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Gossip in the Qur'an: Analysis of Ibn 'Āsyūr Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān in QS. Al-Hujurāt: 12 and An-Nūr: 11,16 and 19

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Abstract

The phenomenon of gossip often occurs in society, both directly and through social media, leading to negative impacts on individuals and society. Gossip is not a new phenomenon, as it also took place during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), one example being the gossip that affected the Prophet's wife, Siti Aisyah (RA), which is recorded in QS. an-Nūr (24), verses 11-19. These verses not only serve as a warning to humanity but also contain *maqṣud* (objectives) that can provide valuable lessons in life, including how to deal with gossip. This article employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. The findings of this article indicate that the verses about gossip in the classification of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* according to Tahir Ibn 'Āsyūr include: first, improving faith (*akidah*); second, instilling good character (*akhlak*); third, safeguarding the well-being of the community by providing rules, as stated in QS. al-Hujurāt (49), verse 12, and QS. an-Nūr (24), verses 16 and 19; fourth, presenting historical stories as a lesson for humanity to prevent repetition of past mistakes; fifth, serving as a reminder to humanity not to violate what has been forbidden by Allah SWT, including gossip; sixth, informing that every action of a human being will be rewarded accordingly; and seventh, as a miracle that must be believed by Muslims.

Keywords: Gossip, Al-Qur'an, Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān Ibn 'Āsyūr

Abstrak

Fenomena gosip kerap terjadi dalam sosial masyarakat, baik secara langsung maupun melalui media sosial, sehingga menimbulkan dampak negatif pada individu ataupun sosial. Gosip bukan fenomena baru, karena pada masa Rasulullah saw. gosip juga terjadi, salah satunya menimpa istri Nabi saw. Siti Aisyah r.a. yang diabadikan dalam QS. an-Nūr (24) ayat 11-19. Ayat ini tidak hanya sebagai peringatan kepada umat manusia, tetapi juga mengandung *maqāṣid* (tujuan) yang akan dapat menjadi ibrah dalam kehidupan, termasuk dalam menyikapi gosip. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis *library research*. Hasil artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa ayat-ayat tentang gosip dalam klasifikasi *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* Tahir Ibn 'Āsyūr, yaitu pertama, memperbaiki akidah; kedua, menanamkan akhlak yang baik; ketiga, menjaga kemaslahatan umat dengan memberikan aturan sebagaimana disampaikan dalam QS. al-Hujurāt (49) ayat 12, dan QS. an-Nūr (24) ayat 16, 19; keempat, kisah-kisah terdahulu sebagai gambaran kepada manusia agar tidak terulang kembali; kelima, sebagai peringatan kepada manusia agar tidak melanggar apa yang sudah dilarang oleh Allah Swt. termasuk gosip; keenam, menginformasikan bahwa segala perbuatan manusia akan mendapatkan balasan; ketujuh, sebagai mukjizat yang wajib diyakini oleh umat muslim.

Kata kunci: Gosip, Al-Qur'an, Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān Ibn 'Āsyūr

Introduction

Every part of the human body will be held accountable before Allah SWT. One of them is the tongue. Although the tongue is small in size, it has a big impact if not used properly and in accordance with Islamic law. Islam warns every human being to guard their tongue from bad words, such as gossip (Dhulkifli, 2019). Gossip often occurs in society. Moreover, the development of technology and social media has made

gossip no longer limited to face-to-face interactions but also widespread through social media networks (Husnaini, 2015), as social media functions as a means to obtain and convey information to the general public (Nailus Sa'aadah 2019, t.t.). This can be seen from the many television programs that broadcast gossip, one of which is the program "Rumpi No Secret" on the TransTV station, hosted by Feny Rose. Gossip is not a new phenomenon; it also occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. For example, the incident involving the Prophet's wife, Aisyah r.a., who was accused of having an affair with one of the Prophet's companions, Ṣafwān bin Al-Mu'aṭṭal As-Sulāmī Az-Ẓakwānī. This incident was later immortalized by Allah SWT in Surah an-Nūr (24), verses 11–19, or according to some opinions, verses 11–21.

