

## THE DYNAMICS OF MAQASIDI INTERPRETATION IN THE CHILDFREE PHENOMENON: CONTROVERSY, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of childfree centers on the freedom to pursue personal life goals without the responsibility of raising children. Parenthood plays a significant role in determining one's quality of life. This study explores the correlation between the interpretation of Maqasid al-Shariah and the childfree phenomenon from religious, social, and cultural perspectives. The research delves into the understanding of childfree through these lenses and employs the Maqasid al-Shariah interpretive approach for analysis. The methodology used in this research is qualitative, relying on a literature review approach (library research). The childfree phenomenon is often linked to the shift in modern values that emphasize individual autonomy, women's rights over their own bodies, and economic considerations. In contemporary society, especially in urban areas, the decision to remain childfree is frequently viewed as part of a lifestyle that prioritizes career and personal achievements. Surah An-Nahl, verse 72, states that Allah created humans in pairs, from whom offspring are born. While this verse is pivotal, a maqasidi interpretation suggests that the decision to remain childfree should be considered within the broader context of individual well-being and circumstances.

**Keywords:** Childfree, Tafsir Maqasidi, Religious, Social and Cultural Perspectives

### ABSTRAK

*childfree adalah tentang kebebasan untuk mencapai tujuan hidup orang lain tanpa tanggung jawab membesarkan anak. Memiliki keturunan sangat penting dalam menentukan kualitas hidup. penelitian yang mencoba menelusuri tentang Korelasi tafsir maqasidi dalam konteks childfree: Perspektif agama, sosial, dan budaya, Maka dari itu penelitian ini lebih menggali dalam mengenai pemahaman Childfree dalam perspektif agama, sosial dan budaya dan kemudian dianalisis dengan pendekatan Tafsir Maqasid al-Syariah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam jurnal penelitian ini merupakan metode kualitatif yang menggunakan pendekatan studi literatur (library research). fenomena childfree sering kali dikaitkan dengan pergeseran nilai-nilai modern yang mementingkan kebebasan individu, hak perempuan atas tubuhnya, serta pertimbangan ekonomi. Di kalangan masyarakat modern, terutama di kota-kota besar, keputusan untuk tidak memiliki anak sering dipandang sebagai bagian dari gaya hidup yang lebih fokus pada karier dan pencapaian pribadi. Dalam surat An-Nahl ayat 72 menyatakan bahwa Allah menciptakan manusia dalam pasangan dan dari pasangan tersebut lahir keturunan. Meskipun ayat ini sangat penting, tafsir maqasidi dapat digunakan untuk menganalisis bahwa keputusan childfree harus dipertimbangkan dalam konteks kemaslahatan dan kondisi individu.*

**Kata kunci:** Childfree, Tafsir Maqasidi, Perspektif Agama, Sosial dan Budaya



## INTRODUCTION

Currently, the phenomenon of being childfree in Indonesia has become an increasingly prominent topic, especially among younger urban generations. The decision not to have children is highly controversial, given Indonesia's strong cultural and social traditions that emphasize family values and unity. However, social changes, rising educational achievements, and globalization have influenced many people's attitudes towards this concept (Munawarudin, 2023).

The term "childfree" literally means "free from children." It refers to individuals or couples who voluntarily choose not to have children, whether biologically or through adoption. For them, being childfree is about the freedom to pursue personal life goals without the responsibility of raising children. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term "childfree" denotes a condition in which a person or couple opts not to have children, primarily by choice. Similarly, the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as a state where an individual or couple chooses not to have children.

The term "childfree" is also widely recognized and more commonly discussed within feminist circles and in feminist agendas. In the book "Feminism and Women's Empowerment in Islamic Perspective" by Siti Muslikhati, feminism is described as a movement aimed at achieving equality in sexual orientation quantitatively (Nabila, et. al., 2024). This means that both men and women should equally contribute, both inside and outside the household.

In the reform era, the feminist movement gained momentum, pushing for changes in various areas, including sexual

relations. The phrase "sexual inequality" became an established term often linked with the disadvantaged, oppressed, or subordinated status of women. This situation led feminists to launch several movements, one of which is the decision for women and couples to remain childfree. This choice is exercised by women as part of their autonomy over whether to become mothers or experience the processes of pregnancy and childbirth.

