

Reinterpreting the Concept of *Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf* in QS. An Nisā' Verse 19 through the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* Approach

Muh. Rizki¹, Adi Harmanto² & Almi Jera³

¹Universitas Cokroaminoto Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Institut Agama Islam Imam Syafii Indonesia, Pekanbaru

³Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau

Abstract

The interpretation of the concept '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' in QS. An Nisā' verse 19 has become increasingly significant in contemporary Islamic discourse, particularly concerning gender justice and marital relations. Classical tafsir traditions tend to interpret this concept within a patriarchal framework, positioning the husband as the dominant figure in the household. This study aims to offer an alternative reading using the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach, which emphasizes reciprocity, equality, and justice in gender relations. Employing a qualitative method based on literature review, this article analyzes classical interpretations such as those by Ibn Kathīr, al Ṭabarī, and al Qurṭubī, alongside contemporary perspectives developed by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir. The findings reveal that the phrase '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' is not merely a command for husbands to treat their wives kindly but reflects a principle of mutual and equitable relationship. The *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach allows for a more contextual and inclusive reconstruction of this verse's meaning, making it relevant to the evolving social realities of contemporary Muslim communities. This study contributes to the development of gender just Qur'anic interpretations and strengthens the paradigm of marital partnership rooted in mutual respect and fairness.

Keywords: Tafsir, Mubādalāh, Gender, Marriage, *Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf*

Reinterpretasi Konsep *Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf* dalam QS. An Nisā' Ayat 19 melalui Pendekatan *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*

Abstrak

Penafsiran terhadap konsep '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' dalam QS. An Nisā' ayat 19 menjadi penting dalam diskursus keislaman kontemporer, terutama terkait isu keadilan gender dan relasi suami istri. Dalam tradisi tafsir klasik, konsep ini cenderung ditafsirkan dalam kerangka patriarkal yang menempatkan suami sebagai figur dominan dalam rumah tangga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menawarkan pembacaan alternatif melalui pendekatan *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*, yang menekankan prinsip kesalingan, kesetaraan, dan keadilan dalam relasi gender. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, artikel ini menganalisis berbagai tafsir klasik seperti karya Ibn Kathīr, al Ṭabarī, dan al Qurṭubī, serta tafsir kontemporer seperti yang dikembangkan oleh Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa frasa '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' tidak semata merupakan perintah bagi suami untuk berbuat baik kepada istri, melainkan mencerminkan prinsip relasi timbal balik yang adil dan setara. Penafsiran melalui *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* mampu merekonstruksi makna ayat ini secara lebih kontekstual dan inklusif, serta relevan dengan dinamika sosial masyarakat Muslim saat ini. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan tafsir berbasis keadilan gender dan memperkuat paradigma relasi pernikahan yang berlandaskan kemitraan.

Kata kunci: Tafsir, Mubādalāh, Gender, Pernikahan, *Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf*

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' in QS. An Nisā' verse 19 is a fundamental principle in the Islamic understanding of marital relationships. This phrase is often translated as "treat your wives kindly," yet its interpretation in classical and contemporary exegesis significantly differs. Classical interpretations tend

Contact: Muh. Rizki | muhammadrizki4714@gmail.com

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to emphasize the husband's primary obligation as the head of the household who must provide for and protect his wife (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 325). In contrast, contemporary exegetical approaches—particularly *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* reinterpret this verse through the lens of reciprocity, highlighting justice, balance, and mutual respect in marital relations (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 45).

Classical exegetes generally understand the phrase '*āsyrūhunna bil ma'rūf*' as a call to act kindly and fairly toward one's wife. However, this understanding is often embedded in patriarchal perspectives. Mufasssirs such as Ibn Kathīr and al Jāhiz argue that, although husbands are encouraged to act kindly, they maintain a superior status over their wives, which can perpetuate a hierarchical structure within marriage (Alparizi et al., 2022; Karimullah, 2022). As a result, such interpretations often frame marital relations in terms of male authority rather than mutual partnership.

