

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MARITAL DYNAMICS: Hadis Interpretation of Amina Wadud's Hermeneutic

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Abstract: Misogynist views emerged from gender-insensitive reading of hadiths that talk about women, are often used as legitimacy in perpetuating injustice and even violence against women in the domestic sphere. The hadith misinterpreted as a justification for a husband's authority over his wife is the hadith regarding women's service to their husbands. In this regard, this article attempts to dig up in-depth information regarding the hadith, by taking a hermeneutic approach in re-understanding the hadith. This research aims to create a new meaning that is not misogynistic, by referring to the feminist hermeneutic method offered by Amina Wadud. This research uses library methods to explore relevant information through books and journals. The results of this research show that although the concept of submissive marriage was the social context in which this hadith was born, practically, the Prophet never showed an authoritative attitude towards his wife.

Keywords: Misogynist hadith, women's service, feminist hermeneutics, Amina Wadud, gender studies.

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Introduction

Throughout human history, females have experienced cultural colonialism.¹ Those cultural reasons are often used to legitimize the unfair treatment of women in society. A feminist figure, Simon De Beauvoir, once said that the social culture has been designed to support the idea of women as a second creation. Thus, that designed culture must be responsible for making women experience such marginalization in the world. Simone believes that being in the second position is not a natural thing for women, however, cultured and perpetuated by the patriarchal system.²

This patriarchal ideology, which is also misogynistic, can in the process give rise to violence against women. In Catahu's records, the National Commission for Women, for example, found 338,496 cases of gender-based violence (KBG) against women, which were caused by the strong patriarchal ideology at the grassroots. For the same reason, it was recorded in the National Commission on Violence Against Women that every 2 hours 3 Indonesian women experience violence, and 60% of cases of violence occur in the domestic sphere.³ The thing that forms a patriarchal and misogynistic culture is the interpretation of religious texts. According to Nunu Burhanuddin, the cause of the perpetuation of misogynist practices in society is because of the strong male-oriented interpretation of religious texts. This one-sided interpretation is used as legitimacy to subordinate women.⁴ This patriarchal view which has gained legitimacy from the interpretation of sacred texts is what then makes violence against women considered normal in the domestic sphere.

Therefore, this article aims to dismantle the patriarchal foundation that accompanies the gender-biased interpretation of hadith texts using a feminist hermeneutic perspective. The hadith regarding women's service to their husbands, for example, is one of the hadiths that is considered misogynistic and requires reinterpretation, in order not to fall into a one-sided literal meaning that is detrimental to women.⁵

Ahmad Fudhaili stated that the hadith on women as husbands' servants is one of 6 groups of hadith that Muslim leaders consider to be hadith that contain hatred towards

¹ Ja'far Ja'far and Muhammad Iqbal, "Bayani Epistemologies in Modern Indonesia: The Contribution of Al Washliyah Ulama to Quranic Exegesis Studies," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 47, no. 1 (2023), <http://dx.doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v47i1.1079>; Ja'far Ja'far, "Ulama, Al Washliyah and Knowledge in Modern Indonesia (1930-1980)," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 46, no. 2 (2022): 235–56, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v46i2.984>.

² Simon de Beauvoir, *Second Sex: Kehidupan Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2016).

³ Riska Mutiah, "Sistem Patriarki Dan Kekerasan Atas Perempuan," *Komunitas: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 10, no. 1 (2019): 58–74.

⁴ Nunu Burhanuddin, "Membincang Persepsi Keterpinggiran Perempuan," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 1 (2015): 57–74, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v16i1.987>.

⁵ Ja'far Ja'far and Umar Muhammad Noor, "Religious Knowledge in Contemporary Indonesia: The Contributions of Al Washliyah Madrasahs and Scholars to the Development of Hadith Studies," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim* 8, no. 2 (2024): 191–219.

women.⁶ In general, the study of hadiths containing hatred towards women or misogynist hadiths has been discussed by Fatima Mernisi. Mernisi in her book *Women in Islam* highlights these hadiths in terms of the historicity of their narrators. She thinks that what makes the hadith sound like it hates women is the first narrator who conveyed these hadiths. Mernisi even stated in her notes that Abu Hurairah and Abu Bakrah as the narrators of the hadith had gone through such experiences that made them hate women, so the hadith they narrated sounded misogynistic.⁷

In particular, Khaled Abou Fadl has also discussed this hadith in his book *In the Name of God*. Abou Fadl in his writing explores this hadith, especially regarding the moral and social implications caused by this hadith. Furthermore, Abou Fadl offers a “precision pause” method as an effort to criticize the hadith, by reviewing the odd editorials of the hadith and conducting a study of the narrator of the hadith as was also done by Fatima Mernisi.⁸ Some researchers like Reni Kumalasari,⁹ M Rifian Panigoro¹⁰ dan Lis Siregar,¹¹ specifically discussed the hadith on women’s service to husbands using Khaled Abou Fadl’s perspective.

