

## CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE MEANING OF *Kafa>'ah* IN QS. AN-NUR [24]: 26; Application of Contextual Interpretation of Abdullah

Saeed

<https://uia.e-journal.id/alrisalah/article/3833>

DOI 10.34005/alrisalah.v15i2.3833

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**ABSTRACT:** *Kafa>'ah in Islamic law is the compatibility between men and women. Although it is not included in the valid requirements of marriage, it is important to pay attention to the concept of kafa>'ah, which in this case is implicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. One of them is QS. An-Nur verse 26. It implies that a good woman will get a good man, and vice versa. This will be connected with what often happens among the habaib. Sharifah is not allowed to marry a non Sayyid. Kafa>ah how is meant in the verse when associated with this modern era. So this study will be studied about how the contextual meaning of QS. An-Nur verse 26 uses Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation. This type of research is library research (literature) and uses descriptive-analytical methods. It starts by explaining the meaning of kafa>'ah, Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation theory, and applying the contextual theory to. This research reviews the meaning of kafa>'ah in QS. An-Nur verse 26 with Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach. The results show that kafa>'ah in marriage does not only include aspects of nasab, religion, morals, wealth, and position but also takes into account the feelings between partners. This allows them to understand, support, and appreciate each other in all aspects of life, facing trials and challenges together.*

**Keywords:** *Kafa>'ah*; contextual; Abdullah Saeed; QS. An-Nur [24]: 26



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## A. Introduction

In the Islamic view marriage is considered an idealized goal that not only physically unites a man and a woman, but also a binding social contract with various obligations and responsibilities. Marriage can be defined as an official and legal bond between two socially, culturally, and often religiously recognized individuals, to form a family and establish a sustainable relationship. More than just a romantic relationship, marriage involves a deep commitment between partners to support, respect, and be responsible for each other.<sup>1</sup>

To form a harmonious and peaceful family, it is important to choose a life partner wisely, considering certain criteria that can affect domestic happiness. After marriage, all aspects of domestic life should be decided through deliberation between husband and wife. In these deliberations, the principles of openness and camaraderie are essential, where each family member should feel equal and no one should dominate. In this way, a conducive atmosphere will be created, allowing each family member to complement and support each other, both in joy and sorrow, thus achieving harmony and tranquility in the family. To be able to lead to a harmonious family as intended, Muslims need to apply the concept of equality or *kafa'ah* as a basic principle.<sup>2</sup>

As research conducted by Nida shows, the concept of *kafa'ah* plays an important role in maintaining family resilience. *Kafa'ah*, which refers to equality in marriage, can minimize both physical and mental disputes in the household. When couples are equal, they are better able to cooperate and support each other in facing the challenges of daily life. This equality covers various aspects, including social background, education, and religious values, all of which contribute to domestic harmony.

By applying the concept of *kafa'ah*, couples can create an environment conducive to mutual benefit, where each individual feels valued and treated fairly. This not only reduces conflict but also strengthens the emotional and spiritual bond between husband and wife. In the long run, equality in marriage helps couples achieve the goals of marriage which include family happiness, stability, and well-being. Therefore, understanding and applying *kafa'ah* in marriage is an important step towards achieving resilience and success in married life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jahwa, Elvina, Desi Pitriani Siregar, M. Riski Harahap, Ihsan Mubarak, dan Ali Akbar. 2024. "Konsep Perkawinan Dalam Hukum Islam Dan Hukum Nasional Di Indonesia." *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 4 (1): 1692–1705.

<sup>2</sup> Asman, Asman. 2020. "Keluarga Sakinah Dalam Kajian Hukum Islam." *Al-Qadha : Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Perundang-Undangan* 7 (2): 99–116.

<sup>3</sup> Nida, Salma. 2022. "Konsep Kafa'ah Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Ketahanan Keluarga." *Isti'dal : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 9 (2): 212–30.

