INJURLENS, Volume 6, Number 1, April 2026
P-ISSN: 2828-9137 (Print), E-ISSN: 2776-4974 (Online)
https://injurlens.bdproject.co.id/index.php/injurlens

The interrelationship of husbands and wives rights and obligations in islam: a normative and socio-legal analysis

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Citation: Lismiati, L, **2026.** The interrelationship of husbands' and wives' rights and obligations in islam: a normative and socio-legal analysis. *INJURLENS, 6(1), 98-113,* https://doi.org/10.51749/injurlens.v6i1.159

Academic Editor: Huda, M. K.

Data:
Received: 8 June 2026
Accepted: 5 October 2026
Publish: 6 October 2026

Publisher's Note: Scholar Center stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the relationship between husbands' and wives' rights and obligations in Islam through normative and social approaches. The study is motivated by the dynamics of societal understanding regarding leadership, responsibility, and the balance of roles within the family, which are often perceived disproportionately. This research employs a qualitative approach using library research as its primary method. The findings indicate that the relationship between husbands' and wives' rights and obligations in Islam is founded upon the principles of justice, balance, and reciprocity (mu'āsharah bi al-ma'rūf). The concept of the husband's leadership is not intended to signify absolute superiority; rather, it represents a form of responsibility accompanied by the obligation to fulfill the rights of the wife. Likewise, the wife's obligations are understood within the framework of cooperation and the maintenance of family harmony. From a social perspective, the implementation of these principles is influenced by cultural contexts and changing gender roles in contemporary society. Therefore, a comprehensive and contextual understanding is necessary to ensure that marital relations remain aligned with Islamic values while also being responsive to social developments.

Keywords: rights and obligations; husband and wife; Islamic law; normative study; social perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage occupies a highly significant position in human life, both at the individual and societal levels. Through a legally recognized marriage, interactions between men and women are conducted in a dignified manner that is consistent with the honor and nobility of human beings as creatures endowed with dignity. Therefore, it is understandable that Islam places considerable emphasis on regulating marriage in a comprehensive and detailed manner. The primary objective of such regulation is to guide humanity toward a dignified way of life that is in harmony with the noble status

bestowed upon human beings among Allah's creations(Khairuddin, 2025). Marriage, therefore, is not merely a private relationship between a man and a woman, but also a legal and social institution that establishes a reciprocal relationship of rights, obligations, and responsibilities between spouses.

Marriage law occupies a highly significant position in Islamic teachings, as it regulates family life, which constitutes the fundamental foundation of society. Marriage is understood as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman established for the purpose of forming a family. The presence of this covenantal element indicates that marriage is a deliberate act grounded in religious principles and legal provisions, thereby affirming its sacred nature within the framework of Islamic law (Taufik et al., 2021). Consequently, the legal consequences of marriage extend beyond the establishment of a lawful relationship to the emergence of reciprocal rights and obligations that must be fulfilled by both spouses. The realization of the objectives of marriage therefore depends not only on the validity of the marriage contract, but also on how husband and wife understand, exercise, and fulfill their respective rights and obligations within family life.

Marriage constitutes a mutual agreement between a man and a woman to live together, thereby creating a new legal relationship. Through the marriage contract (*akad*), both parties become bound by a set of rules that confer rights and impose obligations that did not previously exist. In this context, an obligation refers to duties that must be fulfilled by an individual for the benefit of, or in relation to, another person, whereas a right denotes an entitlement received from another party. Every legal subject inherently possesses rights, which in turn give rise to corresponding responsibilities. Therefore, both husband and wife are required to understand their respective rights and obligations upon entering into marriage. A husband is obligated to fulfill and safeguard the rights of his wife, just as the wife's rights arise from the obligations borne by the husband. Consequently, it is inappropriate for an individual to demand his or her rights before first fulfilling the corresponding obligations (Nur Suci Alawiyah et al., 2025).

