA*, 2021.

to the domestic domain, whereas men are perceived as being more suited to activities within the public sphere.[3] Indeed, both men and women possess equal opportunities to engage in and contribute to both domestic and public domains.

Within this context, one of the Qur'anic verses that has consistently been at the center of scholarly debate is QS. An-Nisā' (4):34[4], Especially concerning the understanding of men as leaders of women, this verse has frequently been interpreted in a literal manner, potentially fostering the perception that Islam assigns women a subordinate status. Therefore, a comprehensive examination of the concepts of men and women in QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 is essential to prevent gender-biased interpretations and misinterpretations of the verse.[5] Against this background, examining gender from the perspective of QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 is crucial for fostering a balanced and contextual interpretation of the Qur'anic discourse on gender relations Accordingly, QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 becomes an important subject of study for understanding how the Qur'an views the relationship between men and women

This study examines gender from the perspective of QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 with the objective of providing a more holistic understanding of the concept of gender relations in Islam. From a theoretical standpoint, this research is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the areas of Qur'anic interpretation and gender studies. From a practical perspective, it is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a reference for the public in understanding and implementing a more equitable conception of gender in social life. Over the past two decades, gender has remained a prominent issue of discussion, generating various related discourses, including gender equality and feminism.[6]

In Indonesia, gender discourse has become an increasingly significant topic, especially in relation to the interpretation of religious texts. As a source of guidance for humanity, the Qur'an also addresses issues related to gender, one example being QS. An-Nisā' (4):34. Some exegetes have interpreted the terms *al-rijāl* and *an-nisā'* in this verse through the lens of specific social characteristics, thereby giving rise to various viewpoints concerning the leadership dynamics between men and women.

A number of previous studies have explored this issue through different approaches. Hunawa examined the status of husbands and wives in QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 and concluded that men's authority as leaders should not be employed as a justification for arbitrary behavior toward women. Jaya, drawing upon Ibn 'Āshūr's interpretation, asserted that the concept of male leadership in this verse is predominantly confined to the familial context. In contrast, Harsya highlighted that the legitimacy of male leadership must be exercised with responsibility and grounded in the principles of justice and equitable leadership practices.

Drawing upon these previous studies, it may be inferred that QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 should not be understood solely through a literal interpretation. Instead, a contextual approach is necessary to ensure that the principles of justice and responsibility in Islam are comprehended in a more balanced and proportionate way.[7]

[3] Nur Rofiah, "Nalar Kritis Muslimah: Refeleksi Atas Keperempuan, Kemanusiaan Dan Keislaman," *Afkaruna.Id,* 2020.

[4] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), QS. An-Nisā'/4:34.

[5] Zaitunah Subhan, "Tafsir Kebencian: Studi Bias Gender Dalam Tafsir Qur'an," *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena Agama*, 2016.

[6] Devi Rizki Apriliani et al., "Gender Dalam Perspektif QS. An-Nisa Ayat 34," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 3 (2021): 188–98, https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15129.

[7] Apriliani et al.

Studies on gender relations in QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 reveal a diversity of approaches to understanding the relationship between men and women in both family and societal contexts. Articles adopting different perspectives have offered varying interpretations of the concepts of leadership and gender relations in Islam.

Studies employing Muhammad Arkoun's critical hermeneutical approach assert that classical interpretations of this verse tend to be influenced by historical and ideological constructions that may give rise to hierarchical relationships. Consequently, a more contextual and egalitarian reinterpretation is required. Comparative research between Ibn 'Āshūr and Wahbah al-Zuhaili reveals a shared view that men function as leaders within the family in terms of responsibility. However, Ibn 'Āshūr tends to adopt a more patriarchal perspective, whereas al-Zuhaili presents a more moderate interpretation oriented toward gender justice. Other studies have also emphasized that QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 depicts a division of roles between men and women within the family based on complementary functions, although these roles are not entirely interchangeable. Meanwhile, studies of Wahbah al-Zuhaili's *Tafsīr al-Munīr* in the context of social ethics indicate that his interpretation extends beyond gender relations to encompass broader social values, including compassion, the maintenance of kinship ties, peace, and social morality. Overall, these four studies demonstrate that the discourse on gender in QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 exists within a diverse spectrum of interpretations. Nevertheless, they ultimately converge on the primary objective of Islam: to realize justice, balance, and harmony in family and social life.