In addition to Khaled Abou Fadl, there is also Amina Wadud, a Muslim feminist thinker who also focuses on discussing sacred texts that are considered gender biased. Amina Wadud criticized the classical gender interpretation which she considered male-oriented and tended to be patriarchal. She then offered a holistic interpretation of the Quran. The holistic interpretation popularized by Amina Wadud attempts to consider all methods of interpretation of various issues of women’s lives from political, social, moral, cultural, and religious aspects, and to solve these problems comprehensively through a women’s perspective. Amina Wadud claims that this method will produce an interpretation that contains more elements of gender equality and justice following the basic principles of Islam.

However, Amina Wadud’s discussion specifically only addressed gender bias verses found in the Koran. This can be seen from her main book which discusses the hermeneutics of the Quran, where she seems to abandon the hadith as a source of law and support for the Quran itself.¹² Therefore, there are not many discussions about Amina Wadud that talk

⁶ Ahmad Fudhaili, *Perempuan Di Lembaran Suci Kritik Atas Hadis Shahih* (Yogyakarta: Nuansa Aksara, 2005).

⁷ Fatimah Mernisi, *Wanita Di Dalam Islam* (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1994).

⁸ Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *Speaking In God’s Name* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2014).

⁹ Reni Kumalasari, “PEREMPUAN DAN KETAATAN: Analisis Terhadap Hadis Ketundukan Istri Pada Suami,” *JSGA* 2, no. 2 (2020).

¹⁰ MA M. Rifian Panigoro, “KRITIK KHALED ABOU EL-FADL ATAS EPISTEMOLOGI HADITS SUJUD PADA SUAMI,” *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2018).

¹¹ Lis Siregar, “Konstruksi Hermeneutika Dalam Studi Tentang Hadis-Hadis Misoginis (Studi Pemikiran Khaled Abou El Fadl),” *Tazkir: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Keislaman*, 2016.

¹² Amina Wadud, *Qur an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text Form a Woman s Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

about women and hadith. This can be seen from various research on Amina Wadud conducted by Mutiara Rizqa Chairunnisa.¹³ Amaliatulwalidain¹⁴ and Maizimun Imron Arsal dan Busyro.¹⁵ These researchers discussed Amina Wadud's gender perspective and her interpretation of women's leadership in the Quran.

From searching previous studies, the author sees that there are no in-depth and specific studies that have been found regarding the hadith of women's service to their husbands which is connected to Amina Wadud's feminist hermeneutics. The feminist hermeneutic method that Amina Wadud brings is an interesting interpretation method to be applied not only to the verses of the Quran but also to Hadiths that are indicated as gender bias. This is mainly because the popular hadith studies conducted by previous researchers such as Fatima Mernisi only focused on the narrator or transmitter, so they did not discuss the content in more depth. The method offered by Amina Wadud will try to see the hadith of women as servants of their husbands from a more intrinsic side so that truly new interpretations are produced, not only criticism of the narrators. Therefore, this research is important as a means of reinterpreting the hadith using a new perspective. It is hoped that this will provide new insights and images regarding the reinterpretation of the hadiths which result in the low position of women in the family.

Methodology

This research is library research which uses data analysis methods to analyse data. Library research is research carried out using literature (library) in the form of books, notes, or reports of research results from previous researchers. There are two sources of data in this research, namely primary and secondary. Primary data in the form of the book *Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred From The Woman's Perspective* by Amina Wadud will be used as a reference in carrying out hermeneutics on the hadith of women as servants of their husbands which the author examines. Meanwhile, secondary data includes other works that are relevant to the research. Data collection was carried out by searching for information related to the construction of feminist hermeneutics promoted by Amina Wadud and how the hermeneutic method could be applied to the hadith being studied. Meanwhile, the data analysis was carried out by reconstructing a new interpretation of the hadith of women as servants of their husbands using the theory of hermeneutics with a feminist perspective developed by Amina Wadud.

¹³ Mutiara Rizqa Chairunnisa, "KEPEMIMPINAN PEREMPUAN DALAM HERMENEUTIKA FEMINISME AMINA WADUD," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 2 (n.d.).

¹⁴ Amaliatulwalidain, "DISKURSUS GENDER: Tela'ah Terhadap Pemikiran Amina Wadud," *Tamaddun* xv, no. 1 (2015): 79–105.

¹⁵ Maizul Imran Arsal, Busyro, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan: Penerapan Metode Tafsir Hermeneutika Feminis Amina Wadud," *Al Quds Jurnal Studi Al Quran Dan Hadis* 4, no. 2 (2020).

Results and Discussion

Understanding Amina Wadud's Feminist Hermeneutic Construction

Feminist hermeneutics can generally be understood through the following five characteristics: First, it is based on women's experiences/views. Second, it is framed by feminist theory. Third, it is using the historical contextualization method.¹⁶ Fourth, use the intertextuality method. Fifth, is the monotheism paradigm. To obtain a fair interpretation of women, we must return to the core teachings of the Quran, namely monotheism as a paradigm framework for interpreting the Quran.¹⁷

Amina Wadud is a Muslim scientist who uses feminist hermeneutic methods in interpreting religious texts which triggers the birth of gender-biased understanding. Wadud initiated feminist-based hermeneutics, namely a method of interpreting the Quran that refers to the idea of gender equality and justice and rejects the patriarchal system. In its operations, Wadud dissects certain verses and keywords in the Quran that limit the role of women both individually and socially, then reinterprets them from a woman's perspective without the stereotypes created by the male interpretation framework.¹⁸