According to the Qur'an, marriage is intended to establish a harmonious family life (*sakinah*) founded upon love and compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*). One of the essential means of building and maintaining marital harmony is the fulfillment of the rights and obligations of each member of the household. Household harmony cannot be achieved without awareness, commitment, and mutual concern in carrying out one's obligations to ensure the realization of the spouse's rights. Therefore, the balance between rights and obligations serves as a fundamental pillar in fostering a stable, harmonious, and enduring marital relationship (Hidayatulloh, 2019). This balance is particularly important in the context of contemporary family life, where changes in social relations, economic conditions, gender roles, and patterns of household interaction have influenced the way marital responsibilities are understood and performed. Such developments create a need to examine whether the normative formulation of marital rights and obligations remains capable of providing a fair and contextual framework for contemporary husband-wife relations.

Rights and obligations are two inseparable elements, akin to two sides of the same coin. Both possess equal scope, function, and significance. When an imbalance occurs for instance, when one party places greater emphasis on claiming rights rather than fulfilling obligations, or vice versa a condition of injustice is likely to arise. Therefore, maintaining a balance between the fulfillment of rights and the performance of obligations is essential for preserving the continuity and harmony of the marital relationship. A marriage cannot achieve its ideal objectives without the commitment of both spouses to carry out their respective responsibilities while simultaneously respecting and upholding the rights of one another (Hidayatulloh, 2019). Accordingly, the issue of marital rights and obligations is significant not only from the perspective of individual family relations but also from the perspective of justice, equality, and the sustainability of the family as a basic social institution. An imbalance in the fulfillment of rights and obligations may generate conflict, injustice, and disharmony within the household, making the issue important to reconsider in light of both Islamic normative principles and contemporary social realities.

Previous studies have examined the rights and obligations of husbands and wives from various perspectives. Hidayatulloh examined the rights and obligations of spouses based on the Qur'an and emphasized the importance of fulfilling the respective responsibilities of husband and wife in achieving harmonious family life (Hidayatulloh, 2019). Nurani subsequently analyzed the relationship between marital rights and obligations from the perspective of *Tafsir Ahkam* and *Hadith Ahkam*, emphasizing the principle of balanced relations between husband and wife (Nurani, 2021). Hermanto examined marital rights and obligations through the perspective of *fiqh mubadalah* and emphasized reciprocity or mutuality as a basis for establishing equitable relations between spouses (Hermanto, 2022). Mubarok and Hermanto further examined marital rights and obligations through the perspective of gender equality and *maqasid al-shariah*, particularly in relation to economic and non-economic dimensions of marriage (Muhammad Fuad Mubarok & Agus Hermanto, 2023).

More recent studies have expanded this discussion into the context of contemporary family relations. Azizah and Yassir compared the rights and obligations of husband and wife under Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and Islamic law, demonstrating the relationship between positive law and Islamic legal principles in regulating marital relations (Azizah & Yassir, 2024). Afif and Zukin examined the flexibility of marital rights and obligations through the perspective of *mubadalah*, particularly in relation to the distribution of economic and domestic responsibilities between spouses (Afif & Zukin, 2024). Hermanto, Safitri, and Hidayat connected the principle of reciprocity with the formation of harmonious families, while Sugiri, Fithoroini, and Fahrisal compared classical and contemporary Islamic jurisprudence and demonstrated that changes in social, economic, and gender relations have encouraged reinterpretation of the traditional formulation of marital rights and obligations (Agus Hermanto et al., 2024).

These studies indicate that the discussion of marital rights and obligations has developed from a predominantly textual and normative approach toward broader perspectives emphasizing reciprocity, gender equality, *maqasid al-shariah*, positive law, and contemporary social change. The existing literature has therefore contributed

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significantly to understanding the normative foundations and changing patterns of husband-wife relations. Nevertheless, the approaches employed in previous studies tend to remain concentrated on particular dimensions. Studies based on the Qur'an and Hadith primarily emphasize textual and normative interpretation, while studies employing *mubadalah*, gender equality, or *maqasid al-shariah* tend to focus on specific principles of relational equality and reciprocity. Meanwhile, studies based on positive law generally emphasize the conformity between Islamic principles and statutory provisions.

The research gap lies in the limited integration of these perspectives into a multidimensional analysis that simultaneously connects the normative sources of Islamic law with juridical, sociological, and philosophical dimensions of contemporary marital relations. In particular, the principle of balance between rights and obligations has generally been discussed as a normative or relational principle, but its broader significance as a framework for understanding justice, responsibility, and the sustainability of marital relations in contemporary society remains insufficiently explored. This gap demonstrates the need for an analysis that does not merely identify the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, but also examines the underlying values and their relevance to changing social and legal circumstances.