Nevertheless, these four studies still exhibit certain limitations, particularly in terms of integrating the gender analysis of QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 with a more comprehensive *adabī ijtimā'ī* interpretive approach that incorporates linguistic, social, and humanitarian dimensions within the perspective of Wahbah al-Zuhaili. Therefore, this study is both significant and worthy of investigation, as it seeks to address this gap by providing a more holistic, contextual, and systematic analysis of the concept of gender in QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 based on *Tafsīr al-Munīr*. It is expected that this research will enrich Islamic scholarly discourse on gender relations by offering a perspective that is more equitable and relevant to contemporary realities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

This research adopts a qualitative approach utilizing a library research method. The study centers on the analysis of QS. An-Nisā' (4):34 by drawing upon a wide range of written sources, such as the Qur'an, classical and contemporary *tafsīr* works, books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other scholarly literature relevant to gender discourse.[8] The approach employed in this study is the *adabi ijtima'i* interpretation approach, which emphasizes linguistic analysis, social dimensions, and the relationship between the meanings of Qur'anic verses and the realities of societal life. Through this approach, the study aims to examine the concept of gender in QS. An-Nisā' verse 34 contextually by exploring the moral, social, and communal values embedded within the verse. The primary data sources of this research consist of the Qur'an and relevant classical and contemporary tafsir works, while the secondary data are derived from various scholarly publications discussing gender, Qur'anic interpretation, and social relations between men

[8] J Lexy Moleong, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif J Lexy Moleong," *Jurnal Ilmiah*, 2020.

and women.[9] Data were collected through documentation techniques by identifying, recording, and classifying relevant references. The collected data were then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method to obtain a systematic, critical, and comprehensive understanding of the concept of gender from the perspective of the Qur'an.[10]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Concept of Gender

Gender is fundamentally a social construct that explains the differences in roles, functions, responsibilities, and behavioral patterns between men and women, which are shaped by the social and cultural values prevailing within society. Therefore, gender is not determined solely by biological factors.[11]

Thus, the concept of gender is not merely understood as a natural distinction based on biological sex, but also as a socio-cultural framework used to comprehend the positions, roles, and relationships of men and women within social life. From the perspective of Nasaruddin Umar, the concept of gender in the Qur'an emphasizes the existence of

the principle of fundamental equality between men and women. Both hold the same status as servants of Allah, share equal responsibilities as *khalifah* (vicegerents) on earth, receive the same primordial covenant, and were created as equal partners from the very beginning in Paradise. Therefore, both men and women have equal opportunities to excel and attain honor in the sight of Allah.[12]

Misunderstandings in distinguishing between gender and *sex* still frequently occur, even among Qur'anic exegetes. Nasaruddin Umar emphasizes that *sex* refers to the biological differences between men and women, whereas gender relates to differences in roles, functions, and identities shaped by social and cultural constructions. A lack of clarity in understanding this distinction can lead to social inequalities, particularly toward women, when certain social roles are perceived as immutable biological destinies. In fact, women possess equal rights and opportunities to participate in the public sphere just as men do. Based on this perspective, Nasaruddin Umar critically examines the Qur'anic view of gender relations to investigate whether gender bias truly originates from the sacred text itself or rather from the social and cultural constructions that have developed within society.[13]

Differences between men and women are indeed a biological reality that cannot be denied, particularly in terms of anatomy and reproductive functions. However, these biological differences often evolve into cultural constructions that shape specific

[9] Rani, "EPISTEMOLOGI PENAFSIRAN NASARUDDIN UMAR (STUDI BUKU ARGUMEN KESETARAAN GENDER PERSPEKTIF AL-QUR'AN)," *At-Tahfidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.53649/at-tahfidz.v3i01.362.

