

# The Concept Of 'Awrah In The Qur'an (A Comparative Study Of Tafseer Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an By Al-Qurthubi And AlKitab Wal-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah By Muhammad Shahrur)

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# The Concept Of 'Aurah In The Qur'an (A Comparative Study Of Tafseer Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an By Al-Qurthubi And Al-Kitab Wal-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah By Muhammad Shahrur)

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the women's 'awrah in the Qur'an and has three problem statements, they are: First, how the concept of the women in the Qur'an is; Second, how is the interpretation of the woman's 'awrah in the Qur'an according to Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur; Third, how is the concept of the women's 'awrah according to al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur and its implementation in the present time. This research is a library research. Researchers do research on Tafseer Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an by Al-Qurthubi and Al-Kitab al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah by Muhammad Shahrur. Data collection techniques are done by the documentation method. Data analysis methods include muqarin method and content analysis method. Main Finding of this study is that in the Qur'an is not specifically described the boundaries of covering the 'awrah, so it was raised different opinions. This makes the 'awrah as a matter of the khilafiyah which each of the opinions expressed is appropriate and in line with their respective arguments. Al-Qurthubi's interpretation of the woman's 'awrah is the whole body that can cause orgasm from the tip of the hair to the toe except the face and both palms. Meanwhile, according to Muhammad Shahrur it has two limitations, namely minimum and maximum. The minimum limit of 'awrah which have to be covered by women, i.e. breast to genitals, while the maximum limitation is the limbs as a whole except the face and palms. The woman's 'awrah in the Qur'an according to Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur can be implemented in the present time as guidelines. Furthermore, the understanding of the 'awrah is even socialized to the people, that the 'awrah is not only associated with physical areas, but it can also be seen from the piety and righteous charity of one's.

## Keywords

Aurah, Muhammad Shahrur, Al-Qurthubi, Limit theory, muqarin method

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## Introduction

The incidence of the widespread use of the hijab (clothing) has been carried out by Muslim women lately. Initially, the hijab was considered the most important clothing for Muslim women, because this outfit can cover the whole body. This garment should be loose so that it does not reveal the slightest posture or body curves, cover the entire surface of the skin without being adorned and colored, and cover the entire body from head to feet. However, hijab has now undergone many changes. It is not able to escape the influence of contemporary fashion developments. The clothes that used to cover the whole body have now become open (Asy-Syayi, 2013, pp. 22–23). Meanwhile, the obligation to cover awrah is very much emphasized by Islam because it has many benefits and will cause harm due to ignoring this problem. However, the problem is the extent to which awrah (especially for women) is obliged to be covered (Ibrahim, 2018, p. 3). Covering one's awrah is a differentiator between humans and animals, as well as to show the cultural height of a nation and human dignity. Therefore, a polite culture is needed so that one's honor is lifted, and can adapt socio-cultural conditions to the context of the situation (Husain, 2018, p. 107).

Seeing how important the problem of awrah is, the Quran as a book of guidance in human life encourages writers to examine the extent to which the Quran provides limitations and solutions. This study appointed the two expert commentators (*mufassir*). The first choice is al-Qurthubi because he presents different views without polemic and sometimes disagrees with his own school, the Maliki School. *Al-Jami 'li Ahkam al-Qur'an* by al-Qurthubi is an encyclopedic interpretation that collects hadith with issues of worship, law, and linguistics (Ayub, 2015, p. 9). The second expert of interpretation is Muhammad Shahrur in the work *Al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah*, a phenomenal work in the Middle East at the end of 1990, which contains new findings related to the reconstruction of understanding of the text of the Quran. He understands that the Quran is following the circumstances of every time (Setiawan, 2012, p. 137). Therefore, the researcher took the two commentary books as data sources which were expected to be able to provide a clear picture of the problems of women's awrah in the Quran.

## Literature Review

Research or discussion of awrah, especially women's awrah, has been a long discourse since classical scholars until now with various approaches and backgrounds. Among the works that have discussed the aforementioned themes is Haya Binti Mubarak al-Barik who wrote "Muslimah Women's Encyclopedia" (Al-Barik, 2015, p. 147). This work discusses the development and position of women from pre-Islamic times to the arrival of Islam as well as several other important issues. Among them are related to marriage and educating children. Of the umpteenth interesting discussion is the issue of awrah where the central issue is the genitals of women starting from the genitals in prayer, family, and association. Thus, the discussion of this book is quite comprehensive, but the solutions offered regarding the trend or mode of open awrah are not found in many of the works.

Maria Ulfah with the title of the thesis "Hijab in the Perspective of Muhammad Ali Ash-Shobuni (Study on Tafsir Rawai' al-Bayan)" concludes that awrah, especially women, is something that must be covered and hidden in the presence of foreign men who include all members of the body except the face and both palms (Ulfah, 2008, p. 77). However, how awrah is implemented today has not been described in the discussion of this study. Hasanah with the title of the thesis "The Interpretation of the Jilbab According to M. Quraish Shihab and TM Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy" examines the al-Qur'an in revealing the meaning of the veil with in-depth analysis (Hasanah, 2013, p. 78). This thesis discusses the problem of the veil and genitals. However, the discussion of veins is still not elaborated on in this thesis. Mahtuf Ahnan and Maria Ulfa in the book "Risalah Fiqih Wanita (Guidelines for Worshipping Muslim Women with Various Problems)" provide guidelines containing

legal insights related to womanhood, especially Muslim women in general. Among the problems contained in the book are genital problems. Besides, the explanation of the ulama's opinions of the four Islamic law schools is very thick in this book so that there are less detailed studies of genitals (Ulfah, 2008). Comprehensive research related to women's genitals in the Quran using the comparative method has not been discussed in detail from previous researchers so that this makes the author discuss the extent to which the concept of the Quran as a guide for Muslims in providing an overview of the concept of genitalia woman by raising two figures of expert commentators, namely al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur. The two commentators have similarities and differences in providing their interpretations. Thus, Muslims are expected to find it easier to understand and implement what is contained in the Quran and implement it in their daily lives.