Gossip seems to have become a "human need" following the basic needs of food, drink, water, housing, and clothing (Aizid, 2015). Gossip is practiced by all segments of society—men and women, children and the elderly, those with low or high levels of education, the unemployed, and even extremely busy people. Even respected religious scholars (ulama) sometimes find it difficult to avoid gossiping (Suudi, 2013). The topics of gossip can cover anything aimed at lowering someone's dignity. However, according to Islamic law (*sharī'ah*), gossip is considered an *akhlāq madhmūmah* (blameworthy character) and is forbidden (*ḥarām*) because it can harm other Muslims (Raihan, Fadhil, Heryana, Fitriani, & Lutfiah, 2022). Those who become the target of gossip are indirectly excluded from the social group and regarded as outsiders, which can result in various kinds of harm. Therefore, this act is prohibited by Allah, as stated in Surah al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12 and Surah al-Nūr (24): 11, 16, and 19. These three verses are about the prohibition of gossip and will be the focus of this discussion.

Surah al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12 addresses gossip with the key term *ghībah*, meaning "backbiting." Meanwhile, Surah al-Nūr (24): 11 and 16 use different key terms: *ifk*, meaning "false accusation," and *buhtān*, meaning "slander." Specifically, Surah al-Nūr (24): 19 does not introduce a particular keyword, but it is included because of its connection to verse 11, which also discusses gossip. This article will explore how gossip is understood in Islam, particularly through the perspective of the Qur'an and the interpretation of verses related to gossip. It employs a qualitative method in the form of a literature review and applies the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* approach, which seeks to uncover the hidden aspects behind the important information about gossip. Every prohibition in the Qur'an is not without purpose (*maqāṣid*); Allah prohibits something because there is certainly a harm (*mafsadah/illāh*) that can bring detriment to His servants.

In this case, the researcher takes the initiative to study the verses on gossip more deeply using the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* approach offered by Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, which consists of eight *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. However, the analysis of the *maqāṣid* for each

verse in this study does not necessarily fall under all eight categories. The reason for choosing Ibn ‘Āshūr’s *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* is that the researcher considers Ibn ‘Āshūr to be one of the scholars of tafsīr who developed and focused on the modern version of *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*, particularly regarding social verses, making it relevant to the social issue of gossip. His emphasis on *maqāṣid* even led Ibn ‘Āshūr to argue that any tafsīr methodology must take *maqāṣid* into account, and he rejected all interpretations that contradicted the *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*. This can be seen in his famous work *at-Taḥrīr wa at-Tanwīr* (Saputra, 2019).

This research is not the first of its kind. Many previous researchers have studied the same theme of gossip, whether in the form of theses, journal articles, or other scientific works. For example, Azka Noor explored this topic and argued that the cultural trend of prejudice and gossip, when viewed through the lens of QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12, produces both positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts can serve as a form of social control and help reduce the spread of biased information, while the negative impacts can lead to conflicts in various settings (A. Noor & Mursida, 2021). Muhyi stated that the concept of gossip, according to Sheikh Nawāwī in his *Tafsīr Marāḥ Labīd*, is understood as talking about people one does not know, harboring negative assumptions based on someone’s unclear behavior or actions, and searching for and discussing the faults of others (Abdul Muhyi & Fajar Islamy, 2022).

However, none of the previous studies have specifically examined gossip as addressed in QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12 and QS. al-Nūr (24): 11, 16, and 19 using the *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* approach as developed by Ibn ‘Āshūr. Therefore, this article aims to explain the verses on gossip in the Qur’an and analyze them through the *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* framework of Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr, so that these insights may serve as both guidance and lessons for daily life.

Theoretical Studies

Linguistically, the word *maqāṣid* is the plural form of *maqṣad*, derived from the root word *qaṣada*, which carries the meaning “to come toward” or “to head toward something” (Fikriyati, 2018). In terminology, *maqāṣid* means purpose or objective, and when combined with *al-Qur’ān*, it refers to the main purposes or ultimate goals of the messages contained in the Qur’an (Fikriyati, 2014).

As for a specific definition of *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*, neither classical nor modern scholars have provided a single, definitive formulation. However, several scholars have paid special attention to this theme in their works. Even so, they generally do not explicitly define what *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* means (M. F. Noor, Wahyuni, & Samsuri,

2023). According to 'Abdul Karīm Hāmidī, as quoted by Wafa' binti Dakhil Lillah in Johar Arifin's work, *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is defined as God's message to His servants, with the main purpose of its revelation being for the welfare (maṣlaḥah) of all humanity (Arifin, 2018). Meanwhile, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, in his work *Wahyu al-Muḥammadī*, states that the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* are actually intended for the well-being of individuals, society, and the ummah. They are guided to the right path, including the purification of the heart, the development of moral intellect, and the establishment of brotherhood among humans.