The novelty of this study lies in its multidimensional analysis of marital rights and obligations by integrating Qur'anic and Prophetic sources with juridical, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. Unlike previous studies that predominantly employ a single analytical framework, this study positions the principle of balance and reciprocity between rights and obligations as a central analytical basis for understanding the ideal relationship between husband and wife. This approach enables the study to move beyond a descriptive identification of rights and obligations toward a contextual analysis of how Islamic principles can guide equitable and mutually responsible marital relations in contemporary society.

The study contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic family law scholarship by providing an integrated framework for understanding marital rights and obligations through the interaction of religious norms, legal principles, social realities, and philosophical values. Practically, the study provides a conceptual basis for strengthening balanced and equitable marital relations, in which the exercise of a spouse's rights is inseparable from the fulfillment of corresponding obligations. The approach is expected to contribute to the development of a more contextual understanding of Islamic family law while maintaining the fundamental values of justice, reciprocity, responsibility, and mutual respect.

The study of husbands' and wives' rights and obligations cannot be adequately understood solely from a normative-theological perspective. An interdisciplinary approach encompassing juridical, sociological, and philosophical dimensions is required to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values are implemented within contemporary contexts. Therefore, this discussion seeks to examine Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) concerning marital relations from a multidimensional perspective in order to develop a more holistic, contextual, and

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applicable understanding. Based on this background, this study examines Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) concerning the rights and obligations of husbands and wives from a multidimensional perspective, particularly by examining the balance and reciprocity between rights and obligations. The study seeks to develop a more holistic, contextual, and applicable understanding of marital relations that remains grounded in Islamic values while responding to the realities and challenges of contemporary family life.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the relationship between husbands' and wives' rights and obligations in Islam from both normative and social perspectives. The focus of the study is directed toward examining how religious texts and legal regulations shape the construction of such relationships and how they are understood within contemporary society. The research adopts a library research method by reviewing and analyzing various relevant primary and secondary sources. This study is descriptive-analytical in nature, presenting normative data related to the rights and obligations of husbands and wives and subsequently analyzing them critically to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of their relationship within the framework of Islamic teachings and social realities. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a balanced and proportional portrayal of the interplay between rights and obligations in fostering a harmonious family life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Normative Foundations of Husbands' and Wives' Rights and Obligations

a. Subsubsection

1) Qur'an, Surah al-Nisaʾ (4): 34: Family Leadership and the Obligation of Maintenance (Nafaqah)

ٱلرِّجَالُ قَوَّٰمُونَ عَلَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ بَعۡضَهُمۡ عَلَىٰ بَعۡضٖ وَبِمَآ أَنفَقُواْ مِنۡ أَمۡوَٰلِهِمۡۚ فَٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ قَٰنِتَٰتٌ حَٰفِظَٰتٞ لِّلۡغَيۡبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ ٱللَّهُۚ وَٱلَّٰتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَٱهۡجُرُوهُنَّ فِي ٱلۡمَضَاجِعِ وَٱضۡرِبُوهُنَّۖ فَإِنۡ أَطَعۡنَكُمۡ فَلَا تَبۡغُواْ عَلَيۡهِنَّ سَبِيلًاۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيّٗا كَبِيرٗا

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given some of them advantages over others and because they spend out of their wealth. Therefore, righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in the husband's absence what Allah would have them guard. As for those women from whom you fear disobedience (nushūz), advise them, forsake them in bed, and then discipline them [in a manner that causes no harm]. But if they obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is Most High, Most Great.

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The analysis of the above verse is as follows:

a) The term *qawwāmūn* in Arabic morphology (ṣarf) represents an intensive (hyperbolic) form, indicating continuous and responsible care, maintenance, and stewardship.
b) This verse does not establish the ontological superiority of men over women; rather, it delineates a functional distribution of responsibilities within the household.
c) The phrase *bimā anfaqū* ("because they spend out of their wealth") indicates that financial maintenance (nafaqah) is a legal obligation of the husband and constitutes one of the fundamental bases of his leadership within the family.