## Methods

This research is library research by analyzing the book *Tafsir Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an* by Al-Qurthubi and *Al-Kitab Wa Al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* by Muhammad Shahrur. The data collection technique is done by using the documentation method. Data analysis methods include comparative methods and content analysis methods.

## Results

### Biography of Socio-Historical Settings and Interpretation of Al-Qurthubi

The full name of Al-Qurthubi is Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Farh, al-Anshori, al-Kharaji, al-Andalusy, Al-Qurthubi. He is a qualified commentator (*mufassir*) of the Quran. He was one of the scholars who was born in Spain in 486 H. He was a pious, wise and ascetic. He spent his time in the affairs of the hereafter and to seek the good pleasure of Allah, worship, and compose books. Al-Qurthubi had studied the religious sciences from the scholars of his time. Among his well-known teachers were Shaykh Abu Abbas Ahmad bin Umar Al-Qurthubi, al-Hafizh Abu Ali al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Bakry, al-Hafizh Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad bin Ali bin Hafsh al-Yahshoby. He passed away on the 29th of Shawwal in 671 H.

Al-Qurthubi has characteristics that make the scholars mention his greatness. Al-Hafizh Abdul Karim said of him: "He is a righteous servant of Allah, a wise scholar, ascetic by always busy himself with the affairs of the hereafter". "He is a shaykh, has useful essays that show the height of his knowledge, among them, is the interpretation of the Quran. Al-Dzahabi conveyed in Islamic history, "Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Farh al-Imam Al-Qurthubi owns a sea of knowledge". He has useful essays that show the heights of the genius of the brain and its virtues.

Another aspect that deserves to be pointed out about the intellectuality of Al-Qurthubi is its very firm commitment to scientific honesty. Concerning intellectual honesty, Al-Qurthubi in his preface to his commentary firmly says, "I require a quote in this book, Al-Jami 'li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an, to bring various opinions (quotations) to those who say it (source reference), and I also refer various hadiths to the compilers". Besides, Al-Qurthubi also emphasized, "among the (signs) of the science blessings is referring opinions to those who have an opinion" (Al-Qurthubi, 2013, p. 3). Or it can also be said that one of the signs of a person's scientific blessing is his scientific honesty.

The works that he has successfully written are:

- 1) Book of Tafsir Al-Jami 'Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an Wa al-Mubayyin lima Tadammanahu Min Al-Sunnah Wa Ayi al-Qur'an
- 2) Al-Asna fi Asmaillah al-Husna.
- 3) Al-Tazkirah bi Ahwakil Manta wa Ahwalil Akhirah.
- 4) Al-Tadzkar fi Afdhalil Adzkar.

- 5) Qom'ul Harsh bi al-Zuhdi wa al-Qona'ati Waroda Ahulli As-Su'ali bil Kutubi wa al-Syaharga.  
6) Syarh al-Taqshy.

Tafseer which is also known as Tafsir Al-Qurthubi, the full title is Tafsir Al-Jami 'Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an Wa al-Mubayyin lima Tadhammanahu Min Al-Sunnah Wa Ayi al-Qur'an (compilation of the Quran laws and an explanation of its contents from the Sunnah and verses of the Quran). The interpretation of Al-Qurthubi is the interpretation that has the greatest benefit and the most universal effect. It is the most considered reference in the science of exegesis because the contents of this interpretation are very complete. This book is included in the category of *ra'y* (logic) interpretation. In its interpretation, al-Qurthubi does not limit itself to legal verses only, but also interprets the Quran as a whole. He mentioned the readings, abrogation as well as *muhkam* and *mutasyabih* (clear and metaphoric meaning). The method used is to mention *asbab al-nuzul* (the reasons of revealed Quran), present various kinds of *qira'at* (readings) and *i'rab* (grammar), explain *gharib alfaz* (rare words), link opinions to those who say it, provide special paragraphs for the biography of the commentators and their information from historians, and quote trustworthy previous scholars, especially Islamic law writers. For example, he quoted from Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, Ibn 'Atiyah, Ibn 'Arabi, al-Kaya al-Haras, and Abu Bakr al-Jassas. Al-Qurthubi was very knowledgeable in studying legal verses. He put forward *khilafiah* (disputed) issues, paid attention to the arguments for each opinion and commented on them, and was not fanatical about his own school, the Maliki school (Al-Qattan, 2015, p. 520).

This book has undergone many revisions because it is in great demand and has become the main reference in understanding the Quran by many people. Finally, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah published it in a new form. Initially, this book was published in 208 pages in al-Azhariyyah publisher, Cairo initiated by Abdul Haq bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman al-Qobasy as-Shafii, and refined by Suraify bin Ahmad al-'Adawy. To prevent this book from errors, this commentary is printed in 15 juz (section), making it easier for the reader. This book was published in 10 volumes, each volume containing 2 juz, and some of which consisted of 22 volumes with a total page size of about 7,723. To make it easier for readers to understand the book, the form of the systematic interpretation is as follows:

- a. Establishing interpreted verses (according to the *uthmani mushaf*) and writing the verse number as in the original book (the Quran) by placing the verse of the Quran in parentheses.
- b. Assigning abrogation page numbers in place to facilitate *muraja'ah* (reviewing) for discussants and readers.
- c. Complete it with *fihras* (table of contents) so that it is easy to refer to it (Al-Qurthubi, 2013).