From these various explanations, it can be concluded that the meaning of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* refers to the wisdom or objectives behind the Qur'an's revelation to humanity, so that it can bring benefit to humankind and prevent harm (Bushiri, 2019). In the view of Ibn 'Āshūr regarding *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, as he outlines in the introduction to his tafsir *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, he identifies eight key objectives, including: correct creed ('Aqīdah) to correct belief and teach sound doctrines, moral formation as explained in a hadith narrated by Imam Mālik in *al-Muwatṭa'*, where the Prophet said, "I was sent to perfect noble character," implementation of general and specific laws the Qur'an gathers comprehensive legal principles in both everyday customs and specific important matters (Ibn 'Asyur, 1884), community Governance (Ummah Politics) as community or political policy, the Qur'an addresses important matters such as the good conduct of the community and the maintenance of its regulations, including the formation of groups, stories of previous nations as narratives and reports about past communities, serving as models of good conduct (Ibn 'Asyur, 1884), teachings suited to the condition of the community as lessons that match the circumstances and behavior of the people addressed by the Qur'an, advice, warnings, and glad tidings as advice, warnings, and good news, conveyed through various verses of promise and threat, as needed, and including debates (*mujādalah*) with the defiant and arrogant, the Qur'an's miraculous nature as proof of the prophet's truthfulness as a miracle, the Qur'an itself stands as evidence of the truth of the Prophets, since the claim to prophethood requires proof (mu'jizah), and the Qur'an contains miraculous qualities even in its wording (Ibn 'Asyur, 1884).

Method

This study uses a qualitative method in the form of library research. The sources used in this research include books, tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) works, journals, undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and other written materials. The approach employed in this article is the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* approach as formulated by Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr.

The data collection procedure in this study is as follows: first, compiling and gathering a collection of Qur'anic verses that explain gossip by using the keywords *ghayb*, *ifk*, and *buhtān*, which are key terms related to gossip. After collecting the relevant verses, the researcher seeks to describe these verses by referring to various tafsir works, using them both as references and as material for analysis.

Second, the researcher attempts to elaborate on the interpretation results using the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* approach in order to uncover the meaning or moral message behind the Qur'anic text. As for the data analysis process in this study, it includes: reading the primary data sourced from QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12, QS. an-Nūr (24): 11, 16, and 19; reading primary data drawn from tafsir works, particularly those that explain gossip, such as *at-Taḥrīr wa at-Tanwīr* by Muhammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb, *al-Munīr: Creed, Sharia, and Methodology* by Wahbah al-Zuhaylī (Syauqani, 2025), *An-Nūr* by Teungku Muhammad Hasbī aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, and the tafsir compiled by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Amnesti, 2021), namely *Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya (Revised Edition)*. The process continues by understanding the related verses, reading their *asbāb al-nuzūl* (context of revelation) if available, analyzing the verses using the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* method of Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, and drawing conclusions.

Result

Gossip Verses in the Qur'an

Here are several verses about the prohibition of gossip. One, **QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12** “O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of Repentance and Merciful.” (Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019). Two, **QS. An-Nūr (24): 11** “Indeed, those who came up with the slander are a group among you. Do not think it is bad for you; rather, it is good for you. Every one of them will be charged for the sin he has earned, and the one who took upon himself the greater portion thereof — for him is a great punishment.” (Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019). Three, **QS. An-Nūr (24): 16** “Why, when you heard it, did you not say, ‘It is not for us to speak of this. Exalted are You [O Allah]; this is a great slander’?” (Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019). Four, **QS. An-Nūr (24): 19** “Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, while you do not know.” (Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019).

Interpretation of the Gossip Verses in the Qur'an

QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12

This verse was revealed based on a story narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir, taken from Ibn Jarīr, who said: people assumed that this verse was revealed concerning Salman al-Farisi, who ate and then slept and snored. One man then described Salman's eating and sleeping, and so this verse was revealed (As-Suyuthi, 2014).