In general, Wadud classifies this interpretation model as a holistic interpretation model, as a form of criticism of the other two interpretation models which according to Wadud are patriarchal and reactive. Amina Wadud groups interpretations about women in the Koran into 3 categories: 1) Traditional interpretation, namely an atomistic model of interpretation and there is no intertextuality between verses. Besides that, traditional interpretation is also dominated by men without paying attention to women's perspectives in interpreting verses relating to women. So gender verses are only understood from men's experiences. 2) Reactive interpretation, namely the interpretation model promoted by feminists which seeks to improve the position of women without using a comprehensive analysis of the Koran, so that the result of interpretation is not at all in line with the Koran's view of women. 3) Holistic interpretation, namely the form of interpretation offered by Amina Wadud to criticize the two previous models of interpretation by interpreting holistically by considering all aspects of the verse based on women's experiences. Apart from that, the interpretation is also arranged thematically by connecting several verses that talk about women's issues to find universal meaning in them.¹⁹

The holistic interpretation model is an interpretation model that considers all methods of interpretation regarding various issues of social, political, cultural, moral,

¹⁶ Mardety Mardinsyah, *Hermeneutika Feminisme Reformasi Gender Dalam Islam*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Bitread, 2018).

¹⁷ Mardety Mardinsyah.

¹⁸ Asyha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of The Quran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁹ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*.

and religious life of women and solves problems comprehensively.²⁰ In this model of interpretation, Amina Wadud interprets the Quran by including women's rights and breaking away from the model built by male interpreters. According to her, a re-study of these verses from the Quran will produce an interpretation based on the principles of social justice, and human equality and in line with the goals of human life.

In her effort to produce a holistic interpretation, Amina Wadud borrowed the double movement method introduced by Fazlur Rahman. Like Wadud, Fazlur Rahman also has the same anxiety about the previous model of interpretation which he considers atomistic which produces literal and textual interpretations. Instead, according to Rahman, the interpretation that should emerge is an interpretation that can produce a complete understanding of the *weltanschauung* of the Quran itself. The effort to find the *weltanschauung* is to do a double movement method.²¹

Double movement is Fazlur Rahman's theory which talks about 2 movements in understanding the Quranic text. The first is to understand the context in which the verses were revealed to find the meaning, the purpose, and a universal principle of the verses. The second movement brings these universal principles into today's context.²² This method is used by Amina Wadud in operating her hermeneutics. Amina Wadud believes that a reader must be able to understand the meaning and expressions of the Quran according to the time and atmosphere of their decline in order to find their true meaning. According to Wadud, this meaning can explain the principles contained in a verse.²³

However, Amina Wadud does not stop by taking the method offered by Fazlur Rahman, at the same time Amina Wadud also uses intertextuality techniques for verses, using a traditional method known as *tafsir quran bil Quran* in her hermeneutical operations.²⁴ So, in simple terms, Amina Wadud's hermeneutics can also be perceived as a marriage between Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics, which is used as a goal, and the *Quran bil Quran* method of interpreting the Quran as a tool to achieve that goal.

To discover the moral principles of the Quran, Amina Wadud carried out an interpretation of the *Quran bil Quran* or what is usually referred to as the intertextuality of verses. Intertextuality of verses itself means an attempt to connect the meaning of verses in one letter or trace the content of verses in another letter.²⁵ In Amina Wadud's case, she

²⁰ Amina Wadud.

²¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, ed. trans. oleh Anas Muhaiyidin (Jakarta: Pustaka Press, 2006).

²² Rahmah Eka Saputri, "Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutic Analysis of Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Islamic Thought Review* 1, no. 1 (June 2023): 22, <https://doi.org/10.30983/itr.v1i1.6491>.

²³ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*.

²⁴ Amina Wadud.

²⁵ Fakhrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Qur'ani; Antara Teks, Konteks Dan Kontekstualisasi* (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2002).

linked verses that spoke about women either separately or together with men.²⁶ She connects one text with another, and in some of her hermeneutical processes, she contrasts texts that are considered gender biased with texts that are otherwise to find principles of justice towards women.

Therefore, the offer presented by Wadud wants to capture the spirit and messages of the Quran in an integrative, holistic, complete manner so that it is not trapped in texts that are formal and partially legal. The importance of interpreting the Quran is actually to provide the meaning from a limited text to an unlimited context. Therefore, the intertextuality and contextualization of texts will always experience development, along with time. So the possibility of a continuous interpretation of the text is a normal thing because understanding the text is never considered final at a certain time.²⁷

The continuity and novelty of meaning produced in text hermeneutics according to Amina Wadud cannot be separated from the experience or knowledge that the interpreter brings when approaching a text. This also assumes that the result interpretation will be vary according to the experience and knowledge of the interpreter. According to Amina Wadud, this principle of authorial subjectivity will add many perspectives and conclusions to interpretation.²⁸ So what Amina Wadud does through this perspective of subjectivity is not just reproducing the discourse that has been given by the author but producing new discourse for the needs of the present in accordance with the subjectivity of the interpreter.²⁹