*Kafa> 'ah* as a basic Islamic principle in selecting potential life partners is important to study, especially in the context of contemporary life. This concept, which refers to suitability or equality, is a relevant focus of study in understanding the social and moral structure in Muslim societies. The equality in question has led to differences of opinion, both among the mufasir. Differences in terms of meaning and in terms of law. In this case Quraish Shihab directs the concept of *kafa> 'ah* to moral and religious. Because building a household must pay more attention to *sakinah, mawaddah, rahmah*, and Allah's mandate which is the binding rope of a marriage. If love and *mawaddah* have faded, there is still grace that binds it. If the grace has faded, there is still Allah's trust that remains. And the trust will be preserved if both are religiously observant.<sup>4</sup>

Problems related to *kafaah*, or equality in marriage in the story of the marriage of Syarifah Nanik bint Ahmad as-Segaf and Syarifah Anis bint Idrus al-Hamid. Both were married to non-sayyid men, individuals who did not come from the direct lineage of the Prophet Muhammad. This poses a major challenge due to the traditional norm among *habāib*s that requires *sharifah* to marry a sayyid to maintain the purity of the lineage. In the case of Syarifah Nanik, although her father initially approved, social pressure from the community led to a change in attitude. Syarifah Nanik had to fight hard to convince her father to give his blessing, which was finally obtained after the intervention of a family cleric.<sup>5</sup>

From the above problems, the meaning of *kafa> 'ah* will be explored contextualized with the contextual theory proposed by Abdullah Saeed. Saeed's contextualization theory focuses on understanding religious texts by considering the current social, cultural and historical context. This research will examine how the concept of *kafa> 'ah* can be applied in contemporary life by considering the social changes that occur. The aim is to find a relevant and applicable understanding of *kafa> 'ah*, so that this principle can be implemented effectively in fostering harmonious and stable households in the modern era. This research will also explore how the concept of equality in marriage can be adapted to the challenges and dynamics of today's society, as well as how Islamic values can be interpreted to support healthy and prosperous family life.

Abdullah Saeed's works, such as "Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach" and also related studies on the contextual interpretation of the Qur'an, provide a solid foundation for exploring the meaning and implications of the principle of *kafa> 'ah*,

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<sup>4</sup> Shihab, M. Quraish. 1999. *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*. Bandung: Mizan.

<sup>5</sup> Masruroh. 2014. "Pernikahan Syarifah Dengan Non-Sayyid Di Patokan Kraksaan Probolinggo Perspektif Imam Malik Dan Imam Syafi'i." *Al-Hukama: The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Family Law* 4 (1): 85–124.

especially QS. al-Nur verse 26. This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the principle of *kafa>'ah* can be translated and applied in everyday life, especially in the context of marriage and interpersonal relationships.

## **B. Research methods**

This research uses a type of library research, which involves collecting information from sources such as books, books, and scientific articles relevant to the topic of *kafa>'ah* in the Qur'an using Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach which he wrote in his work entitled *Interpreting the Quran; Towards a Contemporary Approach*. This study aims to analyze the relevance of the meaning of *kafa>'ah* in the Qur'an if it is drawn to contemporary meaning.

The researcher uses the descriptive-analytical method to analyze the concept of a particular episteme descriptively, followed by a critical analysis. The systematics used in this research begins by discussing the meaning of *kafa>'ah* in general, Abdullah Saeed's contextual theory, and the application of Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation theory to QS. An-Nur verse 26.III. Research Results and Discussion.

## **C. Discussion result**

### **The Concept of *Kafa>'ah***

*Kafa>'ah* comes from Arabic, from the word كفى, which means the same or equal. In the context of fiqh, *kafa>'ah* is also referred to as a match, which means the same, similar, balanced, or harmonious. According to H. Abd. Rahman Ghazali, *kafa>'ah* or kufu, in Arabic, refers to equality, balance, or compatibility between partners, where both are of the same level, equal, or equivalent. In the context of Islamic law, *kafa>'ah* or kufu in marriage refers to the balance and suitability between prospective husbands and wives so that both are not burdened by marriage. Ibn Mandzur defines that *kafa>'ah* is a state of suitability, compatibility, and balance in terms of religion, lineage, position, and so on between prospective husbands and wives. Sayyid Sabiq says that *kafa>'ah* means the same, commensurate or balanced. The meaning of *kafa>'ah* in marriage is that men are comparable and equal in morals, social level, and wealth.<sup>7</sup>

*Kafa>'ah* plays an important role in the context of marriage, although it is not an absolute necessity. Compatibility with a partner is intended to create harmony in forming a

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<sup>6</sup> Nida, Salma. 2022. "Konsep Kafa'ah Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Ketahanan Keluarga." *Isti'dal : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 9 (2): 212–30.