### **Al-Qurthubi's Interpretation of the awrah verses**

The interpretations relating to awrah are as follows:

#### **The interpretation of the letter al-A'raf verse: 26.**

Al-Qurthubi explained that among the pleasures is the (ability) to cover one's awrah. This verse explains that Allah has created something that can cover awrah of Adam. This verse also shows the command to cover awrah. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the obligation to cover the awrah from the human eye. They only disagreed about what is meant by the term awrah. Ibn Abi Dzi'b stated that the awrah of a man is only his two genitals, namely *qubul* (penis) and *dubur* (rectum). Al-Qurthubi presented many opinions from the school's priests, including Malik who argued that the navel is not a category of awrah, while Abu Hanifah and Atha' said that the navel is awrah. Syafi'i is more likely to argue that the navel and knee are not included in awrah. The awrah of a woman is her entire body apart from her face and palms. Al-

Qurthubi quoted Ibn Hisham's opinion which stated that every part of a woman's body, even her nails, is awrah. Meanwhile, awrah for the slave is the nipple to the lower part of the body. Thus, awrah is something that must be covered with clothes that can cover it. However, the best clothes are clothes of piety, shame, and righteous deeds. In other words, besides dressing that can cover one's awrah, polite behavior based on the values of Islamic teachings is the main condition in gaining self-respect, both according to humans and Allah. The clothes of piety are better than physical clothes because the clothes of piety will always be worn by a servant and are never broken so that it will beautify his heart and soul even more. As for body clothing, it is only useful when it is used to cover one's awrah that appears at a certain time or become a piece of jewelry for humans. apart from these purposes, there is no longer the use of clothing. That is if a person does not have clothes and his awrah are exposed. Nor does it harm him if it is exposed when he is forced to. If a person does not have the clothes of piety, his inner awrah will be exposed, so that he will get humiliation and ugliness (Al-Qurthubi, 2013).

### **Interpretation of Surah al-Nur verse: 30.**

The command to hold the gaze is a must so that awrah must be closed. The closure of awrah is under the customs of the local community. He quoted from the opinion of Sa'id bin Abi Hasan who stated that when a non-Muslim woman has her chest (breasts) and navel visible, it is obligatory to shift the gaze. Badness begins with a view sent down into the heart, then moves human intention to do sex-related things. This is the reason why turning away or maintaining views of the opposite sex is the aim of the commandment, namely to avoid slander. Opening awrah is allowed specifically for husbands or wives who are already legal.

The verse above instructs to keep his awrah. The point is to cover it so that it is not seen by others and to avoid adultery, including in the bath. According to Al-Qurthubi, today's people do not know Islamic law and consider it trivial. When they arrived at the bathhouse, they took off their clothes, so that a person who was respected and aged could be seen standing in the bathhouse, while his nakedness was seen by other people and he squeezed something between his thighs. Meanwhile, no one dared to rebuke him. This happened among men, then what happened among women, in this case, has become the attention of the scholars. So, the scholars say that if someone cares himself, he should enter (the bathhouse) under the following ten conditions:

- 1) entering the bathhouse only to seek treatment or to purify *ar-Ruhadha*.
- 2) Looking for a quiet time or a little people.
- 3) Covering awrah with a strong and thick woven sarong.
- 4) Directing his gaze to the ground or facing a wall so that his gaze does not see something forbidden.
- 5) Changing the visible possibilities with tenderness.
- 6) When someone rubs the body, then he should not let him see his awrah from the navel to the knees except for his wife or slave girl.
- 7) Entering places by paying certain wages according to people's terms of habits.
- 8) Pouring water as needed.
- 9) If he is unable to enter the bath by himself, he must accompany a people who hold tight their religion.
- 10) Remembering Hellfire.

If all that he cannot do, then he should cover himself and hold back his gaze because holding back his gaze and preserving awrah is more sacred according to religion and can keep human excrement away (Al-Qurthubi, 2013).

### **Interpretation of Surah al-Nur Verse: 31**

Al-Qurthubi in the interpretation of Surah al-Nur verse 31 explains that women's *ziinah* (jewelry) is

divided into two parts. The first is *ziinah khalqiyah*, which is jewelry that is already attached to her, such as facial features, skin, lips and others. The second is *ziinah muktasabah*, which is jewelry used by women to beautify or cover their bodies, such as clothes, rings, eye shadow, dyes, etc. The meaning contained in this verse can also be the parts of the body that are usually adorned with jewelry and are forbidden to see by people who are not the mahram (family relation). The intent is acquiring in showing commonly visible jewelry, because it is impossible to hide or cover it, such as the face, outerwear, and palms. The women of the Prophet's time covered their heads with a veil and stretched them out towards their backs so that the upper part of the chest and neck were left without anything covering them. So, the above verse instructs believed women (*mu'mina*) to stretch out their veils (towards the front) so that they cover the whole of the shirt (where the head of the hijab enters) to cover their chest (Al-Qurthubi, 2013).

### **Interpretation of Surah al-Nur Verse: 60**

Al-Qurthubi interprets Surah al-Nur verse 60 with the women who are dressed, but they are not wearing the *taqwa* clothes that Allah mentioned in Surah al-A'raf verse 26. Generally, they are accustomed to decorating and going out to display their jewelry. Thus, they are people who are clothed but naked from true piety, both physically and mentally. They show off their jewelry and don't care about the people who see them. That is their goal (to get people's attention). This phenomenon can be seen through them. If they were fearful, they would not have committed the act (Al-Qurthubi, 2013).

