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Research Article

Indicators of an Ideal Family in the Qur'an: An Analysis of Tafsir al-Mizan

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the indicators of an ideal family from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an and examine how Allamah Tabataba'i explains these indicators in Tafsir al-Mizan. The study employs a qualitative library research design using content analysis. The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses related to family life and their interpretations in Tafsir al-Mizan. Relevant verses are selected based on their direct or indirect connection to family relationships, values, and responsibilities. Data are collected through documentary research and analyzed in four stages: identifying relevant Qur'anic verses, examining their interpretations in Tafsir al-Mizan, classifying the interpretations into thematic categories, and synthesizing the findings to formulate indicators of an ideal family. The analysis identifies five main indicators: religiosity and spirituality, piety and God-consciousness, security and tranquility, mutual respect, and responsibility in fulfilling reciprocal duties. The findings suggest that, in Tabataba'i's interpretation, an ideal family is built on spiritual commitment and maintained through ethical conduct, affection, mutual respect, and the fulfillment of family responsibilities. This study contributes to the understanding of Qur'anic family values by systematically organizing relevant verses and their interpretations into a framework of family indicators

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INTRODUCTION

The family is a fundamental social institution that shapes individuals' moral development, emotional well-being, and social relationships. Research on religion and family life suggests that religious beliefs and practices can influence marital and parent–child relationships, although the direction and strength of these associations vary across contexts (Mahoney et al., 2001; Mahoney, 2010). Religion may provide shared meanings, moral expectations, and resources for coping with difficulties, but it can also intensify conflict when family members interpret or practice religious commitments differently (Mahoney, 2005). Empirical studies therefore encourage a careful examination of how religious values are expressed in everyday relationships rather than assuming that religious affiliation alone guarantees family harmony.

In the Qur'anic perspective, family life is associated with tranquility, affection, and mercy. Qur'an 30:21 presents the relationship between spouses through the concepts of *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (mercy), providing a religious and ethical foundation for understanding marriage. Research in family studies offers related, but not identical, insights: relational virtues such as forgiveness, commitment, and sacrifice may help explain the association between religiousness and marital well-being (Day & Acock, 2013), while shared religious beliefs, prayer, and forgiveness have been associated with marital satisfaction (Olson et al., 2015). Other studies, however, caution against treating religious affiliation as a direct predictor of marital

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satisfaction, since cross-cultural comparisons have found no substantial differences among some religious and non-religious groups (Sorokowski et al., 2019). These findings reinforce the value of examining specific teachings and practices, rather than making broad assumptions about religion and family outcomes.

International research has examined several pathways through which religion may relate to family relationships. A study of Pakistani respondents reported associations among religious commitment, religious practices, and marital satisfaction (Khodayari Fard et al., 2013; Aman et al., 2019), while research on dating relationships highlighted the importance of partners' shared religious discussions and practices (Langlais & Schwanz, 2017). Longitudinal research has also investigated how similarity in spouses' religious denominations and the intensity of religious commitment relate to marital satisfaction over time (Hwang et al., 2021). At the same time, studies on religion and family conflict emphasize that religious meanings may either support or complicate conflict resolution depending on how family members understand and apply them (Mahoney, 2005). This body of research provides a useful context for the present article, but it does not replace close textual analysis of Qur'anic verses and their interpretations.

Studies of Islamic family values have also explored Qur'anic concepts of marriage, family responsibilities, and the ideal household through different exegetical approaches. Nisa (2022), for example, compared the interpretations of Buya Hamka's Tafsir al-Azhar and M. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir al-Misbah , while Auliyah et al. (2024) examined the formation of an Islamic family through Tafsir al-Misbah . Related scholarship has discussed family values in Islamic law and the social significance of the family (Mukhitdinov & Baizak, 2019), as well as psychological dimensions of Qur'anic marriage verses, including tranquility, affection, and mercy (Al-Maayta, 2025). A recent systematic review likewise considers the relationship between spiritual and cultural beliefs, family relationships, and marital satisfaction in religious communities (Raesi et al., 2025). Although these studies illuminate important aspects of family life, their different research questions and sources leave room for a focused synthesis of the indicators of an ideal family through Allamah Tabataba'i's Tafsir al-Mizan.

