



**Gender equality in the Qur'an: An Analysis of surah an-Nisa' verses 1
and 34 in the exegesis of al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī**

Nurjannah Ismail*, Muhammad Firdaus✉, Edi Darmawijaya*****

**Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia
Email: nurjannah.ismail@ar-raniry.ac.id*

***Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia
Email: moh.firdaus30@gmail.com*

****Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia
Email: edi.darmaawijaya@ar-raniry.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

Surah An-Nisa' verses 1 and 34 have been central to discussions on gender. According to the interpretations of Imam al-Ṭabarī and Imam al-Rāzī, these verses place women in a subordinate role, both in domestic and non-domestic spheres. This interpretation is considered biased, not reflecting the true essence of the Qur'an. Therefore, further research is necessary to uncover the Qur'an's intended view on gender in these verses. The study uses a descriptive-analytical method with a qualitative approach, gathering data from books, theses, and articles. The findings reveal that al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī's interpretations reinforce male superiority in patriarchal tradition, stating that Eve was created from Adam's rib and that the husband is the absolute leader of the wife. However, contemporary scholars argue that interpreting "nafs" as referring to the unity of humanity without any connotation of gender superiority, emphasizing equality in Islam. The Qur'an advocates for justice in gender issues, making traditional interpretations obsolete in today's context. Regarding Surah An-Nisa' verse 34, al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī interpreted men as the rightful leaders over their wives due to the advantages given by Allah, with financial responsibility as the foundation of their authority. However, modern-contemporary tafsir scholars reject this view, interpreting qiwāmah as shared responsibility regardless of gender, emphasizing partnership in the household and gender equality in Islam. This reflects efforts to understand Qur'anic verses contextually and inclusively, supporting the principles of equality and justice.

Keywords: Justice; Gender; Surah An-Nisa' Verses 1 and 34; Al-Ṭabarī; Al-Rāzī.

✉ Corresponding author:

Email Address: moh.firdaus30@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

Surat An-Nisa' ayat 1 dan 34 menjadi inti pembahasan gender. Menurut tafsir Imam al-Ṭabarī dan Imam al-Rāzī, ayat-ayat tersebut menempatkan perempuan pada peran subordinat, baik dalam ranah domestik maupun non-domestik. Penafsiran ini dianggap bias, tidak mencerminkan hakikat Al-Qur'an yang sebenarnya. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk mengungkap pandangan Al-Qur'an tentang gender dalam ayat-ayat tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitik dengan pendekatan kualitatif, pengumpulan data dari buku, tesis, dan artikel. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penafsiran al-Ṭabarī dan al-Rāzī memperkuat superioritas laki-laki dalam tradisi patriarki, yang menyatakan bahwa Hawa diciptakan dari tulang rusuk Adam dan bahwa suami adalah pemimpin mutlak bagi istri. Namun para ulama kontemporer berpendapat bahwa menafsirkan "nafs" merujuk pada kesatuan umat manusia tanpa ada konotasi superioritas gender, menekankan kesetaraan dalam Islam. Al-Qur'an menganjurkan keadilan dalam isu gender, sehingga membuat penafsiran tradisional menjadi ketinggalan jaman dalam konteks saat ini. Mengenai Surat An-Nisa' ayat 34, al-Ṭabarī dan al-Rāzī memaknai laki-laki sebagai pemimpin yang sah atas istrinya karena kelebihan yang diberikan Allah, dengan tanggung jawab keuangan sebagai landasan kewenangannya. Namun para ulama tafsir modern kontemporer menolak pandangan tersebut, memaknai qiwāmah sebagai tanggung jawab bersama tanpa memandang gender, menekankan kemitraan dalam rumah tangga dan kesetaraan gender dalam Islam. Hal ini mencerminkan upaya pemahaman ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an secara kontekstual dan inklusif, serta mendukung prinsip kesetaraan dan keadilan.

