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Tafsir Aḥkām of Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ Verse 27 on Non-Material *Mahr*: An Academic Perspective

Muhajirul Fadhli[1], Salman Abdul Muthalib[1], Nurjannah Ismail[1]
[1]Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia
muhajirul.fadhli@ar-raniry.ac.id

Abstract

Qur'anic narratives are commonly interpreted as historical and moral accounts, often overlooking their normative and legal dimensions. Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27, which presents service as a form of mahr (dower) in the marriage of Prophet Moses (Mūsā), has rarely been examined through the lens of Tafsir Aḥkām, particularly from the perspective of academics. This study aims to analyze the legal implications of the verse and explore academics' views on the legitimacy of non-material mahr and its relevance to contemporary marriage issues. Using a qualitative field approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with nine academics specializing in Qur'anic Studies, Qur'anic Tafsir, Hadith, and Islamic law at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, supported by documentary analysis of classical and contemporary tafsir and juristic literature. The findings reveal that the participants unanimously regard the verse as providing legal legitimacy for non-material mahr, provided it is mutually agreed upon, specified before the marriage contract, and beneficial. They also view service-based mahr as a potential solution to the growing burden of material mahr in Aceh, while emphasizing the need for cultural acceptance. The novelty of this study lies in integrating Tafsir Aḥkām with empirical evidence from academics' perspectives, demonstrating the relevance of Qur'anic narrative verses to the development of contemporary Islamic family law.

Keyword: Tafsir Aḥkām, Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ Verse 27, Non-Material *Mahr*, Academic Perspectives, *Aḥwāl Syakhṣiyyah*

Abstrak

Kisah-kisah Al-Qur'an umumnya ditafsirkan sebagai narasi historis dan moral sehingga dimensi normatif dan hukumnya sering kali terabaikan. QS. Al-Qaṣaṣ ayat 27, yang menampilkan jasa sebagai bentuk mahar dalam pernikahan Nabi Musa a.s., masih jarang dikaji melalui perspektif Tafsir Aḥkām, terutama dari sudut pandang akademisi. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implikasi hukum ayat tersebut serta mengeksplorasi pandangan akademisi mengenai legitimasi mahar non-materi dan relevansinya terhadap persoalan pernikahan kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif lapangan dengan mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap sembilan akademisi yang memiliki keahlian di bidang Al-Qur'an, tafsir, hadis, dan hukum Islam di UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, yang didukung oleh analisis dokumentasi terhadap kitab-kitab tafsir klasik dan kontemporer serta literatur fikih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh partisipan sepakat ayat tersebut memberikan legitimasi hukum terhadap mahar non-materi, dengan syarat disepakati bersama, ditetapkan sebelum akad nikah, dan memiliki kemanfaatan. Mereka juga memandang mahar berbentuk jasa sebagai solusi potensial terhadap meningkatnya beban mahar material di Aceh, meskipun penerapannya memerlukan penerimaan secara kultural. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengintegrasian Tafsir Aḥkām dengan data empiris mengenai perspektif akademisi, yang

menunjukkan relevansi ayat-ayat kisah Al-Qur'an bagi pengembangan hukum keluarga Islam kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *Tafsir Aḥkām, QS. Al-Qaṣaṣ Ayat 27, Mahar Non-Materi, Perspektif Akademisi, Aḥwāl Syakhṣiyyah*

A. Introduction

Mahr (dower) is one of the essential elements of an Islamic marriage.[1] However, in practice, its meaning has often shifted from a sacred symbol into a socio-economic burden.[2] In Aceh, *mahr* is commonly determined in the form of gold measured in *mayam*,[3] making marriage increasingly expensive as gold prices continue to rise. Consequently, many young people postpone marriage, incur debt, or are driven toward unregistered marriages (*nikah siri*) and premarital relationships.[4] This phenomenon has transformed *mahr* from a symbol of sincerity into an obstacle to marriage, despite the fact that Islamic law seeks to facilitate rather than complicate the institution of marriage. These circumstances call for a renewed examination of the normative sources of Islam to identify alternative forms of *mahr* that reduce financial burdens without diminishing its dignity, one of which is the concept of non-material *mahr* rooted in the Qur'anic text.[5]

Qur'anic narratives constitute one of the central themes of the Qur'an, appearing throughout numerous chapters and verses and serving a strategic role in conveying theological, moral, and social messages.[6] Quantitatively, approximately 1,600 Qur'anic verses[7] contain accounts of prophets, messengers, and previous communities. Qualitatively, these narratives are not merely historical stories or literary accounts but form an integral part of divine guidance (*hudan*) that directs human life in accordance with God's values.[8] The

[1] Misran Ramli and others, 'Unveiling Illegal Marriages in Aceh: Examining the Role of Unofficial Qadi', *El-Mashlahah*, 14.2 (2024), pp. 409–30, doi:10.23971/el-mashlahah.v14i2.8887; Busyro Busyro and others, 'The Reinforcement of the "Dowry for Groom" Tradition in Customary Marriages of West Sumatra's Pariaman Society', *Samarah*, 7.1 (2023), pp. 555–78, doi:https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i1.15872.