### **Interpretation of Surah al-Ahzab Verse: 59**

According to al-Qurthubi, the habit of *jahiliyya* women is not to be ashamed to wear opened clothes, as done by their female slave servants to make men free to explore their views and generate dirty and indecent thoughts. In that condition, Allah told His apostle to command the women to lengthen their head covering if they were to leave their house for some reason. It was the custom at that time that women defecated in the desert before they used the toilet to defecate. After this verse was revealed, free women could be distinguished from slave women. This is because free women must wear a covering on their heads. Meanwhile, the young men who were looking for soulmates did not bother them anymore, because before this verse was revealed, the women of the believers were often teased when they went to defecate because the youths thought these women were slaves. The youths would only leave when shouted at and realize that it was not slaves who were being seduced. This complaint led to this verse being revealed.

Ulama differ on the extent to which the headscarf must cover. Ibn Abbas and Ubaidah As-Salmani argued that a woman should extend the veil so that it is not visible from her body except for one eye which can be used to see. Ibn Abbas also expressed another opinion which was also stated by Qatada that the woman must tie her veil over her head and then connect it again on her nose so that her eyes can open, but still cover most of her face and neck down. Meanwhile, Al-Hasan argued that the veil should be worn on the head and cover half of his face.

Allah SWT commands all women to cover their bodies with long and loose clothing so that they do not reveal their body curves. Unless the woman is just at home with her husband, they may wear whatever clothes they like. Her husband has the right to enjoy whatever his wife has (Al-Qurthubi, 2013). According to Al-Qurthubi, a woman's *awrah* is the whole body that can cause lust from head to toe which must be covered with clothes that can cover them except for the face and the palms of the hands, and the best clothes are that must be followed by polite behavior based on the values of Islamic teachings.

### **Biography, Socio-Historical Settings, and Interpretation of Muhammad Shahrur**

Muhammad Shahrur was born in Sahiliyyah city of Damascus Syria on March 11, 1938. His father was named Dayb ibn Dayb and his mother was named Shiddiqah bint Shaiih Filyun (Shahrur, 1992, p. 832). He took primary and secondary education at the Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi Educational Institute which is located in the southern city of Damascus and graduated in 1957. At the age of 19, he left Syria to study civil engineering at Saratov Moscow with a scholarship from the government from March 1957 to 1964 (Kurzman, n.d., p. 210). After returning from Moscow, Shahrur started his intellectual career as a lecturer at the Technical Faculty of Damascus University in 1964 (Esha, 2013, p. 296). In 1967, Shahrur had the opportunity to conduct research at Imperial College in London, England. However, he was forced to return to Syria because of the "June war" between Syria and Israel which severed diplomatic relations between Syria and Britain. In 1968, Shahrur decided to go to Dublin, Ireland as an envoy from the University of Damascus to take master and doctoral programs at Ireland National University. The scientific fields he takes are the mechanics of land and building engineering. Because of his persistence, he accomplished his Master of Science degree in 1969, while his doctorate was finished in 1972 (Mustaqim, 2018, p. 92). After completing his studies at Ireland National University, Shahrur returned to Syria and officially became a lecturer at the University of Damascus and taught land mechanics and geology courses. Apart from being a lecturer, he is also a consultant in the engineering field. As an expert in engineering, Shahrur was sent by the Syrian government as an expert (consultant) to al-Sa'ud Consult in Saudi Arabia (Shah, 2016, pp. 237–238). In 1995, Shahrur was invited to be an honorary participant and to take part in public debates on Islamic thought in Lebanon and Morocco. Even though Shahrur's academic background is a technique, it does not mean that he is empty of Islamic discourse. Shahrur's attention to Islamic studies began in Dublin, Ireland in 1970-1980 when he took his master and doctoral programs. The role of his friend, Dr. Ja'far Dik al-Bab is also very important. Ja'far introduced the thoughts of al-Farabi, Abu Ali al-Farisy, and his students, ibn Jinny, and Abd al-Qohar al-Jurjaniy (Farida, 2010, p. 40). From those thoughts, Shahrur was moved to study the Quran more seriously with approaches to linguistic theory, philosophy, and modern science.

However, Shahrur, who has a technical background, was also deeply interested in Islamic issues. This is as manifested in his book, *Al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah*. This book is actually what has made his name soar in the field of Islamic thought. The reflections in this book are not half-hearted because he has been writing it for 20 years. In his own specialization of the engineering field, Shahrur is also the prominent, especially in his own country, because he and his colleagues opened the technical consulting firm *Dar al-Istisyyarat al-Handasiyyah* in Damascus in 1972, and then the university sent him back to abroad as an expert at Al-Saud, Saudi Arabia in 1982-1983.

Since 1972, he has been a lecturer at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Damascus University in the fields of Soil Mechanics and Geology. Besides, he also founded the technical consulting firm *Dar al-Istisyyarat al-Handasiyyah* in Damascus. He is also interested in philosophy and Islam, such as Philosophy of Humanism, Philosophy of Language, and Semantics of Arabic. This linguistic knowledge later became the basis for him in reading and interpreting the verses of the Quran (Mubarak, 2018, pp. 137–139).

