

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF M. QURAISH SHIHAB'S THOUGHT: AN ANALYSIS OF TAFSIR AL-MISBAH

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Abstract: The debate on women's leadership continues to be a relevant topic in social and religious contexts. Some scholars reject women as leaders based on textual interpretations of Qur'anic verses, while others, such as M. Quraish Shihab, provide a more contextual perspective. This article aims to analyze M. Quraish Shihab's thoughts related to women's leadership and the concept of leadership in the tafsir of Al-Misbah, especially the study of Surah An-Naml verses 22–40. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method, exploring his interpretation and thoughts. The results of the study show that M. Quraish Shihab supports women's leadership as long as they meet the ability requirements and get the approval of the community. A study of Surah An-Naml verses 22–40 which tells the story of Ratu Balqis emphasizes the concept of ideal leadership, namely transparent, democratic, wise, and oriented to the welfare of the people. The contextual approach taken by M. Quraish Shihab includes linguistic analysis and the socio-historical situation of the verse, which provides a progressive view of the issue. The novelty of this article lies in the unraveling of M. Quraish Shihab's contextual interpretation approach that is relevant to the challenges of women's leadership in the modern era, making a significant contribution to the discourse of leadership in Islam.

Keywords: Women's Leadership; M. Quraish Shihab; Tafsir Al Misbah; Leadership in Islam; Contextual Interpretation Analysis.

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A. Introduction

The problem of women's leadership is an interesting topic and has become a prolonged polemic. Women's leadership is often associated with the principle of gender equality, which in practice still faces various challenges. Gender differences have given birth to boundaries created by society, so that women are often marginalized in various aspects of life, including leadership (Jannah and Faiqoh 2021). This phenomenon does not only occur today, but has been going on since ancient times. Before Islam came, women in Arabia were treated very inhumanely, from being made slaves to the practice of burying girls alive (Izza, Prayogi, and Setiawati 2022). Not much different from the phenomenon that occurs in women today, their abilities, ideals and desires are buried by people who consider men to be superior and women are inferior who are seen as their duty only in the house.

Although Islam came to bring teachings that glorified women, the view of women's leadership remains a controversial issue. In the context of Islam, this debate involves salaf (classical) and khalaf (contemporary) scholars (Muallif et al. 2021). Some scholars who reject women's leadership often refer to verses of the

Qur'an such as An-Nisa: 34, which states that men are leaders for women, as well as the hadith of the Prophet PBUH which states, "It will not be lucky for a people to leave their affairs to women" (HR. Al-Bukhari) (Fauziyah et al. 2024). However, this kind of textual interpretation often ignores the linguistic context and sabab al-nuzul of the verses and hadiths.

On the other hand, contemporary figures such as M. Quraish Shihab provide a different approach by examining the verse contextually (Octaviani 2022). In Tafsir Al-Misbah, he explained that Surah An-Naml verses 22–40 which narrate Queen Balqis show that women have the ability to lead if they meet certain conditions, such as transparency, wisdom, and the ability to bring prosperity to the people (Shihab 2002). This approach is relevant to the times, where women are increasingly playing an active role in the public sphere, including politics.

In Indonesia, women's participation in politics has increased significantly. Law Number 7 of 2017 Article 245 stipulates that the representation of women is at least 30% in the list of prospective legislative candidates (Fahariani 2022). Data shows that in the 2024 Regional Elections, there are six female candidates running

for governor, including figures such as Airin Rachmi Diany in Banten and Khofifah Indar Parawansa in East Java (Gunanto 2024). This reflects that women's leadership is increasingly recognized. However, resistance to women's leadership still often appears, as seen in political debates when female candidates receive derogatory comments, as happened to Airin Rachmi Diany in the Banten gubernatorial election (K. P. U. R. Indonesia 2024).

Arguments against women's leadership often rest on literal interpretations of verses and hadiths without considering the social and historical context (Al Qaradhawi 1995). Like the previous scholars and contemporary scholars, some of them did reject Women's Leadership based on the postulates of the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa' Verse 34 (K. A. R. Indonesia 2024). At the same time, the hadith of the Prophet which means "*Uthman bin Haitsam from Auf from Hasan from Abi Bakrah said: 'Allah benefited me with a sentence that I heard from the Prophet PBUH on the day before the Battle of Jamal, after I had almost justified them (Ashabul Jamal) and fought with them. When he reached the news to the Prophet PBUH that the Persians had appointed Kisra as their leader, he said, "It will not be lucky for a people to leave their affairs to women." (HR Al-Bukhari) (Al-Bukhari, no. 4073).*

In contrast, a more contextual view, such as that put forward by M. Quraish Shihab, provides a different perspective. He argued that in Islam, the main benchmark of leadership is ability and justice, not gender.