[10] Sugiyono, "Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan R&D , (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015), 407 1," *Metode Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan R&D*, 2015.

[11] Wardatul Karomah and Tri Wahyu Hidayati, "Menafsir Ulang Relasi Gender Dalam Qs. An-Nisa'(4): 34 Aplikasi Pendekatan Hermeneutika Kritik Muhammad Arkoun," *Equality Journal of Gender Child and Humanity* 3, no. 1 (2025): 66–85, https://doi.org/10.58518/equality.

[12] Sri Sari Bulan, "Konsep Gender Menurut Nasaruddin Umar Dalam Buku Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Al-Qur'an."

[13] Rani, "EPISTEMOLOGI PENAFSIRAN NASARUDDIN UMAR (STUDI BUKU ARGUMEN KESETARAAN GENDER PERSPEKTIF AL-QUR'AN)."

social role divisions. In this regard, the Qur'an provides space for human beings to exercise reason, wisdom, and the values of justice in determining the distribution of gender roles in a proportional manner. This means that individuals have the freedom to develop patterns of gender relations that are more equitable and humane. The Qur'an acknowledges the existence of differences between men and women as a form of *distinction*, but not *discrimination*. Such differences are not intended to elevate one party above the other or to disadvantage either side.

Rather, these differences are intended to foster harmonious, balanced, and compassionate relationships as part of the fundamental mission of Islamic teachings.[14]

A. The Context of Gender Equality in the Qur'an

In general, the Qur'an acknowledges the existence of *distinctions* between men and women. However, these differences are not intended to grant advantages to one party while marginalizing the other. Rather, they exist as complementary provisions that support the Qur'anic vision of establishing a harmonious, balanced, secure, and peaceful life, enriched with values of goodness and mutual well-being.[15]

Thus, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that the Qur'an also embodies principles of gender equality, which are reflected in the following aspects.

1. The Nature of the Creation of Men and Women

The creation of men and women has been discussed extensively in various verses of the Qur'an.[16]. One of these explanations is found in QS. *Ar-Rūm* verse 21.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

Translation:

"And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for people who reflect."[17]

In a number of verses discussing the creation of humankind, the Qur'an emphasizes that Allah created human beings in pairs, namely men and women. Allah also explains that spouses were created from the same kind so that they may love one another, find tranquility in each other, and build a harmonious life together. This explanation indicates that the relationship between men and women is reciprocal and complementary, without implying the superiority of one party over the other. In line with this understanding, Wahbah al-Zuhaili, in his tafsir, explains that women were created from the same kind as men so that affection, closeness, and harmony could develop between them. This similarity serves as an important factor in fostering compatibility, love, and intimate relationships, whereas excessive

[14] Nasarudin umar, "Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender Perspektif Al-Qur'an.*, 2001.

[15] Sakdiah, "ARGUMEN KESETARAAN JENDER PERSPEKTIF AL-QUR'AN KARYA PROF. DR. NASARUDDIN UMAR, MA," *TAKAMMUL:Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam Serta Perlindungan Anak*, 2021.

[16] Imron Rosyidi and Masrifatul Jannah, "Relasi Suami Dan Istri Dalam Qs . Al- Nisa ' Ayat 34," *Values: Jurnal Kajian Islam Multidisiplin* 2, no. 1 (2025): 53–67, https://values.hellowpustaka.id.