In contrast, modern interpretations represent a significant shift in understanding. Scholars such as Amina Wadud and Nasaruddin Umar emphasize gender equality and justice in spousal relationships, interpreting '*āsyrūhunna bil ma'rūf*' as an expression of collective values and mutual respect between partners (Fattah, 2021; Rani, 2021; Zulaiha, 2016). This perspective aligns with recent research showing that hybrid social contexts have enabled Muslim women to better understand and assert their rights (Faradilla, 2018).

A more inclusive understanding of this verse is especially important in today's context, where gender justice in Islam remains a contentious issue. Previous studies have often focused only on the husband's obligations without exploring how the principle of *ma'rūf* that which is fair and customary should be practiced reciprocally in marriage (Shihab, 2002: 293). Therefore, this study aims to analyze this verse using the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach to offer a more relevant interpretation in light of current domestic realities.

Numerous studies have examined QS. An Nisā' verse 19, especially in the context of gender justice and spousal relationships. However, differences in approach and focus leave room for further exploration. In *Tafsir al Mishbah*, M. Quraish Shihab interprets the verse as a moral exhortation for husbands to treat their wives well. He contextualizes it within the social circumstances of the Arabs at the time of revelation, when women were frequently treated unjustly. While his interpretation affirms the importance of kindness, it does not explicitly address mutuality in the marital relationship, thus retaining a hierarchical framework (Shihab, 2002: 295).

The hermeneutic *ma'nā cum maghẓā* approach offers a linguistic and contextual analysis of the verse in modern life (Hidayat, 2018: 157). This method explores the verse's relevance to pre Islamic Arab traditions but does not deeply engage with the concept of gender equality as central to the *Mubādalāh* framework. Conversely, the *Mubādalāh* approach, developed by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, presents a novel perspective by emphasizing mutuality in spousal relationships, positioning husbands and wives as equal partners with shared rights and responsibilities (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 67).

Several previous studies have explored QS. An Nisā' verse 19 from various angles. For example, Luthfi Anbar (2023) investigated domestic sexual violence in the Qur'anic view using *Tafsir al Mishbah*, highlighting the prohibition of spousal exploitation but without a focus on reciprocal relations. Agung Mubarak (2022) analyzed marital rape using the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* lens, briefly mentioning mutuality but focusing more on sexual violence. Dewi Putri and colleagues (2024) examined reinterpretations of marital relations based on this verse, emphasizing *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf* but without explicitly linking it to mutuality in the *Mubādalāh* framework.

Similarly, Nila Qonita Auliya and Yeti Dahliana (2024) studied domestic sexual violence through *Tafsir al Qurṭubī*, emphasizing the prohibition of violence without addressing reciprocity. Halya Millati

(2021) explored mutual relationships in marriage from Sachiko Murata's perspective, underlining the importance of mutuality but without a direct connection to QS. An Nisā' verse 19.

These studies generally emphasize the prohibition of exploitation and the importance of kindness in marital relationships. However, none have comprehensively explored mutuality as the foundational principle in interpreting QS. An Nisā' 19. Therefore, this study becomes significant not only for addressing spousal rights and duties but also for offering a reading that foregrounds equality and justice through the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach.

Accordingly, this research seeks to answer the following questions: How is the concept of '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' in QS. An Nisā' verse 19 interpreted in classical exegesis? How does the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach reinterpret this verse in the context of gender equality? What are the implications of this interpretation for the concept of justice in marital relationships?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the **library research** method and a descriptive analytical framework. The main focus of the research is to analyze the interpretation of QS. An Nisā' verse 19, particularly the phrase '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*', by examining both classical and contemporary tafsir sources. The study also adopts a contextual hermeneutic approach, specifically *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*, as the interpretive framework used to understand the meaning of the text in a more inclusive and gender responsive manner.

Primary data for this research are drawn from classical tafsir works such as *Jāmi' al Bayān fī Ta'wīl al Qur'ān* by al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al 'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, and *Al Jāmi' li Aḥkām al Qur'ān* by al Qurṭubī. Secondary data are derived from contemporary literature that supports reciprocal and gender just interpretations, including the thought of Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir in *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*, as well as works by prominent Muslim feminist scholars such as Amina Wadud and Fatima Mernissi. In addition, relevant scholarly articles from reputable journals are utilized to enrich perspectives and reinforce the arguments.

