

***QIRĀ'AH MUBĀDALAH* APPROACH TO THE QUR'AN: The Interpretation of Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 34**

Wahyu Fahrul Rizki

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: wahyufahrulrizki27@gmail.com

Abstract

This writing is the author's reflection on one of social phenomena. When a Khatib (preacher), in his preach, quotes al-Nisā' [4]: 34, he says that "A wife can be hit if she disobeys or shows ill-conducts (nushūz) to husband's command". This statement is attention-grabbing because it is not just him, even the latest scholar still defines ḍaraba as a hitting, so does in the 2020 edition of the Quran translation published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. This surely confronts with Quran basic principles itself that address fairness, equality, and mercy for the entire universe. Hence, the basic problem in this writing is that how to precisely understand or interpret the word ḍaraba in that verse, thus, the author proposes a mubādalah (reciprocal) approach. The main argument in this writing is the word ḍaraba in al-Nisā' [4]: 34 does not mean a hitting but "going" to ask other people's help to solve their household problems. In addition, ḍaraba is not just for nushūz wife, but also applied to husband.

Tulisan ini merupakan hasil refleksi penulis terhadap salah satu fenomena sosial. Di mana seorang Khatib Jumat, dalam ceramahnya mengutip al-Nisā' [4]: 34 dan mengatakan "Seorang istri dapat dipukul jika membangkang atau tidak taat (nushūz) terhadap perintah sang suami". Pernyataan sang Khatib ini menarik untuk diteliti, karena bukan hanya iabahkan para mufasir mutakhir tetap mempertahankan makna ḍaraba sebagai memukul, begitu juga dengan terjemahan Al-Qur'an versi Kemenag RI edisi 2020. Ini

tentunya bertolak belakang dengan prinsip-prinsip dasar Al-Qur'an itu sendiri yang menyeru tentang keadilan, kesetaraan, dan rahmat bagi semesta alam. Dengan demikian, maka pertanyaan yang mendasar pada tulisan ini adalah bagaimana memahami atau menafsirkan kata *ḍaraba* pada ayat tersebut dengan cara yang tepat? Maka penulis mengajukan suatu pendekatan *mubâdalah* (resiprokal). Argumen utama tulisan ini bahwa kata *ḍaraba* pada *al-Nisâ'* [4]: 34 tersebut tidak dimaknai sebagai memukul melainkan pergi untuk meminta bantuan orang lain guna menyelesaikan berbagai persoalan rumah tangga mereka. Makna *ḍaraba* tersebut, tidak hanya tertuju kepada istri yang *nushûz*, melainkan juga untuk sang suami.

Keywords: *ḍaraba*; *al-Nisâ'* [4]: 34; Qirâ'ah *mubâdalah*

Received: August 31, 2020; Accepted: December 15, 2020

Introduction

This article is started from one social fact when a *Khatib* (preacher), quotes Q.S. *al-Nisâ'* [4]: 34 in his sermon and says that "A wife can be hit if she commits disobedience or bad behavior (*nushûz*) toward her husband's command" (October 2019). His statement is attention-grabbing apart from him considered as a religious leader and also an important figure in society. His statement is not the only one considered gender-biased and unfriendly to women. Indonesian's Commentators (Y. Rahman 2018, 159) and even the 2020 edition of Quran's Translation published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion have interpreted it in a similar way (<https://www.quran.kemenag.go.id/sura/4>). Even if it is considered progressive, it is nothing more than just giving a special note that hitting a wife who commits *nushûz* can be done if it does not leave scars or gently. However, the use of the term "hitting" in the word *ḍaraba* is not accepted offhand. The term gives a negative impression and wider impact, such as vulnerability to domestic violence (KDRT) happening in Indonesian society recently.

The parable is, at least, quite representative, if one wants to say that the consensus of fourteen centuries ago and even today by Islamic religious authorities have upheld that God has given husbands the right to hit their wives (Morrow 2020). It is because that the interpretation of *al-Nisâ'* [4]: 34, especially the word *ḍaraba*, is something *qat'î*, clear, firm, certain, and

unchanged. Therefore, it does not open for new *ijtihād*. Different interpretations are considered mainstream, wrong, deviant, and violating the teaching that is regarded as normative and *qaṭ'ī*. If this point of view is maintained and applied, then the Quran's interpretation will display double-edges. Terminologically, the form of *ḍaraba* word's interpretation is different from the actual teaching of the Quran itself. Whereas the text interpretation of the main principle for instance: calling out for humanity, justice, and do not distinguish one another. However, in its practice, it displays conception cruel, savage, and always prioritizes men's interest more than considering women's expectation (Muhammad 2013, 17). In fact, for a quite long time women's perspective is absent in a religious interpretation study. They often become the third party or the object, between the text as the first person and men's interpretation as the second person (Kodir 2019, 104).

Whereas, it is known that now Indonesia is modernizing, where they use Quran as one of Islamic Law's sources that should be understood containing justice and equality principles (Mustaqim 2010, 1). Surely, this is done as a respond to various problems, and religious sources are expected to be the solution for problems in society (Shahrūr 1992, 33). However, there is a serious obstacle when there are certain parties who want to maintain the meaning of al-Nisā' [4]: 34, especially the word *ḍaraba*. As in the 7th century for example which is expressed by one of religious figures in the East Aceh, he stated that re-understanding the Quran's text is an action that should be avoided and is considered as bad action the thing that can defile the Quran itself. According to him, interpretation or translation of the Quran that spread in the society is adequate and cannot be reformatted.