2) Surah al-Rum (30): 21: The Foundational Principles of Marital Relationships *Sakinah, Mawaddah,* and *Rahmah*

وَمِنۡ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَنۡ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنۡ أَنفُسِكُمۡ أَزۡوَٰجٗا لِّتَسۡكُنُوٓاْ إِلَيۡهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيۡنَكُم مَّوَدَّةٗ وَرَحۡمَةٗۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَٰتٖ لِّقَوۡمٖ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has placed between you affection (mawaddah) and mercy (raḥmah).

The analysis of the above verse is as follows:

a) Sakinah refers to existential tranquility and inner stability, rather than merely emotional comfort or temporary happiness.
b) Mawaddah *(active and enduring affection)* and raḥmah *(compassionate and nurturing mercy)* constitute the ethical principles governing the relationship between husband and wife, transcending the purely contractual nature of marriage.
c) From a philosophical perspective, this verse affirms that marriage is a relationship between two subjects of equal human dignity, rather than a relationship characterized by domination and subordination.

3) Qur'an, Sūrah al-Taḥrīm (66): 6: The Spiritual Responsibility of the Head of the Family

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ قُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمۡ وَأَهۡلِيكُمۡ نَارٗا وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلۡحِجَارَةُ عَلَيۡهَا مَلَٰٓئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٞ شِدَادٞ لَّا يَعۡصُونَ ٱللَّهَ مَآ أَمَرَهُمۡ وَيَفۡعَلُونَ مَا يُؤۡمَرُونَ

"O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are appointed angels, stern and severe, who do

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not disobey Allah in what He commands them but carry out whatever they are commanded."

The analysis of the above verse is as follows:

a) This verse provides the normative basis for the husband's obligation to serve as a guide and educator of the family in spiritual, ethical, and moral matters.
b) This responsibility is fundamentally pedagogical in nature, aimed at nurturing and educating family members, rather than being repressive or coercive.

The *asbāb al-nuzul* (occasion of revelation) of Qur'an 66:6 is reported in connection with a question raised by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding how one should protect one's family from the Fire after the Prophet had instructed believers to safeguard themselves from Hellfire. In response, the Prophet explained that protecting one's family entails enjoining them to do what is right and preventing them from engaging in wrongdoing. This verse therefore serves as an important foundation for spiritual education within the family, including the teaching of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God), the cultivation of moral values, and the creation of a family environment that encourages obedience and devotion to Allah SWT (Febriani, 2024).

4) Qur'an, Surah al-Nisaʾ (4): 19: Kind and Respectful Treatment of Wives

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمۡ أَن تَرِثُواْ ٱلنِّسَآءَ كَرۡهٗاۖ وَلَا تَعۡضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذۡهَبُواْ بِبَعۡضِ مَآ ءَاتَيۡتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّآ أَن يَأۡتِينَ بِفَٰحِشَةٖ مُّبَيِّنَةٖۚ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۚ فَإِن كَرِهۡتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تَكۡرَهُواْ شَيۡـٔٗا وَيَجۡعَلَ ٱللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيۡرٗا كَثِيرٗا

*O you who believe! It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them harshly in order to take back part of what you have given them, unless they commit a clear act of immorality. Live with them in kindness (*muʿāsharah bi al-maʿrūf*). If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed abundant good.*

The analysis of the above verse is as follows:

a) The majority of fuqahaʾ (Islamic jurists) regard this command as a sharʿi (legal-religious) obligation incumbent upon the husband, requiring him to treat his wife with kindness, fairness, and respect.
b) The concept of maʿruf represents a flexible ethical-legal principle whose application may vary according to custom (ʿurf), social context, and considerations of public welfare (maṣlaḥah), provided that it remains consistent with the fundamental values and objectives of Islamic law.