[17] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), QS. Ar-Rūm/30:21.

differences may give rise to incompatibility.[18]

1. The Position and Equality of Men and Women

Several verses in the Qur'an explain the position and principles of equality between men and women. One of these is found in QS. *An-Naḥl* verse 97.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟
يَعْمَلُونَ

Terjemahnya

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer, We will surely grant them a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of what they used to do."[19]

According to Ibn Kathir, this verse represents Allah's promise to everyone who performs righteous deeds, namely those who follow the guidance of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whether male or female, as long as they believe in Allah and His Messenger. They will receive a greater reward in the Hereafter for all the good deeds they have performed. The phrase "a good life" mentioned in the verse encompasses tranquility, happiness, and peace of mind in its various forms. This verse emphasizes that Allah commands all human beings, without distinction between.

men and women, to uphold Islamic values through faith, piety, and righteous deeds. Every action, whether good or bad, will receive a corresponding recompense in the future. Therefore, this verse demonstrates that the status of human beings before Allah, both men and women, is fundamentally equal, and that the only criterion that distinguishes them is their level of piety (*taqwā*).[20]

1. Men and Women as Servants of Allah

Several verses in the Qur'an affirm that both men and women share the same status as servants of Allah and bear a collective responsibility as *khalifah* (vicegerents) on earth. One of the verses that explains this principle is found in QS. *Al-Baqarah* verse 30.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ
قَالُوا۟ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Translation:

"(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I am going to place a vicegerent (*khalifah*) on the earth.' They said, 'Will You place therein one who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify Your name?' He said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know.[21]

This affirms that men and women, as *khalifah* (vicegerents) on earth, share equal duties and responsibilities in preserving, managing, and sustaining life in this world.

1. Men and Women Have Equal Potential to Achieve Excellence

The Qur'an explains that both men and women have equal opportunities to achieve excellence and receive rewards for their efforts. One of the verses that emphasizes

[18] Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir (Dalam Akidah, Syari'ah, Dan Manhaj)*, *Gema Insani*, 2013.

[19] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), QS. An-Naḥl/16:97.

[20] Ad-Dymasyqi, *Lubaabut Tafsiir Min Ibni Katsiir Jilid 2 Terj. M. Abdul Ghoffar, Pentahqiq: Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Abdurrahman Bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh*.

[21] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), QS. Al-Baqarah/2:30.

this principle is found in QS. *Al-Mu'min* verse 40.

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَىٰٓ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Translation:

"Whoever commits an evil deed will not be recompensed except with its equivalent. But whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer, such people will enter Paradise, where they will be provided for without measure.[22]

This indicates that both men and women possess equal potential, abilities, and opportunities to engage in various endeavors and to attain goodness and excellence.[23]

A. Biography of Wahbah al-Zuhaili

Wahbah al-Zuhaili is known as a prominent Islamic scholar (*'ālim 'allāmah*) with extensive mastery across various fields of knowledge (*mutafannin*). He is one of the leading contemporary jurists (*fuqahā'*) in the Islamic world, whose jurisprudential thought has been widely disseminated through his works and has become a reference in many Muslim countries. Wahbah al-Zuhaili was born in the village of Dir' Atiyah, Damascus, Syria, in 1351 H/1932 CE. His full name is Wahbah ibn Shaykh Mustafa al-Zuhaili. He came from a simple yet religious family; his father, Shaykh H. Mustafa al-Zuhaili, was a pious farmer who memorized the Qur'an, was diligent in worship, and frequently observed voluntary fasting. Meanwhile, his mother, Hajjah Fatimah bint Mustafa Sa'dah, also played an important role in shaping Wahbah al-Zuhaili's religious and educational environment from an early age.[24]

Wahbah al-Zuhaili grew up in an environment of Hanafi scholars, which contributed to shaping his intellectual orientation in Islamic jurisprudence. However, despite his affiliation with the Hanafi school, he was not fanatical toward his own madhhab. Instead, he maintained an open attitude and showed respect for the views of other legal schools. This moderate stance is clearly reflected in his interpretive approach, particularly when discussing legal verses, where he not only presents the perspective of the Hanafi school, but also considers and compares opinions from other schools in an objective and balanced manner.[25]

