

# THE WISDOM OF KINAYAH IN QUR'ANIC SEXUAL TERMINOLOGY: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MEANING, ETHICS, AND AESTHETIC EXPRESSION IN DIVINE DISCOURSE

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**Abstract:** Sex in the Qur'an is mentioned with several variations of terms, namely *mass*, *afda*, *ata*, *asyiru*, *basyiru* and *rafats*. The six terms are *kinayah* which have high aesthetic value. This study will describe the wisdom of using these terms by focusing on looking at the aspects of the *kinayah* contained. To obtain this, the author uses the thematic interpretation method with a linguistic approach, especially *balagah*. The results of the study show that sex in the Qur'an is considered something sacred and has the function of continuing the lineage. Terms such as *mass*, *afda*, *ata*, *asyiru*, *basyiru* and *rafats* in the verses about sex as *kinayah* have their own emphases. The emphasis can be detected in the basic meaning of each term. The wisdom of using these terms includes proof of the greatness of the language of the Qur'an, affirmation of manners in conveying meaning and affirmation of sex as a form of outpouring of love and affection. This research has implications for the scientific field, especially in the fields of interpretation and literature.

**Keywords:** *Kinayah*, Sex Terms, the Qur'an

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## INTRODUCTION

Discussion of sexual relations in the context of the Qur'an is considered taboo by society. This was detected from the broadcast of the program "Islam is Beautiful" on one of the national TV stations, Trans TV. One of the speakers expressed several sentences about the blessings given by Allah SWT in the afterlife, namely about sex. Specifically, the speaker mentioned that the sexual pleasure in question was a sex party. This sparked polemics and commotion in society.<sup>1</sup> This even made the Chairman of the MUI, Cholil Nafis, also speak up and criticize the language of one of the sources which was considered inappropriate. In addition, many academics also questioned the unethical language spoken by one of the sources. Although the language used by the source was not very polite, it can be used as a basis that Muslim society views the issue of sex as taboo.

Some commentators also tend to give brief interpretations when discussing issues related to sex. One of the verses that contains the term sex is QS al-Baqarah/2: 236 as follows. Al-Tabari in interpreting the verse discusses more about the husband's non-obligation to give a dowry to his wife if the dowry has not been determined and the husband has not had intercourse with her. Although there is a *mass* term in the verse, it is not discussed thoroughly in terms of the choice of diction, the beauty of the language or other meanings. Al-Tabari emphasizes his interpretation on another word in the verse, namely *mata'an bil ma'ruf* in detail. This is proven by the many opinions he quotes.<sup>2</sup>

Sayyid Qutb in *fi Zilal al-Qur'an* reveals that the main focus of this verse as well as verse 237 is the explanation of divorce which falls on women who have never been married by their husbands. He interpreted the word *mass* as "mixed". Furthermore, he stated that based on the verse above there are rights for women who are divorced before their dowry is interfered with and determined. The husband should give *mut'ah* or gifts as comfort to him.<sup>3</sup> Divorce in any form is a painful thing, however, Sayyid Qutb's explanation is also less detailed regarding the term *mass*.

Al-Qurtubi in his interpretation interprets the word *mass* as *jima'*. This can only be done if both of them touch their genitals to each other. Thus, related to verses 236 and 237, he also mentions the rights of a wife who has not had *jima'* but has been divorced by her husband. For those who are married *tafwid* (the dowry has not been determined when the contract was made) and have not had *jima'* and

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<sup>1</sup>Rizky Mandasari, "Heboh Seramah Tentang 'Pesta Seks' Di TV, Netizens Protest And Are Angry," Brilio, 2017, <https://www.brilio.net/duh/heboh-ceramah-soal-pesta-seks-di-tv-netizen-protos-dan-berang-170717u.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Abu Ja'far Al-Tabari, *Jami' Al-Bayan* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr, 2008), 226.

<sup>3</sup>Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, Volume (Beirut: Dar Al-Ilm, 1986), p. 305.

then are divorced, for her *mut'ah* (gift) from the husband. As for those whose dowry has been determined, they have the right to half of the dowry that has been determined.<sup>4</sup> Women who are *tafwid* are also explained in QS al-Ahzab/33: 49 which also contains the term *mass*. Thus, al-Qurtubi's interpretation has not yet gone into detail regarding the meaning and beauty of the term *mass*.

Ibn Atiyah in his interpretation mentions that the choice of the diction *mass* in verses related to sexuality in the Qur'an (including the verse above) is *kinayah*. This choice also proves the refinement of the language of the Qur'an.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in everyday communication, a person should use appropriate (polite) language.