<sup>7</sup> Nafisah, Zahrotun, dan Uswatun Khasanah. 2018. "Komparasi Konsep Kafa'ah Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab Dan Fiqh Empat Mazhab." *Isti'dal : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 5 (2): 126–40.

happy and loving household, by the concept of *sakinah, mawaddah wa rahmah*. Thus, the purpose of marriage can be achieved if there is harmony and balance between partners. Incompatibility between husband and wife often results in differences in views and lifestyles that can lead to conflict, even leading to divorce.<sup>8</sup> The mention of *kafa'ah* in the Qur'an does not directly refer to the concept of compatibility or balance in marriage. However, the principles underlying the concept of *kafa'ah* can be found in Qur'anic verses that emphasize the importance of unity, cooperation, and harmony in relationships between individuals, including in the context of marriage.

Among them in Surah Ar-Rum verse 21, Allah says: "And among the signs of His power is that He created for you mates of your kind, that you may tend to them and feel secure in them, and He made between you love and affection. Indeed, in such things, there are signs for those who think." This verse shows that Allah created life partners for humans so that they complement each other, feel at ease, and love each other. Although the word *kafa'ah* is not directly mentioned here, the principles contained in the concept, such as compatibility, harmony, and complementarity, can be interpreted from this verse.

QS. al-Baqarah verse 221 emphasizes the importance of compatibility between believing couples. The verse states, "And do not marry polytheist women (to believing men) before they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist woman, even if she appeals to your heart. And you should not marry polytheists (to believing women) before they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even if he attracts you. They invite to hell, while Allah invites to paradise and forgiveness with His permission. And Allah explains His verses to men that they may learn."

In this verse, Allah emphasizes that compatibility of faith between partners is very important in marriage. Marrying a believer to a polytheist, or vice versa, can result in disharmony in the relationship. Allah points out that a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even if the slave attracts you with his charms. This confirms that the compatibility of faith and beliefs in marriage is more important than other factors such as social status or physical attractiveness. With shared beliefs and values, couples can support each other and strengthen their marital bond, as well as be better able to cope with differences and challenges that may arise in married life.

QS. al-Hujurat verse 13 states, "O mankind, indeed We created you from a man and a woman and We made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the

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<sup>8</sup> Rasjid, Sulaiman. 1996. *Fiqh Islam*. Bandung: Sinar Baru.

noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah knows best.” This verse underlines the importance of brotherhood and getting to know each other. In the context of marriage, the compatibility of faith, piety, and values is key in building a harmonious relationship. Despite differences in ethnicity, race, or nation, similarities in piety and faith are more important.

QS. An-Nur verse 26, Allah SWT says: “Women who are not good for good men, and men who are not good for good women. And good women for good men, and good men for good women” This verse emphasizes the principle of equality in the choice of life partners. It is not good for a good man to marry a bad woman, and vice versa. Similarly, a good woman should not marry a bad man. Equality in good and bad here emphasizes the importance of moral and character compatibility in building a healthy and harmonious marital relationship. In the context of QS. An-Nur verse 26, the principle of *kafa* > *‘ah* emphasizes the importance of moral and character compatibility between partners. A good partner will complement and support each other in building a household based on cleanliness, honesty, and sincerity.

Thus, *kafa* > *‘ah* plays an important role in maintaining the harmony and sustainability of marital relationships in Islam. Thus, although the Qur'an may not explicitly discuss the concept of *kafa* > *‘ah*, the values contained in the concept can be found and understood in verses that emphasize the importance of a harmonious and complementary relationship between husband and wife in marriage. Islam also emphasizes the importance of *kafa* > *‘ah* as in the hadith:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : تَخَيَّرُوا لِنُطْفِكُمْ وَانكِحُوا الْأَكْفَاءَ

وَانكِحُوا إِلَيْهِمْ

Aisha ra. reported that the Prophet said: Choose for your daughters (a good match). Marry those who are compatible with you and marry your daughters to them. (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI 2019)

This Hadīth emphasizes that equality and compatibility in various aspects of life, including religion, morals, and social status, are important factors to be considered in marriage. By understanding and applying the principle of *kafa* > *‘ah*, married couples can create a strong, harmonious, and lasting relationship, in accordance with the values taught in