Kata Kunci: Keadilan; Gender; Surat An-Nisa' Ayat 1 dan 34; Al-Ṭabarī; Al-Rāzī.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many perceive the debate on gender within the context of Islam as an ancient issue that has reemerged in contemporary times. For apologetic groups, gender issues are frequently considered a Western construct, inappropriate for adoption in Islam. They argue that Islam had already established women's rights and responsibilities long before the West introduced gender equality. Although this perspective may initially seem correct, history demonstrates that Islam is a religion that strongly rejects injustice, including against women. Upon its introduction in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam faced a society steeped in patriarchy, where women found limited opportunities for self-actualization. Islam then reformed Arab society's social structure in order to be more humane and just (Fakih, 2000, p. 3).

In many instances, women struggle to receive fair treatment and the rights they deserve. This remains an issue, especially when linked to religious ideology. Many traditional interpretations continue to place women in a lower position compared to men. The Qur'an emphasizes that men and women hold equally significant rights and obligations. Applying the principles of justice in the Qur'an correctly can serve as a universal moral guide relevant to the continuously changing societal context (Mustabsyirah et al., 2009, p. 110).

Ritzer and Goodman highlight four aspects of gender inequality: unequal social placement, injustice stemming from social organizational structures, neglect of individual differences, and the assumption that social change towards equality will occur easily. These manifestations of injustice include marginalization, subordination, negative stereotypes, and higher work burdens placed on women (Hermawati, 2013, pp. 20-21).

Moreover, to understand how gender differences contribute to gender injustice, it is important to examine the various manifestations of this injustice that frequently occur. For example, marginalization, where certain individuals or groups are economically sidelined, subordination, which suggests that such individuals or groups are politically insignificant, the formation of stereotypes that create negative perceptions or labels based on gender, alongside the prevalence of violence and the disproportionate and prolonged work burdens frequently borne by one gender (Faqih, 1997, pp. 12–13).

Previous exegeses of the Qur'an by Imam al-Ṭabarī and Imam al-Rāzī tend to reinforce male superiority. Their interpretation of Surah An-Nisa' verses 1 and 34 positions men superior to women within the social hierarchy. These interpretations claim that Eve was created from Adam's rib and assert the absolute leadership of men over women. However, modern-contemporary research reveals that the Qur'an actually advocates for justice on gender issues, and gender-biased interpretations are irrelevant in today's context. Contextual interpretation of religious texts must ground the principle of tauhid (oneness of God) as the foundation, recognizing equality and justice as universal moral values in Islam. Reading religious texts through a contextual lens can address modern issues, such as gender bias. Modern interpretations must respond to the challenges of the times and adapt to social, cultural, and scientific developments (Mustabsyirah et al., 2009, p. 111).

Modern thinkers such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Nasaruddin Umar have developed more inclusive and fair exegesis concerning women. They aim to provide women with autonomy and comprehension in decision-making, rather than equality. This research aims to develop a more comprehensive and critical method of interpretation, ensuring that Qur'anic exegesis remains relevant to contemporary issues and the challenges of humanity (Aziz, 2012, p. 16).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on this topic encompasses the following: The article "Feminism and Gender Equality in Contemporary Islamic Studies" by Dhakiyyah Fauziyah Rif'at and Nurwahidin highlights the influence of Western feminism in critiquing the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic law. They examine the impact of patriarchal culture and attempt to reconstruct the understanding of classical Islamic scholars within a modern context (Dhakiyyah Fauziyah & Nurwahidin Rif'at, 2022, pp. 172-182).

Abdullah Zainal Hasan and Syahri Ramadhan's article, "Gender Issues as the Basis for Modern-Contemporary Thought in Islam," elaborates on the theme of gender from various perspectives, identifying two views on gender: as a biological sex and as a behavioral manifestation. They present the history of gender across three waves, emphasizing women's aspirations for justice (Zainal Hasan & Syahri Ramadhan Abdullah, 2023, pp. 515-524).

Both works emphasize that the primary purpose of religion is justice, as revealed in the Qur'anic scripture. This thesis focuses on analyzing verses that form the basis of gender bias,

particularly verses 1 and 34 of Surah An-Nisa'. The research begins with the classical interpretations of Imam al-Ṭabarī and Imam al-Rāzī, followed by a critical analysis by contemporary tafsir scholars. This approach aims to uncover the true understanding of the Qur'an regarding gender and reaffirm the values of equality and justice in verses 1 and 34 of Surah An-Nisa'.