However, in producing new meanings that are appropriate to the current context, Amina Wadud does not abandon the main principles desired by God as the author of the Quran. Wadud admits that in interpreting gender-biased verses, she does not adhere to the opinions of previous scholars, but produces new meanings that may conflict with old or classical opinions but remain within the spirit of Islam itself.³⁰

It should also be understood that in her writings which speak specifically about hermeneutics, Amina Wadud only focuses on discussing Al-Quranic texts which contain gender-biased meanings. She did not include hadith in her analysis of the verses that were considered biased. Therefore, in this research, the author will apply Amina Wadud's hermeneutical theory to different texts, namely hadiths that contain bias and has misogynistic nuances, especially hadiths which as a whole give rise to the understanding that women are servants of their husbands.

²⁶ Amina Wadud, *Qur an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text Form a Woman s Perspective*.

²⁷ MA Dr. Nunu Burhanuddin, Lc, *Filsafat Takwil*, ed. MA Dr. Yusuf Rahman, I (Kediri, Jawa Timur: FAM Publishing, 2020).

²⁸ Amina Wadud, *Qur an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text Form a Woman s Perspective*.

²⁹ A. Khudori Soleh, "Mencermati Sejarah Perkembangan Filsafat Islam," *TSAQAFAH* 10, no. 1 (May 2014): 63, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v10i1.64>.

³⁰ Amina Wadud, *Qur an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text Form a Woman s Perspective*.

Hadith Women as Husband's Servant and General Understanding Surrounding It

حدثنا محمود بن غيلان حدثنا النضر بن شميل
اخبرنا محمد بن عمرو عن ابي سلمة عن ابي هريرة عن نبي
صلي الله عليه وسلم قال لو كنت امرا احدا ان يسجد لاحد
لامرت المرأة ان تسجد لزوجها قال وفي الباب عن معاذ بن
جبل وسراقة بن مالك بن جعشم وعائشة وابن عباس وعبد
الله بن ابي اوفى وطلق بن علي و ام سلمة و انس و ابن عمر
قال ابو عيسى حديث ابي هريرة حديث حسن غريب من هذا
الوجه من حديث محمد بن عمرو عن ابي سلمة عن ابي هريرة

Has told us Mahmud bin Ghailan, has told us An Nadlr bin Syumail has told us Muhammad bin 'Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurairah from the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam said: "If I may order someone to prostrate to another, I will certainly order a wife to prostrate herself to her husband." The hadith was narrated by Mu'adz bin Jabal, Suraqah bin Malik bin Ju'syum, 'Aisyah, Ibn Abbas, Abdullah bin Abu Aufa, Thalq bin Ali, Umu Salamah, Anas, and Ibnu Umar. Abu 'Isa said; "The hadith of Abu Hurairah is a hasan gharib hadith from this line, from the hadith of Muhammad bin Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurairah." (HR. Turmudzi).³¹

The hadith regarding a wife's submission to her husband is very popular in society, in fact, this hadith is often used as a reference to legitimize a wife's obligation to obey her husband.³² According to Ibn Taymiyah, as quoted by Abu Abdurrahman Ibn Abdurrahman al-Sabihi, he said: "There is no obligation for a wife after fulfilling the rights of Allah SWT and His Messenger that is more obligatory for her than fulfilling the rights of her husband."³³ In fact, in the book *Uqud al-Lujain*, it is stated that a wife is obliged to obey her husband as long as it does not violate the rules of Allah SWT.³⁴ If it is viewed or interpreted textually, this hadith has the meaning of a wife's obligation to obey all of her husband orders.

There are various hadiths mention the services that a wife must provide to her husband. Among them is a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet SAW said, "If a

³¹ Muhammad bin 'isa bin Saurah bin Musa bin Ad-Dahhak, *Al-Jami' Al-Kabir Sunan At-Tirmidzi*, Juz 2 (Beirut: Darul Garib al-Islamiy, 1998).

³² Syah Wardi and Mohd. Yusri bin Jusoh, "Mandailing Ulama in Modern Malaysia: The Intellectual Network and Works of Shaykh 'Abd Al-Qâdir Al-Mandîlî," *Nahrasiyah: Journal of Aceh and Malay Archipelago Heritage* 1, no. 1 (2023): 84–105, <https://doi.org/10.47766/nahrasiyah.v1i1.1906>; Mhd. Syahnan, Muhammad Iqbal, and Ja'far Ja'far, "Al Washliyah Fatwa Council's Response to Contemporary Islamic Issues," *Journal of Indonesian Ulama* 01, no. 01 (2023): 1–19.

³³ Abu Adurrahman ibn Abdurrahman al-Sabihi, *Petunjuk Praktis Dan Fatwa Pernikahan* (Jakarta: Najla Press, 2003).