Quraish Shihab in his interpretation also only touches on the issue of sex in this case the term *mass* in only 3 paragraphs, compared to 7 paragraphs related to dowry.<sup>6</sup> In the author's view, this shows that he focuses his interpretation more on the legal aspects related to dowry and has not detailed the discussion of sex contained in the verse.

The taboo of discussing sexual issues in the context of the verses of the Qur'an has resulted in many cases of household breakdown due to sexual issues.<sup>7</sup> Many couples do not know their rights and obligations regarding this issue. Openness is also a problem between husband and wife. In fact, Umar Faruq in his research stated that sexual issues are the main factor causing divorce. The marriage relationship will be shaky if the sexual needs of both are not met. This will cause psychological and mental disturbances that can lead to arguments and divorce.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the issue of sex which is considered taboo needs to be reviewed.

On the other hand, the issue of sex, although it needs to be studied, also needs to be conveyed in a subtle way, because the Qur'an also uses very subtle diction when mentioning sex (husband-wife relations). Delivering verses with vulgar interpretations will certainly create a commotion and the assumption that the Qur'an is a pornographic book or a vulgar book. Of course, this will also be analyzed by researchers in this study.

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<sup>4</sup>Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risala, 2006), p. 420-425.

<sup>5</sup>Ibn Athiyah Al-Andalusi, *Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz Fi Tafsir Al-Kitab Al-Aziz* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2001), p. 704.

<sup>6</sup>Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Message, Impression and Harmony of Al-Qur'an Verses*, 512-515.

<sup>7</sup>Agatha Diviya, "Often a Trigger for Divorce, Does Sex Play a Very Big Role in Relationships?" *Liputan 6*, 2022, <https://www.liputan6.com/health/read/5006061/kerap-jadi-pemicu-perceraian-seks-punya-andil-sangat-besar-dalam-hubungan>.

<sup>8</sup>Umar Faruq, "Sexual Needs Become the Main Cause of High Divorce Rates," *World Journal of Law and Politics* 1, no. 2 (2023): 14-27, <https://doi.org/10.59581/Doktrin-widyakarya.vii2.2969>.

Regarding the relationship between husband and wife (sex), the Qur'an uses many dictions in describing it, namely *mass*, *ata*, *afda*, *'asyiru*, *basyiru* and *rafats*. These terms give the impression that the language of the Qur'an is very gentle (not vulgar). These terms are even mentioned in several cases that are far from the realm of sexuality in text, such as the state of people who consume usury and punishment.

In addition to the modern order that requires discussion related to the issue of sex and the beauty of its language, history also records that before the revelation of QS al-Nisa'/4: 3 regarding polygamy, the Arab nation did not recognize restrictions on the quantity of partners. This made many ignorant Arab communities and even the companions themselves have more than four wives. These indications show that the issue of sex is an issue that has existed since that time and its handling is overcome by the Qur'an.

The historical background of the Arab nation who are very 'fond' of multiplying wives (to channel sexual desire) seems to be a logical reason for the many verses of the Qur'an that discuss provisions regarding sex. Moreover, if drawn into the era of digital transformation where even sex issues are increasingly complex and easy to access. The Qur'an as a guide to life then continues to be interpreted to explain the increasingly developing sex issues.

The use of the language of the Qur'an in every word, especially in the matter of sex, is something that should be studied, because the Qur'an as the Word of Allah SWT certainly does not immediately use certain terms without reference. Avoiding the discussion of sex makes the Qur'an as a guide experience a narrowing of meaning. This statement is based on the vastness of His knowledge. Therefore, a linguistic approach is very appropriate to be used to reveal the meanings contained in a word in the Qur'an in this case related to sexual verses.

Based on the above descriptions, the author will conduct a study of the sex verses in the Qur'an using a linguistic approach. This is done in order to explore the *i'jaz* in terms of the beauty of its language which is the essence of the Qur'an as a revelation. The *i'jaz* of the Qur'an in question is in terms of its *balagah*. Furthermore, the author will describe the beautiful meanings of the terms that contain the meaning of sexual relations.

## THE NATURE OF SEX IN THE QURAN

Sex in Arabic is called *jins* or *jima'*. The word *jins* means type or gender. Meanwhile, *jima'* means husband-wife relations or intercourse. Both words have

meanings with their respective emphases.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the terminology '*jima'*' which is more directed towards sexual activity is what is meant in the author's research.