Eventually, interpretation of religious text incarnates into the Islamic sources of law that is dead and stiff or borrowing Muhammad Arkoun's term, it is as "Official Closed Corpus" (Arkoun 1994, 99). In this sense, it only can be decided by people considered to have authority and especially gain acknowledgment from the public. While "closed" is based on the reality that it cannot be added, decreased, and modified on its interpretation and becomes an established corpus and regarded authentic (Sirry 2015, 10). This is proven by no longer existing progressive *tafsīr* produced (especially re-interpreting the word (*ḍaraba*). Even if it has existed, surely it will get various negative insults and people prefer to use the old *tafsīr*.

Considering the issue, the basic problem discussed in this study is how to understand or interpret the word *daraba* in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 precisely using the *Qirâ'ah Mubâdalah* approach to analyze. The mentioned problem appears because the verse is often misused by certain parties to subdue the women allowing to hit the *nushûz* wife. The problem is also to respond to the current reckless religious interpretation without doing in-depth study about the context and how this verse should be understood without gender-consideration.

The study on al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 is not something new. Since the early 20th century, the study is quite intense to discuss and debate. On one side, it is to maintain the meaning of this verse, it is then taken as a legal stipulation (Fiqh and State) in some Muslim countries to allow hitting wives (Mir-Hosseini 2015, 36). On the other hand, some studies tried to re-understand the verse as it is considered not aligned with social-culture development in the present time. Social problems become more complex as it abuses human rights e.g. domestic violence issues. Religious text is expected to be the main source of law to answer those problems. Unfortunately, the reinterpretation is stopped. If this keeps happening, it will benefit men and hamper another side. It does not respect women in social structure, where, originally, both of them have equal position inside their house and in public (Siddique 1983, 11).

This study does not involve in the existing debate. On the contrary, the topic explored here is how far the modernist discusses the word *daraba* in the verse 34 of al-Nisâ' [4]. Take example, even though Fatima Mernissi indirectly mentions the verse through her misogynist hadiths, she tries to sue the patriarchal system that is too strong in social structure and to give women the same right as men (Mernissi 1991, 49). Another feminist scholar, Amina Wadud, once discussed this verse. She did not mention *daraba*, however, she placed men and women according to their capability. According to her, a husband can be considered as a leader if he proves his leadership, not just in the economy aspect but also in spiritual, moral, and intellectual aspects. If this cannot be proven, then he cannot be a leader for women (Wadud 1999, 1). Even, according to Khaled Abou El Fadl, a wife can take over husband's role as a leader if he shows failure (Fadl 2001, 429).

Even so, at least, the two Moroccan and American monumental works have quite an important part in feminism study and as well as giving stimulation for other scholars to campaign on gender equality. The study

was based on religious texts i.e. Islamic law's source that is reinterpreted according to the social requirement in the present century (Stack 2020).

Furthermore, it seems that the latest discussion on the word *ḍaraba* in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 only focuses on the "hitting requirement". As the study of Muhamed Mahmoud shows that hit can be done as the final step to discipline the *nushûz* wife, after the previous ones (such as spouse's discussion and self-introspection do not give impact. Nevertheless, he gives special note that hitting should be done gently without leaving any scar (Mahmoud 2006). His opinion is followed by Taghian that defines *ḍaraba* as hitting (Taghian 2015). Unlike Mahmoud, Rabha Isa states that hitting is strongly forbidden for it is crime that cannot be tolerated and it is against human rights (Al-Zeera 2013).

Recent studies such as those conducted by Shannon Dunn (Kellison 2010), Muhammad E. Hashem (Hashem 2012), Siel Devos (Devos 2015) Arnold Yasin Mol (Mol 2016), Afiful Ikhwan (Ikhwan 2016) Bouchra Qorchi (Qorchi 2017), Shadaab Rahemtulla (Rahemtulla 2017), Nazir Khan, Tesneem Alkiek, and Safiah Chowdhury (Khan, Alkiek, and Chowdhury 2019) and other scholars also do the same thing. They do not over-repeate advocate the previous scholars' idea that the interpretation of *ḍaraba* in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 is not an immoral act.

Finally, from the various reviews, there is a little gap in the Quran study in Indonesia. The study on al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 especially on the word *ḍaraba*, has not been conducted well. Even if it exists, as seen in the previous discussion, it only focused on the hitting requirement or further on the prohibition to conduct this action. However, in their conclusion, the word *ḍaraba* is still interpreted as hitting. Therefore, at least, this study wants to give a description of *ḍaraba* meaning, that at first is understood as hitting, using *mubâdalah* approach.

***Mubâdalah* Approach**

Qirâ'ah Mubâdalah is one of the approaches to the Quran interpretation which was first introduced by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir. Faqihuddin or usually called "Kang Faqih" is a young scholar from Indonesia. He was born in 1971, grew up and lived in Cirebon. In his childhood, he was accustomed to studying with traditional Islamic knowledge, especially in Islamic boarding school as the early step to study various classical books. He then went to Damascus Syria to study Islamic

Law for his undergraduate program. There, he was taught by Shaykh Ramaðân al-Bûṭî, Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuḥaylî, and other prominent 'Ulamâ's. He pursued Master's degree at the International Islamic University of Malaysia, particularly in the field of Fiqh-Zakat (1996-1999). His doctoral degree was from Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta and graduated in 2015 in the study of "reinforcing women rights in Islam". From college until now, he involves in many organizations, particularly in empowering women and so do in his various writings discussing women issues in Islam (Kodir 2019).