Among his intellectual works are:

- a. Handasat al-Asasat (Building Foundation Techniques), Handasat al-Turbah (Defense Techniques)
- b. *Al-Kitab Wa al-Qur'an Qira'ah mu'ashirah*
- c. *Dirasah Islamiyyah Mu'asirah fi al-Dawlah wa al-Mujtama'*
- d. *Al-Islam Wa al-Iman: Manzumah al-Qiyam*
- e. *Masyru'at al-Amal al-Islam*
- f. *Nahwa usul Jadidah Li Fiqh al-Islami; Fiqh al-Mar'ah*

He is also an avid writer of articles in magazines and journals such as "The Divine Text and Pluralism



in Muslim Societies". Besides, she often presented her main thoughts on the Quran which were related to social and political issues, such as women's rights (Setiawan, 2012).

In explaining the muhkamat of Qur'anic verses (legal verses), Shahrur uses the boundary theory (nazhariyat al-hudud). The term limit (al-hudud) means "the limits of the provisions of Allah which cannot be violated, but there is still a door for ijihad that is elastic, flexible and dynamic".

In its use of fiqh law, Shahrur divides legal evidence into two limits, the maximum limit (*al-hadd al-a'la*) and the minimum limit (*al-hadd al-adna*). This means that Allah's laws are relative and the area of human ijihad remains, as long as it is between the minimum and maximum limits. While a Muslim is within the boundaries of Allah (Allah's provision is between the maximum and minimum limits), he cannot be considered as violating the laws of Allah (Mustaqim, n.d.).

*Al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* is the work of Muhammad Shahrur. This book was the most phenomenal work in the Middle East at the end of 1990. New findings related to the reconstruction of the understanding of the Quran text were published in it. He understands that the Qur'an is following the circumstances of any time, so a method to find the content and purpose of the Quran is a must. With the method of intratextuality and paradigm-syntagmatic linguistic analysis, Muhammad Shahrur tried to position the Quran as an object of study to be invited to interact and solve contemporary problems (Mustaqim, n.d.).

### Muhammad Shahrur's Interpretation of the Awrah Verses

In interpreting the verses related to al-saw'ah or awrah, Shahrur did not interpret all the verses in depth. Shahrur focused on certain verses.

#### The interpretation of the letter al-A'raf verse: 26.

Shahrur got an indication that strengthened the tendency to understand the word *al-saw'a* in a connotative way. This is based on the statement of the letter al-A'raf verse 26. Ibn Abbas and Qatadah interpret *libasu al-taqwa* as bad deeds, while Shahrur interprets *al-saw'ah* with bad deeds in someone who does not want to be exposed to other parties, especially if the person is a class of repentant, faithful, and conscience such Adam and his wife. In this verse, Allah said that the clothing that was sent down to Adam's descendants which he calls *libas al-taqwa* (clothing of piety) aims to cover awrah. According to Shahrur, the term *libas al-taqwa* based on the denotative meaning of the word *libas* has several meanings, including:

- 1) The first garment sent down by Allah and worn by Adam's descendants to cover their awrah.
- 2) A set of clothes commonly used to offer prayers.
- 3) Armor and protective armor used in battle.

Meanwhile, the word *libas* connotatively-metaphorically by looking at the word *al-taqwa* has several possible meanings. the meaning is faith, charity, and shame. On the other hand, there are also other connotations, such as self-care, good monotheism, humility, and serenity. The opinions that support one of the three denotative meanings are issued by the textual group. Ibn Hazm prohibits interpreting it connotatively if it is still possible to understand the word based on its denotative meaning. The priests who supported one of the three connotative meanings were not textual. According to Qatada, the term *libas al-taqwa* means "faith", while according to Ibn Abbas it means "good deeds", and according to Ma'bad it means "shame". It seems clear that each of these experts selects and chooses the meaning of words based on the indications leading to the meaning of the word. it cannot be denied that the selection of meaning (*al-intiqaiyya*) is an indispensable process of interpreting and understanding the verses of *al-tanzil al-hakim*. According to Shahrur, *al-intiqaiyya*'s process was not carried out arbitrarily or based on the reader's subjectivity. This process must be carried out based on language, rationality, and conformity with the realities of life. If *libas al-taqwa* is defined as a series of clothes consisting of

shirt and trousers, the word will lose its conformity with reality and rationality. The selection of the meaning of the word (*al-intiqā'iyya*) is solely based on the opinion of the classical ulama (Shahrur, 2000, p. 470).

### Interpretation of Surah al-Nur verses: 30, 31

In understanding the awrah verses, Shahrur begins by discussing the clothing of women and men. Surah al-Nur: 30 explains that men and women are required to avert some of their eyes. This can be seen from the sentence used by the Quran which places "min" which means part of the view and not the whole view. This greatly influences the meaning of this verse which is not closing your eyes but closing part of your view. Thus, if there is something visible from awrah of a man or woman whether intentionally or not, the man or woman will not be happy. Therefore, clothing that covers awrah is very necessary so that there is no vision of awrah which the person does not like. However, the compulsion in which men and women are having a conversation or discussion looking at each other is allowed. In addition to these needs, they are instructed to look away from the opposite sex. Withholding views of the opposite sex, especially concerning forbidden areas (awrah), is a preventive measure not to fall into adultery. So, the order to guard *farj* or genitals is a method of education in the Quran so that *mu'min* and *mu'minah* are saved from a heinous matter, adultery (Shahrur, 1992).