Sayyid Quṭb interprets this verse as a call for believers to avoid bad assumptions (suspicion), spying, and backbiting in order to purify the heart from thoughts and behaviors that can lead to sin. The Qur'an reminds us that these three actions pollute the soul and damage relationships between people. Specifically, the prohibition of backbiting is illustrated as a disgusting act — like eating the flesh of one's dead brother. This warning invites anyone involved to immediately repent and seek Allah's mercy (Quṭb, 2004) so they can live in a society free from suspicion and filled with mutual love and pure hearts.

Furthermore, Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr also interprets this verse as a call for believers to avoid suspicion, which is considered a sin. This warning is important to prevent negative suspicions that can lead to harmful actions, such as jealousy, defamation, and hostility. The prohibition against spying (*tajassus*) and backbiting (*ghibah*) is also emphasized, as both arise from suspicion and can result in enmity. Backbiting is likened to eating the flesh of one's dead brother, showing how repulsive this act is (Ibn 'Asyur, 1884). This analogy aims to evoke a sense of horror in the perpetrators and make them realize they must avoid backbiting — a practice that was widespread in society, especially in the pre-Islamic era.

QS. An-Nūr (24): 11

This verse was revealed based on a story narrated by *al-Shaykhānī* (al-Bukhari and Muslim) and others, who transmitted it from Aisha. The reason for revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) of this verse is also the same as that for QS. An-Nūr verses 16 and 19. *Al-Shaykhānī* state that when the Prophet Muhammad was about to set out on a journey, he drew lots among his wives, and Aisha was chosen to accompany him on a military expedition. When they reached a location near Medina, the Prophet announced a short rest. At that time, Aisha left the group for personal needs and was left behind when she returned. She waited at the spot, hoping the group would come back for her, but eventually fell asleep. Safwan, a member of the group, later found her and was surprised, uttering only the words of *istirja'* ("Truly, we belong to Allah and to Him we

return”) until Aisha woke up. There was no conversation between them except for that one statement. Safwan then led Aisha to catch up with the caravan, and they eventually rejoined the group by the riverbank of Azh-Zahirah. From this incident, rumors began to spread accusing Aisha of adultery with Safwan. The main figure behind spreading this gossip was Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul (As-Suyuthi, 2014).

Sayyid Qutb interprets this verse by first explaining the magnitude of a conspiracy orchestrated secretly, launching a sly attack on Islam and the Muslim community. However, behind this scheme, Allah emphasized that the event actually brought benefit to the Muslims: it revealed the identities of those plotting against the Prophet and his family, clarified the meaning and purpose behind the prohibition of making accusations, and provided the best guidance on how to handle such a severe event. Those involved in the conspiracy would receive punishment according to their guilt, both in this world and the hereafter. Specifically, Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul, as the leader of this conspiracy, played the biggest role in spreading the false news about Aisha, shaking the entire city of Medina and making it a topic of discussion for an entire month (Qutb, 2004). This shows just how dangerous false information can be if not properly handled, as the consequences can be deeply damaging to both individuals and society as a whole.

Furthermore, Ṭāhir ibn ‘Āshur interprets this verse as beginning with a statement about a group of people from among the Muslims themselves, numbering from ten to forty individuals, who spread this harmful false news (*al-ifk*). They fabricated the lie and disseminated it among the public, eventually reaching naïve (ignorant) Muslims. According to Ibn ‘Āshur, this was done purely to stir up discord within the Muslim community. Yet, Allah reminds the Muslims not to see this incident as purely evil, but rather as a source of goodness — to relieve them from the regret caused by the provocation. Each individual involved in spreading the lie would receive a punishment proportionate to their sin, especially Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul, the key figure, who would die as a disbeliever and receive the lowest punishment in Hell (Ibn ‘Asyur, 1884). This serves as a real example of the consequences of spreading lies and calls us to always act with integrity and to consider the impact of our words and actions on others.