In essence, the decision to remain childfree is deeply personal. Nevertheless, it is still considered taboo in Indonesia. Before the childfree concept emerged in Indonesia, the idea that someone could choose not to have children first appeared in literature in the early 1970s. This can be verified through the National Family Growth Survey compiled by Good Doctor, which stated that 24% of women and 15% of men did not wish to have children. Moreover, according to a poll conducted by General Social Survey (GSS), 7% of Canadian adults aged 20 to 34 reported wanting to remain childfree, representing 434,000 individuals. Furthermore, 45 of them stated that marriage was still very important, even though they had no desire for children. The reasons behind Canadians' decisions to remain childfree included unfavorable medical conditions, the inability of caregivers to look after their children, declining health, and environmental factors (Admin, 2022). Statistics from the U.S. Census in 2004 also reveal a correlation between childfree intentions and educational attainment, with rates of 14.3% among high school graduates, 18.2% among bachelor's degree holders, and 27.6% among those with master's or doctoral degrees. Additionally, the likelihood of remaining childfree was 82.5% for unmarried women, while for married women, the rate

was 12.9% (Implementasi & Masyarakat, 2022).

The term “childfree” began to emerge in the late 20th century. As a contemporary cultural phenomenon, the choice to not have children has gained traction in several developed countries such as Japan and the United States, as well as in Indonesia. Recently, however, the online world has been stirred by the term “childfree.” This concept first gained prominence when influencer Gita Savitri publicly announced her decision to remain childfree within her marriage. This statement, made on her YouTube channel, quickly went viral. Similarly, actress Cinta Laura Kiehl, a Columbia University graduate in Psychology and German Literature, shared her own choice to embrace the childfree lifestyle due to concerns about overpopulation. She expressed these views on The Hermansyah A6 YouTube channel on August 8, 2021, stating that the Earth is already overburdened by the human population, and adoption could serve as an alternative to further contributing to this strain through procreation (Prasmono & Kartikasari, 2024). These statements from both public figures caused a significant stir in Indonesian society, as their views on childfree became viral and a trending topic across various online and offline media. This reaction is perhaps not surprising, given that childfree choices are still unfamiliar in Indonesia, where children are traditionally regarded as a blessing and one of the primary purposes of marriage (Fikriya, 2023; Dewi, M. O. S., 2023).

As more public figures declare their alignment with the childfree concept, this phenomenon is likely to spark controversy. There are concerns that such decisions, if made without adequate knowledge, could

negatively impact societal perspectives. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the psychological and financial factors that influence parents to opt against having children (Rifa'i, Prasetiawati, & Mushodiq, 2024). Many women who reject the idea of pregnancy do so because their thoughts are no longer anchored in the present; they feel incapable of nurturing a child and are consumed by materialistic anxieties. Parents who resist having children often believe that doing so would complicate their lives significantly and adversely affect their child's development. Additionally, some individuals suffer from unresolved early traumas, rendering them unable to heal and become nurturing figures (Sihombing, 2023).

According to Nur Ainy Fardana, childfree is defined as a personal choice not to have children. She emphasized that this decision should not be regarded as inherently right or wrong; rather, the key lies in the awareness and understanding behind the choice. Many people prefer to focus on their careers or hobbies without the burden of raising children. Others may face health issues that prevent them from having children, or past traumas may play a significant role in their decision. Some simply do not feel prepared or interested in taking on the responsibilities associated with parenting, including the financial and emotional costs. While some may view the childfree choice as selfish or irresponsible, others see it as a valid and respectable decision (Fikriya, K. N., 2023).

Indonesia's Law No. 4 of 2024 on Maternal and Child Welfare during the First Thousand Days of Life (UU KIA) provides protection for couples in Indonesia who do not wish to have children. “Childfree, in my view, is still a safe phenomenon in Indonesia.

The total fertility rate (TFR) per province shows that only two provinces have a TFR below two. The UU KIA aims to support women in feeling secure in their roles so that even after having children, they can continue their careers and remain productive,” said Bonivasius. As of now, Indonesia’s national fertility rate, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), is 2.18, meaning that, on average, each woman gives birth to two children during her reproductive years. Bonivasius emphasized that the government, together with all stakeholders, continues to ensure that the childfree phenomenon does not take root in Indonesia by introducing relevant regulations. “We continue to guard against this phenomenon through the regulations in place.”