Al-Ragib al-Asfahani in *al-Mufradat fi Garib al-Qur'an* defines the word *jima'* as physical relations between husband and wife in the context of marriage. Therefore, sexual activity outside of marriage is not categorized in the terminology of *jima'*.<sup>10</sup> Because intercourse is not only done based on the satisfaction of lust, but is also accompanied by the basis of building affection and protecting offspring.

Meanwhile, al-Qurtubi in his interpretation defines *jima'* as an act of worship if it is done within the corridor that has been outlined by the sharia. He further explains that *jima'* is not only functioned as a fulfillment of desire, but also as a fulfillment of halal biological needs and a form of self-awareness from *zina*.<sup>11</sup> Apart from that, *jima'* also functions to protect one's lineage.

Meanwhile, Ibn Qayyum al-Jawziyyah stated that *jima'* is a form of Allah SWT's love for humans as a means to achieve household harmony with the bonds of love and affection. *Jima'* is intended as a fulfillment of halal biological needs for both men and women who have been married.<sup>12</sup>

Based on several opinions that have been described, it can be concluded that experts generally agree that *jima'* is a sexual relationship that is carried out after marriage. While the difference lies in the purpose of *jima'* as a means of obtaining offspring by some experts is not required as a basis when wanting to do it. However, the majority of experts argue that the main purpose of *jima'* is a form of self-protection from adultery or unlawful relationships.

The Quran itself does not once mention the term *jima'* in its verses because it is considered to directly refer to one meaning, namely sexual intercourse. However, the verses of the Quran still discuss the relationship between husband and wife (sex) in other terms. This shows the beauty of the language of the Quran in describing something, including the issue of sex.

One of the verses The verse relating to sexual relations using the term *afda* is QS al-Nisa'/4: 21

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَآخَذَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٢١﴾

<sup>9</sup> Alfa Singgani L Irade, Adam, and M Taufan, "The Nature of the Purpose of Marriage from an Islamic View," Proceedings of Islamic Studies and the Integration of Science in the Era of Society (KIES) 3, no. 1 (2024): 194–197.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Ragib Al-Asfahani, *Mu'jam Fi Garib Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, tt), p. 383.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, p. 345.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Tuhfatul Mawdud Bi Ahkam Al-Mawlud* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), p. 93.

## Translation:

"How can you take it back, when you have had intercourse with one another (as husband and wife) and they (your wives) have made a strong covenant (marriage bond) with you?"<sup>13</sup>

The term *afda* in the verse is in the form *fi'il madhi* so the meaning is "have been associating". This verse explains the problem of giving a husband to his wife. One of the main reasons or factors that a husband cannot take back what he gave his wife is because he has cheated on her. Therefore, the verse above seems to emphasize the impermissibility of taking back gifts from the wife, because in fact the husband has also taken pleasure from his wife by hanging out with her.

Al-Zamaksyari in his interpretation explains that the verse above discusses the husband's gift to his wife that cannot be taken back. Specifically, the verse contains the term *afda* which means meeting intimately. He explains that the word has a general meaning, namely related to repeated meetings between husband and wife over a long period of time, both in activities related to sex and those that are not.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to these terms, there are various other terms that the author will discuss in the next section. The Qur'an as a holy book certainly holds a lot of wisdom that if explored will be apparent and will further strengthen the faith of believers. In addition, the wisdom of the beauty of the terms of the Qur'an will dispel negative assumptions related to the truth of the Qur'an as the Word of Allah SWT.

1. *Mass*

*Mass* in *lisan al-arab* it is interpreted as touch. However, in its use it is often used as a *kinayah* for other meanings. One of the meanings in question is *jima'* (sexual intercourse).<sup>15</sup> The word *mass* in the Qur'an is repeated 66 times. With 5 times in the form of *lamisa* (*mass* with the addition of *lam* means effect or there is excellence/emphasis) and 61 times in the form of *massa-yamassu*.<sup>16</sup> The term *lamisa* has various meanings, 2 of which are interpreted as *jima'*, namely in QS an-Nisa'/4: 43 and al-Maidah/5: 6, while in QS al-An'am/6: 7 it is interpreted as touching the book, QS al-Hadid/-13 it is interpreted as touching the light or the command to seek nur, and in QS al-Jinn/72: 8 it means groping (guessing).