The analysis technique employed in this study is content analysis with a thematic approach. The researcher identifies major themes in the tafsir texts related to spousal relationships, gender justice, and the principle of *mu'āsyarah bil ma'rūf*. The analytical process is conducted in stages, beginning with a critical reading of classical tafsir, followed by reinterpretation using the principles of *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* such as reciprocity, relational justice, and contextual reading.

DISCUSSION

Classical Interpretations of '*Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf*'

The full text of QS. An Nisā' verse 19, in which the phrase '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' appears, reads as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا
آتَيْنَهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ ۚ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا
شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

" O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will. And do not make things difficult for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear

immorality. And live with them in kindness (ma'rūf). For if you dislike them—perhaps you dislike something through which Allah makes much good." (QS. An Nisā' 19)

Classical scholars explain that this verse was revealed to eliminate certain pre Islamic practices that were oppressive to women, such as inheriting them against their will. Ibn 'Abbas RA, as cited by Ibn Kathīr (1999), reported that this verse was revealed to abolish the practice in which women were treated as inheritable property. When a husband died, his heirs could inherit his wife, force her into marriage, or prevent her from remarrying.

Moreover, the command to live with one's wife *bil ma'rūf* (in kindness) emphasizes the importance of treating one's spouse well—not only in providing material needs but also in emotional support and everyday conduct. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated:

"The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family." (At Tirmidhi, 2007)

This hadith underscores that a husband's excellence is measured by how he treats his wife and family.

Thus, the verse and related hadith collectively stress the obligation to treat wives kindly, abolish oppressive traditions, and encourage marital relationships based on compassion and justice.

In *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al 'Aẓīm*, Ibn Kathīr (1999) interprets the phrase '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf* (live with them in kindness) as a directive for husbands to treat their wives appropriately, within the bounds set by social and religious norms. He explains that this includes fulfilling the wife's material rights such as financial maintenance, clothing, and housing—according to the husband's means and local customs (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 325). Ibn Kathīr frames this obligation within the husband's role as the head of the household, asserting his dominant position and authority based on his capacity to provide and lead.

Al Ṭabarī, in *Jāmi' al Bayān fī Ta'wīl al Qur'ān*, supports Ibn Kathīr's interpretation but places additional emphasis on justice and the prohibition of harm toward wives (Al Ṭabarī, 2001: 235). For him, *ma'rūf* refers not only to material provision but also to respectful and non-abusive treatment. Nevertheless, al Ṭabarī reaffirms the hierarchical structure in marital relationships, wherein the husband retains a higher level of authority.

Similarly, al Qurṭubī in *Al Jāmi' lil Aḥkām al Qur'ān* upholds the view that the husband is responsible for leading and safeguarding the household (Al Qurṭubī, 1996: 412). He adds that *ma'rūf* should be understood contextually, in accordance with prevailing social norms. Al Qurṭubī not only discusses the material dimension but also stresses the need to protect the wife's dignity, albeit within the framework of the husband's superior leadership.

While these classical exegetes underscore the importance of treating wives well, their interpretations generally assume a hierarchical structure within marriage. Women are often positioned as subjects under male authority, and explicit discussions of mutuality or equality are rarely present. This perspective has since been challenged by contemporary approaches such as *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*, which reject the hierarchical model and promote equitable and reciprocal relationships between spouses.

The *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* Approach in Interpreting '*Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf*

The Qur'an describes marriage as a *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* a strong and sacred covenant between a man and a woman. This bond is not merely a social contract, but a moral commitment that binds both parties in a relationship of mutual responsibility. To preserve justice and harmony within marriage, Islam establishes relational principles between husband and wife, as reflected in the phrase *wa 'āshirūhunna bil ma'rūf* (and live with them in kindness) in QS. An Nisā' verse 19.

The verse emphasizes that marriage should not be based on coercion or exploitation, but on justice and mutual respect. Within the discourse of male leadership in the household, a commonly referenced verse is QS. An Nisā' verse 34: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means..."