Subsequently, in the biography, there is something interesting that might be regarded as different from other scholars and so does with the approach he used. On one side, Faqihuddin is one of the young scholars that is quite strong in Islamic classical tradition. On the other side, he is capable of developing thoughts about women empowerment and equality in Islam using *madrassa* point of view. According to Martin Van Bruinessen Islamic boarding school in Indonesia is commonly traditional and the established science is imitation and ritual, so that, it is hard to get out and develop Islamic law (Van Bruinessen 1995). On this base, Faqihuddin then offers a progressive thought called *Qirâ'ah Mubâdalah*.

This approach, generally, is almost the same as other contemporary approaches that emphasize the Quran's contextualization where it should be interpreted by considering time and place. Fazlur Rahman for instance, calls it the "double movement" approach (F. Rahman 1982, 5). Abdullah Saeed, in his works, while develops Rahman's theory, calls it as micro and macro of the Quran (Saeed 2014). However, Rahman and Saeed's opinion, even though it is only applied in law verses, is not enough without giving clear emphasis. Law verses are not only dedicated to women as in current interpretation method men should also be considered as an object in the Quran. Therefore, this *mubâdalah* approach completes the empty spaces that existed in the progressive scholar approach and gives new color to the Quran study.

Before discussing the mechanism of *mubâdalah*, first of all, there are two things that ground this approach i.e. social and language. First, Faqihuddin reveals one of his disappointments in Islamic tradition is that it seemed one-sided in interpreting religious texts. Hence, it prefers using man experience and tends to answer men anxiety instead of considering women's expectation. To strengthen this form, Faqihuddin gives one social fact in society about the heaven's angel prepared specially for men who are

righteous and about the obligation for a wife to always obey and be patient when the husband conducts polygamy (Kodir 2019).

The second is linguistic structure. This lies on the linguistic gap emerging in these latest centuries. Since this field of knowledge discipline is strong, it leads the tafseer expert to be trapped in linguistic meaning. As a result, man and woman distinction in every word in the Quran cannot be avoided. Even if the scholar tries to contextualize the textual meaning, it is still one-side comprehended that the word *daraba* is for the wife not for husband.

These two social facts are enough to prove that religious texts interpretation is dominated by men, without giving opportunity for women to express their hopes. Verses giving promises to the good husbands that they will be accompanied by angels in heaven (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 25; Âli 'Imrân [3]: 15; al-Wâqi'ah [56]: 72; al-Dukhân [44]: 54; al-Ṭûr [52]: 20) without explaining similar promises to the good wives show that men are spoiled. The one-sided interpretation barely considers wives' feeling as well as their children who are anxious about their mother's fate. Even, they try to narrate that the wife will accompany the angels to satisfy her husband. Moreover, the verse says that it is a must for the wife to always obey and be patient to keep serving as their ticket to heaven, even if the husband is immoral. On the other hand, the husband whose wife is sick is encouraged to marry another woman as *sunnah* expression (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34).

Therefore, *mubâdalah* approach is offered to explain religious texts. On one side, language structure issue, that is too powerful and formal, makes religious text seemed to be stiff, narrow, and can only be fixated on language meaning. On the other hand, the approach proposed by the scholar is not adequate, because it is dominated by men's interest and often neglects women's perspective.

***Mubâdalah* Application**

Mubâdalah (مُبَادَلَةٌ) comes from the Arabic word "ba-da-la" and is repeated as much as 44 times in the Quran with almost similar lexeme meaning. The term itself means "reciprocal" (*mufâ'alah*); which is interchange, cooperate, changes, penetrate, and cooperative between men and women, either in domestic or in public (Kodir 2019).

There are some verses directly mentioning *mubâdalah*, such as in Q.S. al-Ḥujurât [49]: 13; al-Nisâ' [4]: 1, 19, 124; al-Anfâl [8]: 72; al-Tawbah [9]:

71; Âli 'Imrân [3]: 95; al-Baqarah [2]: 187, 221, 233, 232; al-Nahl [16]: 97; Ghâfir [40]: 40; al-Aḥzâb [33]: 35; al-Ḥadîd [57]: 12, al-Aḥzâb [33]: 36, 58; al-Nûr [24]: 30-31; al-Mâ'idah [5]: 38-39; al-Nûr [24]: 2-3; and Nûḥ [71]: 28. One of the conspicuous verses is "And cooperate in righteousness and piety but do not cooperate in sin and aggression (Q.S. al-Mâ'idah [5]: 2)". Another verse also mentions that "God has created men and women made you people and tribes that you may know one another". Some of the verses, at least, can be used as proof that Quran itself also talks about mutualism (reciprocal) and cooperation.

Thus, *mubâdalah* approach tries to transform every law verse that is initially hierarchical to egalitarian so that justice is no longer defined based on man's position that is higher than others. Substantive justice is when men and women are seen as humans and are placed as a whole, equal, partnership, cooperative, sustaining, and completing each other, without degrading their gender.