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<sup>13</sup> <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/4?from=21&to=21>, accessed on September 30, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Abu Qasim Mahmud bin 'Umar Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kasysyaf 'an Haqa'id Ghawamid Al-Tanzil Wa 'Uyun Al-Aqawil Fi Wujuh Al-Ta'wil* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1998), p. 228.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Manzur, *Lisan Al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 2010), p. 4201-4202.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Bāqī, Muhammad Fūad 'Abd Al-Bāqī, *Mu'jam Mufahras Li Al-Fadz Al-Qur'an Al-Kārim*, p. 653.

As for the *massa-yamussu* terminology, there are several meanings that can be known, namely *jima'* (mixed), touch, obtain, get, feel, befall, . As for relationships (*jima'*), the term *mass* is found in QS al-Baqarah/2: 236 & 237, Ali Imran/3: 47, Maryam/19: 20, al-Ahzab/33: 49 and al-Mujjadi/58 : 3 & 4.

## 2. *Afda*

The word *afda* comes from the word *fadala*. The word means virtue, glory, superiority or the opposite of flaws and deficiencies.<sup>17</sup> Where the word *fadala* is repeated 105 times in the Qur'an with various derivations.<sup>18</sup> As for the form of *afda*, it is only repeated once in QS al-Nisa/4: 21. This verse discusses the impermissibility of taking gifts from a husband to his wife by emphasizing that the husband has had sex with his wife.

## 3. *Ata*

The word *ata* is repeated 549 times with various derivations.<sup>19</sup> In general, this word has the meaning of coming, bringing, bringing, giving or providing.<sup>20</sup> In relation to sexual intercourse, the word *ata* is repeated 4 times, namely QS al-Baqarah/2: 222, QS al-al-Nisa'/4: 16, QS al-A'raf/7: 81 and QS al-Naml/27: 55. In QS al-Baqarah/2: 222 it talks about the permissible husband and wife relationship after the menstrual phase. As for QS al-Nisa'/4: 16 it discusses sexual intercourse that is done before the marriage contract (adultery). While QS al-A'raf/7: 81 and QS al-Naml/27: 55 discuss the deviant sexual behavior of the Sadum People who lived during the time of Prophet Luth as.

## 4. *'Asyiru*

The word *'asyiru* comes from the word *'asyara* which literally means the number ten or tens. The word is repeated 27 times with various derivations.<sup>21</sup> The word *'asyiru* itself is only repeated once in QS an-Nisa'/4: 19. In the context of this verse, the term *'asyiru* means husband-wife relations including sexual relations.

## 5. *Basyiru*

*Basyiru* comes from the word *basyara* which generally means a living creature that has skin, in this case referring to humans. The word in its various derivations is repeated 123 times in the Qur'an.<sup>22</sup> As for the *basyiru* form, it is only repeated twice in the same place, namely QS al-Baqarah/2: 187. The discussion of this verse

<sup>17</sup>Manzur, Oral Al-Arab, p. 3428-3430.

<sup>18</sup>Al-Baqi, pp. 521-522.

<sup>19</sup>Al-Baqi, pp. 4-11.

<sup>20</sup>Manzur, Lisan Al-Arab, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup>Al-Baqi, p. 462.

<sup>22</sup>Al-Baqi, pp. 119-121.

is related to the permissibility of having sexual relations at night during the month of Ramadan.

## 6. *Rafats*

The word *rafats* generally means mixed or blended. This word is repeated twice in the Koran.<sup>23</sup> From both repetitions of the word in the Qur'an, the intended meaning is sexual intercourse. This is stated in QS al-Baqarah/2: 187 and 197. Both verses explain the situations in which sexual intercourse is permissible and vice versa.

## WISDOM OF SEX TERMS

### 1. Confirmation of the Greatness of the Qur'an as the Word of Allah

The Qur'an as the perfect word of Allah, covers all aspects of human life in a unique and wise way. When the Qur'an touches on the theme of husband and wife relations, the language used is very gentle and *kinayah*, showing unmatched greatness. The greatness of the Qur'an is seen in the choice of words such as *mass*, *afda*, *ata*, *'asyiru*, *basyiru*, and *rafats*. In Ibn Katsir's interpretation, every choice of word in the Qur'an is considered to have a depth that not only reflects the basic meaning, but also reflects the precision and wisdom of Allah in teaching noble values without having to indulge in vulgarity.<sup>24</sup>

The use of *kinayah* in these terms shows that the Qur'an teaches humans to speak with manners, especially in matters related to sensitive issues such as sexual relations. One of the verses that is often associated with *kinayah* in husband and wife relations is QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 187, which mentions the word *basyiru*. This word shows the subtlety of the Qur'an in conveying meaning, and according to Al-Razi's view, the word *basyiru* used here describes not just physical interaction, but also emotional and spiritual closeness between husband and wife.<sup>25</sup> This choice of words reinforces the message that the Qur'an is a great book, teaching love without ignoring the norms of politeness.