Iqlima Aminy Rahmatullah’s research discovered that the childfree phenomenon among Indonesian millennials is influenced by various factors, including economic reasons, time constraints, and lifestyle preferences (Fathnin, Purnowati, & Khasanah, 2024). The study also highlights that childless individuals or couples are often considered vulnerable in old age, as caring for parents remains a social responsibility primarily fulfilled within the family. In Indonesia, being a parent is highly desired for both men and women and is seen as a marker of maturity. (Ana Rita Dahnia, 2023). This underscores another motivation for rejecting childfree choices: concerns about the future and the reliance on children for care in later life (Prasmono, A. S. P., 2024).

Numerous studies and articles claim that childfree decisions are not supported by the Quran. Verses regarding children in the Quran affirm that children are a gift from Allah, bringing countless blessings to their parents. The birth of a child is believed to be

accompanied by provisions already recorded in the Lauh Mahfudz. According to Munawarudin, A. (2023), the Quran clarifies that Allah provides for every child, thus negating any justification for not having children. As mentioned in Surah Al-Furqan, verse 74, children are viewed as a divine blessing through marriage, destined to become righteous individuals who will continue the duty of khalifah (stewardship) on Earth. They are meant to promote human growth, enabling people to connect, collaborate, and support one another. Hence, the continuation of humanity and the preservation of good progeny is essential until the end of time (Idris, 2020).

Given these issues, the author is interested in conducting research on the correlation between maqasid-based interpretation and the childfree concept from religious, social, and cultural perspectives. While previous studies have touched upon maqasid-based interpretations of childfree choices, this research aims to delve deeper into the understanding of childfree from religious, social, and cultural viewpoints, analyzed through the lens of Maqasid al-Shariah (Anwa, Awang, & Sahid, 2021). Recent studies have uncovered gaps in previous research regarding maqasid-based interpretations of childfree choices. This study will examine the relevant Quranic verses and analyze the opinions of Islamic scholars and the objectives inherent within them.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a library research approach, aimed at analyzing the childfree phenomenon from a maqasidi interpretation perspective within the contexts of religion, society, and culture.

The library research method was chosen due to its flexibility in examining various relevant written sources, such as books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, and online media related to the childfree topic and maqasidi interpretation. Data collection was conducted through systematic searches in academic databases, libraries, and reputable online sources, where relevant materials were identified based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria encompassed sources that specifically discuss the childfree phenomenon, maqasid al-shariah, and religious perspectives, while the exclusion criteria included sources that are irrelevant, outdated, or lack authority in the related fields.

Once data was gathered, the sources were categorized into several groups to facilitate analysis, including academic journals, books, theses, dissertations, and online media. This categorization aims to provide a clearer and more organized structure in compiling secondary data, thus enabling a more systematic discussion. The analysis technique used in this research is content analysis, focusing on identifying themes, patterns, and meanings from the collected data. Data was analyzed through several stages, including identifying key themes, coding data based on relevant themes such as the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and interpreting the data to understand the relevance of these themes to the childfree phenomenon.

The Qur'an and maqasidi interpretation serve as the primary data in this research. Verses related to family roles and lineage, such as Surah An-Nahl verse 72 and Surah Al-Furqan verse 74, were analyzed using a maqasidi hermeneutic approach. Through

this analysis, the study explores the understanding of maqasid (the objectives of sharia) concerning the childfree phenomenon, assessing whether the childfree decision aligns with maqasid al-shariah, particularly in terms of preserving the well-being of individuals, families, and society as a whole. The primary focus of this analysis is on how maqasidi interpretation offers flexibility in addressing contemporary issues like childfree, while still adhering to the underlying principles of sharia.

The secondary data sources are structured more clearly by grouping them according to type. For instance, sources from academic journals focusing on maqasidi interpretation and the childfree phenomenon, books that discuss maqasid al-shariah interpretation, scholarly works such as theses and dissertations relevant to the research theme, and online media discussing the childfree phenomenon in modern society. Thus, this research not only provides a deep theoretical understanding but also considers the social and cultural realities surrounding the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia.