Mubâdalah approach specifically cooperates to clarify women's and men's position as objects mentioned in the Quran. Hence, three main premises of the approaches are; first, Islam is not biased to only men or women, so the texts also should cover both of them. Second, relation principle between both of them is cooperation and mutualism, not hegemony and authority. The last is that Islamic texts are open to be reinterpreted so the previous premises are possible to be reflected in every interpretation (Kodir, 195).

Based on the three premises, *mubâdalah* approach tries to find the main notion of every text in order to always correspond with the universal Islamic principles and can be applied for everyone without considering the gender. Texts that are specifically referred to or mention women or men are partial and contextual text. It must be deeply studied for its substantial meaning and aligned with the Quran as the basic principle. The threat of hitting for a *nushûz* wife (al-Nisâ' [4]: 34), for instance, cannot be executed only for demanding the wife to be obedient and submissive to her husband. In fact, *nushûz* can also happen to husband, not only wife. Thus, it cannot be interpreted as wife who is rude to husband, instead it contains a command to obey and respect each other without committing any violence.

Therefore, one of the purposes of *mubâdalah* approach is to unite all Islamic text into a bigger Islamic paradigm i.e. *rahmat li al-'âlamîn* and beneficial for all. Goodness for men is also good for women. The evilness

that must be taken away from women must also be taken away from men. The similar acts are applied to blessing, benefit, and justice issues. The issues in *mubâdalah* awareness must be felt by women and men.

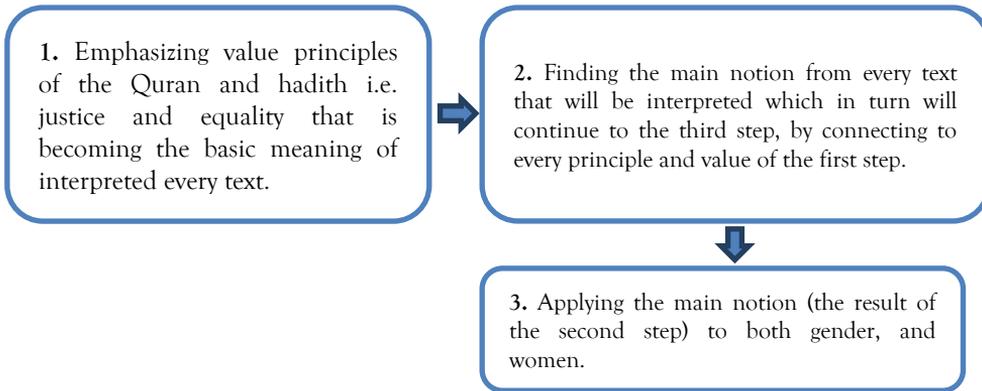
***Mubâdalah* Procedure**

There are three *mubâdalah* procedures proposed by Faqihuddin. The first procedure is to find and stress the basic principles from the Quran and hadith that are universal justiciabl, and equal as the foundation of interpretation for every text. It is said principle because it exceeds gender differences. For instance, in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34, a woman is demanded to obey her husband. In *mubâdalah* approach, obedience in the family system is not only a command for the wife but also for the husband. Both, in *mubâdalah* approach, are equal regardless of their gender. Both also must maintain a solid marriage and do good deeds toward one another, having intense discussion, and also striving and comfort. This principle becomes the interpretation found in the next step.

The second procedure is finding the main notion or message in every text that will be interpreted. This step can be done with other supporting methods existed in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, for instance, legal analogy (*qiyâs*), seeking goodness (*istiḥsân*), and excavating the word's meaning (*dalâlah al-alfâẓ*). The Islamic legal objectives method (*maqâṣid al-sharî'ah*) can also be used to find meaning in every text and then connects it with principles in the first step. However, if the text that will be interpreted is specific, especially for women, then we can use the third step.

The last procedure is dropping the idea found in every text, which is born from the previous procedure to be processed to all genders. It means, if there is a legal text which specifically relates to women, the meaning process will be led to *mubâdalah*, feedback, or mutualism (reciprocal). Hence, the text will not stop on one gender only but also cover another gender. This way, *mubâdalah* approach emphasizes that text for women is also for men and vice versa. Therefore, *mubâdalah* logic states that if a smile, hospitality, service, and all pleasant actions are obliged for the wife, then it is also obliged for husband. In the term of hitting, if it is considered as a final solution in the family conflict, then it can also be done by the wife toward her husband (Kodir 2019).

Picture 1
A diagram of *mubâdalah*



In essence, the three procedures above do not reject the distinction of men and women in certain verses, such as the biological matter, e.g. menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. However, there is an exception in verses discussing *'iddah*; the purpose is to give time to think and reflect in the hope there will be a change for husband-wife's decision to reunite. Therefore, *mubâdalah* can explain that men should also perform *'iddah* (pause) by not approaching other women and dressing up. Wife that has been divorced and is in her *'iddah* time is prohibited to dress up. The purpose is to ease the psychological readiness of each party to open and unite to the marriage bond.

The three procedures disagree with the opposite point of view stating women are always right and men as a source of problems. The approach, in Faqihuddin's opinion, does not justify women to blame, corner, demean, and discredit men. This is to emphasize that the interpretation does not incline to men's perspective and neglect women's expectations. When interpreting a text, we should find the way to benefit both men and women without demeaning one party.