Furthermore, Muhammad Shahrur explained that it is permissible to show jewelry or clothes that cover one's awrah if you are forced to. According to Shahrur, the parts of the women's body who are dressed in jewelry are divided into two kinds. First, the part of the body that is born or appears is visible from the physical body of the woman by the original form of creation, such as the head, back, legs, and hands. This is because Allah created humans naked and did not create them clothed. Second, the part of the body that does not appear naturally is the part of the body that wears clothes that can cover *jujub* (hidden decoration), cover the chest (nipple) to the bottom of the genitals (*farj*). Therefore, if a child sees his father or mother naked, this is not considered a *haram* (forbidden), but a disgrace (a defect or deficiency that must be covered). This is because the child and the parents live in one house, and if their awrah are seen, they will be ashamed because their awrah is obliged to cover them. This is because the meaning of awrah is something that if it is seen, he will be ashamed. Therefore, in Surah al-Nur: 31 there is an exception, awrah is not applied to small children who do not know which ones are considered naked and not so that if their awrah is seen by adults, they will not feel ashamed. A hadith narrated, "having told us Ya'qub bin Ka'b Al-Anthaki and Muammal Ibn al-Fadhl Al-Harrani, both said; have told us al-Walid from Sa'id bin Bashir from Qatada from Khalid said; Ya'qub bin Duraik said from 'Aisyah, that Asma' bint Abi Bakr came to meet Rasulullah wearing a thin cloth, then the Prophet turned away from him. He said: "O Asma, actually a woman when she has reached maturity should not be seen from her except for this and this - she points to her face and her palms" (Al-Zuhaily, 2006).

The minimum limit of awrah that must be covered by a woman is limited to the breasts to the genitals and not completely naked, while the maximum limit is to cover all the bodies as a whole except the face and palms of two hands, which refers to in surah al-Nur verse 31. Thus, he tends to think that awrah limited to the navel to the knees are not correct, because *Shari'a* prioritizes the boundaries of shame in interpreting awrah (Shahrur, 1992). Thus, women who do not wear the headscarf in general (including the now popular "slang headscarf" model) have fulfilled Allah's requirements, because they are still in the area of minimum and maximum limits. On the other hand, a woman who covers her entire body (including the face with a veil for example) is considered to have crossed the boundaries of Allah, because she has exceeded the maximum limit determined by the Quran. In other words, women who wear a veil and cover their entire bodies are no longer Islamic. The clothes of slave girls were very different from these. This is very logical from two sides. The first is that slaves work for their masters in preparing food, drinks, household chores, and shopping at the market. The second is the difference in social position between free people and slaves. This difference has existed since the success of Islam in

conquering many areas which resulted in the increasing number of women who were slaves in the Muslim world. This prompted classical jurists to pay great attention to the discussion of religious laws reserved exclusively for free people and male and female slaves. Besides, parental nakedness that shows their genitals is common.

### Interpretation of surah al-Ahzab verse: 59.

The Prophet's command to his wives, daughters, and Muslim women to stretch their headscarves was in the context of differences between men and women. Several attempts were also made as action and arrangement to cope with a special situation occurring in Medina society. For example, Umar has taken a policy that it must be distinguished between free women and female slaves so that he does not allow these female slaves to come out wearing the clothes of free women. According to Shahrur, the maximum limit for women's clothing is that "all of a woman's body are awrah, except for the face and palms of her hands". Apart from that, the Prophet advised women to cover all their bodies to the maximum extent, and the Prophet also did not recommend women (in wearing clothes) under any circumstances to cover their faces and palms of her hands, because human faces are self-identifiable. So, if a woman leaves the house unclothed, she has gone out of the limits (of the law) of Allah, and if she leaves without showing her face and hands then she is out of the boundaries of the Messenger of Allah. The clothes of most women in the world are enforced under the provisions of Allah and His Messenger. This is a natural thing for humans in terms of dress. A small proportion of conditions that are fixated by the rules in some of these conditions are less permissible in the dress code (Shahrur, 1992).

## Discussion

### Similarities

The Quran clearly instructs people to cover their awrah with clothes that can cover them. This is ordered to protect the honor of the wearer and to increase their dignity so that one's behavior can be seen from physical appearance. The logical consequence of dressing that covers awrah as a whole is that what the person does must be in line with Islamic teachings. If his behavior deviates from Islamic teachings even though he is wearing a veil, then basically that person is a hypocrite. According to Muhammad Shahrur, a woman's awrah is as described in the Quran surah al-Nur verse 31 regarding the minimum limit of awrah that must be covered by women, which is limited from the breasts to the genitals, while the maximum limit is the whole limb except the face and palms of two hands. He is more inclined to think that awrah is something that can cause shame if her/his awrah is seen by others.

The Quran clearly states that human's awrah, in general, must be closed, and views must be turned away from anything that can cause or arouse sexual desire. Some commentators discuss awrah and how to cover them in the Quran in various ways. However, Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur in their interpretation regarding awrah have similarities, namely:

Methodologically, the two experts use *tahlili* (detailed) method in interpreting the verses of the Quran, especially verses about awrah, by explaining all aspects contained in the interpreted verse and explaining the meanings contained therein by his expertise. This can be seen in its broad interpretation in terms of *i'rab*, the background of the verse, its relation to other verses, and the opinions of competent scholars or figures, whether conveyed by the Prophet, the companions, and the followers, as well as other commentators. Thus, this method will enrich and deepen the study of the interpretation of each interpreter. In this *tahlili* method, Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur have many opportunities to put forward new ideas based on their expertise following their interpretive understanding. The form of the approach used in interpreting the awrah verses is to

use *al-ra'y* (ratio) or the power of reason to uncover the material contained in the Quran. This can be seen from the ability of *ijtihad* with the argument of *naqli* (hadith of the Prophet) and *aqli*. They try to make the contents of the Quran easier to understand by all mankind. Therefore, rational use to reveal the verses of the Quran is a demand. The similarities in understanding the concept of *awrah* in the Quran according to Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur are as followed:

Al-Qurthubi explains that the command to cover *awrah* is addressed to all humans, not limited to *mu'min* and *mu'minah*. Besides, *awrah* is something that must be covered by using clothes as a cover, and the best clothes are clothes of *taqwa*. In addition to clothing being used as a covering for someone's *awrah*, behaving politely based on the values of Islamic teachings is the main requirement in gaining self-respect, both in the eyes of humans and Allah. Concerning the clothing as a medium for covering one's genitals, Shahrur is more tolerant by adjusting to the conditions of a people, so that the clothes covering his *awrah* are different from one place to another. This is because preventive action is more important than overcoming it. Thus, for Al-Qurthubi, clothing is equipment to cover human's *awrah*. According to Muhammad Shahrur, the order to cover *awrah* is imperative to cover it. The minimum limit of *awrah* that must be covered by a woman is limited from the breasts to the genitals and not completely naked, while the maximum limit is to cover all the limbs as a whole except the face and palms, which he refers to in surah al-Nur verse 31. Thus, he is more likely to argue that *awrah* that is limited from the navel to the knees are not absolutely true, because *Shari'a* prioritizes the boundaries of disgrace and shame in interpreting *awrah*.

In understanding the *awrah* verses. He argues that men and women are obliged to avert some of their eyes. This can be seen from the sentence used by the Quran which places "*min*" before "*abshaarihim*", which means part, not the whole view. It means not completely closing your eyes but partially.

Therefore, if there is something that is seen either intentionally or not from what is *awrah* of a man or woman, then that person will not be happy if his *awrah* is opened and seen by others. Therefore, clothes covering *awrah* are very necessary so that there is no view of *awrah*, which if it is seen, the owner does not like. However, if looking at the male or female interlocutor is permissible in a state of compulsion, and it is ordered to look away from the opposite sex. Withholding views of the opposite sex, especially about forbidden parts (genitalia), is a preventive effort so as not to fall into adultery. So, an order to protect *farj* or genitals is a method of education in the Quran so that Muslims are saved from the case of heinous, such as adultery (Shahrur, 1992). Muhammad Shahrur is more inclined to argue that *awrah* is something that can cause shame if part of it is seen by others.

According to al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur, covering *awrah* for women is to have the same goal, such as to elevate the status of women so that they are respected and honored, and not disturbed. The closure of *awrah* is very necessary as a means of preventing sexual harassment in Islamic societies by behaving under the guidance of Islamic law. Covering *awrah* will also invite a negative response for those who see it, especially for men who are not mahram, so that it provides peace for the wearer in the absence of interference from other people.

## Differences

The fundamental differences between Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur lie in the background or specialization of those who characterize it as a style of interpretation. It is called *Tafsir al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* because what is highlighted in its interpretation is to discuss the laws of worship and transactions which are summarized in the interpretation in detail. Thus, al-Qurthubi in his interpretation is more inclined to the *fiqh* style so that he explains more on the opinions of the *madhab* (Islamic law school), especially the Maliki school, although not all of them take Imam Malik's opinion. On the other hand, Muhammad Shahrur's *al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* chooses a *lughawi* (linguistic) style oriented towards the power of language, *balagha*,

and critical analysis of social phenomena. From this interpretation of Muhammad Shahrur, many broad explanations relating to social criticism or discourse that require reinterpretation are found. This can be seen from his interpretation of awrah. Al-Qurthubi argues that a woman's awrah is the whole body that can cause lust, which is from head to toe. This is based on the phenomenon that occurs. If a woman's nails alone can arouse sexual arousal towards the opposite sex, it must be covered. Al-Qurthubi is more oriented towards prevention than curative. If some parts of the body bring slander or reinforcements, then it is better to close them so that they are safe from sexual harassment and even rape. This is the function of why the Quran commands to cover awrah and keep the view of things that can arouse sexual desire. Furthermore, he argues that clothes that can cover awrah are that can completely cover and protect the body from wild views, whether headscarf or other clothes that are following the culture of each region.

Unlike what was conveyed by Muhammad Shahrur, he is more inclined to argue that a woman's awrah that is understood from the navel to the knees is not correct because the most important thing is a shame if it is seen by the opposite sex. This is based on the boundaries of shame in interpreting awrah. Therefore, he became more moderate in understanding awrah. If the interaction between men and women in a discussion or another issue (such as healthiness) that requires the disclosure of awrah, it is permissible to open their awrah needed. According to Muhammad Shahrur, awrah (especially penis/vagina and rectum) must be covered. As for the others, it is adapted to the situation and conditions of a society. If showing the limbs from the breast up and the knees down could cause shame, then it is awrah for him and must be covered up. Concept of Woman's awrah According to Al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur, and Its Implementation in the Present The reality of society often contradicts the holy texts of the Quran and hadith. A tough task for the younger generation is to interpret the text contextually in seeing the realities that occur in society. Benefit from religion, reason, honor, or property, as a result of understanding the detailed legal propositions of the Quran and Hadith can be achieved.

The fact that the development of the sociological context of a society that cannot be stopped and the text of revelation is not born in a vacuum is addressed and appreciated in the form of the development of the legal *istinbath* (an effort to make legal decisions) mechanism which is directed as long as the problem to be interpreted is still within the framework of *maqasid asy-syari'ah* (the goals of jurisprudence), namely the principles of problems in responding various legal events in the community that is applied. Likewise, in matters relating to the veil, the verses of the Quran about the hijab contain many interpretations. Besides, hadiths that were used as references by the scholars did not convince other scholars, either because of differences in interpretation or they were considered weak. If there are definite provisions and clear boundaries from the Quran or hadith, it can be ascertained that the ancient scholars until now will never have different opinions regarding awrah (Ibrahim, 2018).