[2] Dian Friantoro and Akhmad Akbar Susamto, 'The Determinants of the Value of Mahr in Muslim Societies: Evidence from the Indonesian Family Life Surveys', *Jurnal Ekonomi & Studi Pembangunan*, 22.2 (2021), pp. 323–38.

[3] Musyaffa Amin Ash Shabah, 'Systematic Literature Review (SLR): The Tradition of Dowry in Marriage in Southeast Asia', *Krtha Bhayangkara*, 18.3 (2024), pp. 622–48.

[4] Anggi Prasetyo and Ilyya Muhsin, 'The Practice of Ṣiḥah Marriage among the Rifa'iyah Congregation in Sociological and Islamic Marriage Law Perspectives', *Al-'Adalah*, 20.2 (2024), p. 235, doi:10.24042/adalah.v20i2.19324; Mursyid Djawas, Wafaa' Yusof, and others, 'The Integration Between Syara'and Ade'in Marriage Tradition Bugis Bone, South Sulawesi', *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial*, 18.2 (2023), pp. 342–64, doi:https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v18i2.10373.

[5] Mursyid Djawas, Ridhwan Ridhwan, and others, 'The Integration Between Syara' and Ade' in Marriage Tradition Bugis Bone, South Sulawesi', *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, 18.2 (2023), pp. 342–64, doi:10.19105/al-lhkam.v18i2.10373; Gandi Liyorba Indra, M. Yasin Al Arif, and Abdul Qodir Zaelani, 'The Ideal Age For Marriage in The Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) and Psychology', *Al-'Adalah*, 20.1 (2023), p. 1, doi:10.24042/adalah.v20i1.11598.

[6] Sulaiman al-Ṭarwānah, *Rahasia Pilihan Kalimah dalam al-Qur'ān: Dirāsah al-Naṣṣiyyah al-Ādābiyyah fī al-Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ānī*, Cetakan I (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2004), 4.

[7] Howard M Federspiel and Tajul Arifin, *Kajian al-Qur'an di Indonesia: Dari Mahmud Yunus hingga Quraish Shihab*, Cetakan I (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 192.

[8] Mohsen Varzandeh and Subkhani Kusuma Dewi, 'The Theological Significance of Non-Chronological Qur'anic Stories: Moral Resonance in Strengthening the Da'wah Mission', *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 24.2 (2023), pp. 156–66.

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narrative method has proven to be an effective educational approach for strengthening faith, cultivating moral awareness, and shaping both individual character and social conduct.[9]

Nevertheless, existing studies of Qur'anic narratives have largely focused on their ethical (*akhlāq*) and exhortative (*mawʿiẓah*) dimensions, thereby reducing their function to historical and moral reflection. Such an approach tends to overlook the normative potential of Qur'anic narratives, particularly in the context of Islamic law. As the primary source of Islamic legislation, the Qur'an presents legal guidance not only through explicit commands and prohibitions but also through narrative accounts that embody legal principles and provide practical guidance for the lives of Muslims.[10]

This issue has become increasingly prominent with the emergence of modern scholars such as Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, who viewed Qur'anic narratives as literary and imaginative constructions that do not necessarily represent historical facts.[11] This perspective has significant implications for the authority of Qur'anic narratives as normative sources. If these narratives are regarded as non-historical, they can no longer be classified as *sharʿu man qablana* (the revealed laws of previous communities) and consequently lose their legitimacy as a basis for legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*). Such an epistemological position risks reducing the Qur'an to a purely symbolic text while obscuring its legal and normative dimensions.[12]

In contrast, the Qur'an explicitly affirms that its narratives recount authentic and truthful events, although they are presented through a narrative style distinct from conventional historiography. The accusation that Qur'anic stories are merely legends of former peoples is directly refuted in Qur'an Surah al-Furqān (25): 4–6, which emphasizes that the Qur'an was revealed by Allah, the One who possesses perfect knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth. This affirmation demonstrates that Qur'anic narratives are not merely literary compositions but accounts derived from absolute divine knowledge.[13]

In line with this understanding, classical scholars of *ʿUlūm al-Qur'an* maintain that Qur'anic narratives describe real events involving earlier communities and prophets, embodying both historical truth and normative guidance.[14] Owing to their epistemological certainty, these narratives may serve as a foundation for deriving Islamic legal rulings through the doctrine of *sharʿu man qablana*. Ibn al-ʿArabī argued that narrative verses are not solely descriptive but also contain legal implications applicable to Muslim life.[15] Likewise, al-Zarkashī regarded Qur'anic narratives as one of the potential sources of legal reasoning,[16] while Usāmah ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm identified dozens of narrative verses containing

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[9] Abdolrazagh Rahmani, Abdolah Foroozanfar, and Shahla Jaafari, 'Quranic Stories and Creative Thinking in Quranic Students', *Iranian Journal of Educational Research*, 4.2 (2025), p. 0.

[10] Rahmani, Foroozanfar, and Jaafari.

[11] Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah and Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Bukan Kitab Sejarah: Seni, Sastra, dan Moralitas dalam Kisah-kisah Al-Qur'an*, *Terjemahan dari: al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002), 159-176.

