



The Concept of the Ideal Husband and Wife in the Perspective of the Quran: A Comparative Review of the Tafsir of the Quran Al-Azhim and Tafsir Al-Mishbah

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Abstract

This study examines the concept of the ideal husband and wife in the Quranic perspective through a comparative approach to two major exegetical works, namely Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azhim by Ibn Kathir and Tafsir Al-Mishbah by Muhammad Quraish Shihab. The study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical-comparative approach and library research. The primary data sources are the two tafsir texts, while secondary sources include relevant scientific literature. The findings reveal that the Quranic concept of the ideal married couple is built upon three main dimensions. First, the moral-spiritual aspect, which encompasses marital commitment based on mitsaqan ghalizhan, guarding one's gaze, and upholding honesty and justice. Second, the relational-psychological aspect, which includes the principle of mutual complementarity based on the libas metaphor, kind treatment through muasharah bil maruf, and the prohibition of demeaning one's partner. Third, the partnership and family governance aspect, encompassing leadership responsibility based on the qawwam concept, equality of dignity, deliberation (shura), and mutual cooperation. Both exegetes converge in their orientation toward building a harmonious family, while their differences lie in methodological approach, with Ibn Kathir tending toward normative-textual interpretation and Quraish Shihab toward contextual-humanistic interpretation. These findings suggest that the integration of both interpretive approaches can serve as a comprehensive solution to the family challenges facing Muslim communities in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Ideal Husband and Wife, Al-Quran, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, Comparative Exegesis

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INTRODUCTION

The institution of marriage in Islam is one of the main foundations of social life which has spiritual, legal, and social dimensions at the same time. The Qur'an emphasizes that marriage is not just a social contract, but a firm agreement (mitsaqan ghalizhan) that aims to bring peace of mind (sakinah), love (mawaddah), and affection (rahmah) between couples (Q.S. An-Nisa/4 verse 21; Q.S. Ar-Rum/30 verse 21). Within the framework of maqashid al-sharia, the family built on the guidelines of the Qur'an functions to protect religion, soul,

intellect, descendants, and property, so that the relationship between husband and wife becomes the foundation for the formation of a civilized society (Kamali, 2008).

Contemporary realities show that family institutions are facing increasingly complex pressures. Data shows a significant increase in divorce rates in various Muslim countries, including Indonesia. Shifts in social values, economic demands, and changes in gender roles have created new dynamics in domestic life (Soemardjan in Ihromi, 2004). Hochschild (in Fakhri, 2013) identifies the phenomenon of double shift experienced by modern women, where wives who work in the public sphere still have to bear disproportionate domestic responsibilities. This condition has the potential to cause emotional exhaustion, communication tension, and ultimately hinder the creation of an ideal husband and wife relationship.

In the midst of this complexity, the study of the Qur'anic interpretation of the concept of the ideal husband and wife has become increasingly relevant. Two works of tafsir that represent two different eras and methodological approaches are the Tafsir of the Quran Al-Azhim by Ibn Kathir (700-774 AH) and the Tafsir Al-Mishbah by Muhammad Quraish Shihab. Ibn Kathir represents the classical tradition of tafsir with a *bi al-matsur* approach that prioritizes narrations from the Quran, hadiths, companions, and *tabi'in* (al-Dzahabi, 2000). Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab uses a contextual approach that considers social, cultural, and developmental conditions (Gusmian, 2003). The comparison between the two is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the values of husband and wife relationships sourced from the Quran.

Previous studies on the relationship between husband and wife in the perspective of the Quran have been conducted by a number of researchers. Zahri Fuad (in a thematic interpretation study) stated that the equality of rights and obligations of husband and wife in the Quran means equal partnership between men and women (Fuad, 2021). Wiwin Nuraeni and Masruchin concluded that the implementation of husband obligations is always accompanied by the principle of *bi al-maruf*, which shows the necessity based on sincerity and responsibility (Nuraeni and Masruchin, 2020). Fatimah Zuhroh emphasized that there is no fundamental difference between husband and wife, but rather a functional relationship that complements each other (Zuhroh, 2021). Muslim Djuned and Asmaul Husna emphasized that the ideal family harmony lies in the moral values possessed by each family member (Djuned and Husna, 2019). This study distinguishes itself from these studies by conducting a systematic comparison between Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azhim and Tafsir Al-Mishbah comprehensively based on the three main dimensions of the concept of ideal husband and wife in the context of the modern era.