The explanation regarding the use of the Qur'an and maqasidi interpretation as primary data is further developed by clarifying that the relevant Qur'anic verses are analyzed hermeneutically, especially in understanding the maqasid (sharia objectives) related to the childfree issue. Maqasidi interpretation is utilized to examine how the childfree decision can be considered within the context of the well-being of individuals and families, and how sharia provides room for the consideration of spiritual and physical well-being, particularly in the modern social and economic context. This study also explores how maqasidi interpretation can be used to contextualize the childfree

phenomenon, making it relevant to the ongoing social changes.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **A Maqasidi Interpretation: Integrating Religious, Cultural, and Social Values in Understanding the Childfree Phenomenon**

The Maqasidic interpretation is a method of interpreting the Qur'an that emphasizes achieving the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shariah), namely, to protect and promote the holistic well-being of humanity, covering aspects such as religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. This approach allows for flexibility in interpreting contemporary issues, such as the childfree phenomenon (Ana Rita Dahniah et al., 2023), where individuals or couples choose not to have children. The integration of the Maqasidic interpretation with religious, cultural, and social values is essential to comprehensively understanding this phenomenon.

In Islamic tradition, having offspring is considered one of the essential recommendations, viewed as part of the effort to ensure the continuity of the ummah. However, the Maqasidic interpretation allows for a deeper assessment of the objectives of Islamic law, where individual welfare and communal benefit are prioritized. The principle of *hifz al-nasl* (preservation of lineage) in *maqasid al-shariah* is typically interpreted as a directive to procreate, but Maqasidic interpretation opens the door to a broader understanding that takes individual circumstances into account.

For instance, the decision to remain childfree can be understood through the broader objectives of *shariah*, such as the preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and the safeguarding of wealth (*hifz al-mal*). If having

children poses a risk to a mother's physical or mental health or places an economic burden on the family, the decision not to have children may be seen as a legitimate action aimed at ensuring well-being. Thus, the Maqasidic interpretation allows for a flexible approach to family decisions, including the choice to remain childfree, as long as the overall objective of preserving well-being is maintained.

Culture plays a significant role in shaping societal views on the roles of family and procreation. In many cultures, particularly in Indonesia, having children is seen as a symbol of social status and a measure of success in life. However, globalization and modernization have shifted much of these traditional perceptions, especially among the younger generation and urban communities that prioritize career and personal freedom.

In more traditional cultural contexts, the decision not to have children may be viewed as going against established social norms. However, through Maqasidic interpretation, the childfree decision can be justified if larger objectives, such as physical, mental, and economic well-being, are taken into account. Maqasidic interpretation seeks to understand local culture while respecting Islamic values, yet it also creates space for differences in interpretation concerning the childfree phenomenon.

From a social perspective, the childfree phenomenon is often linked to shifting modern values that emphasize individual freedom, women's bodily autonomy, and economic considerations. In modern societies, particularly in large cities, the decision not to have children is often seen as part of a lifestyle that focuses more on career and personal achievements. On the other hand, more conservative communities may

view childfree as a threat to traditional values (Fadhilah, 2022).

The Maqasidic interpretation provides a framework for harmonizing these two perspectives. It takes into account the social changes occurring and seeks to apply Islamic values in a manner that is relevant to contemporary society. The Maqasidic approach allows for a dynamic interpretation of the childfree phenomenon, where each decision is considered within its social context and with an eye toward the greater good for both individuals and society.

From the Maqasid perspective, social well-being is also crucial (Anwa et al., 2021). If the childfree decision contributes positively to an individual's life, for example, by reducing financial burdens or lowering stress, it can be seen as a decision in line with Islamic law. This interpretation underscores the importance of individual freedom to make decisions that best suit their circumstances, as long as they do not violate the core principles of religion.

The Maqasidic interpretation offers an integrative approach that bridges religion, culture, and society in understanding the childfree phenomenon. In this case, the Maqasid approach not only considers the normative aspects of religious teachings but also accounts for the social and cultural realities surrounding individuals. This approach seeks to achieve a balance between upholding religious values and granting individuals the freedom to plan their lives.

In the context of childfree decisions, Maqasidic interpretation posits that this choice is not merely a violation of religious or cultural norms but rather part of individual freedom that should be respected if done with good intentions, such as safeguarding

well-being and promoting communal benefit. The childfree phenomenon can be viewed as an adaptation to changing times, where individuals or couples assess their needs and capabilities within a broader context, including economic, health, and social considerations.

