

The Case of Childfree in Social Affairs: Analysis of Tafsir Al-Maraghî by

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Abstract

Childfree is the decision not to have children, originally emerging in the West and spreading to Indonesia, sparking debates with religious principles. The Tafsir Al-Maraghî highlights the purpose of partnering in Islam, emphasizing the sustainability of humanity. Verses such as An-Nahl 16:72, Ar-Rum 30:21, and Asy-Syura 42:11 underscore the importance of children's roles in the family. Research, utilizing library research methods and a descriptive analytical approach, indicates that the childfree decision can be positive if based on considerations that bring benefits. However, without a strong foundation or neglecting the core values of marriage, it is deemed inconsistent with religious teachings emphasizing the purpose of marriage to preserve human existence and the inherent nature of humanity.

Keywords: *Childfree*, *Azwajan*, Tafsir Al-Maraghî, Al-Qur’an.

Abstrak

Childfree adalah keputusan untuk tidak memiliki anak yang awalnya muncul di Barat dan menyebar ke Indonesia, menimbulkan perdebatan dengan prinsip-prinsip yang berkembang. Tafsir Al-Maraghî menunjukkan tujuan berpasangan dalam Islam, menekankan keberlangsungan manusia. Ayat-ayat seperti An-Nahl 16:72, Ar-Rum 30:21, dan Asy-Syura 42:11 menunjukkan pentingnya peran anak dalam keluarga. Penelitian menggunakan metode *library research* dan pendekatan deskriptif analisis menunjukkan bahwa keputusan *childfree* bisa positif jika didasarkan pada pertimbangan yang membawa manfaat, tetapi tanpa dasar kuat atau mengabaikan nilai-nilai utama pernikahan dianggap tidak sesuai dengan ajaran agama yang menekankan tujuan pernikahan untuk menjaga eksistensi manusia dan fitrah manusia.

Kata Kunci: *Childfree*, *azwajan*, Tafsir Al-Maraghî, Al-Qur’an

INTRODUCTION

Rules and laws play a crucial role in the life of society and the state, including in the context of religions such as Islam. Adherence to the rules of Islamic teachings is mandatory, with their primary sources being the Quran and

Sunnah. The Quran is the word of God, while the Sunnah is the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad. The two complement each other, forming the foundation of comprehensive Islamic rules and laws. Understanding and following these principles is crucial for followers of Islam.¹

One of the things regulated in Islam is marriage. Marriage in Islam is strictly regulated because it is considered a basic human need, both physically and spiritually. Marriage rules are designed to ensure the fulfillment of biological and reproductive needs.² In today's era, this is not in line with the recent emergence of the phenomenon of childfree, which rejects the presence of children in their lives. Childfree is a phenomenon where couples choose not to have children. The issue of childfree has become a topic of debate on social media, including in Indonesia, where several public figures, such as Gita Savitri, have openly stated their decision not to have children.³

In an article by the Directorate of Statistics Analysis and Development, titled "Tracing the Footprint of Childfree in Indonesia," data from the 2019-2022 National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) shows that approximately 8% of women in Indonesia can be considered childfree. This figure amounts to nearly 71,000 people and was obtained from women aged 15-49 who have been married but do not yet have children. However, if questions about having children were also asked to those who use contraception and who are unmarried, it is estimated that the number of childfree women in Indonesia would be higher than recorded. The potential continuation of this trend could risk losing a certain generational segment in Indonesia's population pyramid.⁴

Starting from the phenomenon where this phenomenon did not exist during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, who was the recipient of the Qur'an. Therefore, problems like this need to be understood through the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, so that the answer to this phenomenon can be found.

¹ Septi Aji Fitra Jaya, "Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis Sebagai Sumber Hukum Islam", dalam *IndoIslamika*, Vol. 9 (July 2, 2019), h. 204.

² Imam Zarkasyi Mubhar,dkk, " Konsep Seksual Dalam Islam", dalam *Mimbar: Jurnal Media Intelektual Muslim dan Bimbingan Rohani*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2021), h. 170.

³ Uswatul Khasanah and Muhammad Rosyid Ridho, "Childfree Perspektif Hak Reprod uksi Perempuan Dalam Islam", dalam *Al-Syakhsyiyah: Journal of Law & Family Studies*, Vol.3, No. 2 (December 11, 2021), h. 116.