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b. Prophetic Traditions *(Hadith)*

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ الْقُشَيْرِيِّ رضي الله عنه قَالَ:قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ, مَا حَقُّ زَوْجَةِ أَحَدِنَا عَلَيْهِ؟, قَالَ: «أَنْ تُطْعِمَهَا إِذَا طَعِمْتَ, وَتَكْسُوَهَا إِذَا اكْتَسَيْتَ, أَوِ اكْتَسَبْتَ, وَلَا تَضْرِبِ الْوَجْهَ, وَلَا تُقَبِّحْ, وَلَا تَهْجُرْ إِلَّا فِي الْبَيْتِ»

Muʿāwiyah al-Qushayrī (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: I asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is the right of a wife over her husband?" He replied, "That you feed her when you feed yourself, clothe her when you clothe yourself or when you are provided with sustenance do not strike her on the face, do not insult or revile her, and do not abandon her except within the house." This ḥadīth is classified as ḥasan and was narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and Aḥmad (Sunan Abū Dāwūd, no. 2142).

The explanation of the above ḥadīth is as follows:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was once asked about the rights of a wife over her husband. In response, the Prophet mentioned several matters, including: (HadeethEnc, 2025)

a) First: Do not reserve food exclusively for yourself without sharing it with your wife; rather, provide her with food whenever you eat.
b) Second: Do not reserve clothing exclusively for yourself; instead, provide her with clothing whenever you clothe yourself and whenever you have the means and financial capacity to do so.
c) Third: Do not strike her except when there is a valid reason and necessity. If a husband considers it necessary as a form of guidance or because she has neglected certain obligations, it must not be a harsh blow. Likewise, striking the face is prohibited because the face is the most prominent and honorable part of the body and contains delicate and noble features.
d) Fourth: Do not insult or curse her by saying, "May Allah disgrace your face," or similar expressions. One should not disparage the face or any other part of the body, for it is Allah the Exalted who created and perfected the human form. To disparage the created form ultimately reflects disparagement of the Creator. We seek refuge in Allah from such conduct.
e) Fifth: Do not boycott or abandon her except within the marital bed. Do not leave her altogether or send her to another house, as temporary separation within the home may be a form of estrangement that sometimes occurs between spouses.

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عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ : «اسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرًا؛ فَإِنَّ المرأة خُلِقَتْ مِن ضِلعٍ، وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ مَا في الضِّلَعِ أعْلاهُ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبتَ تُقيمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ، وإن تركته، لم يزل أعوج، فاستوصوا بالنساء». وفي رواية: «المرأة كالضِّلَعِ إِنْ أَقَمْتَهَا كَسَرْتَهَا، وَإِن اسْتَمتَعْتَ بها، استمتعت وفيها عوَجٌ». وفي رواية: «إِنَّ المَرأةَ خُلِقَت مِنْ ضِلَعٍ، لَنْ تَسْتَقِيمَ لَكَ عَلَى طَرِيقة، فإن استمتعت بها استمتعت بها وفيها عوج، وإِنْ ذَهَبْتَ تُقِيمُهَا كَسَرْتَها، وَكَسْرُهَا طَلاَقُهَا.«[صحيح] - [الرواية الأولى: متفق عليها الرواية الثانية: متفق عليها الرواية الثالثة: رواها مسلم]

Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Treat women kindly, for a woman was created from a rib, and the most curved part of the rib is its upper portion. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it; and if you leave it as it is, it will remain curved. Therefore, treat women kindly."In another narration, he said: "A woman is like a rib; if you try to straighten her, you will break her. But if you enjoy her company, you may do so while there remains some curvature in her." In yet another narration: "Indeed, a woman was created from a rib, and you will never be able to straighten her completely. If you enjoy her company, you may do so while there remains some curvature in her. But if you try to straighten her, you will break her; and breaking her means divorcing her." [Authentic Hadith] – Narrated by Muslim; agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim in its two narrations (Muttafaq ʿAlayh).

The meaning and relevance of the above ḥadīth are as follows:

a) "I enjoin you to treat women with kindness and goodwill"

   It indicates the moral and religious obligation of a husband to treat his wife with gentleness, patience, and good character.

b) "A woman was created from a rib"

   Figuratively, this expression signifies that women possess qualities of gentleness, sensitivity, and vulnerability that should be understood and appreciated by their husbands.

c) Prohibition of Harsh Treatment

   "If you attempt to straighten it by force, you will break it" signifies that violence, coercion, and harsh treatment are contrary to the Sunnah of the Prophet.

d) The Purpose of the Hadith

   It emphasizes the principles of justice, affection *(mawaddah)*, compassion (raḥmah), and harmony within the family.