Classical interpretations, such as that of Ibn Kathīr, justify male leadership (*qawwām*) in marriage based on two main reasons: the natural advantage given to men in certain areas like physical strength and societal roles, and the financial responsibility placed upon them (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 325). Al Qurṭbī strengthens this view by noting that male leadership is not a privilege but a duty that must be exercised with justice and protection of the wife and family (Al Qurṭbī, 1996: 412). Al Ṭabari, in *Jāmi' al Bayān*, also explains that this leadership is a trust that requires wisdom and fairness, rather than absolute domination (Al Ṭabari, 2001: 235).

Hadith literature also emphasizes this leadership in a more humanistic way. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family" (At Tirmidhi, No. 3895). This hadith underscores that leadership in the household is not about unilateral authority, but about kind and harmonious interaction between husband and wife.

Contemporary interpretations have evolved along with social changes. M. Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsir Al Mishbah*, argues that the concept of *qawwām* in QS. An Nisā': 34 is not absolute or innate, but rather a functional role based on individual capability. He rejects the notion that men are inherently superior to women and stresses that household leadership must be just and proportional (Shihab, 2002: 295). Abou El Fadl, in *Reasoning with God*, also criticizes rigid traditional views of male leadership, arguing that many classical interpretations of *qawwām* were shaped by patriarchal social structures of their time and should be reinterpreted with universal principles of justice in mind (El Fadl, 2014: 112).

The *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach, developed by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, offers a reciprocal framework for understanding marital relationships. It rejects male exclusive leadership, emphasizing instead shared responsibility based on justice and individual capacity. Kodir argues that dominant interpretations of male leadership often marginalize women's roles and must be contextualized within dynamic social realities. In many households, women also exercise leadership, especially in decision making and management (Kodir, 2019: 130).

This analysis shows that classical and contemporary interpretations differ significantly. Classical tafsirs emphasize male responsibility rooted in finance and protection, while modern views highlight fairness and reciprocity. The *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach offers a more egalitarian alternative, where leadership is a cooperative duty rather than a tool of domination.

The term *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* etymologically combines *qira'ah* (reading) and *mubādalāh* (reciprocity or exchange). It aims to construct an inclusive tafsir framework where men and women are positioned as equals in social relations, including marriage (Kodir, 2019: 23). This method was formulated in response to male centric classical tafsirs that often depict women as subordinate. Kodir highlights that around 14% of households in Indonesia are led by women (BPS 2010), a fact challenging traditional assumptions that men must always be heads of households.

Mubādalāh interprets Islamic revelation as a universal message addressed equally to men and women, seeking well being for both in this world and the hereafter (Kodir, 2019: 89). The approach rests on three main premises: (1) Universal gender justice—Islam addresses both men and women equally, so its messages must reflect this; (2) Reciprocal relations—interactions between genders must be based on cooperation, not domination; (3) Interpretive openness—Islamic texts are dynamic and open to reinterpretation in light of justice and human welfare (Kodir, 2019: 112).

The interpretation process in Mubādalāh involves three stages: First, identifying universal values such as justice, compassion, and mutual responsibility; second, extracting the core message of the text without gender bias; and third, applying the message equally to both men and women (Kodir, 2019: 130).

In QS. An Nisā' verse 19, the phrase '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' is interpreted as a directive for mutual kind treatment. Kodir explains that '*āshiru*', from the root '*ashara*', implies partnership and reciprocal interaction. Thus, *ma'rūf* based behavior is a mutual obligation, not one sided (Kodir, 2019: 145).

Furthermore, *ma'rūf* is a dynamic moral standard that evolves with societal changes and must be continually contextualized to uphold gender justice and human dignity (Kodir, 2019: 89).

Through the Mubādalāh lens, spousal relationships in Islam are seen as balanced partnerships, not hierarchical structures dominated by men. This framework refutes rigid textual interpretations that confine women to inferior roles and affirms their right to equitable treatment within the family (Kodir, 2019: 130).