3. METHOD

This research employs a literature review technique to gather information by examining books, religious texts, documents, and related articles (Nazir, 2003, p. 27). The aim is to answer the research questions regarding the interpretation of verses 1 and 34 of Surah An-Nisa' according to al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī and to critically analyze the discussion of modern-contemporary Tafsir scholars on these interpretations. Additionally, it seeks to explore how the Qur'an advocates for equality in these two verses. This method helps to understand the classical views and modern critiques of gender bias in the interpretation of these verses.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Interpretation of Surah An-Nisa' Verses 1 and 34 According to al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī

4.1.1. Surah An-Nisa' Verse 1 Regarding the Creation of Eve

Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝

Meaning:

"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer". (Q.S. An-Nisa' [4]: 1).

In interpreting the phrase "min nafsīn wāhidah" (from one soul), al-Ṭabarī clearly and explicitly interprets it as referring to Adam, *و الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة، يعنى : من آدم*, he elaborates further on this interpretation by supporting it with various hadith and poetic expressions to strengthen his view (Al-Ṭabarī, 1999, p. 513).

In several narrations, it is explained that the phrase *خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ* "created you from one soul" refers to the creation of humanity from Adam. Ahmad bin Mufaḍḍal and Asbaṭ, through As-Suddi, interpreted that the "one soul" refers to Prophet Adam (a.s.). Similarly, Bisyr bin Mu'adz and Yazid bin Zurai', citing Sa'id from Qatadah, also understood the verse as referring to the creation of mankind from Prophet Adam (a.s.). Sufyan bin Waki' and his father, through Sufyan and Mujahid, conveyed the same interpretation (Abdul-Baqi, 2022, p. 120).

A poem illustrating the use of the term in the context of creation from a male figure states:

أَبُوكَ خَلِيفَةٌ وَكَدْ ثُهُ أُخْرَى وَأَنْتَ خَلِيفَةُ ذَاكَ الْكَمَلِ

Meaning:

"Your father is a caliph born of another caliph, and you are a caliph, and that is perfection". (Al-Farra', 1989, p. 208).

قال أبو جعفر : يعنى بقوله جل ثناؤه : (وخلق منها زوجها وخلق من النفس الواحدة زوجها) يعنى : و الزوج الثانى لها . وهو فيما قال أهل التأويل ، امرأتها حواء .

Imam al-Ṭabarī explains that in Allah's words *wa khalaqa minha zawjaha*, وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا ("and from it He created its mate"), the meaning is that Allah created Eve from the same soul, which is Prophet Adam (a.s.). The term *al-zauj* refers to the second partner of that same soul, in this case, Eve. Several narrations explain that Eve was created from the rib of Prophet Adam (a.s.). Muhammad bin Amr, through Abu Ashim from Isa, who heard from Ibn Abi Najih through Mujahid, stated that Eve was created from Adam's rib while he was asleep, and when he woke up, Adam referred to her as his wife in the Nibti language. Bisyr bin Mu'adz, through Yazid and Sa'id from Qatadah, and Musa bin Harun, through Amr bin Hammad and Asbath from As-Suddi, also reported similar statements. Ibn Humaid, through Salamah from Ibn Ishaq and Abdullah bin Abbas, added that Eve was created from Adam's left rib. Muhammad bin Al Husain, through Ahmad bin Mufaḍḍal and Asbat from As-Suddi, confirmed that Eve originated from Adam (Al-Ṭabarī, 1999, p. 515).

In this regard, al-Rāzī, in interpreting this verse, affirms that scholars unanimously agree that the term "one soul" in this context refers to Prophet Adam (a.s.), even though the word "soul" indicates singularity. A similar use of the word "soul" can be found in another verse, such as Allah's words: "Did you kill an innocent soul without [a right] cause?" (Surah Al-Kahfi: 74). To support his argument, al-Rāzī includes a poem: "Your father is a caliph born from another caliph, and you are a caliph, and that is perfection" (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 163).