Previous studies have shown that women's leadership is recognized as capable of bringing significant change in inclusive and justice-based policies. UN Women reports that women leaders are more likely to push for more socially just policies, including in the areas of education, health, and poverty alleviation (Women 2021). Research by Hoobler et al. also found that the presence of women in leadership increases diversity of perspectives in decision-making, which ultimately improves overall organizational performance (Hoobler et al. 2018). In the political realm, studies by Pande and Ford show that women's representation in the legislature correlates with policies that support women's empowerment and protection for vulnerable groups, emphasizing the importance of women's role in public leadership (Pande and Ford 2012).

However, in the context of Islam, research that explores the contextual interpretation approach to women's leadership issues is still very limited. Some studies, such as Rofiah, show that textual approaches are often used to discredit women's ability to be leaders, even though Qur'anic verses have flexibility in their interpretation when viewed through historical and social contexts (Rofiah, Nikmatullah, and Mufidah 2024). This is supported by Duderija et.al, who emphasized that a contextual approach is essential to understand the role of women in Islam in an inclusive way (Duderija, Alak, and Hissong 2020). Furthermore, Salaudeen et al. highlighted the story of Queen Balqis as an example of inclusive and democratic female leadership, as well as the importance of interpreting Qur'anic verses taking into account sabab al-nuzul, linguistic context, and social situation (Salaudeen 2019). However, the implementation of this approach in contemporary interpretation analysis is still rare, so further research is needed to expand this understanding.

Therefore, this research is important to provide an objective view of women's leadership in Islam. By analyzing the thoughts of M. Quraish Shihab through a contextual interpretation approach,

this study seeks to fill the existing literature gap, while contributing to the discourse of women's leadership in Islam that is relevant to the challenges of modern times.

B. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research to analyze M. Quraish Shihab's thoughts on women's leadership, especially in Tafsir Al-Misbah on Surah An-Naml verses 22–40 (Darmalaksana 2020). Data were collected through documentation, by examining relevant primary and secondary texts. The analysis was carried out using the content analysis method, which included data reduction, text interpretation, contextualization, and drawing conclusions. Data validation is carried out through source triangulation by comparing classical literature, contemporary interpretation, and modern scientific studies (Nazir 1988). This research aims to understand the concept of women's leadership in Islam contextually and contribute to the discourse of women's leadership that is relevant to modern challenges.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Women's Leadership Perspective M. Quraish Shihab

Leadership is a general terminology that can be attributed to many things (Rivai 2014). From a very limited and small scope, it continues to penetrate into a wider space. Finally, it leads to leadership in a country, and more broadly the problem of *khilāfah*. The purpose of leadership is none other than to create a systematic and orderly situation for the achievement of goodness and benefit (Lussier and Achua 2001). Without good leadership, it is like a chicken that has lost its mother, passing without a clear direction and purpose (Zakaria 2013).

The scholars forbid women to be leaders, based on the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa' verse 34, which means: "*Men (husbands) are responsible for women (wives) because Allah has given some of them (men) more than others (women) and because they (men) have provided for part of their wealth. Righteous women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and take care of themselves when (their husbands) are not there because Allah has taken care of (them). Women whom you are worried about nusyuz, give them advice, leave them in bed (separate beds), and (if necessary,) beat them (in a painless way). However, if they obey you, do not look for ways to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is the Most High and the Greatest". (Qur'an Surah An-Nisa':34).*

The context of leadership in Surah an Nisa' verse 34, understood by M. Quraish Shihab in the context of the household, namely that men are the most entitled to be leaders in the household, because of their obligation to provide for their families. This was stated by M. Quraish Shihab as a reward for his hard work in providing for his family, so men should be leaders. Although she also did not rule out the possibility that in certain circumstances women could become leaders in the household. Unless a man as a husband cannot provide for himself because of a disability or serious illness, then it is the man who must lead the household, because he is responsible for providing for and protecting his family. Women are not obliged to provide for themselves, so it is the husband who must meet their needs. This consideration, according to M. Quraish Shihab, is the logical reason for male leadership in the household.