Ultimately, the approach tries to delete the assumption that women are only as accompaniment for men, having small roles, and insignificant. The truth is that man completes woman's existence and vice versa. Humanity values can be reached if both are regarded equally and complete each other. This approach speaks about mutualism and cooperative principles between men and women in performing their role inside or outside home. This is the essence of *mubâdalah* approach proposed by

Faqihuddin that will be applied by the author in interpreting al-Nisâ' [4]: 34, especially on the word of *ḍaraba*.

Application of *Mubâdalah* Approach to Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

“Men are in charge of women (wife) by (right of) what God has given one over the other (women) and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence of what Allah would have them, guard. But those (wives) from whom you fear arrogance (*nushûz*), you should advise them, forsake them in bed, and finally (if necessary) “hitting” them. But if they obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, God is ever Exalted and Grand.” (<https://www.quran.kemenag.go.id/sura/4>).

The translation of the verse has not been interpreted with *mubâdalah* approach yet since it is the translation from the 2020 Quran translation edition published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion which becomes the guideline for Indonesian society. The verse has five important issues that should be discussed by modernist scholars; *qawwâmûn*, *faḍḍala*, *qânitât*, *nushûz*, and *waḍribûhunna*. However, in this writing, the writer will focus on the last issue, because it seems superior and discriminating against women. In fact, it is noted that the Quran's main message is justice and equality among human. Hence, the basic question in this study is, what is the meaning of the word *waḍribûhunna*, which comes from the word *ḍaraba*? To discuss the answer, the writer uses three steps of interpretation proposed by Faqihuddin called *mubâdalah*.

Text Basic Principles

Linguistics-wise, the word *ḍaraba* in Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 means “hitting”, as found in many dictionaries or *tafsîr* books. However, *mubâdalah* approach does not stick on the language aspect but to search for *ijtihâd* of

previous scholars. The focus is on the Quran's basic principles that men and women are similar i.e. God's creature (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]:124; al-Nahl [16]: 97; Ghâfir [40]: 40; al-Hujurât [49]: 13; al-Dhâriyât [51]: 56) and leaders on earth (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 30). Therefore, *ḍaraba*'s meaning should refer to justice and equality principles. So, even if the word *ḍaraba* is an imperative for man to hit woman, it is no longer comprehended that way.

The Quran's basic principle which is the first step of the *mubâdalah* approach, and at the same time becomes the main capital in understanding the word *ḍaraba* substantially brings a *mujtahid* to be able to distinguish between sharī'ah and *fiqh* (Auda 2008, 45) or religion with deeper religious understanding (Soroush 2000, 30). This difference is important because it wants to shift the claim that represents God's commandment towards a dualistic human understanding (true and wrong) (Abû Zayd 1994). Thus, the difference between the two implies that there is no longer *tafsîr*, *fiqh*, and *fatwas* that are sacred and divine in nature, but are humane and will always change according to place and time. Likewise, it implies to the word *ḍaraba*, which in *fiqh/tafsîr* means hitting for *nushûz* wives. It is interpreted in different way that is "going" and it is not only for a wife but also a *nushûz* husband.

If we search further, the word *ḍaraba* appears 58 times in the Quran; 55 times as a verb and 3 times as a noun. This word in the Quran is often used figuratively, and is rarely used to mean stomping or hitting, unless it is used on a musical instrument suitable for hitting. Bouchra Qorchi said that the word has many meanings; first, setting out (Q.S. Âli 'Imrân [3]: 156; al-Nisâ' [4]: 101; Şad [38]: 44; al-Muzzammil [73]: 20; al-Baqarah [2]: 273); strike (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 60, 73; al-A'râf [7]: 160; al-Anfâl [8]: 12; Tâhâ [20]: 77; al-Nûr [24]: 31; al-Shu'arâ' [26]: 63; al-Şaffât [37]: 93; Muḥammad [47]: 4); beat (Q.S. al-Anfâl [8]: 50; Muḥammad [47]: 27); set up (Q.S. al-Zukhruf [43]: 58; al-Ḥadîd 57: 13); second, giving examples (Q.S. Ibrâhîm [14]: 24, 45; al-Nahl [16]: 75; al-Insân [76]: 112; al-Kahf [18]: 32, 45; al-Nûr [24]: 35; Şad [38]: 28, 58; Yâsin [36]: 78; al-Zumar [39]: 27, 29; al-Zukhruf [43]: 17; al-Ḥashr [59]: 21; al-Taḥrîm [66]: 10, 11); third, taking away, ignoring (Q.S. al-Zukhruf [43]: 5); fourth, condemning (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 61); fifth, sealing, drawing over (Q.S. al-Kahf [18]: 11); sixth, covering (Q.S. al-Nûr [24]: 31); seventh, explaining (Q.S. al-Ra'd [13]: 17); and lastly, separating, turning away (Q.S. Âli 'Imrân [3]: 34) (Qorchi 2017, 177-78).