[12] Illy Yanti and others, 'Negotiating Sharīʿah and Customary Law: Legal Pluralism in Familial Relationships among the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi', *Journal of Islamic Law*, 6.2 (2025), doi:10.24260/jil.v6i2.3311; Nofiardi, 'ADAT RANTAU AS A SOLUTION FOR MULTI-ETHNIC MARRIAGE IN PASAMAN, WEST SUMATERA', *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan*, 20.2 (2020), pp. 243–56, doi:https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v20i2.544.

[13] Nicolai Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Qur'an: Some Hermeneutic Reflections', 2020.

[14] Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿArabī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2003), 39.

[15] al-ʿArabī, 39.

[16] Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1984), 3.

legal principles across various fields, including worship (*ʿibādāt*), transactions (*muʿāmalāt*), criminal law (*jināyāt*), and family law (*munākaḥāt*).[17]

Studies on *mahr* in Islamic law have likewise become increasingly diverse. Kecia Ali conceptualizes *mahr* as an integral component of the classical Islamic marriage contract, representing both the wife's legal entitlement and a juridical consequence of marriage, rather than a purchase price for women or merely a cultural symbol.[18] A more legalistic perspective is offered by Nathan B. Oman and Richard Freeland, who examine *mahr* as a contractual institution in Islamic law and analyze the challenges of its implementation within modern legal systems in Western countries.[19] Meanwhile, Rubya Mehdi demonstrates that the practice of *mahr* among Pakistani Muslim communities in Denmark is continuously negotiated between Islamic legal norms, cultural traditions, and the legal framework of the host country, making its form and function inherently contextual.[20] More recent scholarship by Scheunchen further explores the enforcement of *mahr* agreements in United States courts, arguing that *mahr* should be understood not merely as a contractual clause but as a legal institution that performs an important social function by safeguarding women's bargaining position within marriage.[21]

Although these studies have made significant contributions to the development of Islamic family law scholarship, they generally focus on the contractual nature of *mahr*, the wife's economic rights, legal implementation, or the interaction between Islamic law and modern state legal systems.[22] Consequently, the Qur'an is primarily treated as a general normative foundation for *mahr*, while specific verses are rarely examined through the lens of legal exegesis (Tafsir Aḥkām). In contrast, this study specifically examines Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 as the object of Tafsir Aḥkām to investigate the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* through the process of legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*), while simultaneously relating it to the perspectives of academics as representatives of contemporary scholarly authority. Accordingly, this article not only offers a new interpretation of the concept of *mahr* but also expands the discourse on the normative function of Qur'anic narrative verses as a source for the development of contemporary Islamic family law.

Unfortunately, the legal dimensions of Qur'anic narrative verses remain relatively neglected in contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, leaving many of their juridical implications—including those related to the concept of *mahr*—insufficiently explored. Yet, the Qur'an describes these narratives as *ʿibrah* (lessons), which should be understood not only within a moral framework but also in their normative capacity to regulate human life, particularly in the sphere of Islamic family law.[23]

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[17] Usāmah Muḥammad ʿAbdu al-ʿAẓīm Ḥamzah, *al-Qaṣaṣ al-Qurʾānī wa Atharuhu fī Istinbāṭ al-Aḥkām* (Cairo: Dār al-Fatḥ, 1997), 32.

[18] Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Harvard University Press, 2010).

[19] Nathan B Oman, 'Bargaining in the Shadow of God's Law: Islamic Mahr Contracts and the Perils of Legal Specialization', *45 Wake Forest Law Review 579-606 (2010)*, 2010.

[20] Rubya Mehdi, 'Danish Law and the Practice of Mahr among Muslim Pakistanis in Denmark', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 31.2 (2003), pp. 115–29.

[21] Tobias Scheunchen, 'Lost in Translation? Mahr-Agreements, US Courts, and the Predicament of Muslim Women', *J. Islamic L.*, 2 (2021), p. 33; Nurnazli Nurnazli and others, 'Productive Dowry and Women's Economic Empowerment and Their Influence on Marital Assets in Bandar Lampung', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 8.2 (2024), p. 954, doi:10.22373/sjhk.v8i2.19887.

[22] M. Tahir Maloko and others, 'Sompa Tanah in Makassar Bugis Customary Marriages: Legal, Religious, and Cultural Perspectives', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 12.3 (2024), p. 1213, doi:10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1309.

[23] Endri Yenti and others, 'A Set of Prayer Outfits as a Mahar? Discrimination against Women in the 'Urf Reality of the Archipelago's Fiqh', *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan*, 20.1 (2020), pp. 17–30, doi:10.30631/alrisalah.v20i1.567.

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Although Qur'anic narrative verses possess considerable potential as sources of *istinbāṭ*, previous tafsir studies have primarily emphasized their ethical (*akhlāq*) and reflective (*iʿtibār*) dimensions, while their legal implications have rarely been examined systematically. In particular, Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27, which portrays service as the *mahr* in the marriage of Prophet Moses (Mūsā), has received little attention as a foundation for Tafsir Aḥkām concerning the permissibility of non-material *mahr*. Furthermore, existing studies are predominantly normative and library-based, without incorporating the perspectives of academics as holders of scholarly authority through empirical field research. This constitutes the novelty of the present study: integrating Tafsir Aḥkām of a Qur'anic narrative verse with empirically grounded academic perspectives, an approach that remains largely unexplored in contemporary Islamic family law scholarship.