The present study addresses this need by examining relevant Qur'anic verses alongside their explanations in Tafsir al-Mizan . Its novelty lies in synthesizing the interpretations into five interconnected indicators of an ideal family: religiosity and spirituality, piety and God-consciousness, security and tranquility, mutual respect, and responsibility in fulfilling reciprocal duties. Rather than presenting these values only as separate recommendations, the study organizes them into a framework that connects spiritual commitment with relational and ethical conduct. This is a textual and interpretive contribution, not a claim that no previous study has examined Islamic family values. The framework may be useful to researchers and students of Qur'anic studies, educators, family counselors, and general readers seeking to understand how Qur'anic teachings about family life are interpreted and organized. Accordingly, the study asks: (1) What indicators of an ideal family can be identified from Qur'anic verses concerning family life? and (2) How does Tabataba'i interpret these indicators in Tafsir al-Mizan ? The study uses qualitative library research and content analysis to examine selected verses, classify recurring themes, and synthesize the resulting indicators.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative library research design to examine indicators of an ideal family in the Qur'an through Allamah Tabataba'i's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Mizan*. The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses concerning family relationships, marriage, spirituality, mutual rights, and family responsibilities, together with their corresponding interpretations in *Tafsir al-Mizan*. The verses are selected purposively based on their direct or indirect relevance to family life and the values that sustain family relationships. Secondary sources include scholarly publications on Qur'anic interpretation, family values, and qualitative research methodology. Data are collected through documentary research by identifying, recording, and organizing relevant verses and their interpretations. Document analysis is appropriate because it enables researchers to examine written materials systematically in relation to specific research questions (Bowen, 2009). The use of a structured literature-based approach also helps establish a clear connection between the research objectives, the selected sources, and the resulting interpretation (Snyder, 2019).

The data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic categorization. First, relevant Qur'anic verses are identified and matched with their explanations in *Tafsir al-Mizan*. Second, the textual data are examined to identify recurring meanings related to family life. Third, similar meanings are coded and grouped into broader thematic categories, which are reviewed against the original texts to ensure that the interpretation remains grounded in the sources. Finally, the categories are synthesized into a framework of

ideal-family indicators. This procedure follows the preparation, organization, and reporting stages of qualitative content analysis described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). The identification and review of recurring themes also draw on the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Because the study focuses on textual interpretation rather than empirical observation of households, its findings represent a thematic synthesis of selected Qur'anic verses and their interpretations, not statistical generalizations about contemporary families.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indicators of the Ideal Family in the Qur'an

The central question addressed in this article is: What indicators exist within the Qur'anic teachings that determine the characteristics of an ideal family? In other words, how does Allamah Tabataba'i, in his Tafsir al-Mizan, use Qur'anic verses to present a vision of the ideal family? Undoubtedly, Islam, as the most complete divine religion and the final religion for humanity, regards the family as the most vital social institution, whose existential purpose is to provide security, peace, and stability. Consequently, to regulate and guide this essential institution, it is necessary to define exemplary indicators, enabling the family to navigate changing social circumstances and organize its social environment effectively.

From the Qur'anic perspective, an ideal family is one that aligns itself with these defined indicators and safeguards itself against social and moral threats. The authors argue that both the Qur'an and Tafsir al-Mizan represent rich sources of knowledge capable of guiding the establishment of such indicators. The most prominent of these indicators are outlined below:

1. **Religiosity and Spirituality**

   One of the most fundamental pillars of human society is religion. Throughout history, human communities have always been intertwined with religious belief and practice; there has never been a society entirely devoid of religion, nor has religion existed without worship. The Qur'an explicitly states that the purpose of creation is worship and devotion to God alone, as expressed in the verse: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56). Thus, the ultimate purpose of creation is the relationship between creatures and their Creator—God created beings to establish a meaningful connection with Him (Tabataba'i, 2011: 379–418).

   Allamah Tabataba'i considers the recognition of God's unity and worship as the foremost indicator of the ideal family. He asserts that a family founded solely on affection or personal preference lacks intrinsic value; a family becomes truly desirable and meaningful only when it embraces obedience to God's commandments. He writes: "Indeed, Islam does not call upon people to love their relatives merely because they are kin. Rather, the love Islam encourages among relatives is love for the sake of God, without the slightest interference from mere kinship ties" (Tabataba'i, 2011: 75).