M. Quraish Shihab thinks that the pronunciation *ar-rijāl* in a sentence *ar-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alan nīsā'*, (men are leaders for women). The context of the verse talks about family issues (Shihab 2002), so it is clear that what is meant by the surplus of men in the above sentence, because "they (the husbands) have spent some of their property", that is, for their wives. Lafadz *Al-Rijal* taken from the sentence *al-rijal qawwāmuna alan nisa'*, according to M. Quraish Shihab, it does not mean a man in general, but specifically means "husband".

The word *qawwām* from the above verse is often translated by the leader, although it does not fully describe the desired meaning in the word *qawwām*. Quraish Shihab defines leadership as the fulfillment of needs, attention, maintenance, defense and guidance. Therefore, according to M. Quraish Shihab, it needs to be emphasized that *qawwāmah* or leadership bestowed by Allah on the husband should not make him act arbitrarily against his wife. Furthermore, M. Quraish Shihab concluded that the husband's leadership over his wife is an advantage that the husband has, but it also contains a great responsibility (Quraish 2007).

Some interpreters interpret the word *Qawwamun* as a leader. In contrast to M. Quraish Shihab, it is revealed that the person who carries out the task or what is expected of him is called *qa'im*. If he performs the task as perfectly as possible, continuously, and repeatedly, then he is named *qawwam* (Shihab 2010). In the view of M. Quraish Shihab, this verse speaks in the context of the family. Privilege *qawwāmah*/ The leadership of the husband over the wife does not make the husband act arbitrarily in determining everything. It is not deliberation nor is it a teaching of the Qur'an in solving problems, including the family. Thus, it can be concluded that the leadership of the husband over the wife is caused by; *First*, the husband has a privilege in leadership that is more suitable to carry out his duties. *Second*, because the husband has provided for some of their possessions. If the second reason above is not in the husband, meaning the ability to do leadership and provide for a living, it is possible that the leadership of the family will shift to the wife. Thus, Surah An-Nisa' verse 34 does not mean that it affirms the superiority of men and should not be used as a basis *qath'iy* (Kodir 2021), both to require male leadership and prohibit female leadership, moreover to determine the pattern of unequal relations between men and women, where one party can control, regulate and the other must accept and obey, so it is necessary to refer to other verses in the same relationship.

In addition, M. Quraish Shihab also said that leadership is an ability to influence others so that they lead consciously and voluntarily towards the goals to be achieved. This ability to influence can be done by anyone, including women. A woman can also become a leader in the household indirectly when she can influence her husband's decisions through deliberations that concern family interests. Therefore, Quraish Shihab advised women to continue to improve their quality by continuing to learn so that they can influence men with logical and scientific arguments. Thus, a woman can be idolized in her household, both for her husband and her children, because she has the power of logical arguments that can influence the decisions her husband takes and the subtle feeling of loving his family. Quraish Shihab is not opposed if a woman does have the ability to lead. Therefore, it is natural for the woman to become the leader of a community, group, or state leader on the condition that she has potential and is agreed upon by many people and her main duties as a wife and mother are not neglected.

The above verse for Quraish Shihab cannot be used as a postulate to prevent women from becoming leaders. The continuation of the verse reads: "... and because they (men) have spent some of their possessions." This verse speaks in the context of the household. Not in any other context. Outside the household, Quraish Shihab allows women to be leaders for their fellow women or men. On the condition that the woman does not abandon her obligations in the household. Quraish Shihab did not directly state that women's duties were in the household, but he always emphasized that educating and giving affection to children was the main duty of women. In terms of this main task, Quraish Shihab adheres to Surah Al-Ahzab verse 33: "*And you should remain in your house and do not adorn and behave like the Jahiliyds of old, and establish prayers, pay zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Indeed, Allah intends to remove your sins from you, O ahlul of the temple and cleanse you as cleanly.*"