Based on the above description, this study aims to (1) analyze Ibn Kathir's and Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an related to the concept of ideal husband and wife, (2) identify the common points and differences between the two, and (3) formulate the relevance of these concepts in responding to the problems of the Muslim family in the contemporary era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. Moleong (2007) defines qualitative research as research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences holistically by means of descriptions in the form of words and language. This approach was chosen because the object of study is in the form of interpretive texts that require in-depth interpretation and comparative analysis between perspectives.

The primary data sources in this study are the two main interpretations. First, Ibn Kathir's Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azhim which is a representation of the bi al-matsur-oriented classical commentary. Second, Tafsir Al-Mishbah by Muhammad Quraish Shihab which is a representation of contemporary Indonesian interpretation with a contextual approach. Secondary data sources include books, scientific journals, articles, and other academic works relevant to the research theme. Data collection is carried out through a systematic search of Quranic verses related to marital relations, including aspects of commitment, leadership, equality, deliberation, good treatment, and prohibition of degrading acts.

Data analysis uses descriptive-analytical-comparative methods. First, each interpretive text is analyzed descriptively to understand the substance of the views of each mufasir. Second, the two views are systematically compared to identify the common ground (ijma) and differences (ikhtilaf) between the two. Third, the comparative findings were analyzed for relevance in the context of contemporary family problems. The verses studied specifically include An-Nisa/4 verses 19, 21, and 34; Al-Baqarah/2 verses 187 and 228; An-Nur/24 verses 30-31; Al-Hujurat/49 verse 11; and An-Nisa/4 verse 135.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a comparative analysis of the interpretation of Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab, the concept of ideal husband and wife in the Qur'an can be mapped into three main dimensions that are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The three dimensions are the moral-spiritual aspect, the relational-psychological aspect, and the partnership and family governance aspect.

Moral-Spiritual Aspects

The moral-spiritual dimension is the most fundamental foundation in the concept of the ideal husband and wife according to the Quran. This dimension includes three core values that reinforce each other, namely marriage commitment, maintenance of views, and honesty and justice.

Marriage Commitment (Mitsaqan Ghalizhan)

The concept of marriage commitment in the Qur'an is mentioned through the term mitsaqan ghalizhan in Q.S. An-Nisa/4 verse 21. Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab both view marriage as a strong and sacred bond that must be maintained by both parties. Both agreed that the phrase mitsaqan ghalizhan indicates the existence of a great covenant so that it demands seriousness, responsibility, and loyalty from both husband and wife.

The difference lies in the emphasis on meaning. Ibn Katsir highlighted the marriage contract as a sharia agreement that gives birth to concrete rights and obligations between husband and wife. His interpretation is based on the historical postulates of the companions and tabiin which affirm the legal-formal dimension of the marriage bond (al-Dzahabi, 2000). Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab interprets *mitsaqan ghalizhan* more broadly as a legal bond as well as an emotional, moral, and spiritual bond that leads to the formation of a family of *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*. Nurhadi and Mawardi (in Shihab, 2002) affirm that Quraish Shihab's thought places the institution of marriage as an integrative value system between the legal dimension and the ethical-psychological dimension.

Keeping an Eye

In interpreting An-Nur/24 verses 30-31, Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab have the same view that the commandment to subdue views is addressed to the believers as part of an effort to maintain self-purity, honor, and moral purity. Sight in the perspective of sharia is understood not only as a physical activity of the eyes, but also as a starting door that can trigger impulses that have the potential to lead to acts that violate religious boundaries.

A difference in emphasis arises in the way the two develop the meaning of the verse. Ibn Kathir emphasized the aspect of self-protection from *fitnah* and self-control from all forms of stimuli that can lead to violations of religious law. With the characteristics of *tafsir bi al-matsur*, Ibn Kathir places this verse in the normative framework of sharia as a preventive effort (*sadd al-dzariah*) to close the path that can lead a person to disobedience. Quraish Shihab gives a broader emphasis by attributing the commandment not only as a rule of law, but also as a process of forming spiritual awareness and inner ethics of man, as well as an effort to cultivate an attitude of respect for human dignity as a creature glorified by Allah (Shihab, 2002).