This diversity of *ḍaraba*'s meaning can also be found in the monumental work of al-Ṭabarî (d. 923), *Jâmi' al-Bayân*. He is considered as one of the earliest scholars since most of his chronicles were attributed from Muslim's second generation (*tâbi'in*) and also considered as the most authoritative source. He gives *tafsîr* forms toward the word *ḍaraba*. For instance, in Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 75, the word *ḍaraba* means "present", in (Q.S. al-Zukhruf [43]: 57) mean "parable", (Q.S. Âli 'Imrân [3]: 112) "put under", (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 101) "travels", (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 94) "go", (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 273) "try", (Q.S. al-Nûr [24]: 31) "wrapped". Even if al-Ṭabarî interpreted *ḍaraba* as hitting, it is not used for discriminating or even demeaning women in social structure, but it is related to problems in theology, such as the one contained in Q.S. al-A'râf [7]: 160; al-Anfâl [8]: 12, 50; and al-Baqarah [2]: 73 (al-Ṭabarî 1969).

"Hitting" in the word *ḍaraba*, written in the *tafsîr* books, can no longer be an excuse for having quarrel because of *nushûz* (husband or wife) in the family. This contradicts the very purpose of the verse itself, namely to build harmony and reconciliation between partners. This meaning also contradicts the basic principles of the universality of the Quran i.e. justice, and equality, and it is also against the Prophet Muhammad historicity who respects women, as mentioned in *sîrah* books and hadiths (Marhumah 2016, 14). Ayesha S. Chaudhry states, in the early 7th century A.D, the Prophets never once did physical violence to discipline the *nushûz* wives (Chaudhry 2011, 416; Noor 2016).

The variety of the word *ḍaraba*, is strengthened by the conclusion in Nafiseh Ghafournia that the word has more than one hundred meanings in the Quran. In fact, he assures readers that there is no single verse in the Quran, where the word *ḍaraba* is interpreted as hitting. Nafiseh review the life of the Prophet Muhammad; whenever he had problems with his wives, he left home for several days. According to Nafiseh, if *ḍaraba* means "going" (wife or husband) in the present context, of course, this does not protect women's rights. Therefore, leaving does not mean leaving the house, even if it is just awhile. Instead, it means to go asking for other people's advice(neighbors, relatives, and especially those closest to you) (Ghafournia 2017).

Therefore, the meaning of hitting on al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 is no longer considered something firm, clear, and closed from other interpretations. It must remain open to new interpretations that better reflect the justice for

men and women and the spirit of Islam to the entire universe (*rahmat li al-'âlamîn*). Thus, the meaning of *ḍaraba* must be dedicated to men and women, and does not mean "hitting" but "going". Furthermore, the second step is needed, namely the *mubâdalah* approach, which is the main message of al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 or also called as the history of the Quran (*asbâb al-nuzûl*).

Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 Main Message

Al-Ṭabarî, in his monumental work, only mentioned that verse 34 of al-Nisâ' [4] was descended related to "a husband who slapped his wife, and after that, he reported to the Prophet about his conduct and he was then given *qişâs*". Immediately after that, this verse is descended and said "I want something, but God wants something else" (al-Ṭabarî 1969, 290). Scholars after al-Ṭabarî, such as Ibn Kathîr (d. 1373) and al-Suyûtî (d. 1505) also referred to the same history. However, they added more complete detail. For instance: adding the name in the story of the verse, Ḥabîbah bint Zayd ibn Zuhayr and his husband Sa'd ibn Rabî' ibn 'Amr, in which al-Ṭabarî did not mention (Saeed 2014).

History wise, it is not proven whether the Prophet really ordered to conduct *qişâs* or not. However, it proves clearly that "hitting practice in solving a family conflict cannot be justifiable" in this verse (Spectorsky 2010, 24). In fact, Kaukab Siddique's notes that "hitting practice is one of tradition from pre-Islam which later being adopted and modified by conservative 'Ulamâ' by imposing strict requirements e.g. such as hitting with toothbrush twigs, handkerchief, and other items that are not physically harmful. Further, Kaukab's thought, "during these time we have been misled to interpret the word *ḍaraba* as "hitting" (Siddique 1983). Kaukab's question is strengthened by one of the Prophet's statement that is cited in many interpreter's works, such as in Hamka (Hamka 1966) and Muhammad Asad (Asad 1980) that "how can one of you hits your wife as if hitting a slave, then in the night you sleep with her".

Hence, historically, main message of al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 is not emphasizing men's leadership or responsibility toward women because this is inappropriate with the Quran's basic principle. In the Quran, someone is not given responsibility just because of the gender, but his ability and achievement. *Mubâdalah* Tafseer is talking about the demand toward those who have a specialty (*fadl*) and wealth (*nafaqah*). In essence, al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 main message is related to "procedure of dispute within the household"

(Saeed 2014) which gives full broad for human's intelligence in managing and solving their household problems (husband-wife) (Umar 2001, 203).

Basically, spouse's life (husband-wife) is not without problem and conflict. They are supposed to be able to get through with it and manage the problems with mutualism principles. If in the end, family conflict cannot be avoided, then al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 gives three steps to solve problems in the family; conducting discussion (*fa 'izûhunna*), self-introspection (*wa uhjurûhunna fi madâji'*); and the last step is by hitting (*wa idribûhunna*).

In the consensus of Islamic law, the word *wa idribûhunna* is interpreted as hitting, while providing very strict conditions; such as hitting in symbolic ways, without hurting physically, and without leaving scars. It can be done with *siwak*, handkerchiefs, and other harmless tools. *Mubâdalah* interpretation does not question these conditions but the word *daraba* itself that is interpreted as a blow which is a construction of previous scholars. It means "go" for asking other people's help to solve their household problems. This is based on the following verse "and if you fear of dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, God will cause it between them (spouse)" (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 35).