In interpreting the above verse, M. Quraish Shihab disagrees with Ibn Kathir who forbade women from leaving the house except in an emergency (Bahri and Hakim 2017). Quraish Shihab interprets this verse more as a division of labor between men and women by emphasizing the assignment of women in household affairs as their main task. Quraish Shihab also followed Sayyid Quthb who stated that the word *Waqarna* In this verse it means meaningful, steady, and settled, but it does not mean that women are forbidden to leave the house. However, this verse hints that the main task of women is inside the household, while outside the household is not their main task. The division of duties for men is based on Surah Al-Jumu'ah verse 10: "*When the prayer has been fulfilled, then scatter yourselves on the face of the earth; and seek the bounty of God, and remember him many times that you may be lucky.*" This yat is an affirmation that men are indeed on duty outside the home to earn a living, they are also obliged to carry out Friday prayers in the mosque. While women are not required to pray in mosques, they are encouraged to stay in the house (Hasyim 1999).

Men and women each have advantages that allow them to "complement" each other. Men are assertive, rational and strong. Meanwhile, women have motherhood and boundless affection. In terms of the advantages possessed by these two genders, according to Quraish Shihab, the advantages possessed by men are more suitable for becoming leaders in the household than women. This is caused by women who experience a menstrual cycle every month which affects women's mental and psychiatric conditions. Women become more emotional and irritable when they are menstruating, therefore she cannot be the leader in the household. Referring to the previous discussion that leaders should not be emotional, Quraish Shihab underlines the menstrual cycle experienced by women as the reason why they cannot be leaders in the household.

2. The Concept of Leadership in Tafsir Al-Misbah A Study of Surah An-Naml verses 22 – 40

The concept of leadership is a framework of understanding or ideas about how a person influences, guides, and directs others to achieve a common goal. Leadership involves a combination of abilities, attitudes, and actions that allow a person to be a role model and move a group or organization toward the desired outcome.

The concept of leadership contained in surah an-Naml verses 22-40 above, in this study is as follows:

a. Have the ability

It means that a person has certain expertise, skills, knowledge, or potential that allows them to do something well. This ability can be innate (natural) or the result of learning and experience. In this case, to be a leader must have abilities in everything, such as the ability of Queen Balqis as described in Surah An-Naml verse 23; which is *art; Indeed, I found a woman who ruled over them. He was endowed with everything and had a great throne.*

The hud-hud bird reported to the Prophet Solomon that he found a woman who ruled a country and that she was endowed with everything and had a great throne. The word *وَأُوْتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ* means *to be endowed with everything*, not in a general sense, but endowed with everything that can make his power lasting, strong and great. For example, fertile land, obedient population, formidable armed forces, and stable government. The sentence *عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ / The great throne* is specifically mentioned here, because the throne reflects the greatness of the kingdom.

The greatness of a kingdom is determined by the ability of the ruling King to manage everything related to the kingdom, this verse describes how Queen Balqis is able to manage everything that makes her power last.

b. Integrity

A leader with integrity is a leader who has strong, honest, and consistent moral values in the actions and decisions taken. They prioritize honesty, fairness, and transparency in all aspects of their leadership. Some of the characteristics of a leader with integrity are:

- 1) **Honesty:** Leaders with integrity always speak and act honestly, both in favorable and difficult situations.
- 2) **Fairness:** They ensure that each individual is treated fairly without discrimination or bias.
- 3) **Consistency:** This leader is not easily influenced by pressure or self-interest, and remains steadfast in the values he believes in.
- 4) **Responsibility:** They are responsible for their actions and decisions, and do not look for scapegoats when faced with mistakes or failures.
- 5) **Transparency:** Leaders with integrity are open in communication and do not hide important information.
- 6) **Empathy:** They understand and care about the needs and well-being of others, and strive to create an inclusive environment.

The rejection of the gift given by Queen Balqis is the integrity of King Prophet Solomon (as), the gift is intended so that the Prophet Solomon undoes his intention to conquer the Kingdom of Saba' which is led by Queen Balqis. As described in the following verse; which means, *"When (the messengers) came to Solomon, he said, "Will you give me treasure (as a gift)? What God has given me is better than what God has given you, but you feel proud of your gifts (36). Go home to them (by bringing back your gift)! We will definitely come to them with an army that is impossible to defeat. We will certainly drive them out of the land (Saba') in a state of humiliation and submission"(37).*

c. Transparent

It is an honest, open, and clear attitude of leaders in conveying information, decisions, and policies to their subordinates. Transparency is an important part of building trust, improving work efficiency, and creating a healthy work environment. This quality must be possessed by a leader as well as the difat possessed by Queen Balqis as mentioned in the verse below; which means, *"He (Balqis) said, "O dignitaries, an important letter has indeed been delivered to me" (29). Indeed, it comes from Sulaiman whose content (reads,) "In the name of Allah the Most Merciful and the Most Merciful (30). Do not be arrogant towards me and come to me as surrenderers!"(31).*