The *asbāb al nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation) of QS. An Nisā':19 relate to the unjust practices of pre Islamic Arabia, where women were treated as inheritable property. According to a report from Ibn Abbas in *Sahih Bukhari*, when a man died, his wife could be inherited by his male heirs, who could marry her without consent or force her into marriage to claim her dowry.

Abu Dawud, citing al Zuhri and Abu Mijlaz, added that this claim was symbolized by throwing a piece of cloth on the woman. Al Wahidi, in *Asbāb al Nuzūl*, narrates the case of Kubayshah bint Ma'n, whose stepson claimed her after her husband's death by throwing a cloth over her, asserting his right without providing maintenance or freedom. These complaints reached the Prophet and led to the revelation of QS. An Nisā':19 to abolish such practices.

This context highlights Islam's legal protection of women's rights and rejection of patriarchal traditions that stripped women of autonomy. QS. An Nisā':19 thus stands as a foundational verse affirming gender equality in marriage.

The *munāsabah* (contextual linkage) of this verse with surrounding verses further reinforces the Qur'an's mission to uplift women's dignity. Following the prohibition against treating women as inheritance, QS. An Nisā':19 is linked with verses on dowry (verse 4) and inheritance rights (verses 7 and 11), affirming women's equal share as heirs (Al Qurṭbī).

Hence, this verse is part of the Qur'anic agenda for social reform, eliminating gender based injustice and promoting mutual respect in the household. It also supports the prohibition of forcibly reclaiming a wife's wealth, as further emphasized in QS. An Nisā':20.

Classical and modern exegetes interpret QS. An Nisā':19 differently. Al Ṭabari sees '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' as an injunction to fulfill basic marital obligations, including maintenance and protection. If separation is necessary, it must be conducted respectfully. Al Qurṭbī and al Shawkānī address the audience as husbands and guardians, emphasizing that husbands bear primary responsibility for maintaining *ma'rūf* standards.

However, Wahbah al Zuhaylī offers a more inclusive interpretation, asserting that *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf* applies to both spouses. He argues that spousal relations should be based on affection, openness, and mutual respect in all aspects, including sexual relations (*al Zuhaylī, Al Fiqh al Islami wa Adillatuhu*).

Zuhaylī explicitly states that sexual relations must be consensual and within the bounds of Islamic ethics. He cites QS. Al Baqarah:222, which prohibits sexual activity during menstruation and commands respect for bodily integrity. This is reinforced by the hadith: "Do not approach your wives through their rectums" (Abu Dawud No. 2163; At Tirmidhi No. 1165).

Such hadiths underscore Islam's prohibition of deviant sexual behavior. Zuhaylī's interpretation aligns with *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*'s principles, where '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' is a universal mandate requiring

reciprocity. The obligation to treat one's spouse kindly is not the husband's burden alone but a shared responsibility, fostering an equitable and cooperative domestic life (Kodir, 2019: 145).

Thus, *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf* is not a male directed injunction but a call for egalitarian partnership grounded in justice, mutual empowerment, and shared commitment in marriage.

Reinterpreting the Meaning of *Āsyirūhunna bil Ma'rūf* From Male Dominance to Reciprocal Relationship

Based on an analysis of linguistic elements, *asbāb al nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation), *munāsabah* (contextual linkage), and exegetical opinions, it can be concluded that QS. An Nisā' verse 19 explicitly addresses men—particularly husbands and guardians. The structure of the verse uses the masculine imperative form *'āshirū*, which grammatically refers to men. However, the Arabic linguistic principle of *taghlīb* allows for the interpretation that the command can also encompass women in certain contexts.

The central message of this verse includes two aspects: the prohibition of mistreating wives and the obligation to treat them with kindness (*mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf*). The word *'āshirū* derives from the root *'ashara*, which implies intimacy and partnership. Ibn Shumail even interpreted *al 'ishrah* as general social interaction, signaling a harmonious relationship among community members. Thus, the husband wife relationship instructed in this verse contains elements of equality and deep familiarity.