Furthermore, the Qur'an uses the word *mass* in QS. Maryam/19: 20 when Maryam asks how she can have a child without being "touched" (*mass*) by a man.

قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلْمٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾

Translation:

<sup>23</sup> Al-Baqi, 418-419.

<sup>24</sup> Ismail bin Umar bin Katsir, Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Fakhruddin Al-Razi, The Mystery of the Hidden (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, n.d.).



"She (Maryam) said, "How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me and I am not a prostitute?"<sup>26</sup>

This verse shows the use of the word *mass* as a *kinayah* for physical contact between men and women. In Al-Alusi's view, the use of the word *mass* in this context shows Allah's wisdom in conveying matters related to inter-gender relations with polite language, without having to mention it explicitly.<sup>27</sup> The Qur'an consistently shows greatness and perfection in every aspect of its sentences, including in the choice of words that are able to maintain the purity of meaning without losing depth.

*Afda* which is used in the context of husband and wife relationships also has a subtlety of meaning that emphasizes the greatness of Allah's words. In QS. an-Nisa'/4: 21, this word describes the interaction of husband and wife as a loving relationship that connects their souls as a whole.

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٢١﴾

Translation:

"How can you take it back, when you have had intercourse with one another (as husband and wife) and they (your wives) have made a strong covenant (marriage bond) with you?"<sup>28</sup>

The word *afda* reflects the depth of the relationship that goes beyond physical proximity, suggesting that the relationship between husband and wife is a gift that unites them in divine affection. The Qur'an explicitly presents this relationship as part of God's creation that is shrouded in wisdom, so that the word *afda* in the verse does not merely refer to physical contact, but implies union in God's love and mercy.

'*Asyiru*, which means "living together," in QS. an-Nisa'/4: 19 teaches that the relationship between husband and wife is a form of living together that is full of responsibility and affection.

<sup>26</sup> <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/19?from=20&to=20>, accessed on September 30, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Syihabuddin Mahmud Al-Alusi, *Ruh Al-Ma'ani Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim Wa Al-Sab' Al-Matsani* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/4?from=21&to=21>, accessed on September 30, 2024.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا<sup>٢٩</sup> وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ  
مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ<sup>٣٠</sup> وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ<sup>٣١</sup> فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ  
فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

Translation:

"O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by force. Do not give them trouble because they want to take back some of what you have given them, unless they commit a truly heinous act. Associate with them in an appropriate way. If you don't like them, (be patient) because it may be that you don't like something, even though Allah has made a lot of good in it."<sup>29</sup>

Al-Tabari argues that this word is a *kinayah* to teach the importance of togetherness in a marriage that supports and respects each other. The word '*asyiru*' is used very subtly to describe a broader meaning, namely a life full of affection, far from just a physical relationship.<sup>30</sup> Thus, this word emphasizes the greatness of the Al-Qur'an in conveying the message of life through polite and high-value language.

Based on this interpretation, the use of *kinayah* in the Qur'an also emphasizes that the word of Allah was revealed by paying attention to the manners and purity of words. The Qur'an as the last revelation was revealed for all mankind, therefore, the language used is a language that is able to balance meaning with ethics. The greatness of the Qur'an is seen in the politeness of its language when talking about issues that may be considered sensitive or personal. The Qur'an teaches that language is a reflection of noble values, so the use of this *kinayah* is real evidence of the perfection and greatness of the word of Allah.

Furthermore, the word *basyiru* which is repeated in various verses emphasizes that the relationship between husband and wife is not something purely physical, but rather a way to express affection and create happiness together. Al-Qurtubi believes that the use of the word *basyiru* as *kinayah* in the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of sincere love in a marriage relationship.<sup>31</sup> The language of the Qur'an, which avoids vulgar expressions, reflects that the word of Allah is great, capable of

<sup>29</sup> <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/4?from=19&to=19>, accessed on September 30, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Tabari, Jami' Al-Bayan.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an.

conveying personal and sensitive matters while maintaining good manners and beauty.

Ultimately, every term of instruction related to the husband and wife relationship in the Qur'an shows that this holy book was revealed with unmatched linguistic beauty. The Qur'an not only contains commands and prohibitions, but also conveys guidance in a way that touches the heart and glorifies moral norms. The choice of these words of instruction is evidence of the greatness of Allah's word, which teaches mankind to speak and act with high etiquette, especially in personal matters.