This study aims to analyze Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 within the framework of Tafsir Aḥkām while exploring academics' understanding of the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* and its relevance to contemporary marriage issues. Specifically, it addresses the following questions: Does this verse contain legal (aḥkām) implications, or is it merely historical and moral in nature? What is the status of Qur'anic narrative verses as sources of Islamic legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*)? How do academics interpret the service rendered by Prophet Moses as *mahr*, and can it serve as legitimate evidence for the permissibility of non-material *mahr*? Finally, to what extent is this understanding consistent with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*) and capable of contributing to the development of contemporary Islamic family law?

The central argument of this study is that Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 should not be understood merely as a historical and moral narrative but also as containing normative legitimacy for non-material *mahr*, which offers a relevant response to the problem of excessive material *mahr*. By integrating Tafsir Aḥkām with the perspectives of academics, this article contributes to reaffirming the normative authority of Qur'anic narrative verses in Islamic legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*) while providing a conceptual foundation for the development of a more contextual and *maṣlaḥah*-oriented Islamic family law.

This study adopts a qualitative approach employing an interpretive field research design that integrates Tafsir Aḥkām as its interpretive framework. The research was conducted at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, one of Aceh's leading centers for Qur'anic Studies and Islamic law, which also operates within a social context where the issue of high material *mahr* remains prevalent in marriage practices. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria: expertise in Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir, Hadith Studies, or Islamic law; possession of a master's or doctoral degree; and relevant teaching and research experience. A total of nine academics were interviewed, and data collection was concluded after reaching thematic saturation, at which point no new substantive themes emerged.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews using eight open-ended questions designed to explore participants' views on the status of Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 as a basis for legitimizing non-material *mahr*. These data were complemented by documentary analysis of classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, juristic works from various schools of Islamic law, *uṣūl al-fiqh* literature, and relevant academic studies. The credibility of the findings was ensured through source triangulation by comparing participants' perspectives and verifying them against authoritative textual sources within the traditions of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic jurisprudence.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, including data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, and thematic interpretation. The resulting themes were

subsequently analyzed through the perspective of Tafsir Aḥkām, with Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 serving as the primary normative framework. This approach facilitates a dialogue between empirical evidence and normative sources, thereby producing an interpretation that connects the Qur'anic text, the exegetical tradition, and contemporary social practices concerning non-material *mahr*.

B. Results and Discussion

Academics' Perspectives on Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ Verse 27

This study involved nine academics from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh specializing in Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir, Hadith Studies, and Islamic law. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a code ranging from I1 to I9, as presented in Table 1. The participants' profiles demonstrate that the perspectives collected represent relevant and diverse scholarly authorities in terms of disciplinary background, educational qualifications, and professional experience.

Table 1. Profile of Research Participants

Code	Gender	Area of Expertise	Education	Experience
I1	Male	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Ph.D.	29 years
I2	Male	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Master's Degree	10 years
I3	Male	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Master's Degree	Lecturer in Classical Tafsir Literature
I4	Male	Hadith Studies	Master's Degree	2 years
I5	Male	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Master's Degree	Lecturer in Modern Tafsir Literature
I6	Female	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Ph.D.	Undergraduate and Graduate Lecturer
I7	Female	Islamic Law (Islamic Family Law)	Ph.D.	15 years
I8	Female	Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Tafsir	Master's Degree	Lecturer in *Rasm* and *Ḍabṭ al-Qur'an*
I9	Male	Islamic Law (Siyāsah)	Master's Degree	Lecturer in Zakat and Waqf Law

Source: Primary data processed by the authors (2026).

All participants agreed that Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 contains legal (*aḥkām*) implications, although it is presented in the form of a narrative. Some participants regarded the verse as simultaneously fulfilling three functions. As participant I5 stated, the verse "combines all three dimensions: it contains legal, historical, and moral elements."[24] Likewise, I3 remarked that "although it is presented as a narrative (*qaṣaṣ*), it contains legal indications."[25] These statements demonstrate that, among the participating academics, there is no doubt regarding the normative content embedded in this narrative verse. Accordingly, reducing it to merely a moral lesson is considered an inadequate interpretation.

Regarding the status of Qur'anic narrative verses as a source of *istinbāṭ* (Islamic legal reasoning), the participants accepted their legal authority subject to certain methodological conditions. Participant I2 emphasized that, in principle, every Qur'anic verse contains legal

[24] Interview with Participant I5, June 2026
[25] Interview with Participant I3, June 2026

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implications; "however, if a verse relates to previous communities, it must first be examined to determine whether its ruling remains applicable."[26] Similarly, I3 explained that the majority of Muslim scholars accept narrative verses as a source of legal rulings "provided there is an indication that the ruling is intended to serve as guidance for the Muslim community and that no evidence exists to indicate its abrogation."[27] Participant I7 further specified that several legal rulings may be derived from Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27, including the permissibility of an *ijārah* (service) contract, commercial transactions, and service-based *mahr*. These findings indicate that the participants interpret verse 27 within the framework of *sharʿu man qablana*, whose legal authority remains valid unless abrogated.