   In this context, the Qur'an reprimands the people of Mecca, stating: "Your kinship ties and your children will not benefit you on the Day of Resurrection" (Al-Mumtahina 60:3). Tabataba'i explains this verse as follows "The reason for the failure of causes, including apparent kinship, is that kinship, which is understood as a relationship between two or more individuals by blood, manifests its effects only in the worldly life—the social domain—through affection, cooperation, support, and loyalty. In the hereafter, when the ultimate truths are revealed and worldly veils are lifted, the effects of these worldly perceptions disappear entirely. Relationships that were based on causality or kinship in this world have no bearing in the afterlife. Therefore, it is unreasonable for a rational person to betray God or His Messenger for the sake of relatives or children, as they will not benefit him on the Day of Judgment" (Tabataba'i, 2011: 392–393).

   In summary, the foundation of an ideal family, according to the Qur'an and Tabataba'i's interpretation, is the establishment of a relationship with God that supersedes purely worldly attachments, ensuring that the family's moral and spiritual compass aligns with divine guidance.

   Thus, if one of the pillars of the family, such as the husband, possesses the characteristic of religiosity while his spouse lacks it, the family relationship will not benefit all members. For instance, the Qur'an refers to the wives of Noah and Lot, who were under their guardianship yet were devoid of faith, betraying their religious and moral obligations and failing to believe in their prophets. The Qur'an presents these two women as negative examples for people:"Allah presents an example of those who

disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot; they were under two of Our righteous servants, but they betrayed them..." (At-Tahrim 66:10).

Conversely, a woman may possess religiosity and faith while her husband does not. An example is Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, about whom the Qur'an states:"And Allah presents an example to those who believe of Pharaoh's wife, when she said, 'My Lord, build for me a house with You in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds, and save me from the wrongdoing people'" (At-Tahrim 66:11).

Therefore, Islamic teachings strongly emphasize the religiosity and spirituality of both pillars of the family (husband and wife) when selecting a spouse. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:"If a man comes to you whose religion and character satisfy you, then marry him; otherwise, you may cause great corruption and mischief on the earth" (Tirmidhi).

2. Piety and God-consciousness

The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes piety (taqwa) in family formation. As it is stated:"O mankind! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and maintain the ties of kinship. Indeed, Allah is ever an Observer over you" (An-Nisa 4:1).

In this verse, the Qur'an stresses that piety is essential in establishing family relationships, referring to it as a "strong covenant" (mithaqan ghaliẓan, An-Nisa 4:21). Similarly, in Surah At-Talaq, in order to prevent the dissolution of this strong covenant, the Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of piety, observing God's limits, kindness, patience, reliance upon God, and forbearance (At-Talaq 65:1–5).

Thus, the Qur'an not only considers piety a central pillar of the ideal family but also presents it as a criterion for superiority among individuals and societies, stating:"Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Al-Hujurat 49:13).

Accordingly, a family that demonstrates greater adherence to God-consciousness is considered superior and desirable. Therefore, beauty, wealth, or social status are not the primary criteria for selecting a spouse or forming a family. Instead, religiosity and piety should be the guiding principles in choosing a life partner. As narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him):"If a man marries a woman for her beauty or wealth, both will lead him to that purpose. But if he marries her for her religion, Allah will grant him both wealth and beauty" (Al-Saduq, Isnad via Hisham ibn al-Hakam).

3. Security and Tranquility

One of the serious challenges facing human society is the instability and fragility of families, along with a lack of tranquility. From the perspective of the Qur'an, two fundamental elements that strengthen the family are tranquility and security. As stated in Surah Ar-Rum:"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect" (Ar-Rum 30:21).

The term tranquility, synonymous with sakīnah in the Qur'an, refers to that which brings reassurance and affection to the heart. In Maʿīn's lexicon, under the entries sakīnah and mawaddah, it is defined as: "a mixture of friendship, love, sincerity, companionship, and kindness among individuals."

Based on the linguistic and conceptual meaning of mawaddah (affection) and rahmah (mercy), it can be said that within the family environment, the love and compassion exhibited by the parents toward one another, as well as the care and mercy they show toward their children, produce both psychological and physical tranquility in the household. Consequently, this familial tranquility contributes to broader social stability. The sense of security and comfort is among the most fundamental needs fulfilled by the establishment of the family.