The term *ma'rūf* holds a dynamic and evolving meaning. Unlike *khayr*, which refers to absolute good rooted in revelation, *ma'rūf* reflects socially recognized values that can change with time and context. This is why the Qur'an employs the term *ma'rūf* flexibly in various verses addressing marital relations, including QS. Al Baqarah: 228 and 229.

Historically, the *asbāb al nuzūl* of QS. An Nisā' verse 19 reveals gender inequality in pre Islamic Arab society, where women were treated as inheritance objects. Women lacked autonomy and were subject to the will of male heirs. The verse was revealed to abolish such oppressive traditions and affirm women's rights to just and respectful treatment.

However, today's social realities have significantly evolved. Women are no longer in a subordinate position as in the pre Islamic era. According to 2010 data from BPS (Statistics Indonesia), 14% of households in Indonesia are headed by women, affirming their capacity to lead families (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 45; Adi Harmanto, 2023). Therefore, this verse should not be interpreted textually alone but contextualized in light of social developments and gender justice principles.

Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, through the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach, interprets *'āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf* as a reciprocal command between husband and wife. He argues that the verse does not solely impose an obligation on husbands to treat their wives kindly, but also demands wives to treat their husbands in the same manner (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 130). Thus, marital relationships should be built on principles of reciprocity and equal partnership.

In line with this, Wahbah al Zuhaylī affirms that husband wife relationships should be based on *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf*, encompassing all aspects of life, including mutual respect and sexual satisfaction (Al Zuhaylī, *Al Fiqh al Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*). He even states that husbands are obligated to fulfill their wives' sexual needs unless prevented by legal (*shar'ī*) reasons.

This inclusive view is also supported by classical scholars such as Ibn 'Abbās, who stated that a husband should adorn himself for his wife as she does for him—emphasizing mutual respect and care. Ibn al Ḥanafīyyah likewise stated that attending to one's partner's needs is a tangible form of *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf*.

Therefore, the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach offers a more just and contextual perspective. This verse is not merely a directive for husbands to be kind, but a call for equitable and supportive

relationships. This principle is consistent with the Qur'an's broader message advocating justice and compassion in all aspects of domestic life.

From the above exposition, it can be concluded that the meaning of '*āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf*' in QS. An Nisā' verse 19 has undergone significant shifts between classical exegesis and contemporary approaches such as *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*. Classical tafsirs understand the verse as a directive for husbands to treat wives well, within social and religious norms, placing the husband as the dominant figure responsible for providing, protecting, and leading the household (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 325; Al Ṭabarī, 2001: 235; Al Qurṭubī, 1996: 412). Despite emphasizing kind treatment, classical interpretations generally assume a hierarchical relationship where the husband holds ultimate authority.

In contrast, the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach developed by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir offers a fundamentally different perspective. It emphasizes reciprocity in husband wife relations, as opposed to the classical model which grants unilateral authority to husbands. Ibn Kathīr, for example, justifies male leadership (*qawwām*) based on two main factors: certain divine advantages given to men (e.g., physical strength and social responsibility), and the financial obligations placed upon them (Ibn Kathīr, 1999: 325). Al Qurṭubī also frames male leadership as a duty to ensure protection and well being, yet still within a hierarchical structure (Al Qurṭubī, 1996: 412).

Conversely, in *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*, the concept of *qawwām* is reinterpreted as a trust that may also be held by women depending on the situation. The principle of reciprocity demands that rights and responsibilities are mutual not solely the husband's. While classical tafsirs stress the husband's duty to provide and lead, *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* clarifies that wives also bear responsibilities, making marriage a collaborative partnership.

In this view, the wife's responsibility is not mere obedience, but active participation in managing the household economically, emotionally, and socially. Abdul Kodir explains that in modern social contexts, women are not just recipients of decisions but are capable of being equal partners in financial and leadership aspects of domestic life (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 130). Hence, *ma'rūf* is understood as a dynamic moral standard that evolves in accordance with universal values of justice and human dignity, demanding shared responsibility between spouses.