⁴ Yuniarti, "Menelusuri Jejak Childfree Di Indonesia", dalam *DATAin*, Ed. 2023. 01-01, hal. 01-06

The presence of children alone can occur due to the existence of a couple (marriage). Actually, there are several studies related to the childfree phenomenon, where the Qur'an is studied to find answers to this phenomenon, only the bayan used to find answers to the phenomenon is different. The studies related to this phenomenon include: First, The Response of the Qur'an to the Childfree Trend (Analysis of Maqāṣidi Interpretation) This study discusses the childfree phenomenon in the context of Islam in Indonesia using Abdul Mustaqim's theory of maqāṣid interpretation analysis. This study shows that interpretations of childfree can vary, reflecting the complexity of views in Muslim society in Indonesia.⁵ Second, Childfree Issues in the Perspective of the Qur'an "Conceptual Thematic Interpretation Analysis". This study explores the views on the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia, which is different from the European Continent which is more accepting of the decision not to have children. The descriptive analysis research method is used with a focus on the Thematic Interpretation of the Qur'an. The results show that childfree is connected with women's experiences and interpreted as a recognition of the important role of women in society, which is related to changes in views on the mistreatment of women in the Jahiliyah era.⁶ Third, The Response of the Qur'an to the Childfree phenomenon (Comparative Study of the Interpretation of Marriage Verses in the Interpretation of Al-Azhar and Al-Misbah). This study explores the role of marriage and the Qur'an's views on the childfree phenomenon, studied through the interpretations of Buya Hamka and Muhammad Quraish Shihab. Qualitative and analytical methods were used, focusing on specific verses (An-Nisa' 4:1, An-Nur 24:32, An-Nahl 16:72, Ar-Rum 30:21, Al-Isra' 17:31). Both stated that childfree is considered unwise in Islam.⁷

Moving on from the previous matter, this article will try to reveal the response to the childfree phenomenon from the perspective of Ahmad Muṣṭafa Al-Maraghî's interpretation of Al-Maraghî, this interpretation is used as a bayan from the Qur'an in this phenomenon, where this study will discuss two things,

⁵ Roma Wijaya, "Respon Al-Qur'an Atas Trend Childfree (Analisis Tafsir Maqāṣidi)", dalam *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan al-Hadits*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Juni Tahun 2022), hal. 41 - 60

⁶ Indah Muthohiroh, Achmad Zainul Arifin, "Isu Childfree Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an", dalam *al-Munir: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (Januari - Juni 2023)

⁷ Nadifatul Ainiyah, Program Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Fakultas Ushuluddin Dan Dakwah Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Jakarta Tahun 1444 H/ 2022 M

namely: First, How is Ahmad Mustāfa Al-Maraghī's interpretation of the verses related to couples? Second, How is Ahmad Mustāfa Al-Maraghī's interpretation of the verses related to couples if contextualized in the present as a response to the childfree phenomenon. This interpretation was chosen because it is a contemporary interpretation that focuses its discussion not only on the text, but how the verses of the Qur'an answer the problems of human life by linking this phenomenon with verses related to couples and the presence of children as a response to the phenomenon which is then contextualized with the present.

RESEARCH METHODS

A method is a way of doing something, namely a means used to achieve a specific goal.⁸ This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research approach. Data were collected from various sources, including the Qur'an and Al-Maraghi's commentary, as well as books, articles, and journals. The data processing approach used a descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on explaining and analyzing content related to the childfree phenomenon from a Qur'anic perspective using the Bayan of Al-Maraghi's commentary. Data from verses with similar (thematic) discussions regarding couples and children were collected, analyzed, and then linked to the childfree phenomenon as a response to these actions. These data were then contextualized within the current era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Childfree in General Overview

Childfree consists of two words: child, meaning child, and free, meaning freedom. According to Victoria Tunggono in her book "Childfree and Happy," childfree is a conscious lifestyle choice made by a married couple who wish to live without bearing or having children.⁹ The term first appeared in the Meriem-Webster English dictionary before 1901, meaning "without children."¹⁰ The Macmillan dictionary later defined it as "used to describe someone who has decided not to have children." In 1972, the term childfree was first used by a

⁸ Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2018), h. 51.

⁹ Victoria Tunggono, *Childfree and Happy*, ed. Rifai Asyhari (Yogyakarta: Buku Mojok Group, 2021), h. 13.