Wahbah Zuhaili, in his *Tafsir al-Munir*, explains that this verse refers to a group of people who brought false news about Aisha, not just one or two individuals. Among them were Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul, Hassan bin Thabit, Zaid bin Rifa‘ah, Mistah bin Athathah, Hamnah bint Jahsh, and the wife of Talhah bin Ubaydillah. The word (*minkum*) in this verse means “from among your own people” — from the Muslim community itself. Outwardly, Abdullah bin Ubay was seen as a believer, though in

reality, he was the first to spread the false story, successfully drawing other Muslims into spreading the gossip for almost a month until this verse was revealed (Zuhaili, 2013). Abdullah bin Ubay's ability to invent such a lie about Aisha and to rapidly captivate the attention of the Muslim community shows just how powerful his deception was. Allah reminds the believers that behind this painful event lay goodness and reward for Abu Bakr's family, as well as the reaffirmation of Aisha's purity. Abdullah bin Ubay, as the instigator, would face severe punishment, both in this world — with his hypocrisy exposed and being cast out by society — and in the hereafter, by being placed in the lowest level of Hell (Zuhaili, 2013).

QS. *An-Nūr* (24): 16

Wahbah Zuhaili explains that this verse instructs the believers to think well of Aisha when faced with the false news about her. The faith in their hearts should have led them to reject the lies fabricated and engineered against Aisha (Zuhaili, 2013). Thus, faith is not just a spiritual foundation but also serves as a guide in social interactions, especially when confronting challenges and false news that can damage social relationships. Whatever happened should not have aroused suspicion, let alone invited negative assumptions, because at that time, Aisha arrived riding the camel of Safwan bin Mu'attal in broad daylight, and the entire army, including the Prophet, witnessed the event and rejected the negative suspicions that arose (Zuhaili, 2013).

Hasbi as-Siddiqi also explains this verse, stating that when the accusations spread by the *ahl al-ifk* were heard, Aisha should have been treated with kindness. The faith in their hearts should have driven them to behave well and avoid negative thinking, especially toward fellow believers. Why did they not refute the accusation when they heard it, even though they could have said, "This is an outright lie," because the circumstances gave no reason for suspicion? Aisha arrived riding Safwan's camel, witnessed by everyone, because it happened in broad daylight (Ash Shiddieqy, 2000). This should have been sufficient clear evidence and a basis for the Muslim community to assess the event properly, rather than hastily making judgments based on assumptions or rumors alone.

The next interpretation comes from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' *Tafsir*. This commentary begins by explaining the meaning of the word *buhtān*, which refers to a great falsehood. The term comes from *buhita*, meaning to be shocked, amazed, confused, and not knowing what to do. Gossip is considered *buhtān* because it is a deliberate statement made without reason or proof and because it concerns the honor of God's chosen community and His Prophet's family. Allah expressed disappointment at the Muslims' behavior of continuously discussing this false news. They should have

denied it as fake news and should have exalted Allah, who would never allow such vileness to touch the most noble wife of the Prophet (Agama RI, 2011). This initial explanation of *buhtān* provides a deeper understanding of how serious the consequences of spreading lies are, as major falsehoods not only damage individual reputations but can also create distrust and division within the community.

QS. An-Nūr (24): 19

Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āsyūr interprets this verse as a warning from Allah to the believers not to repeat the same mistake in the future, accompanied by a strong threat. The threat is given because they take pleasure when immorality spreads among people. According to Ibn ‘Āsyūr, the obligation of a believer is to love fellow believers and not to spread bad news, whether about themselves or their brothers. The spreading of news about immorality, whether true or false, can damage the morals of both the victim and the perpetrator. For the perpetrator, it causes them to continuously remember and talk about the already spread news. Although the impact may not be obvious to the ear, if there are wicked souls, they will imitate the vile act, causing it to happen more often and be talked about more widely until it spreads further (Ibn ‘Āsyūr, 1884). Ibn ‘Āsyūr highlights the effects of an event like that of Aisyah, not only on the victim but also on the perpetrator. This shows how dangerous it is if similar events occur in society. Therefore, Allah concludes His statement with “And Allah knows, while you do not know,” meaning Allah knows all the evils that humans do not know, reminding that what humans consider trivial may be significant in His sight (Ibn ‘Āsyūr, 1884).

Furthermore, Sayyid Quṭb interprets this verse by stating that Allah describes those who accuse pure and virtuous women as those who rejoice when wickedness spreads among the believers. They are threatened with painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter because the accusation aims to shake the faith of Muslims in the goodness and purity of the Prophet and his family. Additionally, the accusation also aims to remove the guilt of Muslims when they commit wrongdoing (Quṭb, 2004).