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حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ":كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ. فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَمَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَمَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَمَسْؤُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا، وَالْخَادِمُ رَاعٍ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَمَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ."

"Each of you is a shepherd (leader), and each of you is responsible for those under his or her care. The ruler is a shepherd and is responsible for his subjects. A man is a shepherd over his family and is responsible for them. A woman is a shepherd in her husband's household and is responsible for what is under her care. A servant is a shepherd over his master's property and is responsible for what is entrusted to him. Therefore, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for those under his or her care."

The meaning of this ḥadīth in the context of a wife's obligations is as follows:

a) To preserve her chastity and personal honor *(farj/ ʿiffah)*.
b) To safeguard the trust *(amānah)* of the household and the property entrusted to her by her husband.
c) To manage household affairs in accordance with the values and principles of Islamic law *(Sharīʿah)*.
d) To refrain from engaging in actions that may harm the dignity and reputation of the family.
e) To protect the privacy and confidentiality of family matters *(sitr)*.
f) To fulfill domestic responsibilities in accordance with accepted *ʿurf* (sound and socially recognized customs), provided that they do not conflict with Islamic principles.

Normative Legal Analysis of Husbands' and Wives' Rights and Obligations

Qur'an 4:34 constitutes one of the foundational texts in the structure of Islamic family law. The verse affirms the principle of qiwāmah *(male guardianship/leadership)* over women, which is normatively grounded in two main reasons: first, because Allah has granted certain advantages to men over women; and second, because of the obligation of men to provide financial maintenance *(nafaqah)*. From a normative-legal perspective, this verse does not merely confer structural superiority upon the husband, but rather establishes a functional legal responsibility. The husband's leadership is not an absolute sovereignty, but an ethical-legal mandate that must be exercised based on the values of justice, protection, and compassion. This is evident in the continuation of the verse, which instructs that wives must be treated kindly and that any marital discord must be addressed proportionately. Thus, qiwāmah should be understood within the framework

of responsibility *(taklīf)*, rather than in the context of hierarchical domination as it is often misinterpreted (Al-Ṭabarī, 1992).

Similarly, the ḥadīth of Muʿāwiyah ibn Ḥaydah regarding the rights of a wife over her husband provides an operational elaboration of the principle of *qiwāmah*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that a husband is obliged to feed his wife as he feeds himself, clothe her as he clothes himself, refrain from striking her face, avoid insulting her, and abstain from boycotting her except within the confines of the marital home. This ḥadīth demonstrates that the marital relationship in Islamic law is not constructed upon a relation of domination and power, but rather upon a system of interrelated moral and legal obligations. Maintenance (*nafaqah*), physical protection, and respectful treatment constitute the three primary dimensions of the husband's responsibilities. Collectively, these elements indicate that *qiwāmah* is protective and regulatory in nature, rather than oppressive or punitive. From a legal perspective, this ḥadīth provides a normative foundation for jurists in formulating the obligations of financial maintenance, the prohibition of harm against one's wife, the principle of *muʿāsharah bi al-maʿrūf* (kind and honorable companionship), and the limits of corrective measures in cases of marital discord.

The integration of the Qur'anic verses and ḥadīth above constructs a coherent legal framework: every right generates a corresponding obligation, and every obligation entails a reciprocal right. A wife's right to financial maintenance implies the husband's duty to provide it, while the wife's obligation to safeguard the integrity of the household corresponds to the husband's right to moral order and family stability. This relational structure reflects the principles of balance (*tawāzun*) and reciprocity (*mubādalah*), which constitute the foundation of Islamic family law. Accordingly, the marital relationship cannot be understood as a one-directional hierarchy that places the husband as the sole bearer of authority. Rather, it is a moral-legal contractual relationship arising from the marriage contract (*ʿaqd al-nikāḥ*), which in classical jurisprudential literature is regarded as a solemn and weighty contract (*ʿaqdun ghalīẓ*), carrying significant legal and ethical implications before both Allah and society (Al-Zuḥaylī, 1985).