Islam. *Kafa> 'ah* is not just about finding similarities, but also about building a solid foundation for long-term family happiness and tranquility.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Abdullah Saeed's Contextual Interpretation of the Qur'an**

Before explaining his contextual interpretation, Saeed clarifies his view of revelation. According to him, the Qur'an and hadith are revelations that are divided into *matlu* revelations (those that can be read by the Qur'an) and *ghoiru matlu* revelations (those that cannot be read (hadith)). Although the Qur'an has a higher position, both have almost equal authority in the context of legal ethics. Ghaziy also asserts that both come from the same source, the Word of God, although they are delivered in different ways.<sup>9</sup>

Saeed does not fully agree with the theory that every word of the Qur'ān and hadith is binding regardless of the context of time, place and conditions, as both are considered divine revelation, which may limit the flexibility of Muslims in developing laws according to changing needs. The Qur'an generally gives laws in general terms while the hadith gives specific rules but not all issues are covered by them. Restricting interpretation only to the understanding of the past may hinder the development of thought in interpreting both.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, he did not just build his premise. His initial approach begins with his understanding of the concept of revelation. Saeed's view of revelation is not too different from Rahman's, especially in emphasizing the psychological and historical aspects of revelation. Saeed believes that the Qur'an is a divine revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad, and the perfection of the Qur'anic text in the Ottoman Mushaf is considered authentic.<sup>11</sup> However, Saeed emphasizes the need to reconstruct an understanding of the socio-historical context in which the Qur'an was revealed. He asserts that the Qur'an was revealed in response to the problems faced by society at that time. By considering the complexity of social, cultural, political and economic realities, Saeed states that the understanding of revelation must be adjusted to the socio-historical context that influenced it.<sup>12</sup>

The second is the importance of flexibility in the use of texts. In the early days of Islam, people were given the freedom to interpret the Qur'anic text in various ways. This suggests that flexibility in reading the text may also indicate support for flexibility in interpreting the

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<sup>9</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2006. *Interpreting the Quran; Towards a Contemporary Approach*. London: Routledge.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2006. *Interpreting the Quran; Towards a Contemporary Approach*. London: Routledge.

<sup>12</sup> Jayana, Thoriq Aziz. 2019. "Model Interpretasi Alquran dalam Pendekatan Tafsir Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed." *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 3 (1): 37–52.

Qur'ān, particularly in relation to verses relating to legal ethics. While most Muslims may take the view that flexibility in reading the Qur'ān is not directly related to the process of interpretation, it is worth considering that such flexibility may be an attempt to meet the needs of communities with different dialects.<sup>13</sup> In this regard Saeed also refers to two classic phenomena that underline the contextual approach in interpretation, namely *nasikh mansukh* and flexibility of meaning in *sab'ah ahruf*.<sup>14</sup>

Abdullah Saeed offers a contextual approach to understanding the Qur'an, given the vast differences between the needs of Muslim societies in the 21st century and the socio-historical context in which the Qur'an was revealed. He argues that Muslims' bondage to the literal or grammatical-theological interpretation of Qur'ānic texts has hindered an understanding that is in line with current social realities. Therefore, further research into Qur'anic values in the current social, cultural and value contexts is essential to revive Islamic sciences that have begun to experience stagnation.<sup>15</sup>

Saeed offers a model of context-based *ijtihad*, which involves understanding the Qur'anic text and its socio-historical context, followed by application in everyday life. This model aims to understand contemporary issues by using knowledge of legal history in the context of the past. On the other hand, the text-based *ijtihad* model or classical traditional model gives full reign to texts, such as the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the opinions of early Islamic scholars. The *ijma'* and *qiyas* methods dominate in the law-making process. Meanwhile, eclectic *ijtihad* involves selecting texts that support a held opinion, more concerned with the justification of subjective ideas than the search for truth. For example, in the issue of usury, Saeed's approach considers mapping the needs of debtors in productive and consumptive loans, as an effort of Islamic protection of the weak. Saeed's thinking is also influenced by the modern concept of human rights, which leads him to equate the concept of justice in the perspective of human rights.<sup>16</sup>

In general, Muslims often view the Qur'ān as a legal text, although much of it also contains other ethical aspects. Saeed argues that there is a section of the Qur'ān known as the

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<sup>13</sup> Putra, Afriadi. 2017. "Isu Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Penafsiran Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Warisan." *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 7 (2): 209–20.