4. Familial Tranquility in the Qur'an

The Qur'an regards achieving tranquility in all dimensions of human existence as one of the primary objectives of family formation. It highlights the husband's need for a spouse, introducing the wife as a source of familial serenity:"He it is Who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate that he might dwell in security with her" (Al-Aʿraf 7:189).

To establish this tranquility, God endowed couples with the blessings of mawaddah (affection) and rahmah (mercy), regarding them as manifestations of His own signs:"And of His signs is that He created

for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect" (Ar-Rum 30:21).

This verse conveys several important theological insights that sanctify and elevate the value of the family: The family as a locus of affection and mercy: The late Allamah Tabataba'i comments on this verse, noting: "The family is one of the most prominent manifestations of affection and mercy. On one hand, it unites the spouses; on the other, it ensures that particularly the wife, shows compassion and care toward her young children—who are incapable of meeting their vital needs—providing them with protection, nurturing, sustenance, and education. Without this benevolence, the human species would have perished and humanity could never have survived" (Tabataba'i, 166).

Affection and mercy as divine endowments: The love and compassion between family members, especially spouses, are divinely ordained and cannot be acquired through wealth, social status, or beauty. The continuity of family relies on love and mercy: As long as affection and mercy exist among family members, the family remains intact. If these bonds weaken or disappear, the family becomes vulnerable to disintegration. Thus, while marriage and union form the initial cause of family existence, affection and love are the sustaining causes that preserve it.

Complementarity of husband and wife: Spouses complement one another; neither is complete alone. The Qur'anic principle of tranquility further emphasizes that in the divine system, the family serves as the source of life's emotional and psychological peace:"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them" (Ar-Rum 30:21).

God created men and women to complement one another, such that only when united in the family can they attain the vital serenity essential for human life. Allamah Tabataba'i (may his soul rest in peace) explains in Tafsir al-Mizan:"Each of the man and the woman is equipped with a distinct disposition, such that in practice, each complements the work of the other, and procreation is the outcome of their union. Hence, each of the man and the woman is, in itself, incomplete and dependent on the other, and from the combination of the two, a complete unit emerges capable of generating offspring. It is due to this incompleteness and need that each is drawn toward the other, seeking tranquility in the bond, for every deficient being longs for its perfection, and every dependent being inclines toward someone or something that can fulfill its need" (Tabataba'i, 166, Vol. 16).

The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the factors that preserve familial tranquility. These include: Surah Al-Baqarah 2:228 – fulfilling the duties of husband and wife; Surah An-Nisa 4:19 – exhibiting proper conduct; Surah Ash-Shura 42:37 – practicing forgiveness and pardon; Surah An-Nur 24:22 – exercising piety.

Surah An-Nisa 4:1 and Surah Al-Baqarah 2:187 – being a source of adornment and comfort to each other. From these verses, it is clear that the existential purpose of family formation is to achieve peace and tranquility for the spouses. Therefore, from the Qur'anic perspective, one of the primary indicators of an ideal family is the attainment of security and serenity among its members.

In Tafsir al-Mizan, Allamah Tabataba'i, when examining Qur'anic verses related to family life, comments on affection (mawaddah) and mercy (rahmah) between husband and wife:"Mawaddah is a form of love whose effects manifest in behavior, while rahmah is a psychological influence that arises from witnessing the deprivation or deficiency of another, compelling one to assist them. Among the clearest manifestations of mawaddah and rahmah is the small social unit of the family, since the husband and wife are mutually committed to love and mercy. Moreover, they, particularly the wife, extend compassion toward young children. This love and affection motivate parents to strive for the protection, nourishment, and upbringing of their children" (Tabataba'i, 285, Vol. 4, 1374).

5. Mutual Respect

In the Qur'anic teachings, members of an ideal family are expected to observe mutual respect and rights toward one another. Each member honors the dignity of the others; the woman, as a pillar of the family, is accorded the highest respect, and similarly, the man, as the other pillar, holds a position of esteemed personality.

Islamic teachings emphasize that anyone who takes a woman as a spouse must honor her, avoid harming or oppressing her, and safeguard her dignity and human worth. She should be respected, treated with kindness at home, not subjected to verbal abuse or harassment, and, under all circumstances, be

obeyed and cherished. Such a spouse is regarded as exceptionally fortunate: "A woman is truly fortunate who honors her husband, does not harm him, and obeys him in all matters" (tradition cited in al-Tirmidhi).