### **A Maqasidi Interpretation of Arguments Surrounding the Childfree Issue from Religious, Social, and Cultural Perspectives**

In Islam, marriage and procreation are considered highly recommended Sunnah, and in certain circumstances, they may even become obligatory. One of the primary purposes of marriage is to continue the lineage and ensure the survival of humanity. However, the maqasidi interpretation offers a broader perspective on the command to have children.

Traditionally, religious arguments have emphasized the importance of offspring as a means of preserving human existence. However, the maqasidi interpretation does not focus solely on the quantity of children but also on the quality of life and their overall well-being. If an individual or couple feels that they are not physically, mentally, or financially capable of raising children in a healthy manner, the decision not to have children may be considered valid and in harmony with the broader principles of maqasid. This perspective is further supported by Surah An-Nahl, verse 72 of the Qur'an,

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ



الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفْئَالُ الْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ  
يَكْفُرُونَ<sup>١</sup>

*"Allah has provided for you spouses from among yourselves and granted you, through your spouses, children and grandchildren, bestowing upon you abundant and good sustenance. So why is it that they believe in falsehood, while they reject the blessings of Allah?"*

The emphasis in the aforementioned verse underscores that Islam places greater importance on the responsibility of parents to provide a decent life for their children, rather than merely encouraging the highest possible birth rates. In this regard, a maqasidi interpretation can justify the decision to remain childfree if it is seen as a means to protect the family's well-being and ensure that any potential offspring will be raised in a proper manner.

In Islam, both physical and mental health are highly valued. If a woman or a couple decides not to have children due to serious health risks, the maqasidi interpretation offers a valid justification for such a decision. The Quran itself reflects the hardships a mother endures during pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing, as highlighted in Surah Luqman, verse 14,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى  
وَهْنٍ وَفَصَّالَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ<sup>٢</sup>  
إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ

*"We have enjoined upon man (to act kindly) towards his parents. His mother bore him in a state of increasing weakness and nursed him for two years. (Our command,) 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents.' To Me alone you will return."*

The above verse highlights that the protection of life encompasses safeguarding individuals from both physical and psychological harm that may arise from pregnancy or child-rearing. If having children poses significant risks to the health of the mother or the couple, the decision to remain childfree aligns with the principle of life protection.

For example, in cases where pregnancy could be life-threatening due to certain health conditions, a maqasidi interpretation would prioritize the mother's safety over the obligation to have children. This demonstrates that Islam provides flexibility based on individual circumstances.

Traditional religious arguments often emphasize that God will provide sustenance for the children born, yet the maqasidi interpretation allows Muslims to take their economic situation into account before deciding to have children. The Quran asserts that sustenance for children is guaranteed by Allah in Surah Al-An'am, verse 151: Say: 'Come, let me recite what your Lord has forbidden to you—that you should not associate anything with Him, and be kind to your parents, and do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We will provide for you and for them. And do not approach shameful deeds, whether open or secret. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. This He has instructed you that you may use reason.'

If a couple feels they are financially unable to provide a decent life for their children, choosing to remain childfree may be considered a measure to protect the family's welfare.

In situations where couples must choose between meeting basic economic needs and

having children, maqasidi reasoning allows for the decision to delay or forgo having children in order to ensure the family's economic stability. This is in line with the Shariah principle of preserving wealth and preventing poverty or the inability to care for children properly.

In many Muslim societies, including Indonesia, culture and religion are often closely intertwined in shaping social expectations about family life (Febrianto & Munawir, 2023). Patriarchal culture, social expectations, and traditional values frequently place considerable pressure on couples, particularly women, to have children after marriage. The childfree phenomenon is often viewed as going against these cultural norms (Rusmana, 2024).

The maqasidi interpretation can be used to alleviate the social pressures faced by couples who choose not to have children. The objective of Shariah in this context is to achieve well-being for individuals and families, rather than merely adhering to social expectations. Thus, maqasidi interpretation grants individuals the freedom to make decisions that are appropriate for their lives without having to conform to rigid social norms (Rifa'i, 2024).

The social pressure to have children, especially for women, often overlooks individual circumstances, such as physical health, mental well-being, or financial capability. Maqasidi teaching underscores that life decisions related to family should consider the real conditions individuals face, rather than merely fulfilling traditional or cultural demands.