Wahbah Zuhaili, in his tafsir al-Munīr, explains that merely desiring and enjoying talking about wicked deeds is already deserving of a threat of punishment. Certainly, those who spread such news bear more sin and deserve punishment, both in this world through the hadd punishment for qadhf (false accusation) and in the Hereafter with the torment of Hell. The pleasure in the spreading of wicked deeds is often triggered by jealousy and the desire for unity, harmony, and peace among the Muslim community. Indeed, Allah knows everything, and entrusting everything to Him will guide us to the right path (Zuhaili, 2013). This interpretation provides a deeper understanding that merely having a malicious intent to talk about wicked deeds deserves

punishment, showing that not only actions but also negative thoughts can damage social harmony.

Discussion

Gossip Verses in the Qur'an

Several terms related to gossip in the Qur'an include: *ifk* (false accusation), *buhtan* (lying), and *ghibah* (backbiting). This paper limits the discussion to three specific verses: QS. al-Hujurāt (49):12, QS. an-Nūr (24):11, and 16. More specifically, the keyword *ghibah* is found in QS. al-Hujurāt:12, *ifk* in QS. an-Nūr:11, and *buhtan* in QS. an-Nūr:16. For QS. an-Nūr (24):19, no specific term is used, but the verse is included due to its connection with verse 11, which also discusses gossip.

The three terms above are based on Al-Hasan's opinion that gossip can be classified into three types, all mentioned in the Qur'an: *Ifk* (false accusation), which means narrating a story based on information you received about someone, *Buhtan* (lying), which means telling something that is untrue or nonexistent, *Ghibah* (backbiting), which means speaking about something that belongs to your brother (Usman, 2009). From the above explanation, it is clear that gossip in the Qur'an is not only referred to by the term *ghibah* but also by *ifk* (false accusation) and *buhtan* (lying), as presented by Al-Hasan in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī.

Analysis of the Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān by Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr on the Interpretation of Gossip Verses

As explained earlier, Ibn 'Āsyūr presents eight themes of maqāṣid al-Qur'ān, namely: (1) True Creed (Aqidah), (2) Formation of Morals (Akhlak), (3) Formulation of General and Specific Laws, (4) Politics of the Community, (5) Stories of Previous Nations, (6) Teachings Suitable for the Condition of the Community, serving as lessons for appropriate behavior during the time addressed by the Qur'an, (7) Teachings, advice, warnings, and glad tidings appropriate to societal conditions, (8) Miracles of the Qur'an as proof of the truthfulness of the Prophet.

The implication is that the purpose of Qur'anic verses relates to one or more of these eight maqāṣid themes. Therefore, this discussion applies Ibn 'Āsyūr's maqāṣid concept to uncover the hidden moral messages within each gossip-related verse, which can guide us in life. The analysis of each gossip verse and its maqāṣid is as follows:

QS. Al-Hujurāt (49):12

Firstly, this verse aims to improve the faith (aqidah) of the believers at that time and of all humanity, so that they avoid negative assumptions, spying, and backbiting — behaviors present in those whose faith is not yet perfect. It also warns against evil suspicion that leads to polytheism or atheism, since misguided beliefs and heresy arise from wrongful suspicion. When faith is complete in the heart, it establishes good habits and cleanses the heart from suspicion, spying, backbiting, polytheism, and the like.

Secondly, the verse aims to improve morals. Allah SWT wants His servants to have hearts pure from whispers and doubts, nurturing good character and morals. This includes avoiding negative suspicion, spying, and backbiting. If these exist, they easily take root and become difficult negative traits to remove.

Thirdly, the verse describes a story about previous nations. Allah wants to show that social conditions at the time were not entirely good, even among believers who still violated His prohibitions. This information serves as a lesson for future generations not to imitate such bad behavior, such as suspicion, spying, and backbiting. The consequences are serious, including jealousy, defamation, conspiracies, fighting, and even murder. Such problems occur because those gossiped about are excluded from the social group and considered outsiders, causing harm to the target of gossip (Greenslade-Yeats, Cooper-Thomas, Corner, & Morrison, 2024).

Fourthly, the verse serves as a warning not to violate Allah's prohibitions, which have clear purposes. Prohibitions exist because of their harmful consequences, while commands contain wisdom. The prohibitions in this verse lead to several bad effects: hostility between the gossipers and those gossiped about, loss for the gossipers as their good deeds are transferred to the victim, broken ties of brotherhood, legal punishment by Allah, and loss of trustworthiness (Maarif, 2018).