Wahbah al-Zuhaili began his early education by studying the Qur'an and attending elementary (ibtidaiyah) school in his hometown. He later completed his basic education in Damascus in 1946 CE. After that, he pursued higher education in the field of Sharia and graduated in 1952 CE. His strong enthusiasm for learning encouraged him to continuously deepen his knowledge. When he continued his studies in Cairo, Egypt, he simultaneously enrolled in several programs, namely at the Faculty of Arabic Language at Al-Azhar University and the Faculty of Law at 'Ain Shams University.[26] After obtaining his doctoral degree, Wahbah al-Zuhaili began his academic career as a lecturer at the Faculty of Sharia, University of

[22]ementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), QS. Ghafir (Al-Mu'min)/40:40.

[23] Ad-Dymasyqi, *Lubaabut Tafsiir Min Ibni Katsiir Jilid 2 Terj. M. Abdul Ghoffar, Pentahqiq: Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Abdurrahman Bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh*.

[24] Abu Samsudin, "Wawasan Al-Qur'an Tentang Ulu Albab," *Skripsi, Program Sarjana, UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya*, 2016.

[25] Samsudin.

[26] Hhobib Abdul Aziz, "IMPLIKASI NILAI-NILAI IBADAH PUASA TERHADAP PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER (Studi Tentang Puasa Dalam Kitab Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu Karya Prof. Dr. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili)," *Skripsi Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Walisongo*, 2015.

Damascus in 1963. His dedication and scholarly capacity continued to develop until he was appointed as an assistant professor in 1969, and later promoted to full professor in 1975. As a distinguished academic, he was also trusted as a visiting lecturer at various universities across the Arab world, including the Faculty of Sharia and Law and the Postgraduate Faculty of Arts at the University of Benghazi in Libya. In addition, he taught at the University of Khartoum, Omdurman Islamic University, and the African International University in Sudan. Alongside his contributions to education, Wahbah al-Zuhaili was widely recognized for his prolific writing. He produced a wide range of scholarly works, including articles, papers, and multi-volume books. Badi‘ al-Sayyid al-Lahham, in his biography titled *Wahbah al-Zuhaili al-‘Alim, al-Faqih, al-Mufassir*, records that the number of Wahbah al-Zuhaili's written works reached approximately 199 titles, excluding numerous articles published in various academic journals. [27]

Wahbah al-Zuhaili's great attention to various fields of knowledge not only made him a diligent seeker of knowledge but also positioned him as an important reference figure for subsequent generations. The depth of his knowledge and the breadth of his intellectual insight produced many students who later also contributed to

the field of Islamic scholarship. Among his students were Muhammad Faruq Hamdan, Muhammad Na‘im Yasin, ‘Abd al-Sattar Abu Ghuddah, ‘Abd al-Latif Farfur, Muhammad Abu Lail, as well as his own son, Muhammad Zuhaili. In addition to them, many other students and academics also studied under his guidance, both at the Faculty of Sharia and at various other higher education institutions.[28]

Wahbah al-Zuhaili is known as a highly productive scholar in the field of Islamic sciences, particularly through his extensive and diverse written works. In addition to actively producing academic articles, he also authored dozens of important books in the fields of usul al-fiqh, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), and contemporary Islamic studies. Among his monumental works are *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*, and *Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Manhaj*. *Tafsir al-Munir* is one of his greatest works, written over approximately 16 years, from 1975 to 1991, as a form of his dedication to connecting Muslims with the Qur'an in a scholarly, rational, and contextual manner. This work consists of 16 volumes and was compiled with the aim of making the Qur'an a guiding framework for life that is capable of addressing the problems of the Muslim community across different eras.[29]

In its systematic approach, *Tafsir al-Munir* integrates linguistic aspects, *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), *qirā'āt* (variant القراءات), tafsir, *balāghah* (rhetoric), fiqh rulings, and social realities. Wahbah al-Zuhaili employs a method that combines *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* and *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*, meaning he integrates authentic transmitted reports with rational analysis grounded in the principles of Islamic law. His exegetical style is characterized by an *adabī ijtimā‘ī* (literary-social) orientation with a strong fiqh dimension, so that it does not merely present linguistic and legal explanations but

[27] Aziz.

