

Implications of Childless Families in the Qur'an

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Abstract

This paper examines the implications of childless families in the view of the Qur'an. This type of research uses *library research*, namely activities to find and collect information related to the Qur'anic view of the *childfree* phenomenon in marriage, using written materials such as books, documents, journal articles, previous research results, and other scientific works related to the topic of the problem. The results show that childless families in the view of the Qur'an can lead to the emergence of various negative impacts that will be experienced by families if there is no birth of children in the family. These negative impacts include; the loss of heart conditioning, the loss of blessings from a child for his parents, life will feel empty, and not including a complete family. Parents should know the nature and privilege of children in the family because it can be a side of luck for parents and their families. To avoid the negative impacts of *childfree* families, every married couple needs to consider a number of these negative impacts so that they can change their stance from a *pro-childfree* family to a family that wants offspring because children are very useful for a family.

Keywords: Family, Childlessness, Qur'an

Introduction

This *childfree* phenomenon is basically inseparable from the change in the perspective on marriage from institutional to individual marriage. This paradigm shift then affects the perspective of married couples on the importance of having children or not. In institutional marriages, having children is seen as important because of social expectations and demands. Whereas in individualized marriages, the presence of children is not the main goal because

couples are more focused on fulfilling their affection and self-development needs. (Eva Fadhilah, 2022: 72). *Childfree* is an option to exist in the public sphere without being hampered by the presence of children. Although having children is something that is coveted in a marriage in general. Both from the couple themselves and the extended family. Usually they decide to be *Childfree* temporarily until what they want has been achieved and fulfilled.

A research shows that the choice not to have children has a variety of reasons, ranging from career, family circumstances, environment to economy, including expensive childcare costs. In Islam, a family blessed with a child will be perfect because children are the fitrah of marriage. Islam presents a perfect teaching for all creatures and is a blessing for the universe. Islam is also comprehensive, in the sense that all the problems needed by humans are of course all well served. It can be ascertained that there is no single religion or ism that provides all the needs of demands concerning all aspects of human life as perfectly as Islam. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2018: 106-107)

One of the things that is regulated in Islam is marriage as a way to form a family. Marriage according to Islamic law is "marriage, which is a very strong contract or *mī'sāqaqan gholīẓan* to obey Allah's commands and carrying it out is an act of worship". (Andi Nuzul, 2019: 52). A legal marriage, as regulated in religion, will have an impact on the good of the family, so that everyone is expected to build a household as religious guidance. (Rina Yulianti, 2010: 20) As Allah says in QS.al-Rūm [30]: 21.

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

Translation:

And among the signs of His greatness is that He created mates for you from your own kind, so that you tend to them and feel at ease, and He made between you love and affection. Indeed, in such there are signs (of Allah's greatness) for those who think (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2010: 406).

According to Ibn Kasīr, in Surah al-Rūm verse 21 explains that Allah swt. created women from their own kind, if Allah swt. made the son of Adam male and made women from other types, such as from the jinn or animal species, undoubtedly the feeling of affection between them and between the various couples will not be achieved, even it will be disharmonious if the couple is different. (Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abudrrahman, 2008: 209). But, it is thanks to His mercy and compassion that has created men and women in pairs so that between them can be created a sense of love and affection. From the above verse it can be seen that all of His creatures were created in pairs, so as not to gundah gulana heart. As His people can be obtained provisions that live in pairs is the innate instinct of humans and other living things, even everything was created in pairs.

The Qur'an is a book of guidance for mankind (*hudan*) and a guiding light (*sirājan muniran*). (Imam Suprayogo, et al, 2001: 80). so the existence in the middle of life is very important. The Qur'an is the main source of teachings for Muslims with its absolute truth and cannot be refuted by human reason. The emergence of the *childfree* phenomenon was not found at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet who received the Qur'an, so *childfree* is

not included in the category of prohibited acts, because every married couple has the right to plan and organize their household life, including having children. Nevertheless, although there is no verse that directly prohibits *childfree*, as a human being who believes in Allah swt, the choice to *childfree* can be said to be an unwise choice because Allah swt. Guarantees the survival of every servant. In Islam, children are seen as a gift that must be grateful for because children are God's gift. Every human being who is given the mandate to become a parent must fulfill this role well and in totality. (Eva Fadhillah: 71).