QS. An-Nūr (24):11

Firstly, this verse aims to improve morals. Everyone must and should build good relationships with one another. According to Khoiruddin, ethics toward fellow humans must begin with ethics toward the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is the most worthy of love after Allah. Loving and honoring the Prophet, his family, and his companions is a reflection of our good morals toward Allah, as it is His command. (Khoiruddin & Zamroni, 2023). However, this contrasts sharply with the actions of the so-called “*al-Ifk*” group (the spreaders of falsehood), who spread lies that Aisyah had an affair with Şafwan bin al-Mu’āṭal. Their behavior is extremely immoral and contradicts the statement given by Khoiruddin above. Thus, the primary purpose of this verse is to

improve the morals of this particular group of Muslims as the main perpetrators, and also to teach Muslims and the affected non-Muslims a lesson through the threat of severe punishment, so that it deters the perpetrators and encourages them to improve their behavior and ethics.

Second, the purpose of the above verse is to depict the story of previous communities. When discussing the condition of past communities, not all their stories are about disbelievers who mostly rebelled against the Prophet and refused to follow his teachings. However, even among Muslims themselves, the faults were not completely absent. The evidence is the story found in this verse, which, quoting from Wahbah Zuhaili's interpretation, states that those who spread false rumors (gossip) about Lady Aisyah came from the believing group itself, led by Abdullah bin Ubay. He was considered outwardly a believer (Zuhaili, 2013). This also shows that gossip is not only done by women but also by men, as exemplified by Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul. Therefore, with the revelation of this verse, there is an implicit command and advice for humanity, especially Muslims, not to imitate their bad deeds, because if they continue, it will cause harm to the victim and severe punishment for the perpetrator.

Third, the teaching, advice, warning, and glad tidings correspond to the condition of society. The purpose of this verse is to inform that every deed, whether good or bad, will be rewarded accordingly, and nothing escapes the sight of Allah SWT, as explained in (QS. Al-Zalzalah (99): 7-8). If the deed is bad, it is fortunate if Allah does not immediately punish it in this world but delays the punishment until the hereafter. However, this was not the case for the ahl al-Ifk (those who spread slander) mentioned in this verse; they received punishment in this world and the hereafter, with the heaviest burden on Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul, who was the first to fabricate and manipulate the false news, then spread and propagated it.

Fourth, the purpose is to give a warning. The warning in this verse is in the form of a threat, which is not only directed at the slanderers and those involved in the incident but also applies to all humanity to avoid such behavior. The threat includes not only harsh punishment in this world but also in the afterlife. Fifth, the purpose is to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'an. The revelation of this verse shows that the Qur'an can refute the false rumors that have spread and become gossip among Muslims. Moreover, this miracle also aims to protect the honor of Prophet Muhammad, whose personality is noble and worthy of being a role model for all mankind, especially Muslims. Likewise, his noble and honorable family is protected from the forbidden matters that Allah forbids, including Lady Aisyah, who could not have committed such a forbidden act.

QS. An-Nur (24):16

First, the purpose is to correct the faith of believers whose belief has weakened. This is stated because if their faith were still deeply rooted (strong faith), they would not easily be deceived by the false news spread by the ahl al-Ifk about Lady Aisyah. When they heard it, they would surely deny and refuse to believe it since everyone knows that Aisyah is a pure woman, free from wrongdoing, especially as the wife of the most noble prophet in the sight of Allah, so it is impossible for her to violate her husband's teachings. Second, the purpose is to reveal the contents of the Qur'an about rules for human life, for the welfare of the community (Ummah Politics). Humans need rules to live a directed life according to Islamic law. All rules are mentioned in the Qur'an, including this verse, which aims to convey rules in responding to news or information that is not yet confirmed to be true. The attitude one should have is not to easily believe unproven news but to deny and clarify it first. This rule is ultimately for the benefit of humanity because if we are influenced by false news, it can lead to hatred, hostility, and other negative effects.