In modern society, social changes such as increased urbanization, rising living costs, and the growing number of women pursuing

careers have contributed to the childfree phenomenon. Maqasidi interpretation, with its contextual approach, enables Islam to adapt to these social changes. Maqasid principles can be applied to understand that not everyone is in the same situation, and the decision to remain childfree may be a rational and responsible choice in the modern social context (Hawani & Ilham, 2023).

This interpretation can also support couples who feel that social conditions, such as an unsupportive work environment, do not allow them to have children. Therefore, maqasidi interpretation values the well-being of the family as a whole, rather than focusing solely on the continuation of lineage.

In many cultures, women are often seen primarily as mothers and wives, and a reluctance to have children may be viewed as a violation of these traditional roles. Maqasidi interpretation allows for the reinterpretation of gender roles within a broader and more flexible context.

Maqasidi principles uphold individual freedom in decision-making, including women's reproductive choices. Islam respects women's right to make informed decisions regarding their own bodies, and maqasidi interpretation allows them to decide whether or not to have children without succumbing to cultural pressures that force them into traditional roles.

Women's roles in Islam extend beyond being mothers; they are also individuals with broader social, economic, and spiritual responsibilities. Maqasidi interpretation enables women to weigh these responsibilities when making reproductive decisions.

Traditional culture often emphasizes the importance of having many children as a sign

of blessings. However, maqasidi interpretation shifts the focus to the quality of life for children, rather than merely their quantity. According to maqasid principles, the quality of education, well-being, and upbringing of children is more important than the number of offspring. In some situations, the decision to not have children may align with the goal of improving the quality of life and ensuring the welfare of the family.

### **Comparison of Interpretations on Childfree: A Traditional Approach and the Maqasidi Exegesis**

The maqasidi interpretation of Surah An-Nahl, verse 72, highlights the significance of family and offspring as one of Allah's blessings. One of the primary objectives of Islamic law is to preserve the continuity of humankind through the protection of lineage. Allah provides spouses and offspring to create a high-quality generation, both physically and spiritually.

However, the maqasidi exegesis does not solely focus on the quantitative aspect of having children but also emphasizes the quality of education and care provided to them. The principles of maqasid stress the responsibility of raising children to become beneficial individuals for both society and the Muslim community. In this verse, Allah emphasizes that spouses and offspring are sources of happiness and well-being. From a maqasidi perspective, the purpose of having a spouse and children is to provide emotional well-being and a sense of security for the individual (Fatimah, 2024).

The maqasidi interpretation recognizes that every individual has the right to a dignified and balanced life. Thus, having children should align with the family's

physical, mental, and economic circumstances (Maula & Yuzar, 2024). If conditions are unfavorable, the principles of maqasid allow couples to make wise decisions regarding the number of children or even opting for a childfree life, in order to safeguard their well-being. Maqasid al-Shariah teaches that having children must be accompanied by the capacity to provide adequate education, food, and basic needs. If someone is not financially capable, maqasidi interpretation permits the prudent planning of family size to ensure the welfare of all family members.

This verse reminds humankind not to deny Allah's blessings, including the blessings of a spouse and children (Dalimunthe, Junaidi, & Is, 2024). The maqasidi interpretation underscores the importance of acknowledging Allah's blessings by living a balanced life, fulfilling religious obligations while also maintaining personal and family well-being (Maghfur, 2024).

The concept of maqasid also teaches that family happiness does not only stem from the number of children but also from the quality of the relationship and responsibilities shared between spouses and their offspring.

Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Surah An-Nahl, verse 72, explains that Allah created for you wives from among your own kind so that you may find tranquility (sakinah) in them (Siregar, Ladayya, Albaqi, & Wardana, 2023). From these wives, Allah has given you children and grandchildren. Then, Allah has provided you with good and favorable provisions. Despite all of this, do some people still associate others with Allah, believe in falsehood, and deny the apparent blessings of the Lord? Such blessings should, in fact, lead to gratitude and devotion to Allah alone (1). (1) Marriage is a sacred relationship