6. Responsibility and Fulfilling Mutual Duties

From the Qur'anic perspective, the fulfillment of reciprocal responsibilities by both spouses plays a decisive role in reinforcing and sustaining the family. Several aspects of these responsibilities are highlighted below: Mutual Protection from Deviation, god elucidates the rights and duties of spouses in a single, profound statement:"They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them..." (Al-Baqarah 2:187)

The metaphor of clothing conveys multiple layers of meaning. Just as clothing protects the body from cold, heat, and physical harm while also concealing imperfections, spouses protect each other from moral and spiritual deviation, cover each other's faults, provide comfort and tranquility, and serve as adornment for one another. This expression emphasizes the spiritual intimacy and equality of men and women within the marital relationship (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1975, 1:733). According to this and other Qur'anic verses and hadiths, spouses are sources of beauty, protection, and moral guidance for each other. Patience and Perseverance in Life: The Qur'an repeatedly enjoins patience and resilience:"And seek help through patience and prayer..." (Al-Baqarah 2:45)

Islamic teachings encourage believers to cultivate steadfastness amid life's trials, uphold virtue in the face of wrongdoing, pursue truth over falsehood, and endure hardships with perseverance:"By time, indeed, mankind is in loss, except those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience." (Al-'Asr 103:1–3) Patience thus becomes a foundational quality for maintaining the stability and harmony of family life.

Spirit of Forgiveness and Forbearance: Forgiveness strengthens friendships and relationships. God states:"Not equal are the good deed and the evil deed. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one between you and him will become as though he were a devoted friend." (Fussilat 41:34) If forgiveness can transform enmity into friendship, its impact within the inherently intimate context of the family is even more profound. Such forbearance stems from the faith and piety of family members.

Avoiding Suspicion and Jealousy: Family members must refrain from undue suspicion. When concerns arise, they should be addressed openly and honestly to verify their accuracy. All members should support one another, as the well-being of the family depends on the well-being of each individual. Jealousy is a destructive factor within familial relations. The story of Jacob's (peace be upon him) family illustrates this: the jealousy of Joseph's (peace be upon him) brothers led to physical and emotional separation, causing prolonged distress for Jacob and the family as a whole.

Confidentiality and Loyalty: Loyalty is an essential condition of marriage and family membership, and confidentiality is a core component of spousal loyalty. The Qur'an emphasizes this in Surah At-Tahrim 66:3. The dangers of betrayal are significant, as exemplified by the experiences of prophets such as Noah (peace be upon him) and Lot (peace be upon him), whose spouses turned against them (At-Tahrim 66:10). Loyalty fosters intimacy, love, and trust among family members, serving as a protective barrier against adversity and strengthening the family's foundation. The Qur'an presents responsibility, mutual protection, patience, forgiveness, avoidance of jealousy, and loyalty as essential duties that sustain the marital bond and ensure the enduring stability of the family unit.

Examples of Children's Respect for Parents

Respect toward parents is broad and comprehensive. The Qur'an mentions the necessity of honoring and showing kindness to one's parents in thirteen instances and, in seven of these, instructs believers to do so immediately after affirming God's oneness and expressing gratitude to Him. In certain cases, the Qur'an details specific acts of respect, guiding people to implement these behaviors. Notable examples include: Gratitude toward parents: In Surah Luqman, verse 14, gratitude to parents is presented as a divine command, placing it on par with gratitude to God:"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination" (Luqman 31:14).

Allamah Tabataba'i notes that the interjected phrase in the midst of Luqman's words signifies that gratitude to parents is akin to gratitude to God. In essence, thanking one's parents is an act of worship, as it aligns with God's command. The Qur'an emphasizes that human birth, breastfeeding, and weaning are great blessings provided through God, particularly via the mother. This period, being a critical and challenging stage in human life, requires the mother's constant attention and care. Therefore, humans must express gratitude both to God and to their mothers for this divine favor.

Praying for parents: According to the Qur'an, a child should not only be humble and grateful toward their parents but also supplicate for their well-being. Such prayers are divinely sanctioned and indicate the child's gratitude for parental efforts:"Lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up when I was small'" (Al-Isra' 17:24).