Continuing his interpretation, al-Rāzī explains the meaning of Allah's words, *wa khalaqa minha zawjaha*, وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا ("And from it He created its mate"), referring to the creation of Eve from Adam. There are two main perspectives: Most scholars believe that Allah created Eve from one of Adam's ribs while he was asleep, and when Adam woke, he felt connected to Eve because she came from a part of him. This view is supported by the saying of the Prophet Muhammad that women were created from a crooked rib. The second view, from Abu Muslim al-Asfahani, argues that Eve was created from the same type as Adam, referencing other Qur'anic verses that describe the creation of pairs of the same kind. Al-Qadhi supports the first opinion, reasoning that if Eve had been created separately, humanity would have originated from two different entities, not one. However, al-Rāzī adds that the word "from" here signifies the beginning of creation, so it is appropriate to say, "He created you from one soul." Allah, who has the power to create Adam from clay, also has the ability to create Eve from clay, making the creation from Adam's rib more symbolic. Al-Rāzī refers to the views of scholars from the *tabi'in* generation to further support this interpretation (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 167).

4.1.2. Surah An-Nisa' Verse 34 on Male Leadership over Women

Allah says:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ٣٤

Meaning:

"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. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). For Allah is Most High, Great (above you all)". (Q.S. An-Nisa' [4]: 34).

Imam al-Ṭabarī explains that the phrase *al-rijālu qawwāmūn 'alā al-nisā'* الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ ("Men are the protectors and maintainers of women") means that men are responsible for educating and guiding their wives in fulfilling their duties toward Allah and their husbands. This is due to the advantages Allah has given men, such as the responsibility to provide a dowry, financial support, and meet the needs of their wives. Therefore, men are designated as leaders over their wives and are to carry out the duties that Allah has ordained (Al-Ṭabarī, 1999b, p. 290).

To support his argument, Imam al-Ṭabarī includes hadiths that strengthen his interpretation. Abdullah bin Ṣalih narrated from Mu'awiyah bin Ṣalih, through Ali bin Abi Ṭalhah from Ibn Abbas, that men must be obeyed by women in matters that Allah has commanded, including being kind to family members and safeguarding wealth. Ishaq, from Abu Zuhair through Luwaibir from Ad-Dahhak, stated that a husband has the right to instruct his wife to obey Allah and may lightly discipline her if she disobeys. Ahmad bin Mufaḍḍal, through Asbat from As-Suddi, confirmed that men have the authority to guide their wives. Hibban bin Musa, through Ibn Mubarak from Sufyan, emphasized that Allah has given men superiority over women (Al-Ṭabarī, 1999, p. 291).

Al-Rāzī begins his interpretation of verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa' by explaining how he develops his egalitarian perspective (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 90). He notes that when Allah says, "And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others" (Surah An-Nisa': 32), he is referring to women protesting that men receive a larger share of inheritance. The verse explains that men's greater inheritance is due to their financial responsibilities toward women. Allah commands men to provide dowries and financial support for their wives, so the privileges granted to one side balance those given to the other. The term *qawwām* means full responsibility, such as safeguarding the interests of the spouse. Ibn Abbas explains that the verse addresses Sa'ad bin al-Rabi', who struck his wife, demonstrating the responsibility and authority men have over women. Prophet Muhammad confirmed that Allah has given men authority over women, abolishing retaliatory punishment, and granting men significant influence in family affairs due to specific qualities Allah has given them (Al-Rāzī, 1981, pp. 90-91).

Men's superiority over women is based on natural characteristics such as knowledge and strength, as well as religious decrees. Men are superior in intelligence, bravery, physical strength, and roles in society, such as being prophets, scholars, leaders, and engaging in jihad. They also hold superiority in matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, and the number of wives allowed (Al-Qurtubi, 2006, p. 90). Additionally, this superiority is tied to financial responsibilities, such as paying the dowry and supporting the wife. Al-Rāzī explains that the

obligation to pay the dowry and provide for the wife is the second reason behind the concept of *qiwāmah* mentioned in this verse (Al-Rāzī, 1981, p. 91).