The author feels it is important to conduct a deeper study of the Qur'anic view of the *childfree* phenomenon in marriage in order to better understand the nature and privileges of children in the Qur'an, by looking at the reality that shows that children are important in the family, and it is also interesting for the author to know the negative impact on childless families in the Qur'an.

Literature Review

Childfree consists of two words, *child* which means child, and *free* which means free. According to Victoria Tunggono in her book entitled *Childfree and Happy*, *Childfree* is a life choice made consciously by someone who wants to live a life without giving birth or having children. (Victoria Tunggono: 13).

In simple terms, *childfree* is defined as *not wanting children and having no desire to take on the burden of the parenthood*, which means not having children and having no desire to *take on the burden of parental responsibilities*. *Childfree* is also an agreement made by a married couple not to have children during their marriage. From this explanation, it can be understood that *childfree* is a conscious state of choosing to be child-free both from personal and family. Based on the results of searches in various sources, that research that is directly related to this research design is identified as follows:

Research conducted by Mumtazah, "Review of Islamic Law on the Decision to Marry Without Children or Childfree" (Case Study of Youtube Creator Content Gita Savitri Devi) in 2022, research conducted by Mumtazah is more directed at analyzing the issue of Youtube content Gita Savitri Devi when stating that she and her husband decided not to have children or *childfree*. (Mumtazah, 2022: 42). This research has similarities with the research to be done, which focuses on the *childfree* phenomenon. However, this research examines in the form of a YouTube content case study, while this research focuses on the Qur'anic view of the *childfree* phenomenon in marriage.

The next research was conducted by Karunia Hazyimara, "The Phenomenon of *Childfree* Decisions in the Perspective of the Qur'an (Thematic Interpretation Study), in 2022, the results of this study discuss the verses about *childfree*, *childfree* values in Islam and the phenomenon of *childfree* decisions in the Indonesian context. (Karunia Hazyimara, 2022: 65) Even this research has similarities with the research to be done, which focuses on the *childfree* phenomenon. However, the object of discussion that will be carried out by researchers is different from the object discussed by Karunia Hazyimara, researchers focus more on the nature and privileges of children in the Qur'an and the negative impact of childless families in the Qur'an.

The next research prepared by Mochammad Khoirul Huda entitled "Childfree: A Study of Women Refusing to Get Pregnant on Social Media from the Perspective of Andrea Dworkin's Radical Feminism" in 2022, in this study found a research result that in the perspective of Andrea Dworkin's radical feminism, *childfree* on social media or women refusing to get pregnant is women's awareness of body ownership, which in the analysis of this study, Andrea has opened the intentionality of womanhood radically to four things, namely: pregnancy is an exploitation of the body, rejection of patriarchy, *childfree* in the view of pornography and prostitution, and women's awareness of sexuality. (Mochammad Khoirul Huda, 2022: 49) Even this research has similarities with the research to be carried out, which focuses on the *childfree* phenomenon. However, the researcher's focus is different from this research, which focuses more on the Implications of Childless Families in the Qur'an.

Research Methods

This type of research uses *library research*, namely activities to find and collect information related to the Qur'an's view of the *childfree* phenomenon in marriage, using written materials such as books, documents, journal articles, previous research results, and other scientific works related to the topic of the problem. (Rahmadi, 2011: 15) In addition, this research is included in qualitative research, which is a type of research that prioritizes emphasis on processes and meanings that are not tested, or measured precisely with data in the form of descriptive data. (Ansem Strauss and J Corbin, 2003: 157)

The data source used in this research is the subject from which the data is obtained. (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2002: 107). The data is divided into 2 namely primary and secondary. Primary data intended in this study are verses of the Qur'an that talk about the nature and privileges of children in the Qur'an and verses of the Qur'an related to the negative impact of childless families. Meanwhile, secondary data are data used as support for primary data obtained from books, articles, journals, and previous studies that have aligned topics and other literature related to the author's research object.