Islam views that the relationship between husband and wife is an act of worship that involves physical and spiritual aspects. By choosing polite words, the Qur'an teaches the importance of maintaining ethics in all aspects of life, including marriage. Fakhruddin Al-Razi stated that the use of *kinayah* in the Qur'an shows that every word in this revelation has a deep meaning and contains wisdom.<sup>32</sup> With this, Muslims are increasingly convinced that the Qur'an is the great, perfect word of Allah, and contains a message that is timeless.

The use of *kinayah* also proves that the Qur'an teaches the importance of respecting feelings and maintaining purity in talking about husband and wife relationships. In every word chosen, it is seen how the Qur'an emphasizes noble values, making this book not only a guide to life, but also a manifestation of Allah's love and wisdom towards mankind.

## 2. Manners in Conveying Meaning

Manners in conveying meaning are an important element that emphasizes the beauty and politeness of the language of revelation. When discussing the relationship between husband and wife, the Qur'an uses gentle language full of *kinayah*, showing that literary value and subtlety in conveying meaning are only achieved if delivered in a non-vulgar manner. The choice of words that avoid explicit or harsh expressions shows divine wisdom in maintaining the sanctity of His words, especially in matters concerning sensitive topics such as marriage relationships.

The Qur'an, through terms such as *mass*, *afda*, *ata*, *asyiru*, *basyiru*, and *rafats*, conveys the concept of husband and wife relations in *kinayah* language which requires depth of understanding. Al-Jurjani revealed that *kinayah* in the Al-Qur'an is a form of *balagah* which not only beautifies the language but also maintains ethics, placing the Al-Qur'an as a book that maintains the honor of the reader. The *kinayah* language in these verses conveys a much deeper meaning than just

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Razi, The Secret of the Hidden.

physical expressions, showing the emotional and spiritual aspects of the relationship with guarded and polite language.<sup>33</sup>

For example, in QS al-Baqarah/2: 187 which uses the word *basyiru*, the Qur'an suggests that the relationship between husband and wife is a sacred intimacy.

أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلَّمَ اللَّهُ أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَنْتُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الْآلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

Translation:

"It is permissible for you on the night of the fast to mix with your wife. They are clothes for you and you are clothes for them. Allah knows that you cannot help yourself, but He accepts your repentance and forgives you. So, now intervene with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you. Eat and drink until it becomes clear to you (the difference) between the white thread and the black thread, namely dawn. Then, complete the fast until (comes) evening. However, do not interfere with them when you are (in the state of) making Iqtikaf at the mosque. Those are the limits (provisions) of Allah. So, don't approach him. Thus Allah explains His verses to people so that they become pious."<sup>34</sup>

The word *basyiru*, according to Al-Razi, describes a loving encounter without having to directly mention the physical aspect. This shows how the Qur'an teaches people to speak politely, avoid vulgarity, and maintain the honor of their partner.<sup>35</sup> With this instruction, the Qur'an provides a concrete example of how to speak about personal matters in a manner that is full of manners and beauty.

The Qur'an also teaches the importance of communication ethics through classy and civilized language. According to him, the delivery of polite and non-vulgar meanings not only reflects the greatness of revelation, but also teaches

<sup>33</sup> Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjani, *Dala'il Al-I'jaz* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Khaniji li al-Tabaah wa al-Nasyr, 1984).

<sup>34</sup> <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/2?from=187&to=187>, accessed on September 30, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Razi, *The Secret of the Hidden*.

people to respect the values of politeness and maintain human dignity. When talking about husband and wife relations, the Qur'an does not merely emphasize the biological aspect but also conveys the importance of emotional intimacy in a way that does not violate the ethics of politeness.

In *balaghah*, especially in the aspect of *kinayah*, the choice of words in the Qur'an shows that language that is not open or vulgar actually deepens the literary value and meaning of the verse. The word *asyiru*, which in QS al-Nisa'/4: 19 is used to indicate "living together", is an example of how the Qur'an suggests a harmonious relationship without directly mentioning the physical aspect. According to Al-Tabari, this word emphasizes that togetherness in marriage must be filled with affection and respect, and the relationship between husband and wife is part of everyday life that should be lived with mutual respect.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, the word *mass* that appears in several verses to describe the touch or physical contact of husband and wife, is carefully chosen so as not to seem vulgar. The Qur'an maintains the purity of meaning through refined language. Al-Alusi argues that the use of the word *mass* in this context displays the wisdom of the Qur'an which still conveys meaning clearly without losing manners and aesthetic value.<sup>37</sup> From a rhetorical perspective, this shows the greatness of the language of revelation which is able to express deep meanings while still respecting the norms of politeness.