³⁴ Muhammad ibn Umar, *Uqud Al-Lujain* (Indonesia: Jedda, n.d.).

husband invites his wife to bed, then she refuses, the angels will curse her until dawn.” In another hadith, for example, the Prophet said, “By Allah, if a wife licks boils that grow all over her husband’s body, from toe to hair, then that is not enough to fulfill her obligations to her husband.”³⁵

The problem is that these hadiths have serious theological, moral, and social impacts, which have implications for lowering the moral status of women in general. This seems paradoxical when combined with the slogan which is always associated with liberation and equality promoted by Islam itself, with the hadith which literally places the honor of women below that of men. Even a prominent person in Islam, Ibn Aljawzi, believed that a wife should consider herself as a slave to her husband.³⁶ In this case, Muslim women are often misperceived as victims of patriarchy and misogyny in Islam.³⁷

Implementation of Amina Wadud’s Feminist Hermeneutics on Hadith of Women As Husband’s Servant.

1. Grammatical Analysis

Linguistically, the keyword in this hadith is the word prostration. According to Ibn Sayyidah, prostrating means placing your forehead on the ground.³⁸ According to Quraish Shihab, the word prostration means submission and humility, it is also used in the sense of lowering the head, as well as in the sense of directing one’s gaze towards something. The peak of this submission is depicted in “placing the forehead on the earth”, which is one part of prayer.³⁹ Prostration is always related to the context of a creature’s relationship with God. In this way, the above hadith indicates that humans are not permitted to bow down to fellow humans. Meanwhile, the wife’s prostration to her husband as intended by the above hadith is a symbol of obedience and loyalty.

In the above hadith, there is indeed a shift in the purpose of the *mukhatab* or target, the question asked by the *sahabat* was whether they could worship the Messenger of Allah, but the answer was diverted to the issue of husband and wife relations. From this transfer, it can be seen that a wife has a huge obligation to her husband. In essence, the Prophet Muhammad still did not allow wives to worship their husbands.

2. Historical Analysis

In understanding a hadith, what is no less important to pay attention to is the

³⁵ Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *Speaking In God’s Name*.

³⁶ Khaled Abou el-Fadl.

³⁷ Gabriela Özel Volfová and Maria Holt, “Muslimske Feministky a Jejich Hledani Genderove Rovnostarskeho Islamu,” *Gender a Vyzkum / Gender and Research* (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute of Sociology, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.13060/25706578.2019.20.2.481>.

³⁸ Abi al-Fadl Jamaluddin Muhammad Ibn Makram Ibn Manzur al-Afraqi al-Misri, *Lisan Al-Arab*, Jilid IV (Beirut: Dar al-Sharaf, n.d.).

³⁹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah, Jil. XV* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007).

context and target when the hadith was uttered by the Prophet SAW. The hadith regarding the submission of wives to their husbands is motivated by an incident. It was when Qais bin Sa'ad and Muadz ibn Jabal at different times witnessed a group of people from Hirah and Syam worshiped or prostrated themselves to their leader and commander. After seeing that, *sahabah* met the Prophet Muhammad, and did the same thing because they thought the Messenger was the first person who had the right to be worshipped. Then Rasulullah SAW answered that if someone is ordered to prostrate to another person, then a husband has more right to be prostrated by his wife.⁴⁰

From Abdullah ibn Aufa, he said, "When Mu'adz arrived from Syria he bowed down to the Prophet SAW. Prophet SAW. asked, "What is this, O Muadz?", Muadz answered, "I have arrived in Syria and I saw the people prostrating themselves to their leaders and dignitaries, so I also wish to prostrate to you, O Prophet." Rasulullah SAW. said, "Do not do that, in fact, if I ordered someone to prostrate to someone other than Allah SWT, then I would order a wife to prostrate to her husband, and by the One in Whose Hands the soul of Muhammad is, no woman will fulfill the rights of her Lord, before she fulfills her husband's rights, and if her husband asks for her soul, she does not refuse him." (HR. Ibn Majah)⁴¹

In another version related to the historical context when this hadith was uttered this way: ⁴²

Aisyah that Rasulullah Saw., that Rasulullah Saw. said, "If I ordered one person to prostrate to another, I would certainly order a woman to prostrate herself to her husband, and if a man ordered his wife to change a red mountain into a black mountain, then from a black mountain to a red mountain then the wife has to do it." (HR. Ibn Majah).

These hadiths explain a fundamental principle that may have an impact on patterns of marriage and gender relations. While the practice of physically prostrating oneself to one's husband is not permitted, the moral substance of prostrating oneself is actually enforced on the basis of such hadiths. The real impact of these hadiths is that a wife has a very big obligation toward her husband. And because of this position, a husband has the right to receive respect and service from his wife.

Apart from the specific historical review surrounding this hadith, as Amina Wadud, Khaled Abou Fadl also said that it was necessary to consider the patriarchal system of Arab society as the background of the birth of Islam. Before Islam came, a cultural system of hating female developed massively in Jahiliyah Arab society. Having a daughter

⁴⁰ Andi Alda Khairul Ummah Marhany Malik, "KETAATAN ISTRI TERHADAP SUAMI PERSPEKTIF NABI SAW. (SUATU KAJIAN TAHLILI)," *Ushuluddin* 23, no. 1 (2021).