Research results

The importance of children in the family

The institution of the family is the most essential institution in society, as it plays the role of teaching the habits, patterns, lessons and values that will make good civilized children. In order for all to exist, society needs loyalty, stability and achievement from its members, all qualities that the family is able to help develop. (Endry Fatimaningsih, 107) Children in the family certainly have their own positive value to advance and raise the name of the family, the importance of the presence of a child in the family to spur and build harmony. Therefore, the presence of a child is the perfection of the results of the parents' baby which signifies the love of the two parents.

In this case, children prove to play an important role in a family, especially for a woman who has the nature to become pregnant and give birth to a child. Marriage is also one way to fulfill biological needs legally and legally for the state. For rural communities with the majority of farmers, until now children play an important role, one of which is for

economic functions, where later parents will depend on their children, besides that having many children means also having a lot of labor capital to generate more income, so it is not uncommon to find parents who invite their children to go to the fields from a young age to get used to their parents' activities. (Laras Santi Sulisty Linuwih, 2019: 12) As a social institution, with somewhat different language, the family has basic functions and social functions. The basic functions of the family are functions that are difficult to change and be replaced by other people or institutions.

With the presence or presence of a child, these functions can be fulfilled because they have been fulfilled and given birth to the condition that there must be children in the family. The main functions include:

1. Biological function, namely the family is the birthplace of children. This function is the basis of human survival,
2. The function of affection, namely only in the family is there an atmosphere of affection as a result of the loving relationship that is the basis of marriage, and
3. Socialization function, this function refers to the role of the family in shaping the child's personality. Through social interactions in the family, children learn patterns of behavior, attitudes, beliefs, ideals, and values in society in the context of their personality development.

Meanwhile, social functions are relatively easier to change or undergo changes, including: economic functions, child protection and maintenance functions, educational and religious functions, and recreational functions. A slightly different classification identifies several family functions, including: socialization, regulation of sexual activity, social placement/identity, and material and emotional protection. (Endry Fatimaningsih, 107)

The Negative Impact of Childless Families in the Qur'an

Children are the hope of the next generation of parents for their families, as one of the keys to the success of a family in establishing love, marked by the birth of children in the family. (Endry Fatimaningsih, 87) In a nuclear family there are several aspects that determine that the family is perfect, starting from the father who acts as the head of the family, the mother acts as a household processor and manages finances for children and extended family and children as a complement in the family which indicates that their baby exists and is the most beautiful mandate from Allah SWT. Nowadays it is not uncommon to find a housewife also acting as the head of the household who earns through her own work and helps the family economy, some are even the center of the family economy.

It will be a burden for a family, even a mother who is versatile in her small family in terms of management, but also on the other hand there is happiness in itself when a child is considered a gift and trust and entrustment given by Allah swt. Another case with families who do not have children or give birth to children through the mother, of course, when viewed from the various privileges of children, the position of children and even the function and importance of children in the Qur'an, the benefits of children for a family are enormous. (Kusmidi, 2018: 78) In the verse of the Qur'an it is not uncommon to explain about children in a family, therefore as a family with an Islamic religious background, of course, it would not agree if in a family there did not want the birth of a

child in his daily life because, children are the most beautiful gift that Allah swt. entrusted to his servants. Another case with families with non-Islamic backgrounds, who do not agree with the importance of children in the family, may agree if there is no birth of children in the family.

Some of the negative impacts that a family will experience if there is no child birth in the family.

1. The loss of heart conditioning in the event of parental disputes in the family, as mentioned in the Qur'an that children are *qurrata a'yun* (heart conditioning), in this case, a family that does not have children can be said to have lost the medicine of the heart when the distress hit the family. As Allah swt. says in QS. al-Furqān [25]: 74 as follows:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا.