The literary value in the Qur'an, which is maintained through the use of *kinayah*, also provides an important lesson about the importance of expressing sensitive matters in a non-offensive manner. The language chosen in this word of Allah is not open or vulgar, but rather polite, so that it can be accepted by all levels of society. According to Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, the language used in the Qur'an is the best example of how to convey deep meaning with ethics, showing that the greatness of literature lies not in openness, but in the subtlety and precision in the choice of words.

In QS. Maryam/19: 20, Maryam asks how she can have a child without being touched (*mass*) by a man. The use of the word *mass* as *kinayah* shows respect for this sensitive topic. This proves that the Qur'an does not use vulgar or harsh words even though the meaning is clear. In Fakhruddin Al-Razi's view, this is one aspect of the beauty of *balaghah* in the Qur'an, which explains that good communication is one that continues to respect norms and ethics, especially in matters that are personal and sacred.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Al-Tabari, Jami' Al-Bayan.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Alusi, Ruh Al-Ma'ani Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim Wa Al-Sab' Al-Matsani.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Razi, The Secret of the Hidden.

The Qur'an also teaches people not to talk about husband and wife relationships in a vulgar way. By choosing soft and open *kinayah* words, the Qur'an provides an example of the importance of maintaining the dignity of oneself and others in communication. The term *afda*, used in QS. al-Nisa'/4: 21, shows the importance of purity in marriage relationships. According to Al-Biqai's view, the word *afda* reflects how the Qur'an educates people to understand this relationship is not just physical contact, but an interaction that is honorable and of high value.

Therefore, the *kinayah* in the Qur'an directs people to always maintain manners and politeness, especially in talking about personal matters. The choice of *kinayah* language in discussing husband and wife relations is an example of how the Qur'an makes politeness and beautiful language a top priority. Through beautiful *balagah*, the Qur'an teaches that husband and wife relations are part of an honorable and sacred life, which should be conveyed in language that is not vulgar or rude.

Thus, through the beautiful and polite language of *kinayah*, the Qur'an provides an example of how to convey sensitive and personal matters without losing ethics. This shows that meaningful and wise literature is in a language that is not vulgar, a language that remains polite even though it discusses deep and complex topics. The Qur'an, with the majesty of its language, teaches that the delivery of meaning will be of high value if it is done in a way that does not reveal the meaning's aurat, but still directs it to pure truth and beauty.

### 3. Emphasizing Aspects of Love and Affection in Relationships

The aspect of love and affection in the relationship between husband and wife is one of the main values emphasized by the Qur'an. When conveying this theme, the Qur'an uses the gentle and meaningful language of *kinayah*, showing that intimacy in marriage is not only about the physical aspect, but deeper, touching on the emotional and spiritual sides that strengthen each other. Terms such as *basyiru*, *asyiru*, and *afda* used in the Qur'an illustrate that affection is the core of the relationship between husband and wife which is based on respect, love, and mutual care.

The word *asyiru* in QS. Al-Nisa/4: 19 which means "living together" shows how the Qur'an defines the relationship between husband and wife as a form of togetherness that is full of affection and loyalty. The Qur'an commands that husbands treat their wives well, which is expressed through the word *asyiru*. According to Al-Tabari, this word is not only a command to live together physically, but also to live in an atmosphere of deep love, mutual respect, and understanding. This shows that the aspect of affection is a fundamental part of the marriage relationship according to the Islamic perspective.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Al-Tabari, Jami' Al-Bayan.

Al-Qurtubi mentions that the affection symbolized in the use of the word *basyiru*, which means “together” or “to approach,” implies the closeness of the hearts between husband and wife.<sup>40</sup> In QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 187, the word *basyiru* is used to describe intimacy between couples with language full of tenderness. Al-Qurtubi explains that the use of this *kinayah* illustrates that the relationship between husband and wife is not just a physical aspect, but also includes love that strengthens emotional bonds and brings each other's hearts closer. This is in line with the purpose of marriage in Islam which is not only to fulfill physical needs, but also to fulfill affection and true love.