⁴¹ Abû Abdillâh Muhammad bin Yazîd ar-Rabî al-Quzwainî Ibnu Mâjah, *Sunan Ibnu Mâjah, Kitâb an-Nikâh, Bab Hak Suami Atas Istri*, Juz 1, No. (Beirut: Dâr ihyâ¹ at-Turâts al-Arabî, n.d.).

⁴² Abû Abdillâh Muhammad bin Yazîd ar-Rabî al-Quzwainî Ibnu Mâjah.

is a very shameful disgrace and misfortune for arabic people. So they do not give rights, freedom, and authority in the lives of Jahiliyah Arab women both in the domestic and public sectors. Even though Islam came to eradicate this cultural system, this cultural practice did not disappear completely.⁴³

This condition is supported by the classical Islamic intellectual history which tends to be textualist and patriarchal where men at that time were considered as ideal intellectual agents and superior to women. Men were considered narrators who promoted what was conveyed by the Qur'an and Hadith, so that male interpretation was an intellectual dish that women needed to accept, even though the interpretation was done textually and reduced women's humanity.⁴⁴ Women according to Amina Wadud in Islamic intellectual history is treated as objects of Shariah discussion, and not decision maker. Decisions made concerning her role in family and society were made by several male intellectuals to control how women should behave. This tendency is supported by the existence of the hadith, resulting in reproducing the textual interpretation by ignoring its actual meaning.⁴⁵

3. Intertextual Analysis

Along with the above hadith, there is also text in the Quran, Surah Annisa, verse 34, which often associates a good woman with being a woman who is obedient to her husband, even in the traditional interpretation of this verse, this verse allows the beating of disobedient wives.⁴⁶

Men (husbands) are protectors of women (wives) because Allah has preferred some of them (men) over others (women), and because they (men) have provided support from their wealth. So pious women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and take care of themselves when (their husbands) are not around because Allah has taken care of (them). For women who you are worried about nusyuz, you should give them advice, leave them in bed (separate beds), and (if necessary) beat them. But if they obey you, then don't look for reasons to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is Most High, Most Great.

According to Wadud, this verse is often interpreted that a woman must obey her husband, if not, the husband has the right to hit her. However, on the other hand, Wadud actually believes that this verse is intended to provide a way to solve the ongoing disharmony problem between husband and wife. The word "qanitaat" in this verse is described as a good woman, often mistranslated as a literal "obedient" toward husband. According to Wadud, this word actually describes the characteristics or personality traits

⁴³ Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *Speaking In God's Name*.

⁴⁴ Amina Wadud, "Reflections on Islamic Feminist Exegesis of the Qur'an," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (July 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070497>.

⁴⁵ Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women Reform In Islam* (England: Oneworld Publication, 2008).

⁴⁶ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*.

of people who believe in Allah. They tend to be cooperative with each other and submissive before Allah. This is clearly different from the concept of obedience to fellow creatures created by Allah.⁴⁷

In line with Amina Wadud, Kaukab Siddique added that the traditional interpretation of this verse is often used as a weapon to subjugate women in the name of Islam. There are four points that are considered to be the meaning of this verse: 1) Men are women's bodyguards or *qawwamun*, so men become their leaders. 2) Women must obey their husbands in order to be called as pious Muslim women. 3) After giving advice and punishment for separating from bed, the husband has the right to beat his wife if he is worried about her disobedience. 4) If the woman does not want to accept this submission then the husband has the right to divorce her.⁴⁸

This verse is often used as a step in the solution that a husband should take when he finds his wife *nusyuz*. According to Said Qutub, said Amina Wadud, the term *nusyuz* itself cannot be interpreted as a wife's disobedience, but rather as a chaotic condition that occurs in the household.⁴⁹

If it means chaos then what solution does the Quran suggest? 1) Verbal solutions, solving problems between husband and wife with the help of a mediator. 2) If open talks fail then the couple can take a firmer solution, to separate properly. 3) Causing trouble, is the final way to be taken if the condition has exceeded the limit.⁵⁰

However, Wadud said, the things that need to be remembered regarding the restoration of marital harmony are: (1) The Quran prioritizes harmonious conditions and emphasizes the importance of restoration. Thus, disciplinary steps are not the main thing in resolving disputes in the family. (2) If the steps in the Quran are followed, it is possible to create harmony again before taking the third step. (3) Even if you take the right attitude, "distress/causing trouble" should not led to violence in the household because that is not Islamic.⁵¹

This bad husband-and-wife relationship is widely spread in Muslim societies that are experiencing decadence. Later scholars even embellished their interpretations with hadiths relating to the worshipping to husbands. In fact, hadith literature contains teachings that encourage husbands and wives to pay attention to each other's sexual and spiritual needs. However, male-oriented ulama only emphasizes hadiths that encourage women to pay attention to their husband's sexual and spiritual needs and ignore the Quran and

⁴⁷ Amina Wadud.

⁴⁸ Dr. Kaukab Siddique, *Menggugat Tuhan Yang Maskulin* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002).

⁴⁹ Sayyid Quthb, *Fi Zilaalil Quran* (Beirut: Dar Al Syuruq, 1980).

⁵⁰ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text Form a Woman's Perspective*.

⁵¹ Amina Wadud.