The previous verses describe the assignment of the Prophet Solomon (as). To the Hud-hud to deliver his letter to the land of Saba' which at that time worshipped the sun. The Hud-hud set out and arrived there, and immediately threw the letter to the Queen who also read it, and gathered the officials and his advisers. He said to them: *"O rulers, indeed a glorious letter has been cast upon me in an extraordinary way. Indeed, it is the letter, from Sulaiman, and indeed it is Bismillahi ar-Rahman ar-Rahim: In the name of Allah the Most Merciful and the Most Merciful. That you should not be arrogant towards me by reluctantly fulfilling my invitation, and come to me as surrenderers, for I have done nothing except for the sake of Allah as the Lord of the universe, the only one who is worthy of worship."*

This verse explains the openness of Queen Balqis in managing her kingdom, by reading the contents of a letter from the Prophet Solomon brought by the hud-hud bird to all the people of the Kingdom. This shows that Ratu Balqis is a transparent person.

d. Democratic

It means being fair, open, respecting individual rights, and giving everyone an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making. In this case Queen Balqis asked for advice and input from her subordinates to take the decision of her kingdom, as narrated in this verse, which means: *She (Balqis) said, "O nobles, give me consideration in my affairs. I never decide a matter before you are present."(32) They replied, "We have great strength and agility (to fight), but the decision is in your hands. Consider, then, what you will command."US\$ 33*

After the Queen had conveyed the contents of the letter, the source and the manner of its reception, *she said: "O gentlemen of government, give me consideration in this very important matter of mine that I have never decided the slightest question of the state, before you have witnessed that I am in this assembly, let alone concerning this great question which we are facing. Solomon the King asked us to come and obey him. They replied: "We are a nation of physical and military strength and also possessed strong agility and courage in warfare, but nevertheless, we return this matter to your view while the final decision is up to you, so consider what you will command and we are all ready to carry out your judgment."*

The attitude of deliberating before taking a Royal Decision reflects the democratic attitude of the Queen, who receives advice and opinions from her subordinates to make a joint decision.

e. Wise

Wisdom is the trait or ability of a person to make good decisions, understand the situation deeply, and act with wisdom,

justice, and understanding. Wise people usually have characteristics such as:

- 1) Deep Understanding: Able to see various points of view and understand the consequences of decisions taken.
- 2) Rational and Calm: Not easily carried away by emotions, thinking logically, and acting with a cool head.
- 3) Empathy and Understanding: Understanding the feelings and needs of others, as well as respecting their rights.
- 4) Adhering to Moral Values: Making decisions that are in line with the principles of morality, honesty, and justice.
- 5) Life Experience: Wisdom is often born from life experience and learning from past mistakes.

Queen Balqis has the nature of wisdom, as illustrated in the verse below; which means: *She (Balqis) said, "Indeed, when kings conquer a land, they will destroy it and despise its noble inhabitants. That is what they will do (34).*

After considering all aspects, and also paying attention to the contents of the letter and the manner in which it was delivered, the Queen was not inclined to go to war as impressed by the answers of her advisers. *He said: "Indeed, when kings enter a land to attack and conquer it, they will destroy it, and despise the nobles of its inhabitants and make their commoners suffer greatly; and so will they, Solomon, and his army do if they attack and we lose the battle."*

The wise nature of Queen Balqis can be seen from this verse 34, she is very careful and meticulous in dealing with a precarious situation like this. Calculate cause and effect before it acts further. Queen Balqis' wisdom can be seen in several attitudes:

- 1) When he makes a decision, he considers the cause and effect of every decision he will take.
- 2) When he received a letter from the Prophet Solomon (as), he tried to persuade the Prophet Sulaiman by giving gifts.
- 3) His mental strength can be seen in how he controls such a large empire, even though he is facing difficulties.