4.2. Critical Discussion of Modern-Contemporary Scholars on the Interpretations of al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī

4.2.1. Surah An-Nisa' Verse 1 Regarding the Creation of Eve

The interpretation of verse 1 of Surah An-Nisa' by al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī emphasizes that Eve was created from Adam, with her creation derived from Adam's rib. This interpretation implies the emergence of a negative stigma that places men in a superior position compared to women, reinforcing a patriarchal concept that marginalizes women's roles in various aspects of life. Modern-contemporary Tafsir scholars have addressed the consequences of this interpretation. They use a contextual method to reinterpret the Qur'an in order to create better justice for women.

Modern-day Tafsir scholars like Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Nasaruddin Umar, Riffat Hassan, Zaitunah Subhan, Musdah Mulia, Husein Muhammad, and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir have different ideas about how to understand verse 1 of Surah An-Nisa' in the Qur'an, especially when it comes to how humans and Eve were made. Amina Wadud interprets the term 'nafs' as 'self' and considers the word 'min' as an analogy, emphasizing unity in the creation of humanity (Wadud, 2001, p. 19). Asma Barlas rejects the Greek gender dualism in traditional tafsir and advocates for gender equality in Islam (Barlas, 2003, p. 130). Nasaruddin Umar (Umar, 2001, p. 218) and Riffat Hassan (Hassan, 1995, p. 104) criticize the traditional view that Eve was created from Adam's rib, arguing that this is not explicitly stated in the Qur'an and is more influenced by non-Islamic sources.

Zaitunah Subhan (Subhan, 1993, p. 8) and Musdah Mulia (Mulia, 2011, p. 110) highlight that *nafs wāhidah* does not exclusively refer to Adam, and the Qur'an does not explicitly state that Eve was created from his rib. This view is more commonly found in hadith than in the Qur'an itself. Husein Muhammad observes that the Qur'an does not explicitly support the cultural inheritance of Eve's creation from Adam's rib (Muhammad, 2007, p. 30). Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir also critiques this traditional belief, affirming that it is more a result of interpretations by scholars influenced by Jewish and Christian cultures (Kodir, 2019, p. 239).

Overall, these scholars emphasize the importance of reinterpreting verses related to gender, especially verses 1 and 34 of Surah An-Nisa', to reflect the principles of equality and justice in Islam.

4.2.2. Surah An-Nisa' Verse 34 on Male Leadership over Women

Modern-contemporary tafsir scholars, such as Amina Wadud (Wadud, 2001, p. 96), Asma Barlas (Barlas, 2003, p. 5), and Nasaruddin Umar (Umar, 2001, p. 200), explore the interpretation of verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa' in the Qur'an, highlighting issues of gender equality and social change. They reject the idea of male superiority over women, interpreting the verse as emphasizing shared responsibility within the family. Riffat Hassan (Anam, 2019, p. 172), Zaitunah Subhan (Subhan, 2015, p. 105), Musdah Mulia (Mulia, 2007, p. 8), and Husein Muhammad (Muhammad, 2007, p. 146) echo similar thoughts, emphasizing equal opportunities between men and women.

Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir interprets *qiwāmah* as an individual responsibility that transcends gender, while the *mubādalah* perspective emphasizes that familial responsibilities are not exclusively assigned to men. The relationship between spouses is anticipated to be founded on partnership and collaboration, encompassing financial contributions from women. The term *al-rijālu*, typically linked to men, encompasses those who uphold purity, engage in the remembrance of Allah, and fulfill their commitments to Him, irrespective of gender (Kodir, 2019, p. 381). This indicates substantial efforts to transform the comprehension of gender in Islam, highlighting equality, justice, and balance. The contemporary period underscores the significance of inclusive and contextual interpretations of the Qur'an.

The interpretations of Imam al-Ṭabarī and Imam al-Rāzī exhibit a tendency toward gender bias and maintain significant influence within the Islamic scholarly tradition, with perspectives that remain pertinent in contemporary discourse. Their approach was significantly shaped by social and intellectual contexts, as well as their personal experiences in the pursuit of knowledge. This is reminiscent of the modern psychological theory of the butterfly effect (Swallow, 2023, p. 20), which explains how small actions can have significant impacts in the future, both positive and negative. In the context of religious interpretation, this underscores the importance of re-examining interpretations related to gender, especially in the context of key verses such as An-Nisa' verses 1 and 34.