[28] Anwar Hafidzi and Norwahdah Rezky Amalia, "Adil Dalam Al-Qur'an : Kajian Tafsir Al-Munir Karya Wahbah Al-Zuhayli," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial*, 2015.

[29] Muhammad Shohib, "MENELUSURI ETIKA BERMASYARAKAT : ANALISIS PERSPEKTIF WAHBAH AL ZUHAILI DALAM KITAB AL-TAFSIR AL-MUNIR FI AL- Muhammad Shohib Universitas Kiai Abdullah Faqih Gresik Abstrak Salah Satunya Adalah Menjalin Hubungan Dengan Allah Dan Dengan Sesama Manusia . Keh," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 18, no. 4 (2024): 2859–80.

also remains relevant to the needs of modern society. The main strengths of this tafsir lie in its extensive references, systematic scholarly presentation, and its ability to integrate Qur'anic values with contemporary issues.

Although some scholars consider that his interpretation still relies considerably on earlier exegetical works.[30]

A. Interpretation of QS. Al-Nisā' Verse 34 from the Perspective of Wahbah al-Zuhaili

The background of the revelation of QS. An-Nisā' verse 34 is explained in a narration transmitted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Imam al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who stated that:

A woman came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and complained that her husband had struck her. The Prophet then said, "The man must be subjected to *qishash* (a retributive punishment equivalent to his action)." However, afterward Allah revealed QS. An-Nisā' verse 34.

This verse is reported to have been revealed in connection with the incident of Sa'd ibn al-Rabī' who struck his wife, Ḥabībah bint Zayd ibn Abī Hurayrah, because she was considered disobedient. Upon learning of this, Ḥabībah went to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to report her husband's action. At first, the Prophet ruled that Sa'd deserved *qiṣāṣ* for his act. However, he later instructed Ḥabībah to return and withdraw the demand for *qiṣāṣ* after the Angel Jibrīl informed him that Allah had revealed QS. An-Nisā' verse 34. The Prophet also explained that Allah's decree is superior and better than human desires.[31]

The term *al-rijāl* is the plural form of *rajul*, which generally means "men," although its usage does not automatically always carry this specific meaning in every context. Some exegetes understand the term *al-rijāl* in this verse as referring specifically to husbands. However, Muhammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, in his work *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, explains that in the Arabic language and in Qur'anic usage, the word *al-rijāl* does not specifically denote "husbands." This differs from the terms *an-nisā'* or *imra'ah*, which are more specifically used to refer to wives. Therefore, Ibn 'Āshūr holds that the mention of *al-rijāl* and *an-nisā'* in this verse functions as an introductory expression for the subsequent explanation, namely regarding the characteristics and conduct of righteous wives.[32]

The term *qawwamūn* is the plural form of *qawwām*, which refers to someone who is fully committed to managing a matter so that it can be carried out optimally. This term can be understood as a person who is responsible, caretaker, protector, or leader. In the family context, *qawwamūn* indicates the role of men as those responsible for managing, protecting, and leading the household.

Furthermore, the phrase *bimā faḍḍalallāhu ba'ḍahum 'alā ba'ḍ* is understood as referring to certain advantages granted by Allah to men over women in specific aspects, while the word *anfaqu* indicates the obligation of men to spend their wealth as part of their family

[30] Mahyudin Daud and Ahmad Najib Abdullah, "Sumbangan Wahbah Al-Zuḥaylī Dalam Ilmu Tafsir Al-Quran: Tinjauan Terhadap Karya Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fī Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Sharī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj," *Journal of Usuluddin*, 2015, https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol42no1.2.

[31] Apriliani et al., "Gender Dalam Perspektif QS. An-Nisa Ayat 34."

[32] Apriliani et al.

responsibility. The term *qānitāt* refers to the attitude of obedient wives, while *ḥāfiẓāt lil-ghaib* means the ability to safeguard one's dignity, property, and family in the absence of the husband.