<sup>14</sup> Jayana, Thoriq Aziz. 2019. "Model Interpretasi Alquran dalam Pendekatan Tafsir Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed." *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 3 (1): 37–52.

<sup>15</sup> Handriyani, Yessi, dan Muhamad Azhar. 2023. "Menyelami Kearifan Kontekstual: Pemahaman Mendalam Terhadap Metode dan Teori Penafsiran Pemikiran Abdullah Saeed." *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* (E-ISSN 2745-4584) 4 (1): 440–54.

<sup>16</sup> Handriyani, Yessi, dan Muhamad Azhar. 2023. "Menyelami Kearifan Kontekstual: Pemahaman Mendalam Terhadap Metode dan Teori Penafsiran Pemikiran Abdullah Saeed." *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* (E-ISSN 2745-4584) 4 (1): 440–54.



“ethico-legal texts”, which is the focal point of attention in the study of Islamic law. This section includes verses that address various aspects of life, such as beliefs, worship practices such as prayer and fasting, marriage and inheritance regulations, prohibitions and commands, and relations with non-Muslims and the government. Over a period of 14 centuries, Muslim communities have taken these verses as the basis for developing an Islamic legal framework often referred to as “Islamic Law” or “Shari’ah”.<sup>17</sup> Increased attention to legal verses became ingrained in subsequent developments, with verses that did not have legal implications often overlooked. This error occurred due to the overemphasis on legal verses, despite the fact that the Qur’an provides little explicit information about the law in it.<sup>18</sup>

One of the hallmarks of Abdullah Saeed's thought is his theory of the hierarchy of values in relation to ethico-legal texts, which is an important foundation in his contextual interpretation project. This move is in line with the attempt to perfect the moral ideal introduced by Fazlur Rahman. The aim is to develop a new understanding of the Qur’ān that is relevant to our times and can be applied by Muslim communities in addressing their local wisdom. Saeed identifies a hierarchy of values for ethico-legal texts, including:<sup>19</sup>

### **1. Oblatory values**

These values are related to verses that establish obligations (which do not change and cannot be changed). Examples are verses relating to belief (the oneness of Allah, the prohibition of worshipping other than Allah, etc.), worship (prayer, fasting, hajj, dhikr, etc.), and those regulating halal and haram (which are clearly mentioned in the Qur’an). These are obligations that are fixed and unchanging, repeated many times in the Qur’an, and are universal.

### **2. Fundamental values**

Saeed considers fundamental values to be those that are consistently emphasized in the Qur’ān and supported by strong textual evidence, indicating that they are part of the basic teachings of the Qur’ān. This highlights basic human values, such as justice. Early scholars, such as Imam As-Syatibi, referred to them as *maqasid ash-shari’ah* (the main purpose of sharia), while in Fazlur Rahman's study these values are referred to as universal principles.

### **3. Protectional values.**

Protective values are values that originate from fundamental values and function to protect and maintain the existence of these basic values. For example, if the fundamental

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<sup>17</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2008. *The Qur’an: an Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>18</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2006. *Interpreting the Quran; Towards a Contemporary Approach*. London: Routledge.

<sup>19</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2016. *Al-Qur’an Abad 21; Tafsir Kontekstual, terj. Ervan Nurtawab*. Bandung: Mizan. P. 21

value is “safeguarding property” (hifdz mal) in maqasid ash-shari'ah, then the protective value is the prohibition of stealing for every individual. Since this protective value is derived from the fundamental value, its universality still applies.

#### **4. Implementational values**

Implementational values are the steps taken to implement the protectional values. For example, in relation to the prohibition of stealing, if someone is caught stealing, a punishment will be imposed as a form of justice. According to Saeed, these implementational values are not universally applicable because many factors need to be considered, such as the existence of different legal reasons, socio-cultural contexts, historical facts, and so on. This can lead to exceptions from the main law (the literal meaning of the text) for certain reasons.