Honesty and Justice

The principle of honesty and justice in the relationship between husband and wife comes from Q.S. An-Nisa/4 paragraph 135. Ibn Kathir explained that this verse is a command of Allah to the believers to uphold justice perfectly in every situation, without being influenced by factors of emotional closeness, family relationships, or social status of a person. Ibn Kathir emphasized that justice should not be influenced by the consideration of wealth or poverty, because the judgment of a matter must be based on pure truth.

Quraish Shihab interprets the editorial of *qawwamin bil-qisth* as an emphasis on the obligation to be fair to the maximum and consistent. According to him, justice should not be influenced by subjective tendencies such as pity for the weak or partiality for the strong. In family life, Quraish Shihab emphasized that the resolution of marital conflicts must be based on openness, honesty, and respect for the rights of each party. Honesty is the main foundation in realizing this justice, because without honesty a person will not be able to be objective in assessing a case (Shihab, 2002).

Synthetic, these three moral-spiritual values form an ethical unity that serves as the foundation for the formation of a harmonious and stable family. Marriage commitment functions as the normative foundation of relationships, controlling views as a mechanism of

moral protection, while honesty and justice are regulatory instruments in maintaining the sustainability of harmonious relationships.

Relational-Psychological Aspects

The relational-psychological aspect is related to interaction patterns, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the emotional conditions formed in family life. This aspect includes the principles of complementing and respecting each other, good treatment, and the prohibition of demeaning and insulting one's partner.

Complementing and Respecting Each Other

In the Qur'an surah Al-Baqarah/2 verse 187, Allah describes the relationship between husband and wife through the parable "hunna لباسun lakum wa antum لباسun lahunna" (they are clothes for you and you are clothes for them). Ibn Kathir explained that this verse is a metaphor that shows the closeness, attachment, and mutual need relationship between husband and wife. Both are likened to clothes because they have the function of covering the shame and shortcomings of the partner, maintaining honor, and providing protection for each other. Ibn Katsir emphasized that the relationship between husband and wife reflects an intimate and harmonious relationship, where each party has the responsibility to take care of and protect each other.

Quraish Shihab understands the parable of a couple as a garment as a metaphor full of multidimensional meaning. According to him, clothes not only function to cover aurat or shortcomings, but also provide comfort, protection, beauty, and a sense of security for the wearer. He emphasized that the meaning of libas implies an equal partnership relationship between husband and wife, where the ideal relationship in the household should not be dominative, but collaborative based on love, appreciation, and shared responsibility to realize a family that is sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah (Shihab, 2002).

Treat Your Partner Well

In interpreting An-Nisa/4 verse 19 about wa asyiruhunna bil maruf, Ibn Kathir emphasized that the command is a sharia obligation for husbands to treat their wives well in all aspects of domestic life. This kind treatment includes gentle speech, a polite attitude, and actions that do not hurt or harm the partner. Ibn Kathir attributed this command to the example of the Prophet PBUH who always interacted with his wives in a loving manner. The main emphasis is adherence to the text and the normative implementation of Islamic teachings in family life.

Quraish Shihab emphasized that the command is not only normative, but also contains ethical and psychological dimensions in building domestic life. According to him, muasyarah bil maruf must be understood as a form of interaction based on respect, affection, and awareness not to hurt your partner, both physically and emotionally. Quraish Shihab emphasized that goodness in a husband and wife relationship is not enough just to carry out formal obligations, but must also be accompanied by an attitude of empathy, openness, and the ability to accept the weaknesses of the partner as part of human reality (Shihab, 2002).

Prohibition of Reproach and Demeaning

Al-Quran Al-Hujurat/49 verse 11 emphasizes the prohibition of all forms of behavior that degrades human dignity, either through ridicule, reproach, or giving bad titles. Ibn Kathir interpreted that the verse contains a strict prohibition against the act of ridicule, denunciation, and demeaning others, because it is a reprehensible morality that is contrary to the value of faith. Ibn Kathir emphasized the importance of maintaining language, respecting others, and avoiding all forms of speech and attitudes that can hurt the honor of others, including in domestic life.

Quraish Shihab emphasized that the prohibition of denouncing and ridiculing is not only socially ethical, but also a form of respect for the dignity of humanity (*karamah insaniyyah*) inherent in every individual. According to him, every human being has advantages and disadvantages that are not always known to others, so the act of demeaning someone is basically a form of injustice in judging humans. In the family context, this prohibition becomes very relevant because the relationship between husband and wife requires respectful communication, politeness, and self-control in speaking (Shihab, 2002).