that forms the foundation of a family institution, which in turn serves as the bedrock of society and the community. Marriage is one way to actualize the innate nature bestowed by God on both humans and animals. Without normative rules governing marriage, human fulfillment of biological needs would become indistinguishable from that of animals, as individuals would pursue such needs without regard for rules or order. Such behavior would strip them of the intelligence and superiority granted to them, setting them apart from other creatures and assigning them the role of vicegerents on Earth. While God's decree for humanity includes regulating natural inclinations through marriage to prevent chaos, humans also have a natural tendency toward perpetuity. Since no individual can live forever, the only way to maintain continuity is through offspring, who serve as an extension of one's life. This interpretation emphasizes several major blessings from Allah: a spouse, offspring, and good provisions. Allah provides all these for human happiness and welfare, yet unfortunately, many people reject these blessings by failing to show gratitude or by deviating from Allah's teachings. This interpretation calls for the constant acknowledgment and protection of the blessings that Allah has granted.

The Tafsir Jalalayn of Surah An-Nahl, verse 72, explains that Allah has given you wives from your own kind, meaning that Allah created Eve from Adam's rib, and all other humans from the offspring of both men and women. From these wives, Allah has given you children and grandchildren, and provided you with good sustenance such as various fruits, grains, and livestock. Then, why do some people believe in falsehood, such as idols, and deny the blessings of Allah

by associating others with Him? The creation of Eve from Adam's rib is not explicitly mentioned in this tafsir, which instead focuses on Allah's blessings of providing spouses, offspring, and sustenance from that which is good.

Regarding the concept of Eve being created from Adam's rib, this interpretation is widely present in Islamic tradition, including several hadith narrations. Although the Tafsir Jalalayn does not explicitly mention this detail in the context of Surah An-Nahl, verse 72, the idea that Eve was created from Adam's rib comes from the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. These hadith mention that women were created from a curved rib, indicating Eve's creation from Adam. Thus, while the Tafsir Jalalayn does not discuss this explicitly in Surah An-Nahl, it is a widely accepted interpretation based on other Islamic texts.

In terms of methodology, the maqasidi approach emphasizes the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shariah), aiming to achieve the overall welfare of humanity. Within this framework, the maqasid are divided into five essential principles known as al-daruriyyat al-khamsah. Quraish Shihab's thematic interpretation gathers and analyzes Qur'anic verses on specific themes—such as family, divinity, or morality—to provide a comprehensive understanding. On the other hand, Tafsir Jalalayn generally focuses on analyzing Qur'anic verses. In conclusion, all three tafsir approaches share a common emphasis on the importance of marriage and family in Islam, while also underlining that having children is part of Allah's plan to create a harmonious life. The choice to be childfree is a personal decision that must be respected and carefully considered.

Individuals must balance personal freedom with responsibility, while taking into account religious values, societal expectations, and the long-term impact of such decisions. Ultimately, this decision should be made with full awareness and through open dialogue with one's spouse and loved ones. Furthermore, these interpretations remind us to always be grateful for the sustenance that Allah has provided.

## CONCLUSION

The maqasidi interpretation facilitates the integration of religious values with cultural and social perspectives in understanding the childfree phenomenon. This approach provides flexibility for Muslims to align religious obligations with modern social changes, such as urbanization, shifts in gender roles, and economic pressures. By taking into account the overarching objectives of Sharia, including the protection of life, lineage, wealth, and intellect, choosing to be childfree can be regarded as a legitimate option in the pursuit of individual and familial welfare. Maqasidi interpretation emphasizes that in Islam, the quality of life, well-being, and public interest are paramount in every decision made.

The maqasidi interpretation offers a flexible approach in addressing the issue of childfree, focusing on the primary objectives of Sharia, which encompass the well-being of individuals, families, and society. This interpretation is able to respond to various arguments from religious, social, and cultural perspectives, placing welfare as the highest priority. In the context of childfree, the maqasidi interpretation allows for considerations such as physical and mental health (hifz al-nafs), economic factors (hifz al-mal), individual freedom and social

responsibility, and the re-interpretation of gender roles in modern society. Thus, the maqasidi interpretation provides a robust framework for Muslims to navigate contemporary issues like childfree while preserving the essence and objectives of Sharia.

Surah An-Nahl verse 72 states that Allah created humans in pairs and from these pairs comes offspring. While this verse holds significant importance, the maqasidi interpretation allows for the analysis that the decision to be childfree must be weighed within the context of individual welfare and circumstances.

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