The term *afda*, used in QS. an-Nisa/4: 21, also indicates the depth of emotional relationships in marriage. *Afda*, often translated as “mixing,” implies more than just physical contact; it describes the mixing of hearts, souls, and feelings. Al-Biq'a'i states that *afda* emphasizes intimacy that is not only physical but also spiritual, which contains affection and closeness of soul.<sup>41</sup> The affection that is cultivated in marriage makes the relationship between husband and wife a deep and blissful bond, where each provides a sense of security and comfort to the other.

The use of *kinayah* in the Qur'an to describe the affection of husband and wife shows that their relationship is not instant or merely passionate, but is the result of a process of loving that is full of sincerity and sacrifice. Al-Jurjani emphasized that the language of *kinayah* used in the Qur'an shows that pure love is love that is free from all forms of selfishness, where each partner loves with a sense of love and responsibility.<sup>42</sup> This teaches that in Islam, a loving relationship between husband and wife is a bond of worship, a place where divine love radiates in their lives.

The word *mass*, which is also used in the Qur'an as a *kinayah* for “touch,” in QS. Maryam/19: 20 and QS. al-Baqarah/2: 237, describes intimacy in marriage in a way that maintains honor and the value of affection. According to Al-Alusi, the use of the word *mass* to describe touch in the context of husband and wife is a form of *balagah* that emphasizes that the marriage relationship is not just physical interaction, but also a way of expressing sacred affection.<sup>43</sup> This shows that affection in marriage is part of human nature which is sanctified and maintained by Islam.

Furthermore, Ibnu Katsir interpreted that the use of *kinayah* language in describing husband and wife relationships is not only to maintain adab, but also

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<sup>40</sup> Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an.

<sup>41</sup> Ina Salmah Febriani, “Keseimbangan Karakter Feminim Dan Maskulin Dalam Mewujudkan Masyarakat Madani,” *Tsaqofah* 19, no. 1 (2021): 45–62, <https://doi.org/10.32678/tsaqofah.v19i1.5298>.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Jurjani, Dalail Al-I'jaz.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Alusi, Ruh Al-Ma'ani Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim Wa Al-Sab' Al-Matsani.

to teach the deeper and more sincere meaning of love. In the perspective of the Qur'an, the love of husband and wife is a reflection of God's mercy towards humans.<sup>44</sup> Through the bond of marriage, husband and wife can feel the affection that Allah has given them, which is reflected in caring, patience, and sincere love. The Qur'an teaches that a relationship built on true affection will bring tranquility, peace, and happiness.

The presence of affection as the core of the husband and wife relationship is also described in QS. Ar-Rum/30: 21, where Allah states that one of the signs of His power is the creation of partners for humans so that they feel at ease with each other. Scholars such as Sheikh Tantawi emphasize that this verse shows the importance of *sakinah* or tranquility based on affection and love. In marriage, *sakinah* is a form of affection that is present when partners love each other unconditionally, support each other, and are always there for each other.

Thus, the emphasis on affection in the Qur'an is a reminder that marriage in Islam is not just a physical bond, but also a spiritual bond filled with love, understanding, and support. The terms of *kinayah* used in the Qur'an show how this affection is maintained and strengthened through noble values, making the relationship between husband and wife not just a physical meeting, but also a space for growing love and respect.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of *kinayah* (figurative language) in the Qur'an to describe sexual relations between husband and wife is not merely a reflection of linguistic beauty but a manifestation of divine wisdom that upholds ethics and decency in conveying meaning. The six Qur'anic terms analyzed—*mass*, *afda*, *ata*, *'asyiru*, *basyiru*, and *rafats*—each carry unique emphases while collectively portraying marital intimacy as a bond founded on affection, mutual respect, and responsibility. This consistent linguistic subtlety illustrates that the Qur'an approaches sensitive topics such as sexuality with ethical elegance, positioning itself as a sacred text that communicates profound guidance without resorting to explicit or vulgar expressions.

Furthermore, the use of *kinayah* exemplifies the Qur'anic principle of *balāghah* (rhetorical eloquence), where meaning is conveyed with both clarity and grace. In the context of Islamic education, these findings bear significant implications: they serve as a model for ethical communication, promoting the use of respectful, refined language when addressing intimate or sensitive matters. Hence, this study

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<sup>44</sup> Katsir, Al-Azim's Tafsir of the Qur'an.



not only contributes to the fields of Qur'anic exegesis and linguistics but also provides a pedagogical foundation for developing Islamic educational curricula that integrate aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual values—offering learners a holistic understanding of human relationships rooted in divine guidance.

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