Men and Women as Object in Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34

Later on, after *tafsîr mubâdalah* emphasizes the meaning of the word *daraba* in the verse 34 of al-Nisâ' [4] that is returned to the Quran's main message i.e. justice and equality; and while finding the purpose of the verse, then the third step in *mubâdalah* approach emphasizes on solving household problems. for husband has the full right to discipline his *nushûz* wife. It can also mean otherwise, a wife can discipline her husband. Even a wife can also hit (if it was understood extremely, and *daraba* meaning hasn't been interpreted with *mubâdalah* yet) her husband if he conducts *nushûz*. This is called by *mubâdalah* objective to place women equal with men. If not so, as in Manuel Marin's conclusion, one of the causes of violence within a family is the domination of a husband in solving the *nushûz* wifewithout involving the wife in solving her *nushûz* husband. So, he says "Obedience is a price that must be paid by a wife to avoid violence" (Marin 2003).

The word *daraba* in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 is often associated with the word *nushûz* that is known as wife's disobedience or insubordination to husband and never mentioning husband's disobedience to wife. In fact, disobedience

can be in both husband and wife's side. In the Islamic Legal Compilation (ILC) for example, as one of the sources of law in Indonesian Religious court in solving various legal disputes, there is only an article about *nushûz* wife, but there is none for husband, which is in the article 84 clauses 1-4. In that article, a wife who cannot perform her duty to husband, without any reason, is regarded as *nushûz*. This results in the loss of the husband's obligation toward the wife. However, there is no further discussion about *nushûz* husband when he does not fulfill his duty to her wife. If the husband is *nushûz* then it results in the loss of the wife's obligation to husband as well. Such description from ILC shows that the issue is imbalance and it is not mutualism. So, it needs to be re-interpreted to be more *mubâdalah*.

In the Quran, *nushûz* is discussed in two ways. There is wife's *nushûz* toward husband (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 34) and *nushûz* from husband toward his wife (Q.S. al-Nisâ' [4]: 128). Therefore, from both verses, *nushûz* is comprehended as "violation of marriage agreement" which is not only applied for wife but also for husband. So does in solving *nushûz*, it is through a discussion between them, self-introspection, and if both steps do not have impact, then the last step is to "go" (*ḍaraba*) asking for other people's advice to solve their household's problems. Even so, *mubâdalah* perspective really suggests that both of them (even one of them conduct *nushûz*) to reconcile and to discuss without doing two other steps. Because, the essence of *nushûz* management in the Quran is how to restore the previous relation, those are caring and serving each other.

Finally, translation of al-Nisâ' [4]: 34, interpreted using *mubâdalah*, is that men and women are in responsible of each other, because God has given advantages and disadvantages for them, and because both have spent (for a living) their wealth. So, righteous men and women should guard their family against terrible things. If among of you (men and women) fear of violating the marriage agreement (*nushûz*) that has been agreed, you should have internal discussion (*fa 'izûhunna*), do self-introspection (*wa uhjurûhunna fî maḍâjî'*), and if the condition gets more urgent, then go (*ḍaraba*) husband-wife asking for other people's advice to solve their household's problems.

Conclusion

To sum up, the word *ḍaraba* in the verse 34 of al-Nisâ' [4] is initially interpreted as "hitting" and only dedicated to wife. Through *mubâdalah tafsîr*, it is interpreted as "going" and it does not only apply for wife but also

for husband. This conclusion is based on *mubâdalah* three procedures. *First*, *mubâdalah* is no longer stuck on the language aspect but also consider *ijtihad* result from the *ulama*. Referring to the basic principles in the Quran that men and women are equal as a God's creature, *ḍaraba* word should be interpreted that way.

The *second* step is finding the idea or main message in al-Nisâ' [4]: 34 that is associated with the procedure to handle disputes within a family, in which the verse gives a solution in solving family conflict, especially related to *nushûz* (marriage agreement violation). Those are: both of them conducting discussion, doing self-introspection, and if both steps do not show any effect, the last step is to "go" asking for other people's advice to solve their family problems. Later on, the last step of *mubâdalah* approach is the main message in the verse 34 of al-Nisâ' [4]. It does not only apply for the *nushûz* wife, but also for the husband. Therefore, a wife can discipline a husband, if he conducts *nushûz*, through the three steps contained in the verse.

References

- Abû Zayd, Naşr Ḥamid. 1994. *Mafhûm al-Naşş: Dirâsat fi 'Ulûm al-Qur'ân*. Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabî.
- Al-Zeera, Rabha Isa. 2013. *Violence against Women in Qur'an 4:34: A Sacred Ordinance?* eds. Elif Medeni Ednan Aslan and Marcia Hermansen. New York: Peter Lang.
- Arkoun, Mohammed. 1994. *Rethinking Islam: Common Question, Uncommon Answers*. United States: Westview Press.
- Asad, Muhammad. 1980. *The Message of The Quran*. Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus.
- Auda, Jasser. 2008. *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Chaudhry, Ayesha S. 2011. "I Wanted One Thing and God Wanted Another: The Dilemma of the Prophetic Example and the Qur'anic Injunction on Wife-Beating." *Blackwell Publishing: Journal of Religious Ethics* 39(3): 416-37.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9795.2011.00487.x>