#### **5. Instructional values.**

These values relate to the action taken by the Qur'ān on a particular issue that arose at the time of the revelation. They can be prohibitions or commands aimed at dealing with specific situations that occurred at the time of the Prophet (the time of the revelation). Since these values relate to the context of the time of revelation, they are not necessarily universal.

From the beginning, Saeed has emphasized that in the modern era, an acceptable method of interpretation should not ignore the classical interpretive tradition altogether. Rather, he believes that it is important to appreciate, study, and utilize the still relevant and useful aspects of the tradition in the context of contemporary issues. Saeed believes that formulating a new model of interpretation requires a process that involves sifting, developing, critically questioning, and adding to the existing tradition. Therefore, Saeed does not reject tradition, but instead uses it as a foundation to show that context-based Qur'anic interpretation is not only necessary but must also take into account the context of the past.<sup>20</sup> The methodical steps of Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation, including

**First**, Saeed's research on the Qur'an understands the relationship between the process of revelation of the Qur'an as the word of God and the role of the Prophet Muhammad in the socio-historical context. This is important because there is a dynamic interaction between the Prophet's teachings and the Qur'anic response to social dynamics. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad is not only seen as a passive recipient of revelation, but also as an active agent in conveying and interpreting revelation.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Putra, Afriadi. 2017. “Isu Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Penafsiran Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Warisan.” *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 7 (2): 209–20.

<sup>21</sup> Putra, Afriadi. 2017. “Isu Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Penafsiran Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Warisan.” *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 7 (2): 209–20.

In the introduction to his book, "Interpreting the Quran: Towards a Contemporary Approach", Saeed confirms his belief in revelation before developing his model of interpretation. He fully recognizes that the Qur'ān is a revelation of God received by Muhammad, and regards the current Qur'ān as authentic. However, Saeed criticizes the views of classical Muslim scholars who only consider revelation as the word of God without considering the role of the Prophet and society at the time. Instead, he agrees with some modern thinkers, such as Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Farid Esack, and Ebrahim Moosa, who include the religious figures of the Prophet and his community in the process of revelation.

**Second**, at the stage of critical analysis of the text, an interpreter focuses on the text itself without regard to the context of the time of revelation or the current context. This involves linguistic analysis, including the use of words, phrases, and sentences in the verse, as well as the context before and after the verse. In addition, the interpreter understands the type of text, whether it is history, prayer, proverb, parable, or law, and identifies verses that have a similar intent.<sup>22</sup>

Third, the interpreter relates the text to the context of the first recipient of revelation. Saeed outlines five stages in this process. First, is contextual analysis, which involves identifying socio-historical aspects that can explain the meaning of the text as well as understanding the worldview and culture of the first recipients of the Qur'ān in Hijaz. Second, determining the nature of the text's message whether theological, legal, or ethical. Third, examining the focus of the text's message and determining whether its message is universal or relevant to the context of the first recipients of revelation. Fourth, finding the relationship of the verse to the main purpose of the Qur'ān. Fifth, reviewing the classical interpreter's approach to the Qur'ān.

Fourth, the interpreter relates the text to the current context. Saeed outlines six steps to be taken in this process. First, determining the issues relevant to the message of the text being interpreted. Second, investigate the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts that correspond to the text. Third, explore current values, norms and institutions. Fourth, compare the present context with the socio-historical context of the text to understand similarities and differences. Fifth, linking classical interpretations with contemporary interpretations by noting similarities and differences. Sixth, evaluating the universal or specific aspects of the verse with the broader purpose of the Qur'ān.

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<sup>22</sup> Jayana, Thoriq Aziz. 2019. "Model Interpretasi Alquran dalam Pendekatan Tafsir Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed." *AL QUDDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 3 (1): 37–52.

Saeed offers four stages in the contextual interpretation method, which shows a structured and universal approach. Thoroughness and patience are required in interpreting Qur'anic verses objectively using the contextual interpretation method. However, Saeed also emphasizes that there is a limitation in contextual interpretation, which is to consider whether or not the revealed revelation can be applied in the current context. If it cannot be applied, then the verse is included in the historical verse that is not relevant to the context of today.

From the description above, Abdullah Saeed offers four stages in the contextual interpretation method that provide a systematic and universal picture. In the process of interpreting the Qur'an using the contextual interpretation approach, Saeed emphasizes the importance of accuracy and patience in studying the verses of the Qur'an objectively. He considers whether the revelation can be applied in the context of our current times. If not, then the verse is considered part of the historical context that is irrelevant for practical application.