Third, the verse wants to describe the story and news about previous peoples. The depiction in this verse shows how believers easily believed and spread rumors about Lady Aisyah. Instead of refuting them, they were deceived together with the ahl al-Ifk, led by the one who spread the gossip. The story contains a message for the next generation not to imitate their bad deeds, especially since this was done among fellow Muslims, who should only have good assumptions toward each other. Fourth, the purpose is to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'an. This miracle is shown in verses that specifically defend and help Lady Aisyah, reflected in 11 verses (according to the majority of scholars), including verse 16. However, this verse also shows believers who were easily misled by false news, proving that the news was false and highlighting their attitude of not refuting it. Allah SWT is very displeased with their attitude, but perhaps the revelation of this verse will make them aware so it will not happen again.

QS. An-Nur (24):19

First, the purpose of this verse is to describe the condition of the people alive when this verse was revealed. One story from past communities that should not be imitated is the story of the ahl al-Ifk, a group who spread false news about Lady Aisyah and were pleased that it was widely believed and caused hatred toward Lady Aisyah and her family. This story implicitly advises readers, especially Muslims, not to accuse others lightly and spread it to the public. Allah forbids this behavior for good reason because imitating it causes suffering, shame, and a bad reputation for the victim. Once

someone is heard to be bad, they are often considered bad forever even if the news is untrue.

Second, the teaching, advice, warning, and glad tidings fit the social context. The purpose of this verse is to inform that anyone who commits bad deeds, as exemplified here, will receive appropriate punishment, while good deeds will be rewarded. The story in this verse shows that the consequences are harmful to the perpetrators because besides punishment in this world, there will be punishment in the hereafter. Quoting from Zuhaili's interpretation "al-Munir," merely having lust and pleasure in revealing a vile act is punishable, and those who spread it are even more sinful and deserve punishment. The punishment includes the hadd punishment of slander in this world and the torment of the hereafter (Zuhaili, 2013).

Third, the purpose is to provide a warning never to commit vile acts as described in this verse. This warning is Allah's second warning after the first one in verse 11. This warning includes a threat to the ahl al-Ifk, who enjoyed that the false news spread and became gossip lasting a month, according to several tafsir books. Fourth, the purpose is to show the miracle of the Qur'an. The revelation of this verse proves that the Qur'an can oppose those who boldly and deliberately defame the Prophet and his family, and can punish them as the consequence of their deeds, as explained in verse 19. The punishment mentioned here is the second notification after verse 11. This repetition of the warning in verse 19 is because of Allah's great wrath and the severe impact on not only the Prophet and his family but also the faithful Muslim community. Lady Aisyah suffered for a month until the miracle was revealed to the Prophet; she could not stop crying until she became ill. For Muslims, their faith weakened because they thought the family of the Prophet himself had committed forbidden acts he forbade.

From the above explanations, it is clear that this writing is not perfect. The limitation of this research is that only a few verses are studied. Therefore, the author hopes readers can complement these shortcomings in future works by analyzing more verses to gain broader understanding.

Conclusion

The Qur'an has specific purposes when issuing prohibitions to His servants, which are ultimately for the benefit of the community. One of these is the prohibition against gossip, which is mentioned in four verses. First, Surah al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12. This verse explains Allah's command to the believers to avoid suspicion, spying, and gossiping, as these can lead to defamation and conflict. Second, Surah an-Nūr (24): 11. This verse describes a group from among the Muslims who fabricated false news

(gossip) about Aisha and spread it. Third, Surah an-Nūr (24): 16. This verse contains Allah's command to humans, especially the believers, to think well of one another, especially when hearing news whose truth is unclear. Fourth, Surah an-Nūr (24): 19. In this verse, Allah warns the believers not to repeat sinful acts (such as the accusations against Aisha) in the future.

According to Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr's classification of maqāṣid al-Qur'an (the higher objectives of the Qur'an), the goals of these verses about gossip are as follows: First, to continuously correct and protect each person's faith, so they are not easily swayed by desires that could lead them to sin. Second, to instill good morals. Third, to protect and ensure human well-being by providing the regulations conveyed in these verses. Fourth, to serve as a depiction and lesson for future generations so they do not imitate the wrongful actions of people in the past, namely gossiping. Fifth, as a warning to all humans not to violate what has been forbidden, because Allah has prepared punishment for those who dare to break His laws.

It is hoped that this study will raise readers' awareness to avoid negative assumptions as the initial trigger for gossip, to refrain from spreading false information, and to develop a critical attitude toward any received information rather than accepting it blindly. By applying these principles, we can create a social environment that is more respectful, fair, harmonious, and better able to work together for the common good.

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