¹⁰ Tyla Safitri Widiya Ningrum, "Apa Itu Childfree dan Hal-Hal yang Harus Kamu Ketahui Tentangnya", dalam *Humaniora*, 27 Februari 2023,

national organization for non-parents (the National Organization for Non-Parents) in the United States.¹¹

Over time, childfree has become a choice for couples who wish to remain childless, with various factors supporting this decision. The reasons cited for being childfree include:

1. Not everyone desires to be a parent, and this is a fact.
2. One reason someone chooses to be childfree is because of their job.
3. Overpopulation: When someone chooses not to have children, they believe that adding one more person to the planet will require more resources, which can ultimately lead to increased pollution and waste.
4. Poverty (financial): raising children is expensive.
5. Health considerations. Having children impacts the health of parents, especially during pregnancy.
6. Having other children in their lives: Some childless people may take on other childcare roles, such as becoming teachers, nurses, and coaches who spend a lot of time with children.
7. Past trauma. Every individual has a different background, namely past experiences.
8. Desire to travel: Some people choose to be childfree because they want to explore adventures that don't involve children.
9. Cultural factors: Their anticipated arrival often results in a culture that considers the arrival of children to be a burden for childless couples, with questions that can seem to corner them when they don't have children.¹²

From these factors, childfree then began to develop into a wider area and over time. If this is allowed to continue, it will have dangerous impacts, such as the potential threat to a country's demographic bonus. In this case, there is an imbalance between the decreasing number of productive-age population compared to the non-productive-age population. This situation can create an additional burden for the state in providing pension benefits to the non-productive-age population. As a

¹¹ Muhammad Aulia, Childfree “Bagaimana Muslim Harus Bersikap”, h. 14

¹² Rudi Adi, Alfin Afandi, “Analisis Childfree Choice Dalam Perspektif Ulama’ Klasik dan Ulama’ Kontemporer”, dalam Tarunalaw: Journal of Law and Syariah, Vol. 01 No. 01, (January 2023), h. 81

result, a country's economic growth can slow due to the low level of dependence on the productive-age population.¹³

The Childfree Phenomenon in the Quranic Perspective

Childfree is a new phenomenon; the Quran itself does not contain any specific or explicit verses addressing this phenomenon. Several verses in the Quran address the phenomenon of childfree, referring to several factors related to the perpetrators and their motives, such as spouses and offspring (children), and the factors underlying these actions.¹⁴ One of the terms used in the Quran for "couple" is "tazwij," which is implied in Surah An-Nisa (4):1, Surah Az-Zukhruf (43):12, and Surah Adz-Dzariyat (51):49. "Tazwij" in the context of the Islamic message not only contains statements that meaningfully reinforce the universal phenomenon of couplehood, but more specifically, it refers to the meaning of marriage, whose conception, practices, norms, and laws are determined by the divinely revealed law (sharia). At this level, tazwij, or cohabitation from the perspective of Islamic sharia, can be said to be marriage. Where the concept of marriage is depicted in Q.S An-Nisa (4):21, Q.S Ar-Ra'du (13):38, Q.S Ar-Rum (30):21.

The Qur'an itself does not explicitly mention the definition of offspring or children as stated in the law on juvenile justice. Therefore, to gain an understanding of children, it is necessary to explore various terms contained in the Qur'an, such as the term child. To understand the meaning, related to the various terms used in the Qur'an, it is necessary to explore one by one, what terms the Qur'an uses to refer to children. There are at least several terms related to the term child, namely:¹⁵ Children with the term al-walad, Children with the term al-Thifil, Children with the term al-ibn, Children with the term al-Bint, Children with the term Dzurriyyah, Children with the term Hafadah, Children with the term al-Shabiyy, Children with the term Al-Ghulâm.

¹³ Ayu Wulandari, dkk, "Fenomena Childfree Terhadap Bonus Demografi Islam Di Indonesia", dalam Jurnal Soko Guru, Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 2023), h. 49

¹⁴ Jenuri, dkk, "Fenomena Childfree Di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z Serta Pandangan Islam Terhadap Childfree Di Indonesia", dalam Sosial Budaya, Vol. 19, Nomor 2, (Desember 2022)

¹⁵ Abdul Mustaqim, "Berbagai Penyebutan Anak dalam Al-Qur'an: Implikasi Maknanya dalam Konteks Qura'anic Parenting", dalam Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan, Vol. 13, No.01, (2015), h. 271-291