Al-Qurthubi states that a woman's awrah is the entire body that can cause lust from head to toe except for the face and palms which must be covered. The statement can be understood that covering awrah is mandatory. That means that if it is done, it will generate rewards and if it is not done, it will get a sin. The obligation to cover one's awrah does not only apply at prayer time but also in all places where other men can see it. They are not only ashamed to reveal their awrah. They often even feel proud to show off their curves. Their pride increased when they could participate in a beauty contest such as Miss World, which is essentially a "genital contest".

According to Muhammad Shahrur, a woman's awrah is as described in the Quran surah al-Nur verse 31 regarding the minimum limit of awrah that must be covered by women, which is limited from the breasts to the genitals, while the maximum limit is the whole limb except the face and palms. He is more inclined to think that awrah is something that can cause shame if it is seen by others. At present, the Indonesian Muslim community has met the criteria for dressing according to Shahrur because in general, they have covered their awrah in clothing, both within the minimum and maximum limits. However, there are still some who exceed the maximum limit. They cover their entire body including their face with a veil. This is not allowed because they have gone outside the boundaries of Allah. The implementation of covering awrah recommended in the

Quran that can be seen today is that Muslim women wear their headscarves to cover their awrah to avoid unwanted things and be safe. Empirically, Muslim women must face the present era with all aspects of developing culture, especially in the appropriateness of fashion. This (dress culture) has become a necessity for Muslim women to be able to make strict selections in terms of dressing. Islam as a revealed religion whose truth is believed to be *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (merciful to the universe) can be implemented in everyday life and has provided very basic concepts and values in all aspects of human life, including the way Muslim women dress as a solution to the emergence of harassment sexual and other acts of violence.

However, the awareness to return to one's own culture began to grow. Nowadays, the beauty of the hijab can be seen everywhere, such as on campuses, schools, markets, even stations. In fact, in some Western countries, Muslim women who wear hijab are no longer hard to find. Currently, there is no longer any prohibition against wearing hijab and clothes that cover one's awrah. The problem is whether this guarantee of freedom is then immediately welcomed by Muslim women and immediately returns to wearing *taqwa* or not. Clothing is a sign of the greatness of Allah who has given the progress of life for humans. That is why Allah created clothes that aim to cover awrah with the veil. By wearing a headscarf, Muslim women will avoid unwanted acts, sexual harassment, and maintain respect. In these awrah verses, the form of dress or style is not determined by the Quran. The main thing that the Quran wants is clothing that shows faith in Allah and modesty, as well as not use the women's body to be a display for men. It would be nice if those who become fashion experts are people who believe in Allah, not those who believe in money and the attractiveness of desire.

the concept of female awrah in the Quran according to al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur can be implemented in the present as a guide and understanding of the meaning of awrah, and even socialized to the community that awrah is not only related to physical areas but also genitals. It can be seen from one's piety and righteous deeds. Therefore, people can harmonize and balance the two concepts of awrah in everyday life. So, persistence in the implementation of covering one's physical genitals is not a guarantee for someone to avoid negative behavior, without being accompanied by firmness in implementing piety and righteous deeds. This effort will be achieved if someone understands what awrah is and how to behave. If awrah is a weakness of a person, it is only natural that the person covers it. Even, everyone can correct that weakness so that he becomes a perfect human (*insan kamil*). This means that awrah, which has been understood as something physical, will fade with the foundation of piety and good deeds. In this way, a life that respects the dignity of others and does not destroy each other between men and women will be created. This is a function of *taqwa* clothing that must be instilled in every heart and soul of Muslims in responding to the challenges of the era that is complete ease of cultural interchange.

## Conclusions

The concept of a woman's Awrah in the Quran is something that must be covered. The Quran did not specify the limitations of covering one's awrah so that the scholars differed in opinion. This makes the concept of awrah raise various meanings in which every opinion expressed is adjusted to their respective arguments. Allah provides clothes that are used as a covering for awrah, but the clothes of piety in the form of tawhid and keeping against immorality are better. The interpretation of al-Qurthubi about a woman's awrah is that the whole body can cause lust from head to toe except the face and palms which must be covered using clothes, and the best clothes are clothes that must be followed by polite behavior. which is based on the values of Islamic teachings.

Meanwhile, according to the interpretation of Muhammad Shahrur, female's awrah is as described in the Quran surah al-Nur verse 31 regarding **the minimum limit of awrah that must be covered by a woman from the breast to the genitals, while the maximum limit is the whole limb except for the face and palms.** He is more inclined to think that awrah is something that can cause

shame if it is seen by others. Woman's awrah in the Quran according to al-Qurthubi and Muhammad Shahrur can be implemented in the present days as a guide and understanding of genitals, even socialized to the people that awrah is not only related to the physical area of the body but also can be seen from piety and someone's righteous deeds. Muslims can harmonize and balance the two understandings of awrah in everyday life. So, persistence in the implementation of covering one's physical awrah is not a guarantee for someone to avoid negative behavior, without being accompanied by the firmness in implementing piety and righteous deeds.

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# The Concept Of 'Awrah In The Qur'an (A Comparative Study Of Tafseer Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an By Al-Qurthubi And AlKitab Wal-Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah By Muhammad Shahrur)

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