Regarding the service rendered by Prophet Moses (Mūsā), the participants understood it as a form of benefit that possesses measurable value and may be mutually agreed upon, rather than merely as a historical event. Participant I2 compared it to shepherding wages that can be assigned monetary value, while I5 emphasized that the essence of *mahr* lies in the husband's provision to his prospective wife; therefore, service may legitimately substitute for material property, "provided that the service is completed before the marriage contract is concluded."[28] Participant I9 described this practice as "a remarkable meeting point between theology, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the sociology of law."[29] On this basis, all participants agreed that non-material *mahr* is valid and permissible. Its legitimacy is further reinforced by the Prophetic practice of accepting the teaching of the Qur'an as a form of *mahr*, as highlighted by participants I2, I3, I4, and I5. Nevertheless, I4 acknowledged that service-based *mahr* "still feels unfamiliar" in contemporary practice, although the available textual evidence clearly establishes its permissibility.[30]

From a social perspective, the participants highlighted the issue of excessively high *mahr* in Aceh, where it is commonly determined in the form of gold measured in *mayam*.[31] Participant I1 argued that such high standards "are merely customary practices and are not religiously binding."[32] Participant I4 described the tension between Islamic norms and prevailing social values: normatively, "the lower the *mahr*, the better," whereas socially, a high *mahr* is often perceived as enhancing both the bride's dignity and the groom's social prestige.[33] Participant I6 called for a reversal of this perception by emphasizing the principle that "if one desires a blessed marriage, the *mahr* should be made affordable." [34] Meanwhile, I5 proposed practical solutions, including public education on adopting gram-based standards instead of *mayam*, allowing *mahr* to be paid in installments, and reducing its amount. These findings demonstrate a clear gap between the Islamic ideal of facilitating marriage and customary practices that frequently impose unnecessary financial burdens.

As a solution, most participants considered non-material *mahr* to be a viable alternative, particularly for young people who possess valuable skills but have not yet achieved financial stability (I4, I5, and I8). Nevertheless, several participants raised important critical concerns that warrant careful consideration. Participant I9 warned that its

[26] Interview with Participant I2, June 2026
[27] Interview with Participant I3, June 2026
[28] Participant I5.
[29] Interview with Participant I9, June 2026
[30] Interview with Participant I4, June 2026
[31] Musyaffa Amin Ash-Shabah, Nahrowi Nahrowi, and Masyrofah Masyrofah, 'Dowry Amount in Aceh-Indonesia and Selangor-Malaysia: Between State Regulations and Customs', *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 21.2 (2021).
[32] Interview with Participant I1, June 2026
[33] Participant I4.
[34] Interview with Participant I6, June 2026

implementation could "give rise to new social problems,"[35] while I2 argued that service-based *mahr* may be suitable for individuals with a high level of spiritual commitment but "could also create new problems, given the current rate of divorce."[36] Likewise, I5 emphasized that the widespread adoption of non-material *mahr* might conflict with deeply rooted local traditions and therefore suggested that its implementation should begin with respected community leaders and Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) circles to provide a positive example. These concerns indicate that the normative legitimacy of non-material *mahr* does not necessarily guarantee its sociological acceptability. Its implementation therefore requires cultural readiness in addition to textual justification.[37]

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the participants associated non-material *mahr* with the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) and lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). Participant I1 emphasized its relevance to these objectives, arguing that excessively burdensome *mahr*, which delays or prevents marriage, results in social harm (*mafsadah*).[38] Participant I9 further interpreted service-based *mahr* as an embodiment of promoting public benefit (*jalb al-maṣlaḥah*) while preventing harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*), as well as a prototype of a binding, transparent, and equitable premarital agreement. Regarding its contribution to contemporary Islamic family law, the participants argued that this verse provides a legal understanding that is "more flexible, oriented toward public welfare, and responsive to social change without compromising the fundamental principles of Islamic law," while also encouraging a shift in society's perception of *mahr* from material wealth to benefit-based contributions.[39]

These findings provide an empirical foundation for further analysis within the frameworks of Tafsir Aḥkām and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The following discussion critically examines how Qur'anic narrative verses may function as sources of *istinbāṭ*, how the account of Prophet Moses (Mūsā) can be contextualized within the field of *aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah* (Islamic family law), and how the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* may be justified through the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*.

The Role of Qur'anic Narrative Verses in the Reconstruction of Legal Verses

The debate over the number of legal verses (*āyāt al-aḥkām*) in the Qur'an has long been a significant topic in the fields of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Some scholars, including Ibn al-Qayyim and al-Ghazālī,[40] estimated that the number of legal verses ranges from approximately 150 to 500. However, such numerical limitations have not gained universal acceptance. Scholars such as al-Ṭūfī, al-Qarāfī, and al-Zarkashī explicitly rejected the assignment of a fixed number, arguing that the legal content of the Qur'an cannot be confined to numerical categories. According to them, every Qur'anic verse—whether it takes the form of a command, prohibition, narrative, or exhortation—has the potential to serve as a basis for legal rulings, either directly or through the process of legal deduction.