The three principles in the relational-psychological aspect show a mutually reinforcing conceptual relationship, namely that family harmony in the perspective of the Qur'an does not only rely on the fulfillment of formal rights and obligations, but also on the internalization of ethical values of communication, respect for human dignity, and the development of empathy in interpersonal relationships.

Aspects of Partnership and Family Governance

Aspects of partnership and family governance are related to role management patterns, decision-making mechanisms, and forms of interaction that build a balance of relationships in family life. This dimension includes four main principles, namely leadership responsibility, equality of dignity, deliberation, and cooperation.

Leadership Responsibilities

The concept of *qawwam* in Q.S. An-Nisa/4 verse 34 is one of the most debated verses in contemporary interpretation studies. Ibn Kathir explained that the concept shows that the husband has the responsibility to lead, guide, and protect his family. This leadership is given because men have the obligation to provide for the family and maintain the welfare of the household. Therefore, *qawwam* is not only interpreted as authority, but also as a mandate that demands moral and social responsibility in family life.

Quraish Shihab interprets *qawwam* by emphasizing that the husband's position as a leader in the family is essentially a form of responsibility, not privilege or power. According to her, husband's leadership requires the ability to maintain, protect, direct, and meet the needs of the family in a sustainable manner. Quraish Shihab emphasized that the concept of *qawwam* is not understood as the legitimacy of male dominance over women, but as a mandate that requires sacrifice, service, and commitment in maintaining family welfare. The quality of a husband is not measured by the amount of authority he has, but by the extent to which he is able to carry out his responsibilities to the family in a fair and sustainable manner (Shihab,

2002). These findings are in line with Asma's study which emphasizes that the concept of leadership in the Islamic family is more appropriately understood as a system of responsibilities that is functional, not hierarchical.

Equality of Dignity

The principle of equality in marital relations comes from Q.S. Al-Baqarah/2 verse 228. Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab both recognized that men and women have equal dignity before Allah SWT, and that women have rights that must be fulfilled as they have obligations in domestic life. However, there is a difference in the emphasis on the concept of equality. Ibn Kathir emphasized the balance of rights and obligations in accordance with their respective functions as determined by the Shari'a. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab highlights the importance of partnership between husband and wife as well as appreciation for the contributions of each party, so that the concept of equality in Tafsir Al-Mishbah seems more contextual to the development of modern society (Palasenda and Syawaludin, in Shihab, 2002).

Deliberation in Decision Making

The two mufasir agreed that deliberation is an important principle in family decision-making. They view that family issues should not be decided unilaterally, but through mutual agreement. The difference lies in the scope of its application. Ibn Kathir emphasizes deliberation in the context mentioned in the verse, namely the matter of weaning children and other family problems. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab expands the meaning of deliberation as a general principle that must be applied in all aspects of domestic life, as a means of building healthy communication and respecting the opinions of the couple. This finding is in line with Alfiah's (2020) study which explains that deliberation in the perspective of the Qur'an is not only understood as a decision-making mechanism, but also as a foundation for effective communication in building harmonious social relations.

Mutual Help and Cooperation

The principle of mutual help and cooperation in family life comes from the values of al-birr (goodness) and al-iqsath (justice) taught in the Quran. Ibn Kathir emphasized the aspects of virtue and justice as a form of obedience to the teachings of Islam. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab emphasized the importance of cooperation, mutual support, and joint participation in realizing the benefits of the family. Zahid et al. (2022) in their study emphasized that Islam not only teaches tolerance conceptually, but also encourages the practice of helping each other as part of social ethics that builds mutual benefit, including in domestic life.

Points of Convergence and Differences in Interpretation

Based on the analysis of these three dimensions, it is possible to identify the common points and differences between the interpretation of Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab systematically. In general, the two mufasir show the same view that the ideal husband and wife relationship from the perspective of the Qur'an is built on the basis of the values of

responsibility, respect, and family welfare. Both moral-spiritual, relational-psychological aspects, as well as partnerships and family governance, both place the family as an institution that is not only structural, but also full of ethical and social values.