In the Islamic legal system, this verse serves as a basis for jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) in establishing the husband's obligations to provide financial maintenance (*nafaqah*), housing, protection, and the prohibition of physical and verbal harm toward the wife. Meanwhile, the ḥadīth provides practical details regarding how these obligations should be implemented. The interaction between the Qur'anic verse and the ḥadīth illustrates an integrative method of legal derivation *(istinbāṭ al-aḥkām)*: the Qur'an establishes general principles, while the ḥadīth regulates their practical application. Through this framework, Islamic family law does not merely present abstract norms, but also provides concrete guidance for the regulation of domestic life.

From the perspective of positive law in Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, the Qur'anic verses and ḥadīth serve as normative references in the formulation of legal regulations, such as Articles 31 and 34 of the Marriage Law, which stipulate the husband's obligation to provide financial maintenance and to protect his wife (Mutamakin & Ansari, 2020). This coherence indicates that Islamic legal norms possess strong contextual relevance, both within societies that uphold classical jurisprudential traditions and within modern legal systems. Therefore, a normative-legal analysis of

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these two sources demonstrates that Islamic family law is constructed upon the principles of justice, balance, and reciprocal protection. The husband is not the absolute ruler of the household but rather the bearer of responsibility, while the wife is not a subordinate object but a legal subject whose rights are guaranteed by the Sharia (Makmoer et al., 2024).

Thus, the Qur'anic verses and ḥadīth are not merely textual proofs *(dalāʾil naqliyyah)*, but also serve as the philosophical foundation of Islamic family law. Both teach that marriage is a moral-legal institution whose success is highly determined by the awareness of both parties to fulfill their obligations before claiming their rights. A healthy husband wife relationship in the perspective of Islamic law is not a competitive relationship, but rather a synergistic one founded upon cooperation, mutual respect, and reciprocal responsibility.

Sociological Review of the Implementation of Husbands' and Wives' Rights and Obligations in Society

The implementation of husbands' and wives' rights and obligations in society is significantly influenced by how communities perceive the roles of men and women. In many Muslim communities, particularly in South Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, the division of marital roles is not shaped solely by Islamic teachings, but also by local cultural norms. These cultural frameworks often construct the belief that men must always occupy a higher position than women, thereby leading to the understanding of the marital relationship as hierarchical rather than as a complementary partnership as prescribed by Islamic teachings (Mernissi, 1987).

One example of this can be seen in the understanding of the concept of *qiwāmah*. In the Qur'an, *qiwāmah* refers to the husband's responsibility to provide financial support and protection for his wife. However, in social practice, this concept is often narrowed and used as a justification for the assumption that the husband possesses full authority over his wife (Wadud, 1999). In reality, such an approach is more accurately understood as a legacy of patriarchal culture originating from agrarian and feudal societies, in which men were positioned as the sole breadwinners, while women were confined to the domestic sphere (Ahmed, 1992).

From a modern sociological perspective, this social structure is constructed, meaning that it is shaped by cultural values, customs, and historical developments within society, rather than being directly derived from religious texts. In many cases, communities inherit patterns of family relations that emphasize male dominance, and these patterns are often perceived as "natural," even though they are in fact the result of social construction.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the relationship between husband and wife should be built upon justice, cooperation, compassion, and mutual respect. These principles emphasize a functional relationship, in which each spouse performs their respective roles based on function, capacity, and mutual agreement, rather than on the superiority of one party over the other.

As society moves toward a more egalitarian structure marked by increased female education, broader economic participation, and greater involvement of women in the public sphere the understanding of husbands' and wives' rights and obligations also

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evolves. In many contemporary Muslim families, the marital relationship is no longer perceived as one-directional. Domestic and public roles become more flexible, depending on the needs and agreements of the spouses. For instance, a wife's participation in the workforce is no longer seen as a threat to the husband's authority, but rather as a positive contribution to the family's economic stability. In such contexts, the husband's obligation of financial maintenance *(nafaqah)* remains legally binding; however, its implementation becomes more dynamic as both parties cooperate in managing household finances.