A broader perspective was advanced by Ibn al-ʿArabī, who argued that Surah al-Baqarah alone contains thousands of commands, prohibitions, legal rulings, and reports. It is therefore unsurprising that Ibn ʿUmar reportedly spent eight years studying this single

[35] Participant I9.

[36] Participant I2.

[37] Efrinaldi Efrinaldi and others, 'Urf Review of The Practice of Gold Marriage Mahar in The Community of Tanjung Senang District Bandar Lampung', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 7.1 May (2022), pp. 287–310.

[38] Participant I1.

[39] Participant I3.

[40] Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan bin al-ʿArabī bin Muḥammad al-Ḥijawī al-Thaʿālibī al-Jaʿfarī al-Fāsī, *al-Fikr al-Sāmī fī Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), 84.

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chapter. Abū Madyan further explained that the Qur'an possesses two dimensions: *nuzūl*, referring to the revelation of the text, and *tanzīl*, referring to its practical application. According to him, *nuzūl* came to an end with the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whereas *tanzīl*, manifested through the application of the Qur'an to emerging circumstances and the derivation of legal rulings from it, will continue until the end of time.[41]

A more moderate approach can be found in the *tafsir* of al-Rāzī. Although he acknowledged the general classification of legal verses, his exegetical practice consistently derived legal rulings from Qur'anic narrative passages. His interpretation of Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 67, concerning Prophet Moses' (Mūsā) command to slaughter a cow, demonstrates that narrative verses can generate important legal principles, including the gradual implementation of legal obligations (*tadarruj al-taklīf*), the legal consequences of delaying compliance with divine commands, and the legitimacy of introducing additional legal conditions. This example illustrates that Qur'anic narratives are not merely historical reports but also function as implicit vehicles for legal instruction.[42]

The differing opinions regarding the number of legal verses in the Qur'an essentially stem from ambiguity concerning the object of the debate. Scholars who reject numerical limitations maintain that every Qur'anic verse has the potential to generate legal rulings, whether directly or indirectly. By contrast, those who restrict the number of legal verses generally define *āyāt al-aḥkām* as verses that explicitly prescribe juridical rulings (*fiqh*). The disagreement, therefore, is methodological rather than substantive.

The view that Qur'anic narrative verses constitute a legitimate source of *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* is further reinforced by the principle of the Qur'an's multilayered meanings. A narration from Ibn Masʿūd (may Allah be pleased with him), which states that every Qur'anic verse possesses both an outward (*ẓāhir*) and an inward (*bāṭin*) meaning, suggests that the interpretation of the Qur'an should not be confined to its literal meaning alone.[43] Al-Māwardī argued that Qur'anic narratives convey both explicit historical accounts and implicit normative lessons that remain applicable across different times and contexts. Likewise, Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī maintained that the repetition of narratives throughout the Qur'an always carries distinct wisdoms and purposes, including normative and legal objectives.[44]

Within this framework, Qur'anic narrative verses embody two fundamental dimensions: a moral-spiritual dimension and a normative-legal dimension. In *Aḥkām al-Qur'an*, Ibn al-ʿArabī emphasized that narrative passages containing legal implications are intended to be implemented in practice rather than merely contemplated. Similarly, al-Zarkashī affirmed that Qur'anic narratives, parables, and illustrative accounts may all serve as valid sources for deriving legal rulings. Consequently, excluding Qur'anic narrative verses from the framework of *āyāt al-aḥkām* would diminish both the breadth of meaning and the normative function of the Qur'an itself.[45]

Establishing Qur'anic Narrative Verses as Legal Verses

In contemporary Qur'anic Studies, Qur'anic narratives are no longer understood merely as historical accounts or vehicles for conveying moral messages. Rather, they are viewed as a discursive structure of revelation that simultaneously integrates theological,

[41] al-Fāsī, 84.
[42] Fakhr ad-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1420), 543.
[43] Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥibbān, *Al-Iḥsān Fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1st edn (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1988), 276.
[44] Abū al-Layth Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr Al-'Ulūm*, 478.
[45] al-Zarkashī, II.

rhetorical, ethical, and normative dimensions. This perspective suggests that Qur'anic narratives construct meaning through the interplay between linguistic expression, narrative structure, and the overarching objective of divine guidance (*hidāyah*). Consequently, their legal messages are not always conveyed through explicit commands and prohibitions but may also be communicated through the representation of actions, dialogues, and divine approval of particular practices. Accordingly, the interpretation of Qur'anic narratives requires a hermeneutical approach that extends beyond historical and literary-aesthetic analysis to uncover their normative content as a basis for *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* and contemporary methodologies of legal exegesis.[46]