Related Verses in Response to Childfree Acts

In this study, the author only uses the term "couple" to determine the Quranic response to this phenomenon, which is carried out by the main actors, namely couples. The term comes from one of the verses in the Quran, namely "zauj." The Quran mentions the word "zauj" in 68 verses, spread across 43 surahs, with different forms. Among them are the words "zawajnakaha," "zawajnahum," "yuzawwijuhum," "zuwwijjat," "zauj," "zaujan," "zaujaka," "zaujuhu," "zaujaha," "zaujani," "zaujina," "zaujaini," "azwaj," "azwajan," "Al-Azwaj," "Azwajah," "Azwajika," "Azwajukum," "Azwajuhum," "Azwajahunna," and "Azwajina." As for the use of the word **اَزْوَاجًا** azwajan which means in pairs, this term is found in the Qur'an 14 times in 13 verses.¹⁶

In the following table is one of the related terms, so that you can see the response of the Qur'an regarding the childfree phenomenon, namely the term **اَزْوَاجًا** (partner).

| No | Q.S. |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Q.S. Al-Baqarah 2: 234 dan 240 |
| 2 | Q.S. Ar-Ra'd 13:38 |
| 3 | Q.S. Al-Hijr 15:88 |
| 4 | Q.S. An-Nahl 16:72 |
| 5 | Q.S. Tahaa 20:53 dan 131 |
| 6 | Q.S. Ar-Rum 30:21 |
| 7 | Q.S. Al-Fathir 35:11 |
| 8 | Q.S. Asy-Syura 42:11 |
| 9 | Q.S. Al-Waqiah (56):7 |
| 10 | Q.S. At-Tahrim (66):5 |
| 11 | Q.S. An-Naba' (78):8 |

As from the data table, the author will only study approximately three verses, including: Q.S. An-Nahl (16):72, Q.S Ar-Rum (30):21 and Q.S Asy-Shura (42): 11 using Al-Maraghī's interpretation as bayan.

¹⁶ Laela Alfiah, "Makna Zauj Dalam Tafsir Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (Analisis Strukturalisme Linguistik)", dalam *Diya al-Afkar*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Desember 2017), h.308

Al-Marāghī's Tafsīr

Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī was a scholar born in 1883 CE (1300 AH) in the city of Al-Marāghah, Suhaj Province, approximately 700 kilometers south of Cairo. Al-Marāghah is the capital of a district located on the western bank of the Nile River.¹⁷ Al-Marāghī was an exceptionally intelligent scholar and highly productive writer. Throughout his life, he accomplished many things. In addition to teaching, he dedicated his time to writing various works. Many of his writings have reached us today, one of which is his well-known Tafsīr al-Marāghī, consisting of 30 volumes (juz).

The title “al-Marāghī,” used to refer to this tafsīr, does not relate to a tribe, lineage, or family—unlike titles such as “al-Hāshimī,” which is associated with the descendants of Hāshim. Instead, it is linked to the name of his hometown, the city of Al-Marāghah.¹⁸ This tafsīr can be categorized as *adabī ijtimā'ī*, a style that interprets the Qur'an by deeply examining its texts while expressing difficult meanings using eloquent and engaging language. It also contextualizes Qur'anic verses with societal norms, legal regulations, and contemporary civilization. In writing his tafsīr, al-Marāghī employed a unique system, including:¹⁹

1. Presenting one or two verses at the beginning of each discussion, focusing on those with similar meanings and purposes.
2. Explaining vocabulary and difficult terms, then presenting the general meaning of the verse so readers understand its overall message before delving deeper.
3. Including *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) from authentic narrations and contextualizing the verses accordingly.
4. Avoiding excessive use of terms from other disciplines—such as Arabic grammar (*naḥw–ṣarf*) and rhetoric (*balāghah*)—so readers can easily grasp the meaning.
5. Using clear, accessible language.

¹⁷ Hasan Zaini, *Tafsir Tematik Ayat-Ayat Kalam Tafsir Al-Maraghī*, (Jakarta: Pedoman Ilmu Jaya, 1997), h. 15.

¹⁸ Wisnawati Loeis, “Nilai-nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Tafsir Ahmad Muṣṭafa Al-Maraghī: Studi Analisis terhadap Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Fiil”, dalam, *Turats*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Januari 2011), h. 76.

¹⁹ M. Khoirul Hadi, “Karakteristik Tafsir Al Maraghi dan Penafsirannya Tentang Akal”, dalam *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (Juni 2014), h. 164-165.