⁵² Dr. Kaukab Siddique, *Menggugat Tuhan Yang Maskulin*.

hadiths that teach various obligations of husbands towards their wives.⁵² This is what then caused the formation of the structure of Islamic society, most of which is under male domination. Men are the heads of the family and women are in secondary positions in the household.⁵³

4. Submissive Marriage As a Marital Norm in the Past

According to Amina Wadud, the Quran never orders women to obey their husbands. The Quran also never states that obedience to husband is a characteristic of a good woman. It is the patriarchal discourse that always promotes that women's service and kindness towards the family is something good and that is commanded by God.⁵⁴ However, according to Wadud, there was a mode of subjugation marriage in the past that became the norm for marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims which accompanied the context of the revelation. However, even in submissive marriages, as the norm at the time of sacred revelation, there was no correlation that a husband had to beat his wife to make her obey. This kind of interpretation does not have universal potential and is contrary to the essence of the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah. This kind of interpretation contains major errors in reading the Quran and justifies the lack of men self-control.⁵⁵

Also, according to Wadud, the belief in obeying husband is a legacy of the marriage submissive mode and is not unique to only Muslim history, but to the history at that time. However, the family today is seen as a unit for mutual support and a unit of social obedience, not as an institution for making women as slave to men who buy them at high prices and then guarantee their material and physical needs as husband, without paying attention to higher aspects of human development of women as wife.

In line with Amina Wadud, Ahmed, as quoted by Asma Barlas, stated that the misogyny and sexism of Arab culture, especially at the time the Quran was revealed, had been well recorded by Muslims themselves. In the 7th century, there was no egalitarian society, because women at that time were not recognized as complete human beings, moral agents, or independent legal subjects. Assyrian law, for example, allows a husband to pluck or cut off his wife's earlobes, or a wife who opposes her husband can have her teeth crushed with hot stones.⁵⁶

⁵³ Pelin Ta'kin and Funda Nayir, "Does University Effect Gender Perceptions of Teacher Candidates in Turkey?: Reasons and Implications," *Generos* 10, no. 3 (2021): 258–78, <https://doi.org/10.17583/generos.5573>.

⁵⁴ Amina Wadud, "QUR'AN, GENDER AND INTERPRETIVE POSSIBILITIES" (Commonwealth University, 2004), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/1569208043077297>.

⁵⁵ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*.

⁵⁶ Asma Barlas, *Cara Quran Membebaskan Perempuan* (Jakarta: PT. Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2005).

Therefore, the Quran, which focuses on past marriage norms during the time of revelation, imposes various prohibitions on certain actions of husbands towards their wives. In a broader context, the Quran develops a mechanism for solving problems through deliberation and arbitration. So in conclusion, the Quran supports men and women who to marry with the principle of harmony, love and affection. This is also the *weltanschauung* of the Quran regarding the relationship between husband and wife in the household, namely not submission or ownership but rather mutuality and harmony.

Thus, the hadiths that show the wife's obligation to serve her husband completely without giving the opportunity to argue are contrary to the general picture which explains the Prophet's behavior towards his wives. For example, al-Bukhari said, when *'Umar's wife was arguing with her husband, she said, "You scolded me for arguing with you! By Allah, the Prophet's wives also argued with him, one of them even left him from morning till night."* In the history of al-Thayalisi, one of the Prophet's wives even argued with him, making him angry.⁵⁷

Furthermore, there are various reports from the Prophet's wives stating that the Prophet never beat or criticize any of his wives, instead he treated his wives with very gentle and pleasant, even he often asked his wives for advices.⁵⁸

In terms of husband and wife relations, both wife and husband have rights in this matter, as narrated in Shahih Bukhari about the rights of a husband in a husband and wife relationship.

*"Abî Hurairah r.a said: Rasulullah SAW said: If a husband invites his wife to bed and she rejects him and makes her husband angry. Then the angels will curse him until dawn."*⁵⁹

The rights of a wife in a husband and wife-relationship are stated in the following hadith:

"The Messenger of Allah said: "O 'Abdullah, did I not inform you that you fast during the day and worship at night?" I answered: "Yes, Messenger of Allah." The Messenger of Allah said: "Don't do that, fast and break the fast, worship and sleep, indeed to your body there is a right over you, to your two eyes there is a right to you and to your wife, there is a right to you."⁶⁰

One of the principles of the relationship between husband and wife is consistently explained as a relationship of mutuality and affection. This principle can be seen from QS Albaqarah verse 187:

⁵⁷ M. Rifian Panigoro, "KRITIK KHALED ABOU EL-FADL ATAS EPISTEMOLOGI HADITS SUJUD PADA SUAMI."

⁵⁸ M. Rifian Panigoro.

⁵⁹ Al Bukhori, *Shahîh Bukhârî, Kitâb Bad'î Al-Khalqî, Bâb Idz Qâla Ahadukum "Âmîn" Wa Al-Malâ'ikatu Fî as-Samâ'î*, ed. Juz III, n.d.

⁶⁰ Al Bukhori.

It is permissible for you to fast together at night with your wife. They are clothes for you, and you are clothes for them.