The works of classical Muslim scholars demonstrate that Qur'anic narratives serve not only as historical accounts and instruments of moral instruction but also as potential sources of Islamic legal reasoning. Al-Zarkashī argued that Qur'anic narratives, parables, and other forms of discourse constitute fertile grounds for deriving legal rulings, since legal legitimacy arises not only from explicit commands and prohibitions but also from actions that receive divine approval, praise, or affirmation.[47] From a more methodological perspective, Usāmah Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm Ḥamzah explains that the legal indication found in narrative verses is *tābiʿiyyah* (derivative) rather than *aṣliyyah* (primary). Accordingly, legal rulings should not be inferred automatically from every narrative; instead, they must be derived through careful analysis of the wording (*lafẓ*), contextual background, the principle of *sharʿu man qablana*, and their consistency with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*).[48] This perspective is consistent with the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which define Islamic law as the divine address (*khiṭāb Allāh*) concerning the actions of legally accountable persons (*al-mukallafīn*). Consequently, any narrative that records human actions and receives divine validation may carry legal implications.[49]

From this perspective, the account of Prophet Moses (Mūsā) in Midian, narrated in Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ (28): 23–28, conveys not only moral instruction but also provides *sharʿī* legitimacy for several aspects of Islamic family law, including the marriage contract, the role of the guardian (*walī*), non-material *mahr*, and the principle of justice within family relationships. The universality of these legal implications is further reinforced by the legal maxim, *al-ʿibrah bi ʿumūm al-lafẓ lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* (legal consideration is based on the generality of the wording rather than the specificity of the occasion of revelation), which affirms that legal rulings derived from narrative verses remain applicable as long as they fall within the scope of the verse's wording and the objectives of Islamic law, rather than being confined to particular individuals or historical events. Therefore, Qur'anic narrative verses should be understood as living normative texts whose legal relevance transcends time and place, provided that the process of legal derivation is conducted in accordance with rigorous, systematic, and academically accountable methodological principles.

Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ Verse 27 as the Normative Foundation for the Legitimacy of Non-Material *Mahr* in Contemporary Islamic Family Law

The findings of this study demonstrate that a *Tafsir Aḥkām* of Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 affirms the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* in the form of services, as reflected in the marriage agreement between Prophet Moses (Mūsā) and the family of Prophet Shuʿayb. All nine academics from UIN Ar-Raniry who participated in this study regarded the verse

[46] Abdul-Samad Abdullah, 'Fādil Al-Samarra'ī's Contribution to Literary and Rhetorical Exegesis of the Qur'an', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 180.
[47] al-Zarkashī, II, 3.
[48] Ḥamzah, 21.
[49] Ḥamzah, 21.

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not merely as a historical narrative but as a normative source for the development of *aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah* (Islamic family law). They viewed marriage as a *sharʿī* contract founded upon the values of *mawaddah* (affection) and *raḥmah* (compassion),[50] while maintaining that *mahr*—as an obligatory gift that establishes the wife's legal entitlement—need not necessarily take a material form.[51] Rather, *mahr* was understood as a symbol of sincerity and respect rather than the price of a woman.[52] The accommodating attitude of Prophet Shuʿayb was interpreted as exemplifying the flexibility of a marriage guardian (*walī*) in considering the socio-economic circumstances of a prospective son-in-law without compromising the essential validity of the contract.[53]

These findings engage with two major strands of previous scholarship. On the one hand, they extend studies that reinterpret *mahr* through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* by identifying the dominance of material-oriented *mahr* as a contemporary challenge in Islamic family law.[54] On the other hand, they challenge the prevailing tendency in the classical jurisprudence of *munākaḥāt*, which generally conceptualizes *mahr* primarily in material terms.[55] The present study demonstrates that local scholarly authorities explicitly recognize the legitimacy of service-based *mahr*. The principal difference lies in methodology: whereas previous studies have relied primarily on normative-textual interpretation, this research integrates Tafsir Aḥkām with empirical data derived from academics' perspectives, a dimension that has received relatively little attention in existing scholarship.

From the perspective of contemporary Islamic legal studies, the views expressed by the participating academics should not be understood merely as individual opinions but rather as representing interpretive practices operating within an epistemic community. Wael B. Hallaq argues that the formation of Islamic law has never been a mechanical process derived directly from scriptural texts; instead, it develops through the interpretive activities of scholarly authorities who mediate between the revealed texts and the needs of society. Within this framework, the convergence of views among the academics at UIN Ar-Raniry illustrates how Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 is accepted as a normative source that legitimizes non-material *mahr* through a process of *istinbāṭ* firmly grounded in the tradition of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Accordingly, the findings not only demonstrate broad epistemic acceptance of the permissibility of service-based *mahr* but also reveal how the academic community actively reconstructs the relationship between the Qur'anic text, the authority of the marriage guardian (*walī*), and evolving social realities. These findings reinforce the view that Islamic law emerges through a continuous dialogue among divine revelation, the scholarly tradition, and the social context, rather than through a purely literal reproduction of scriptural texts.[56]

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[50] Abdul Karim Amrullah (HAMKA), *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2003), II, 213.

[51] Nelli Jumni, *Fiqh Munakahat* (Pekanbaru: Suska Press, 2008), 65.

[52] Abdullah bin Abdurrahman al-Bassam, *Syarah Bulugh Al-Maram* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2006), 72.