While classical tafsir frames marriage as a male centered leadership structure, *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* promotes a partnership model. In this model, the wife not only has domestic duties but also the right to participate in decision making, child education, family welfare, and even leadership roles beyond the household. Thus, this approach rejects hierarchical relationships and proposes a model of equality, where both parties hold complementary rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Islamic principles of justice and balance (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 112).

Implications of the *Mubādalāh* Interpretation for Spousal Relationships

The primary implications of the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach in interpreting QS. An Nisā' verse 19 encompass three key aspects that signal a paradigm shift in understanding spousal relationships. These implications extend beyond personal dynamics within the household and provide a foundation for broader social transformation toward just and equitable relationships between men and women.

First, justice in marriage becomes the central pillar of this approach. In the *Mubādalāh* perspective, marriage is not an institution based on the husband's dominance but a partnership of equals. Abdul Kodir asserts that justice in marriage requires both parties to mutually uphold rights and responsibilities in a balanced manner (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 72). This principle challenges classical interpretations that tend to place the husband as the authoritative figure, with the wife in a subordinate

position. By positioning both spouses as active and equal subjects, this concept redefines *ma'rūf* to encompass not only material justice but also emotional and social fairness (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 101).

Second, the empowerment of women's rights becomes a central agenda in this approach. Unlike classical interpretations that portray women as submissive parties, the *Mubādalāh* interpretation affirms women as equal partners in the household. According to Abdul Kodir, this approach recognizes women's rights to actively participate in household decision making, to have their dignity respected, and to access family resources fairly (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 135). By strengthening women's roles, this interpretation deconstructs patriarchal structures that often constrain women's agency within both the household and society (Fadl, 2014: 89).

Third, the *Mubādalāh* approach has strong contemporary social relevance. In a modern society increasingly oriented toward principles of equality and human rights, this interpretation provides a theological foundation for social transformation. Abdul Kodir emphasizes that understanding this verse must always be contextualized to align with the evolution of the times (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 154). Therefore, the concept of *'āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf* should not be understood statically but as a dynamic principle adaptable to universal human values. This interpretation establishes the groundwork for harmonious and adaptive domestic relationships amid complex social changes (Abou El Fadl, 2014: 112).

The implications of the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach for spousal relations are thus threefold. First, the principle of justice in marriage affirms that the husband wife relationship should not be centered on male dominance, but on a fair balance of roles and responsibilities (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 72). Second, this approach reinforces women's rights by positioning them as equal partners with the right to participate in decision making and fairly access family resources (Abdul Kodir, 2019: 135). Third, the social relevance of this interpretation provides a conceptual foundation for a model of marriage that is both adaptive and harmonious, aligned with modern social developments and humanistic values (Abou El Fadl, 2014: 112).

Therefore, this study contributes to the construction of a new paradigm in Qur'anic interpretation that promotes gender justice. The *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach serves as a critical response to patriarchal biases in classical tafsir and offers an interpretive framework relevant to contemporary social realities. This interpretation affirms that marital relationships in Islam are not hierarchical or subordinative but should be based on mutual respect, support, and justice in all aspects of domestic life. Consequently, this study advocates for a more humanistic and just reading of the Qur'an—one that not only liberates women from subordination but also provides an ethical and inclusive framework for harmonious family life today and in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the concept of *'āsyirūhunna bil ma'rūf* in QS. An Nisā' verse 19 has undergone a significant shift in meaning between classical interpretations and contemporary approaches such as *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*. Classical exegesis, as presented by Ibn Kathīr, al Qurṭbī, and al Ṭabari, emphasizes that *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf* is a husband's obligation to treat his wife kindly within the bounds of social and religious norms. However, this interpretation maintains a hierarchical relationship in which the husband holds primary authority due to his responsibilities in providing and leading the family.

In contrast, *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* interprets this verse through the lens of equality, rejecting hierarchical structures and proposing a household relationship based on justice and partnership. The concept of *ma'rūf* is understood dynamically as a moral standard that evolves in line with universal values of justice. In today's social context, where women have broader access to education and economic roles, the *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* approach appears more relevant as it emphasizes reciprocity, fostering a more equitable and harmonious family structure.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

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