The main difference lies in the perspective and emphasis of meaning in understanding the relationship between husband and wife. In the moral-spiritual aspect, Ibn Kathir tends to emphasize the normative-textual dimension that is oriented towards compliance with the provisions of the Shari'a, while Quraish Shihab emphasizes the ethical-contextual dimension that leads to social benefit and relevance. In the relational-psychological aspect, Ibn Kathir emphasizes the moral aspect as a form of obedience and self-control according to religious guidance, while Quraish Shihab expands it into emotional and psychological dimensions such as empathy, comfort, and communication quality. As for the aspect of partnership and family governance, Ibn Kathir emphasizes a hierarchical-functional responsibility structure within the framework of sharia, while Quraish Shihab leads to a pattern of relationships that are partnership, dialogical, and participatory.

Thus, the main point of conflict lies in the difference in approach orientation, namely between interpretations that tend to be textual-normative and interpretations that are more contextual-humanist. However, the two approaches are complementary and can complement each other in providing a complete picture of the concept of ideal husband and wife in Islam.

Relevance to Contemporary Problems

The comparative study between the interpretation of Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab has great significance in responding to the problems of marital relations that continue to develop with the changing times. Ibn Kathir provides a solid textual-normative foundation on the basic principles of marital relations, while Quraish Shihab offers a reading that is responsive to contemporary issues such as role equality, economic participation of wives, and shifting decision-making patterns in the family (Shihab, 2002, 2018).

In the context of the increasing rates of divorce, infidelity, and domestic violence (KDRT), the interpretation of the Qur'an on the concept of *muasharah bil maruf*, the prohibition of reproach (Al-Hujurat/49:11), and the stages of resolving domestic conflicts are very relevant. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the word *dharaba* in Q.S. An-Nisa/4:34 which emphasizes the spirit of *ishlah* (peace) and rejects the legitimacy of domestic violence is a concrete example of how contextual interpretation can respond to contemporary social issues in an adaptive manner without reducing the fundamental values of the Qur'an.

The combination of these two interpretive approaches, namely Ibn Kathir who maintains the continuity of textual authority and the scientific tradition of interpretation, and Quraish Shihab who enriches this understanding with today's social context, is important so that the interpretation of family verses does not get trapped in rigid literalism, and at the same time does not lose its normative roots. Values such as commitment (*mitsaqan ghalizhan*), responsibility (*qawwam*), equality of dignity, deliberation, and good treatment (*muasharah bil maruf*) can be preventive instruments in dealing with various modern family problems, such as declining marital commitment, conflicts due to lack of communication, and weakening sense of responsibility towards the family.

CONCLUSION

This study succeeded in mapping the concept of ideal husband and wife in the perspective of the Qur'an through a comparative study of the Tafsir of Al-Quran Al-Azhim by Ibn Katsir and Tafsir Al-Mishbah by Muhammad Quraish Shihab. Key findings show that the Qur'an offers a universal and relevant concept of the ideal husband and wife to be applied in domestic life, which is built on three main interrelated dimensions.

First, the moral-spiritual dimension which includes the commitment to marriage based on mitsaqan ghalizhan, the maintenance of views as a mechanism of moral control, and honesty and justice as the foundation of healthy interaction. Second, the relational-psychological dimension which includes the principle of complementarity based on the metaphor of libas, good treatment through muasharah bil maruf, and the prohibition of degrading the dignity of the partner. Third, the dimension of partnership and family governance which includes leadership responsibilities based on the concept of qawwam, equality of dignity, deliberation in decision-making, as well as cooperation and mutual assistance.

The common point between Ibn Katherine's interpretation and Quraish Shihab lies in the same orientation in building a harmonious, balanced, and welfare-oriented family. Both emphasized the importance of commitment in maintaining the integrity of the household, self-control in interactions, and the need to build fair relationships. The difference lies in the methodological approach, where Ibn Kathir uses the bi al-matsur approach that results in normative-textual interpretations, while Quraish Shihab uses a contextual approach that results in a more adaptive interpretation of the reality of modern society.

The integration between classical and contemporary interpretations as reflected in the comparison of these two mufasir can be a relevant solution in answering the problems of contemporary Muslim families. The values contained in the interpretation of the two mufasir function not only as normative guidelines, but also as a preventive instrument in dealing with modern marital problems such as divorce, infidelity, domestic violence, economic conflicts, and weakened communication between couples.

This study has limitations because it only focuses on a comparative study between two mufasirs. The next research is expected to expand the study by involving other mufasir from various periods and interpretations, and is directed at empirical studies on the implementation of these values in the life of Muslim families in Indonesia.

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