[53] Kurniati and Eka Indriyani MS, 'A Review of The Mashlahah of Uang Panai' in Decision Making: The Role of Financial Behavior, Social Strata, Education and Religiosity', *Bilancia: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum*, 18.1 (2024), pp. 15–36, doi:https://doi.org/10.24239/blc.v18i1.2992; Sudirman and others, 'Maslahah Perspective Towards Uang Panaik (Bride Price) in Bugis Makassar Community', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah*, 17.2 (2019), pp. 150–63.

[54] Azhar Azhar, 'Islamic Law Reform in Indonesia from the Perspective of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah: Kerinci's Intellectual Views', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 8.2 (2024), pp. 750–69.

[55] Muhammad Ridwan, 'Kedudukan Mahar Dalam Perkawinan', *Jurnal Perspektif*, 13.1 (2020), pp. 43–51.

[56] Wael B Hallaq, *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

The implications of these findings are that the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* provides a concrete normative basis for the practice of Islamic family law. This position is consistent with Articles 30–38 of the Indonesian *Compilation of Islamic Law* (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*), which leave the form and amount of *mahr* to the mutual agreement and consent of the parties and do not classify *mahr* as an essential pillar (*rukn*) of marriage.[57] Accordingly, *mahr* may take the form of education, community service, or intellectual and professional services, thereby transforming it from a structural financial burden into an instrument for family empowerment.[58] From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, this reinterpretation also supports the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), honor (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*).[59]

The convergence of the participants' views demonstrates that the interpretation of *mahr* does not develop within a normative sphere detached from social realities but rather through an ongoing negotiation between textual authority and social practice.[60] A similar phenomenon has been observed in various Muslim societies, where the implementation of *mahr* is shaped by the interaction between Islamic legal norms, local customs, and prevailing legal systems.[61] Mehdi, for example, shows that the practice of *mahr* among Pakistani Muslims in Denmark is not determined solely by classical Islamic jurisprudence but is continually reinterpreted in response to changing social and legal contexts. In Aceh, this negotiation is reflected in the efforts of academics to reinterpret Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27 as a normative foundation for the legitimacy of non-material *mahr* amid the dominance of the gold-based *mayam* tradition. Accordingly, the recognition of service-based *mahr* in this study is not intended to replace conventional material *mahr* but rather to broaden the scope of *ijtihād* so that the objectives of Islamic law—facilitation, justice, and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*)—may continue to be realized in contemporary Islamic family law.[62]

These findings also carry important practical and research implications. From a practical perspective, the understanding of marriage guardians (*awliyāʾ*), marriage registrars, and officials of the Offices of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Urusan Agama*) should be harmonized so that service-based *mahr* is not rejected merely because it departs from established custom. From a research perspective, the tension identified in this study between normative legitimacy and customary resistance calls for broader socio-legal investigation. Future research should therefore focus on developing practical guidelines that recognize non-material *mahr* as a legally justifiable and socially acceptable option within contemporary Islamic family law.

C. Conclusion

The principal finding of this study is that Qur'an Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ verse 27, although presented as a Qur'anic narrative (*qaṣaṣ*), may legitimately function as a source of Tafsir Aḥkām for establishing the permissibility of non-material *mahr*. This legitimacy is affirmed

[57] Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *Himpunan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Perkawinan* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Bimbingan Islam, 2009), 240.

[58] Muhammad Danil and others, 'From Provider to Partner: Reconstructing the Legal Concept of Livelihood Obligation in Indonesian Islamic Family Law through the Lens of Gender Justice and Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah', *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies*, 10.2 (2026), pp. 160–73.

[59] Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2008).

[60] Nurnazli and others.

[61] Muhammad Ikhsan, Husnaini Hasbi, and Abdullah Ishak, 'Gold Dowry in Acehnese Traditional Marriage (Das Sein and Das Sollen in Pidie Community Practices)', *Al-Hiwalah: Sharia Economic Law*, 4.1 (2025), pp. 39–52.

[62] Mehdi.

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not only through textual reasoning but also through the perspectives of recognized scholarly authorities. Distinct from previous studies, this research highlights the substantive role of the marriage guardian (*walī*) as a facilitator of public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) in marriage rather than merely an administrative actor.

The contribution of this article is both conceptual and methodological. Conceptually, it establishes Qur'anic narrative verses as a legitimate basis for *istinbāṭ* concerning service-based *mahr* through the doctrine of *sharʿu man qablana*, provided that its legal ruling has not been abrogated, and further supported by Qur'an Surah An-Nisāʾ (4): 4 and the Prophetic practice (*Sunnah*). Methodologically, this study integrates Tafsir Aḥkām with empirical evidence drawn from academics' perspectives—an approach that has rarely been employed in previous studies of *mahr* and constitutes the primary novelty of this research.

This study also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The empirical data were collected from only nine academics at a single institution, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. Consequently, the findings reflect scholarly authority within the Acehnese context and are not intended to be generalized to the national level. Moreover, this study has not incorporated the perspectives of legal practitioners, marriage registrars, or couples who have practiced non-material *mahr*, nor has it empirically examined the sociological tension between normative legitimacy and customary resistance. Future research is therefore encouraged to include participants from diverse regions and professional backgrounds and to adopt a socio-legal approach in order to examine both the societal acceptance and the practical implications of implementing non-material *mahr* within contemporary Muslim communities.

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