Translation:

And, those who say, "O our Lord, bestow upon us the coolness of the eyes from our spouses and offspring and make us a leader for the righteous. (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2012: 366)

The verse is interpreted in tafsir jalalain with the meaning that (And those who say, "O our Rabb! bestow upon us our wives and our offspring) it can be read in the plural so that it becomes *zurriyyātina*, it can also be read in the Mufrad, namely *zurriyyatina* (as a delight to our hearts) meaning that we see them always obeying You (and make us imams for the righteous.") that is, leaders in goodness. (Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī and Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsir Jalalain. Here is the Asbabun Nuzul of Verse 231*

The loss of blessings from a child to his parents, as in QS. al-Anbiyā' [21]: 84 which explains that children are a blessing for their parents. As a basic form of love for his servant by presenting a child in a family who is born through the mother's womb through the relationship between a husband and wife. Allah swt. says in QS. al-Anbiyā' [21]: 84 as follows:

مِنْ ضُرِّ وَاتَيْنَهُ أَهْلَهُ ۗ وَ مِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذَكَرَىٰ لِلْعَبِيدِ بِهِ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ

Translation:

So we answered his call, and we removed the sickness that was in him, and we restored his family to him, and we multiplied their number, as a mercy from Us, and as a warning to all who worship Allah swt. (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2012: 329)

The verse is interpreted (Then We answered his call) his prayer (then We removed the sickness that was in him and We restored his family to him), that is, all his children, both sons and daughters, by bringing them back to life. The number of his sons was three or seven (and We multiplied their number) the number of his sons born to his wife and his wife was made pure. Prophet Job had two barns; one for grain and the other for barley. Then Allah sent two groups of clouds, one of which rained gold on the grain barn and the other of which rained silver on the barley barn, so that both barns were filled with gold and

silver (as a mercy). The word *Rahmatan* becomes *Maf'ūl Lah* (from Us). The word *Min 'Indinā* becomes an adjective (and as a warning to all those who worship Allah) that they should be patient, for which they will be rewarded. (Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī and Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī, 205).

Family life will feel empty and less interesting and colorless without the presence of children in a family. Not included as a complete family with the designation of the nuclear family (somah), which is a social unit consisting of a husband and wife and their children. The loss of one aspect of the family, namely procreation and child rearing, for a family that does not have children, of course the aspect of child rearing cannot be fulfilled even though, nowadays, many families change the position of child rearing to the maintenance of their pets. The family aspect of sexual needs becomes fruitless if there is no birth of children in a family. As explained in the verse, the process of creation and growth of children starts from a drop of semen and becomes a clot of blood resulting from the process of conjugal relations. The process of child development is also mentioned in QS. al-Mu'minun [23]: 14 as Allah swt. says, as follows:

تَمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ
فَتَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

Translation:

Then, the semen We made into something hanging (blood). Then, that which hangs down We made into a lump of flesh. Then, a lump of flesh We made into bones. Then, We wrapped the bones with flesh. Then, We made it into another creature. Glory be to Allah, the best of creators. (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 342)

The verse in QS. al-Mu'minūn [23]: 14 is interpreted in the interpretation of Jalalain that (Then the semen We made a clot of blood) thick blood (then a clot of blood We made a lump of flesh) flesh the size of a fist (and a lump of flesh We made bones, then the bones We wrapped in flesh) according to another *qirā'at* at the pronunciation of 'Izāman in two places is read 'Azmān, ie in the singular. And the word *Khalaqnā*, which means to create, in three places means *Sayyarnā*, meaning We made him (then We made him into another creature), namely by blowing the spirit into his body. (So Glory be to Allah, the Most Excellent Creator) the best of those who create. *Mumayyiz*, on the other hand, is not mentioned because it is known by itself, i.e. the word *Khalqan*. (Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī and Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī, 214)

Based on some of the negative impacts described above, it is known that children have an important role in the family, of course, if there are no children in the family, there is no cooling of the heart when there is a dispute between parents, the blessing of a child is also lost for his parents, family life will feel empty, uninteresting, colorless without the presence of children, and can be said to be an incomplete family.

Conclusion

The implications of childless families in the view of the Qur'an can lead to the emergence of various negative impacts that will be experienced by families if there is no birth of children in the family. These negative impacts include; the loss of heart conditioning, the loss of blessings from a child for his parents, life will feel empty, and not including a complete family. Parents should know the nature and privilege of children in the family because it can be a side of luck for parents and their families. To avoid the negative impact of childless families, every married couple needs to consider a number of these negative impacts so that they can change their stance from a *pro-childfree* family to a family that wants offspring because children are very useful for a family.

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