6. Identifying weaknesses in earlier tafāsīr that included many unverified Isrā'īliyyāt stories.
7. Interpreting verses through relevant narrations, considering both their attribution (to the Prophet, Companions, or Successors) and their function in explaining the Qur'an.²⁰

Analysis of Qur'anic Interpretation and Contextualization as a Response to the Childfree Phenomenon

The childfree phenomenon-where individuals or couples consciously choose not to have children-has become a prominent social and ethical issue in contemporary Muslim communities. Responding to this requires a hermeneutical approach that considers not only textual aspects but also modern social, psychological, and moral contexts. Thus, analyzing Qur'anic verses related to progeny, family, and human responsibility involves two steps: understanding the verses based on classical exegetes, then contextualizing them within modern realities.

1. Surah An-Naḥl (16:72)

اللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَبِعِصْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ

"Allah made for you a partner (husband or wife) from your own kind, made for you from your partner children and grandchildren, and bestowed you with good sustenance. Why do they believe in falsehood, while in Allah's favor they disbelieve?" Q.S. An-Naḥl (16):72

Al-Marāghī explains that Allah grants spouses and, through them, the blessing of children and grandchildren as sources of happiness. He also provides sustenance such as food, drink, clothing, and shelter. Al-Marāghī criticizes deviant behaviors like idol worship, which provide no benefit to humans despite the clear guidance Allah has given for obtaining barakah and well-being.²¹

2. Surah Ar-Rūm (30:21)

²⁰ Irsyad Al Fikri Ys, dkk, "Keunikan Teknik Khusus Penyusunan Tafsir Al-Qur'an oleh Ahmad Mustafa Al-Maraghī", dalam Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas, Vol. 2 No. 1 (2022), h. 13

²¹ Ahmad Mustafa Al-Maragi, Tafsir Al-Maraghī Jilid 14, Terj. Bahrul Abu Bakar, (Semarang: Toha Putra, 1987), h. 196-200.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“Among His signs is that He created for you mates from yourselves, that you may find comfort in them. He has placed love and compassion between you. Indeed, in this are signs for a people who give thought.” Q.S. Ar-Rum (30):21

Al-Marāghī states that one of the signs of resurrection and the return of humans to their Lord is the creation of spouses from their own kind so that tranquility, love, and mercy may fill family life. The creation of spouses has a deep wisdom that should inspire contemplation.

3. Surah Asy-Syūrā (42:11)

فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيْهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْبَصِيْرُ

"(Allah) is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He made for you mates from your own kind and (also made) mates from the kind of livestock (His). He made you reproduce in that way. There is nothing like Him. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." Q.S. Ash-Shura (42): 11.

Al-Marāghī explains that Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, established a system in which pairs are created so that humans may reproduce. This reflects divine wisdom and emphasizes the role of humans as God’s representatives on earth. These verses collectively highlight azwāj (pairs)—even though they do not explicitly state that the primary purpose of marriage is procreation, they indicate that reproduction is a natural consequence of marriage and part of sustaining human life. Al-Marāghī’s interpretations also connect these principles with the idea that children are blessings, as referenced in Surah Al-Furqān (25:74) and supported by prophetic traditions. Relevant Hadith The supplication for righteous spouses and offspring (Q.S. Al-Furqān 25:74). The famous hadith:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ اَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا فُرَّةً اَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا

“And those who say, “Our Lord, grant us our spouses and our offspring as a delight in (our) hearts, and make us leaders of the pious.”

As well as the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW :

اِذَا مَاتَ الْاِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ اِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ: صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، اَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، اَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُوْ لَهُ

"If a person dies then his deeds are cut off except for three things (namely) almsgiving, useful knowledge and the prayers of pious children."

According to Imam Nawawi in *Syarah Shahih Muslim*, as quoted by H. Mahlail Syakur, he explains that all of a person's deeds will indeed cease when they pass away. However, the three actions mentioned in the hadith will continue to bring reward because the doer is the cause behind their continuation. When contextualized in the present time and linked to the encouragement to increase offspring through marriage, the author emphasizes the importance of also considering the quality of the offspring. This means that parents must truly educate their children; even if they have many children, it is important to ensure they possess good qualities so they can bring benefit to their family, the nation, and the state. Therefore, the author believes that in order to maintain quality, it would be better for couples to follow the government's program of birth-spacing, as this recommendation has a solid foundation.