4.3. Gender Equality in Surah An-Nisa' Verses 1 and 34 from a Qur'anic Perspective

Surah An-Nisa' verses 1 and 34 emphasize the principle of equality between men and women through a specific and detailed approach. Verse 1 affirms that all humans were created from a single soul (*nafs wāhidah*), namely Prophet Adam, and from this soul, Allah created his partner, Eve. This illustrates that men and women share the same origin and equal dignity. This verse also reminds all of humanity to fear Allah and maintain familial relationships, reflecting the importance of mutual respect and support between men and women in society (Al-Jassas, 2005, p. 40).

Verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa', on the other hand, addresses the role of men as protectors (*qawwām*) of women. The term *qawwām* derives from the word *qāma*, meaning to stand or to guard, signifying that men have the responsibility to protect and provide for their families. This is not a statement of superiority but rather a division of roles based on responsibility and each person's abilities within the household context. This verse also explains that righteous women are those who are obedient to Allah and safeguard themselves when their husbands are not present. If there are concerns about disobedience (*nusyuz*) on the part of the wife, the measures taken should be gradual: starting with advice, followed by separating beds, and, if necessary, firmer measures, though always within humane and compassionate limits (Mir-Hosseini, 1999, p. 60).

These two verses teach that equality in Islam is not about identical roles but about equal respect and responsibility. Both men and women originate from the same source and hold equal human dignity. Various aspects of life assign them different roles, yet these differences do not diminish their value or rights as individuals. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, cooperation, and the fulfillment of responsibilities with sincerity and devotion to Allah. Thus, the principle of equality in the Qur'an involves respecting differences while ensuring

cooperation within a balanced framework of rights and responsibilities between men and women (Ahmed, 1992, p. 72).

It should also be noted that Qur'anic interpretation reflects the context of its time and is designed to address relevant issues during specific periods (Al-Khuli, 2021, p. 210). Each tafsir, as a "product of its time," mirrors the societal issues and obstacles prevalent during its composition. Tafsir, with its flexibility in interpretation, adapts to social dynamics, intellectual developments, and the progression of thought over time. For example, a 9th-century tafsir might address issues differently than a 12th-century or contemporary tafsir. Therefore, tafsir should be understood as a response to the specific conditions of its era, demonstrating that Qur'anic interpretation is dynamic and evolves in accordance with historical context (Lemu, 2023, p. 150).

The interpretations of Imam al-Ṭabarī and Imam al-Rāzī, which show a tendency toward gender bias, remain influential in Islamic scholarly tradition, carrying views that continue to be relevant today. Social and intellectual contexts, along with their personal experiences in pursuing knowledge, strongly influenced their approach. This is reminiscent of the modern psychological theory of the butterfly effect (Swallow, 2023, p. 20), which explains how small actions can have significant impacts in the future, both positive and negative. In the context of religious interpretation, this underscores the importance of re-examining interpretations related to gender, especially in the context of key verses such as An-Nisa' verses 1 and 34.

5. CONCLUSION

In the interpretation of Surah An-Nisa' verse 1, al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī understood that Eve was created from Adam, reinforcing male superiority in patriarchal tradition with the argument that Eve originated from Adam's rib. However, modern tafsir scholars such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Nasaruddin Umar reject this view, interpreting "nafs" as referring to the unity of humanity without any connotation of gender superiority, emphasizing equality in Islam. Regarding Surah An-Nisa' verse 34, al-Ṭabarī and al-Rāzī interpreted men as the rightful leaders over their wives due to the advantages given by Allah, with financial responsibility as the foundation of their authority. However, modern-contemporary tafsir scholars reject this view, interpreting *qiwāmah* as shared responsibility regardless of gender, emphasizing partnership in the household and gender equality in Islam. This reflects efforts to understand Qur'anic verses contextually and inclusively, supporting the principles of equality and justice.

These two verses affirm equality in Islam as respect for the same human dignity for both men and women, though with different roles in life. The Qur'an encourages mutual respect, cooperation, and fulfilling responsibilities with fairness and devotion to Allah. In Islam, equality is not about assuming identical roles, but about respecting existing differences and granting each individual balanced rights and responsibilities in accordance with the wisdom and justice of the religion.

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