- Devos, Siel. 2015. "The Feminist Challenge of Qur'an Verse 4: 34: An Analysis of Progressive and Reformist Approaches and Their Impact in British Muslim Communities." Dissertation. University of London.
- Fadl, Khaled Abou El. 2001. *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority, and Women*. London: Oneworld Publications.
- Ghafournia, Nafiseh. 2017. "Towards a New Interpretation of Quran 4 : 34." *Brill: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 15(3): 1-14.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341309>
- Hamka. 1966. *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Jakarta: Pembimbing Masa.
- Hashem, Muhammad El-arabawy. 2012. "Wife Beating: Modern Readings of the Qur'an (4 : 34)." *Journal of Faculty of Languages* 3(2): 6-46.
- Ikhwan, Afiful. 2016. "Leadership In Islamic Education: Study of Thematic Al Quran and Al Hadits." *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam* 17(1): 31-46.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v17i1.3253>
- Kellison, Shannon Dunn and Rosemary B. 2010. "At the Intersection of Scripture and Law: Qur'an 4:34 and Violence against Women." *Indiana University Press: Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26(2): 11-36.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/fsr.2010.26.2.11>
- Kodir, Faqihuddin Abdul. 2019. *Qirâ'ah Mubâdalah: Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*. Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD.
- Mahmoud, Mohamed. 2006. "To Beat or Not to Beat: On the Exegetical Dilemmas over Qur an, 4 : 34." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126(4): 537-50.
- Marhumah, Marhumah. 2016. "A Critical Reading on Hadith: Islamic Feminist Approach in Reading Misogynistic Hadith." *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 21(8): 14-23.
DOI: [10.9790/0837-2108081423](https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2108081423)
- Marin, Manuela. 2003. "Disciplining Wives: A Historical Reading of Qur'an 4 : 34." *Brill: Studia Islamica* (97): 5-40.
- Mernissi, Fatima. 1991. *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. 2015. *Men in Charge: Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition*. eds. Mulki Al-Sharmani and Jana Rumminger Ziba Mir-Hosseini. London: Oneworld.
- Mol, Arnold Yasin. 2016. *Classical Tafsir Al-Mathur and Tafsir Al-Ra'y on Qur'an 4:34:Translations of Al-Mawardi and Al-Maturidi's Exegesis, with an Analysis of Differences in Sources, Methodology and Human Ontology*. Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden.
- Morrow, John Andrew. 2020. *The Most Controversial Qur'anic Verse: Why 4:34 Does Not Promote Violence Against Women*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Muhammad, Afif. 2013. *Agama dan Konflik Sosial: Studi Pengalaman Indonesia*. Bandung: Marja.
- Mustaqim, Abdul. 2010. *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.
- Khan, Nazir, Tesneem Alkiek, and Safiah Chowdhury. 2019. *Women In Islamic Law: Examining Five Prevalent Myths*. Washington, D.C: Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research.
- Noor, Mariam. 2016. "Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition: A Book Review." *LUMS Law Journal* 3(1): 19-20.
- Qorchi, Bouchra. 2017. "On the Mistranslation of Daraba in the Holy Quran." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 8(1): 176-80. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.1p.176>
- Rahemtulla, Shadaab. 2017. *Qur'an of The Oppressed: Liberation Theology and Gender Justice in Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, Fazlur. 1982. *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Rahman, Yusuf. 2018. "Q. 4:34 and Disciplining A Wife: Modern Indonesian Muslim Scholars' Interpretations of The Qur'an." *Atlantis Press* 137: 156-60.
- Saeed, Abdullah. 2014. *Reading The Qur'an in The Twenty-First Century: A Contextualist Approach*. London: Routledge.
- Shahrûr, Muḥammad. 1992. *Al-Kitâb wa al-Qur'ân: Qirâ'ah Mu'âsirah*. Damascus: al-Ahâlî li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzî'.

- Siddique, Kaukab. 1983. *The Struggle of Muslim Women*. USA: American Society for Education and Religion.
- Sirry, Mun'im. 2015. *Tradisi Intelektual Islam: Rekonfigurasi Sumber Otoritas Agama*. Malang: Madani.
- Soroush, Abdolkarim. 2000. *Reason, Freedom, & Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of 'Abdolkarim Soroush*. eds. Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spectorsky, Susan A. 2010. *Women in Classical Islamic Law: A Survey of the Sources*. Leiden: Brill.
- Stack, Roohi Khan. 2020. "An Analysis of Muslim Women's Rights Based on the Works of Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Riffat Hassan." MA Thesis. Harvard University.
- al-Ṭabarî, Muḥammad ibn Jarîr. 1969. *Jâmi' al-Bayân 'an Ta'wîl Ây al-Qur'ân*. ed. Maḥmûd Muḥammad Shâkir. Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyah.
- Taghian, Muhammad. 2015. "The Concept of Women-Beating in (Q. 4: 34): A Textual and Contextual Analysis." *Canadian Center of Science and Education: English Language and Literature Studies* 5(4): 119-29.
DOI: 10.5539/ells.v5n4p119
- Umar, Nasaruddin. 2001. *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender: Perspektif Al-Quran*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Van Bruinessen, Martin. 1995. *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat: Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Wadud, Amina. 1999. *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.