The decision not to have children, according to the author's understanding, can negatively affect the continuity of humankind. Although its impact may not yet be clearly visible today, if this practice becomes widespread in the coming years, the effects will become more apparent. This can be seen in countries experiencing significant declines in birth rates due to the spread of the childfree ideology, which is also inconsistent with religious teachings regarding human nature (*fitrah*). In *Surah Ar-Rum* (30:21), this verse illustrates the purpose of living in pairs. Although it does not specifically state that the purpose of marriage is to have children, it conveys the message that the legislation of marriage is inseparable from its intended purposes and the benefits contained within it, so that life may be preserved and reach a state of completeness. To maintain the longevity of family life, there must be a reinforcing element, and from the author's point of view, the presence of children is something that can preserve marital harmony and lead to the fulfillment of human nature in terms of responsibility. When connected to the context of childfree choices, marriage implies that it is the only legitimate path to maintaining a lasting relationship.

When contextualized with the present time, in which marriage is generally pursued to create a happy family complemented by the presence of children so that life may be preserved, the rise of the childfree ideology among married couples

who decide not to have children and choose to live only with their spouse is, according to the author, not in line with the natural disposition of partnered life. Although in reality, choosing not to have children (childfree) is the right of every individual or married couple, and such a choice is completely lawful because there is no scriptural text that prohibits or forbids it, the decision is still seen as regrettable. Exceptions may be made if there are significant reasons—such as health conditions that prevent the ability to have children and may endanger the couple. However, for other reasons such as financial concerns, the desire for marital happiness without children, or cultural influence, the author believes these are not strong justifications and do not align with human nature. As explained in God’s words in Surah Al-Isra’ (17:31).²²

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ ۗ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا

“Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide sustenance for them and for you. Indeed, killing them is a great sin.”

In another verse, Allah SWT also explains in Q.S Al-Imran (3):14 :

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاٰبِ

"It is made beautiful for humans to love various pleasures in the form of women, children, endless wealth in the form of gold, silver, chosen horses, livestock and rice fields. These are the pleasures of life in this world and in the sight of Allah is a good return."

Al-Maraghī explains that this verse reminds humans not to become overly attached to excessive love for worldly matters, which may cause them to forget the true purpose of life—attaining blessings and piety toward Allah. Love for Allah and righteous deeds should be the primary priority in life, not love for desires and worldly possessions that are temporary and impermanent. This should serve as a reminder for humans to understand the importance of maintaining balance in loving and appreciating the blessings granted by Allah.

Al-Maraghī’s Tafsir is an exegesis that encompasses various disciplines of knowledge and is highly beneficial for anyone who studies it, including in relation

²² Abdul Hadi, Husnul Khotimah dan Sadari, Ibid, hal.650

to the phenomenon of childfree living. This tafsir can serve as a clarification and response to that phenomenon. From the author's research, there are two main findings: First, regarding the interpretation of the verses that form the focus of this study—Q.S. An-Nahl (16:72), Q.S. Ar-Rum (30:21), and Q.S. Ash-Shūrā (42:11). From the explanations of these verses, when connected to the childfree phenomenon, it can be concluded that although the purpose of marriage is not explicitly stated to be centered on having children, it can be understood from the descriptions in these three verses that one of the objectives of the legislation of marriage is reproduction and the preservation of marital continuity in order to achieve completeness. Even though this is not explicitly expressed, the depictions in these verses give the impression that one of the goals of establishing a household is participation in the process of procreation as a responsibility inherent in the institution of marriage.

Second, when connected to the current context in which the topic of childfree living has become a common discussion in society, it can be concluded that the decision to live without children is not always negative if made based on considerations grounded in reasons that bring greater benefit. However, if the decision is taken without a strong basis or even neglects more fundamental values, then it does not align with religious teachings. This is because one of the purposes of marriage, as prescribed in religious teachings, is to preserve the continuity of human existence.

CONCLUSION

The childfree phenomenon stems from economic, career, health, psychological, and lifestyle factors. Socially, it threatens population stability. While the Qur'an does not explicitly discuss childfree ideology, many verses affirm that spouses and offspring are divine blessings and part of human fitrah. Al-Marāghī's tafsīr emphasizes that children bring joy and serve important spiritual and social functions. Thus, choosing not to have children without legitimate justification is inconsistent with Islamic teachings, though exceptions exist for valid medical reasons. Islam also encourages responsible family planning to ensure high-quality future generations.

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