### **Application of Contextual Interpretation on QS. An-Nur verse 26**

Just like Fazlur Rahman, Abdullah Saeed also did not produce a comprehensive interpretation of the Qur'an that covers all 30 juz. However, Saeed devotes his efforts to interpreting the Qur'an by applying the theoretical framework of contextual interpretation that he has developed. In this context, the focus of Saeed's interpretation is on verses related to gender issues, especially in the context of inheritance distribution for women.

The steps that can be taken to obtain meaning through Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation are as follows:

First, collecting verses that talk about *kafa* > 'ah, especially in QS. An-Nur [24]: 26 which is a principle in Islam, especially marriage.

الْحَيِّثُ لِلْحَيِّثِ وَالْحَيُّونَ لِلْحَيِّثِ وَالطَّيِّبُ لِلطَّيِّبِ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبِ أُولَٰئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا  
يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

Abominable women for abominable men and abominable men for abominable women, and good women for good men and good men for good women. They (the good ones) are clean from what people accuse them of. For them is forgiveness and glorious sustenance. This verse shows the purity of 'Aisha r.a. and Safwan from any accusations

leveled against them. The Messenger of Allah was the best of men. So, it was a good woman who became his wife.<sup>23</sup> (QS. An-Nur [24]: 26).

In addition to the verses mentioned, there are other verses that raise similar themes, although with different editorials and contexts. These verses are found in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 221, QS. An-Rum [30]: 21, QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13.

Second, analyzing the verse about *kafa* > 'ah from linguistics or language. The above verse, if examined linguistically based on tafsir al-Munir, al-khobitsat are women who are depraved, naughty, and immoral. Lilkhobitsin is intended for depraved, naughty, immoral men as well. Al-thoyyibat are good women, littoyyibin are for good men.<sup>24</sup> This means that good women are meant for good men, and bad women are meant for bad men.

Third, understanding the socio-historical context when the text was revealed. QS. An-Nur [24]: 26 is seen as a universal principle that remains valid throughout time. This basic principle has fundamental values, namely human rights to equality, justice, and compatibility in the family. The protective value of this verse is to maintain the values of *kafa* > 'ah in marriage. While the instructional value is if you want to get a good mate, then this verse implies to do good first.

This verse was delivered in response to the slanderous accusations directed at the Prophet's wife, Aisha r.a, which occurred after the war with Banu Mustaliq in Sha'ban of 5H.<sup>25</sup> While on her way back from the war, Aisha left the casket in which she was riding for some reason. Later she returned and realized that her necklace was no longer with her. While searching for the necklace, the war party left without realizing that 'A'ishah was no longer in the sack.

Safwan ibn Mu'attal, a companion of the Prophet, found Aisha sleeping alone and took her back to Medina. Although this event was interpreted differently by the people, slander was widespread, especially by the hypocrites. When the prophet asked her what defense she could offer, 'A'ishah replied that she would not make a defense until a verse of Allah came down spreading the truth. Then QS. An-Nur [24]: 26.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that this verse confirms the chastity of Siti Aisha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, from the negative accusations that accused her of having an affair with Safwan ibnu Mu'attal. Thus, this verse is seen as a divine

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<sup>23</sup> Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI. 2019. *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya; Edisi Penyempurnaan 2019*. Jakarta.

<sup>24</sup> Zuhaili, Wabbah. 1991. *Al-Tafsi>r Al-muni>r*. 7. Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Muashir.

<sup>25</sup> Shihab, M. Quraish. 2012. *Al-Lubab: Makna, Tujuan, dan Pelajaran dari Surat-surat Al-Qur'an*. Tangerang: Lentera Hati.

clarification that erases the accusation and confirms the impossibility of despicable behavior from a figure of such lofty standing as Aisha.

Fourth, harmonizing God's revelation with the current situation. Based on Abdullah Saeed's contextual theory, to get the meaning of QS. An-Nur [24]: 26 in a contemporary context, it is important to identify relevant issues, challenges and needs of today that are in line with the message contained in the interpreted text.<sup>26</sup>

The majority of fiqh scholars are of the opinion that although *kafa> 'ah* is not one of the valid conditions of marriage, it is very important to strive for a harmonious family.<sup>27</sup> In this case the text says that good women are for good men, and wretched women are for wretched men. If interpreted textually, a good woman is not equal to a bad or wicked man, and vice versa.