Furthermore, the term *nusyūz* describes a wife's act of disobedience toward her household responsibilities, which is addressed through a gradual process of advice, separation of beds, and, if necessary, a firm measure that is not intended to cause harm (*waḍribūhunna*). Nevertheless, all these steps remain bound by the principles of justice and the prohibition of injustice. From this explanation, it can be understood that the leadership of men within the family is based on responsibility, as well as the obligation to provide financial support and protection for the family, including the obligation of *mahr* for the wife. However, the Qur'an still emphasizes that men and women have balanced rights and obligations, although men are assigned greater responsibility in family management. A righteous wife is expected to safeguard the honor and trust of the family, while a wife who exhibits *nusyūz* needs to be guided back toward fulfilling her role harmoniously.[33]

Looking back at the historical conditions before the advent of Islam, Arab society is known to have treated women very unjustly, where women were considered inferior and even regarded as a disgrace to the family.

Not only in the Arabian Peninsula, historical records also show that the Romans in Europe had similar treatment, as women did not obtain a proper position in law, family, or social life. In addition, Yusuf Abdullah Daghfag explains that about two centuries before Islam, French society even questioned the existence of women, asking whether they were human beings, devils, or animals, because at that time women truly had no rights, including the right to speak.[34]

The concept of gender emerged from the dissatisfaction of some women who felt that their rights were largely dominated by men, which then led to demands for equality in various aspects of life.[35] This later developed into the feminist movement during the Renaissance period, pioneered by figures such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Marquis de Condorcet, who advocated for the abolition of male dominance in social, political, and educational life.[36] In the view of some Western perspectives, Islam is often considered unfavorable to women due to fiqh regulations that are seen as limiting women's roles, whereas Islam in essence honors women and regulates gender relations in a just and balanced manner.

QS. An-Nisā' verse 34 explains the division of roles between men and women within family life, where men function as leaders responsible for financial provision and protection, while women play a role in managing the household and maintaining family harmony. Differences in psychological characteristics—men tending to be more assertive and women

[33] Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir*, h. 91.

[34] Zainal Abidin, "Kesetaraan Gender Dan Emansipasi Perempuan Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 2015.

[35] H Puspitawati, *Gender Dan Keluarga: Konsep Dan Realita Di Indonesia*, *PT IPB Press*, 2012, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033583501003705.

[36] Zulfahani Hasyim, "PEREMPUAN DAN FEMINISME DALAM PERSPEKTIF ISLAM," *Muwazah*, 2013, https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v4i1.150.

generally more gentle—are often used as a basis for this role distribution, although such traits are not absolute. In Islam, gender equality does not mean making all roles of men and women identical, but rather placing them proportionally according to their respective functions. Therefore, both men and women complement each other in building a harmonious family life without negating one another's roles.

CONCLUSION

The concept of gender in the Qur'an is not understood as an absolute equalization between men and women, but rather as a fair, proportional, and complementary division of roles. The Qur'an acknowledges the existence of distinctions between the two; however, these differences are not discriminatory in nature, but are intended to realize a harmonious and just life. This is reflected in QS. Ar-Rūm: 21, QS. An-Naḥl: 97, QS. Al-Baqarah: 30, and QS. Al-Mu'min: 40, which affirm the equal status of men and women as servants of Allah and vicegerents on earth, as well as their equal opportunity to believe, perform righteous deeds, and achieve excellence. In QS. An-Nisā' verse 34, the concept of *qiwāmah* is understood as the responsibility of men within the family based on their obligations of financial support and protection, rather than as a form of superiority. As explained by Wahbah al-Zuhaili, although there are differences in roles, the rights and responsibilities of both men and women remain balanced in accordance with their respective functions. Thus, gender equality in Islam means placing men and women proportionally according to their respective responsibilities in order to create a just, harmonious relationship aligned with the values of the Qur'an.

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