This verse explains a mutual relationship between husband and wife. The husband is clothing for the wife and vice versa, the wife is clothing for her husband. This shows that the Quran wants balanced fulfillment between husband and wife. No one is more entitled to be given warmth or service, in fact, this verse shows the entitlement of both of them simultaneously to receive service and fulfill their desires.

Also in Ar-Rum 30:21 this mutual relationship among couples is mentioned:

Among His signs is that He created for you from your own selves, partners, that you might dwell with them in tranquility, and has made affection (*muwaddatan*) and mercy between (these partners). Indeed that is a sign for those who reflect. (Ar-Rum 30:21)

The relationship between the married couple as described here is extremely gentle. *Muwaddatan* as affection also means mutual love and intimacy. This is not a relationship of competition, violence, strife, or hierarchy. It is impossible to have reciprocal terms in the family unless it is started with the fundamental relationship between the married couple. In place of domination, we have a partnership. In place of competition, we have cooperation. These are all aspects of *mu'awadhah* and here the Qur'an explains it in even more intimate terms with the words *muwaddatan bayna al-rajul wa-l-mar'ah* ('mutual love between the man and the woman').⁶¹

In his hadith, the Prophet also often emphasized the element of mutuality between husband and wife. As stated by Jabir bin Abdillah, in Sahih Bukhari no. 3003, Rasulullah used the word *al-mula'abah* for foreplay and the word *al-mudhaahah* for activities that make husband and wife happy.⁶² The use of these words shows that in the relationship between husband and wife, there should be no form of submission, servitude, or superior-subordinate relationship. What is emphasized in the hadiths regarding husband and wife relations is persuasive action from one party to his partner if there is a biological need that wants to be fulfilled and not an oppressive attitude.

Although the husband's leadership over the wife is also a principle in the Quran. The Quran explains very clearly who should ideally be the leader in a household and the reasons why he or she is chosen to lead the household. Amina Wadud also believes that a husband's leadership over his wife is something that must be accepted. However, the leadership taught by the Quran in QS An-Nisa verse 34 does not show the husband's superiority over the wife, but rather is due to the large responsibility for the husband in the form of providing a living. Meanwhile by male-oriented interpreters providing a living is

⁶¹ Amina Wadud, "Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Qur'anic Analysis," 2019.

⁶² Shahih Al-bukhari, "SHAHIH AL-BUKHARI," no. 1 (2012).

actually interpreted as eternal superiority which implies permissibility for husband oppresses his wife.

Thus, basically, the meaning of the hadith regarding the command of wives to prostrate towards their husbands can be seen as being in line with the view of the Quran which places the husband as the leader of the family. However, even though he is a leader with great responsibility, this hadith actually implies that it is inappropriate to prostrate to a husband, which shows that the wife is not the husband's servant.

In the concept of leadership, what is normal for every leader is that they must be obeyed and respected. In this way, a wife is required to obey her husband, but this does not mean that a husband can be authoritarian towards his wife, demean family members, feel proud of doing a job and behave in an arbitrary manner. The most appropriate reference for seeing an ideal household life is the household life of the Prophet Muhammad.

There are many histories that explain the Prophet active participation in his various households. Rasulullah SAW always helped his family, he even sewed torn clothes or broken footwear, he milked the goat and served himself with his own hands. He even helped his family in their tasks and stated that the husband's participation towards his wife was considered alms.⁶³ So, in practice, the Prophet's household carried the principle of *Mubadalah* (mutuality), where not only the wife served her husband, but the Prophet as a husband could also serve his wife and himself.⁶⁴

Although the Quran and hadith emphasize male leadership in the household, in practice, the Prophet always treated his wives like partners who were treated with affection, not treated as subordinates as is practiced in most Muslim households. This means, that even though the norm of submissive marriage was the pattern of marriage at that time, at a time when wives were subordinate to their husbands and had to simply obey, the prophet did not necessarily model that kind action in his household. And when we refer to the *weltanschauung* of Islam on how women should be placed in the household, then it can be seen from what the prophet has shown the muslim about his own household.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research shows that through the principles of justice and equality, the hadith of women as husband's servants cannot be read as being considered a woman's slave. This is because the main principle in marital relations is the principle of equal partners, as exemplified by Rasulullah's daily life. Even though submissive marriage is the social context in which this hadith is reported, the Prophet as *uswah* actually

⁶³ Kumalasari, "PEREMPUAN DAN KETAATAN: Analisis Terhadap Hadis Ketundukan Istri Pada Suami."

⁶⁴ Efendi Gazali, Rahmah Eka Saputri, "Status of Women in the Household (Mubadalah Reading Against Patriarchal Hadis)," in *INSIS International Seminar on Islamic Studies* (Medan: Jurnal UMSU, 2023).

exemplified a fair relationship towards his wives, and not absolute submission, as understood by many Muslims.

Similar research in the future is needed especially to counter the patriarchal narratives that make religious texts in the Quran and Hadith as legitimacy of women's social subordination. There are still many Hadith and verses of the Quran that may be textually used to support patriarchal discourse, on the other hand, it is also an opportunity to be studied and reinterpreted. This research is expected to be able to provide new colors for the interpretation of sacred texts that are more equal and just towards women.

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