Based on the description that has been stated above, it is taken as an illustration that: Ratu Balqis is a leader (Queen) who is good at governing. Because a large empire cannot be controlled except by people who are experts in the science of government. And Queen Balqis is an ideal leader. But from a worldly point of view, Queen Balqis's leadership has almost no flaws and weaknesses at all even though she is a woman. So a person's success in leading is not measured by his gender, but rather by the ability and charisma he has in running the government.

f. Love Peace

It is a trait that prefers a harmonious, harmonious, and harmonious state where there is no conflict, violence, or hostility, either at the individual, community, or inter-nation level. Peace includes a relationship of mutual respect, tolerance for differences, and justice that allows all parties to coexist peacefully. As Queen Balqis did by negotiating with the Prophet Solomon (as) through her messenger, because she did not want a war with her kingdom Prophet Sulaiman (as) mentioned in this verse; Which means: *"Verily, I will send messengers to them with gifts and (I) will wait for what the messengers will bring back" (35).*

After reminding of the dangers of war and its consequences, the Queen continued: *"Indeed, I will answer the letter and indeed I will send a messenger to them, namely Sulaiman and the rulers of the country, with gifts for each of them to show our desire for good relations, and then I will wait for the report which will be brought back by the messengers whom we send with the gifts."* Thus we buy time to look at Sulaiman's response and think further about the steps we will take, whether we fight them or we make peace.

Queen Balqis sent an envoy to give a gift to the Prophet Solomon, so that the gift could melt the heart of the Prophet Solomon so that there would be no war between the troops of the Prophet Solomon and the Army of Queen Balqis, this illustrates that the purpose of the negotiations of Queen Balqis was nothing but to want her country to be peaceful without any war.

He took this diplomatic stance, with the reason that the peace of the people would not be disturbed. It was customary for ancient kings to send gifts as a sign of peace, when they wanted to establish friendship with other kingdoms. In addition to protecting his people from the damage and misery caused by the war, this was also done by Queen Baqis to create peace with the Prophet Sulaiman.

g. Prioritizing People's Well-being and Peace

This trait is a principle or value that is often used as the basis in government or leadership that aims to ensure the welfare, security, and tranquility of the community (Sunarso 2023). This principle emphasizes the importance of the interests of the people as the top priority, where the policies made must focus on improving the quality of life of the people and creating a safe and peaceful situation.

Queen Balqis's attitude in deciding what to do in the face of the threat of the Prophet Solomon, was very concerned about the condition of her people. This is reflected in his words in verse 34, which means: *"He said: "Indeed, when kings enter a land, they will destroy it, and make its noble inhabitants despised so they will do".*

The Queen's remarks about kings are based on the experience of past history. Usually they kill, or at least captivate and expel the rulers of the kingdom or government they defeat, thus insulting and humiliating them. After that, they change laws and regulations or policies that can ensure the continuity of their power. In addition, wars inevitably result in the destruction of buildings, the displacement of residents or murder. Well, this happens in general if the attacker is a king who is usually dictatorial and arbitrary. What the Queen knew about the past experience, she analogized if the Prophet Solomon attacked them, therefore he declared that they would do the same.

This illustrates how his love and care for the fate of his people in the event of war. Therefore, he refused on the advice of his government leaders to go to war.

D. Conclusion

M. Quraish Shihab allows women to become leaders on the condition of having ability and integrity, because there is no absolute prohibition in the Qur'an or Hadith regarding women's leadership. Its interpretation uses a socio-historical approach that combines textual and contextual, with the al-adabi al-ijtima'i style which focuses on the cultural and social context of the community. In understanding Surah An-Nisa' verse 34, he emphasized that the verse discusses male leadership in the context of the household, not

in all aspects of life. In contrast, the interpretation of women's leadership in the public sphere refers to Surah At-Tawbah verse 71, which shows that leadership is not limited to men, but is open to anyone who has intellectual and moral capacity. The concept of ideal leadership in Surah An-Naml verses 22–40, as studied by M. Quraish Shihab, includes a number of characteristics: capable, integrity, transparent, democratic, wise, peace-loving, and prioritizing the welfare and tranquility of the people. This view affirms that leadership in Islam, both by men and women, must be based on quality and responsibility, not just gender. This study shows the importance of a contextual interpretation approach to provide a more relevant understanding of the role of women as leaders in the modern era.

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