A study by Masruroh, in which there are problems that occur in relation to *kafa> 'ah* occurs in Patokan Kraksaan. Syarifah Nanik bint Ahmad as-Segaf who came from the descendants of the Prophet was asked by a man who was not in line with him named Sudarso. Seeing Sudarso's seriousness, Syarifah Nanik's parents agreed. Syarifah Nanik began to fall in love with him. Until one day Syarifah Nanik's father changed his mind to disapprove of her due to the talk of neighbors. Syarifah Nanik, who already loved him, tried to convince her father again. then got his approval again after being asked about it to his uncle in Jakarta, Habib Abdur Rahman as-Segaf. Nanik recognized that her marriage was taboo, blamed, and had to bear the shame of her marriage to a Javanese. After her marriage, no problems occurred between her and her family. Unlike others, she feels inferior if she gathers with Arabs of the as-Segaf clan. Nevertheless, she is grateful for it because she loves her husband very much. She stated that no one could replace her even if they were replaced by a thousand habaib.<sup>28</sup>

The problem is rooted in the assumption of equality by the Arab clans that if it is not in line of descent then it is not equal. whereas the purpose of *kafa> 'ah* itself is for the creation of a harmonious family. Why lineage can be a matter of ridicule. Whereas in QS. An-Nur verse 26 itself stems from the story of slander directed at Aisha so a verse was revealed showing that Aisha was a good person. And the Prophet would not marry except with good women. Thus, Aisha was free from these heinous accusations.

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<sup>26</sup> Saeed, Abdullah. 2016. *Al-Qur'an Abad 21; Tafsir Kontekstual*, terj. Ervan Nurtawab. Bandung: Mizan.

<sup>27</sup> Zuhaili, Wahbah. 2011. *Fiqh Islam 9*, terj. Abdul Hayyie al-Kattani dkk. Jakarta: Gema Insani.

<sup>28</sup> Masruroh. 2014. "Pernikahan Syarifah Dengan Non-Sayyid Di Patokan Kraksaan Probolinggo Perspektif Imam Malik Dan Imam Syafi'i." *Al-Hukama: The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Family Law* 4 (1): 85–124.

If drawn to the contemporary context, the good in question can be interpreted to mean good in feelings between the two parties. This means that equality in feelings and emotions can strengthen the marital relationship. Couples who consider *kafa*> *'ah* in emotional terms tend to have more harmonious and stable relationships. They understand, support, and appreciate each other in all aspects of life, so that they are able to go through various trials and challenges together.

This increasingly developed era is not merely commensurate with the past. As said by Habib Sa'id al-Muhdar in ancient times Syarifah was always married to Sayyid, not now, it's not his time anymore. He does not mind Sharifah's marriage to a non-Sayyid, the important thing is that they both like it.<sup>29</sup>In addition, it is important to note that equality in feelings is not only related to the relationship between husband and wife, but also to the relationship between parents and children, and between other family members. When each family member feels heard, valued and loved, family relationships become stronger and more harmonious.

#### D. Conclusion

*Kafa*> *'ah* is not always interpreted as equality in terms of lineage, religion, morals, wealth, and position alone. *Kafa*> *'ah* in the current context can be interpreted as equal in terms of the feelings of both parties. This is examined through Abdullah Saeed's contextual theory with its systematics. When viewed from the context of language, the *kafa*> *'ah* in question is good. When viewed in terms of asbabun nuzul, the Prophet will not marry except with good women. Therefore, Aisha did not do the abominable thing that was condemned. If it is drawn into current issues such as the example of Sharifah's marriage to a non-Sayyid, even though they like each other, then *kafa*> *'ah* is not merely about lineage, but can also be seen from equality in feelings.

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<sup>29</sup> Masruroh. 2014. "Pernikahan Syarifah Dengan Non-Sayyid Di Patokan Kraksaan Probolinggo Perspektif Imam Malik Dan Imam Syafi'i." *Al-Hukama: The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Family Law* 4 (1): 85–124.

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