Nevertheless, these social changes do not occur uniformly. In some regions, patriarchal values remain strong, leading to the implementation of marital rights and obligations being influenced more by culture than by Islamic teachings. Hence, family education, a balanced understanding of Islamic jurisprudence *(fiqh)*, and a contextual rereading of religious texts are essential in order to foster a more balanced marital relationship aligned with the objectives of Islamic law.

Philosophical Review of the Concept of Marital Relations in Islam

From a philosophical perspective, marital relations in Islam are grounded in an ethical paradigm that views human beings as dignified creatures *(al-karāmah al-insāniyyah)* endowed with reason, free will, and moral responsibility. Accordingly, marriage is not merely understood as a social contract *(ʿaqd)*, but as an existential bond that unites two individuals in building a shared life based on the values of sakinah, mawaddah, and raḥmah. These values are not merely theological concepts, but constitute a philosophical framework that shapes the direction of marital relations as an ethical partnership characterized by complementarity rather than domination (Shihab, 2005).

From the perspective of Islamic ethical philosophy, marital relations are founded upon the principles of *al-musyārakah* (partnership) and *al-muʿāsharah bi al-maʿrūf* (living together in kindness). The principle of maʿrūf is both universal and dynamic; it refers to all forms of good conduct recognized by sound reason, social ethics, and human values. Accordingly, the ideal marital relationship in Islam is not a hierarchical relation as understood in traditional patriarchal structures, but rather a relationship that emphasizes cooperation, mutual respect, and proportional responsibility. Classical Muslim philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh emphasized that the family is the primary ethical unit, where human beings first learn virtue, justice, and self-control before engaging with society at large. Thus, the husband wife relationship is positioned as a space for moral character formation, rather than a sphere for the reproduction of unilateral power.

The principle of qiwāmah in Islamic legal philosophy is not understood as an ontological superiority of men over women, but rather as a functional role bound by a moral mandate *(taklīf)*, namely the obligation to provide financial maintenance, protection, and responsibility for the welfare of the family. This role, according to many contemporary thinkers, is conditional and historical in nature, rather than absolute. Within the framework of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, the ultimate objective of family regulation is the preservation of human dignity, relational justice, and functional balance between husband and wife. Accordingly, qiwāmah can only be understood philosophically insofar as it aligns with the principles of justice *(al-ʿadl)* and mercy *(al-raḥmah)*, not

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domination or oppression. If any interpretation of qiwāmah results in injustice, such an interpretation is contrary to the philosophical essence of the Sharīʿah (Faizah, 2018).

Furthermore, marital relations in Islam emphasize the concept of *al-takāmul* (mutual complementarity). Husband and wife are regarded as two moral subjects, each possessing capacities and strengths that complement one another. This view aligns with the Qur'anic ontological framework, which describes men and women as "garments" for one another a philosophical metaphor indicating warmth, protection, and existential intimacy. From this perspective, the household relationship is not constructed on the basis of who holds greater authority, but rather on who is more capable of fulfilling their moral responsibilities (Faizah, 2018).

Thus, the philosophical analysis demonstrates that marital relations in Islam possess a strong ethical and spiritual foundation, requiring both parties to understand their roles within the framework of justice, compassion, and partnership. Any form of relationship oriented toward domination or subordination contradicts the fundamental principles of Islamic philosophy, which uphold human dignity. The marital relationship should be viewed as an ethical journey of two individuals toward shared moral excellence, based on the principle that each party is a leader for themselves and is responsible for the trust (amānah) of the family.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the rights and obligations of husbands and wives in Islam constitute an integral concept that encompasses textual-normative, juridical-legal, sociological-structural, and philosophical-ethical dimensions. Foundational texts such as Qur'an 4:34 and the ḥadīth of Muʿāwiyah ibn Ḥaydah establish the legal basis that the husband is responsible for safeguarding, protecting, and providing financial maintenance for his wife, while the wife is entitled to rights that must be fulfilled justly. The implementation of these principles in society demonstrates that their interpretation continues to evolve in response to social dynamics, moving toward a more egalitarian and dialogical marital relationship. Philosophically, this relationship constitutes an ethical space in which human beings manifest compassion, justice, and virtue within family life. Ultimately, marital success can only be achieved when both parties understand, fulfill, and respect each other's rights and obligations in a balanced manner.

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