Kindness and benevolence toward parents: The Arabic root ḥ-s-n refers to doing good, and the term iḥsān encompasses two dimensions: performing good deeds and refraining from harm to others (Javadi Amoli, 1387; Musavi Khosravi, 1393). Showing iḥsān toward one's parents is considered a fundamental form of doing good toward others and constitutes a core element of respect within the family.

From the perspective of the Qur'an, the importance of iḥsān (benevolence and kindness) toward parents is so significant that it is consistently mentioned immediately after the issue of tawḥīd (divine unity) and obedience to God. Across four different Surahs, following the discussion of tawḥīd—one of the fundamental principles of faith—emphasis is placed on showing kindness to one's parents. The Qur'an underscores this obligation in nine instances, and in three of these, iḥsān toward parents is explicitly mentioned alongside monotheism: "Worship God and associate nothing with Him, and be kind to parents..." (An-Nisā' 4:36) "And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel: You shall not worship except God, and be kind to your parents..." (Al-Baqarah 2:83)

Allamah Tabataba'i, in his exegesis of the latter verse, remarks: "It becomes evident that the matter of showing kindness to parents is the most obligatory duty after the matter of divine unity. Similarly, ingratitude toward parents (disobedience) ranks, after associating partners with God, among the gravest major sins. For this reason, the Qur'an mentions this duty immediately after tawḥīd and before other legal injunctions. This sequence is consistently maintained throughout the text" (Tabataba'i, 1394/2015: 13/109).

Moreover, God presents iḥsān to parents as a divine command in three other verses, stating:"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents..."

In three additional instances, the Qur'an conveys the importance of honoring and showing kindness to parents through the words of the Prophets:"And [Abraham] said, 'My Lord, forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the Day when the account is established'" (Ibrāhīm 14:41).

After compiling all verses pertaining to iḥsān, Allamah Tabataba'i notes the significance of the hierarchical order in which obedience and benevolence are commanded: "In these verses, a clear order is maintained. First, God is mentioned, as He holds priority over all categories. Next, the parents are cited, for it is evident that after God, they are more deserving of benevolence than any other group. Parents are the root and foundation upon which human existence relies; one's life and being grow upon them. Therefore, they are closer to an individual than other relatives. Following parents, other kin are mentioned, and among them, orphans are given precedence" (Tabataba'i, 1389/2010: 1/329).

Examples of Benevolence toward Parents

Kindness in Social Interaction: Another manifestation of iḥsān (benevolence) toward parents is maintaining good conduct in interaction with them. In verse 15 of Surah Luqmān, the Qur'an instructs that even if parents attempt to lead their child toward shirk (associating partners with God), the child should not obey them in that matter, yet should continue to treat them with kindness and propriety. The verse states:"If they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate conduct, and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]." (Luqmān 31:15).

Even words that might provoke irritation or displeasure in the parents must be avoided. The Prophet Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) commented on this verse, noting that if a word less offensive than "uf" existed, God would have specified it (al-Kulaynī, 2:349).

Humility and Respect toward Parents: The Qur'an further instructs children to approach their parents with humility and to care for them in old age. Allamah Tabataba'i explains: "A person must conduct conversations and interactions with parents in such a manner that the parents perceive the child's humility and reverence" (Tabataba'i, 1394/2015: 13/110).

Avoiding Harshness and Anger toward Parents: In the Qur'an, after commanding respect and benevolence toward parents immediately following the principle of tawḥīd, God explicitly forbids harshness or anger toward them. The relevant verses state:"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and show kindness to parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them [so much as] 'uff' and do not repel them, but speak to them with noble words. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say: 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.'" (Al-Isrā' 17:23–24). From these verses, three key principles in parental conduct emerge: Avoid even the slightest impolite expressions ("uff") and, certainly, refrain from shouting at parents. Demonstrate humility and deference toward parents. Pray for their well-being and mercy, acknowledging their lifelong care and upbringing.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that, from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an as interpreted by Allamah Tabataba'i in *Tafsir al-Mizan*, the ideal family is a sacred social institution founded on religious commitment, spirituality, and ethical conduct. The findings identify five interconnected indicators of an ideal family: religiosity and spirituality, piety and God-consciousness, security and tranquility, mutual respect, and responsibility in fulfilling reciprocal duties. These indicators demonstrate that the quality and stability of family life depend not only on the marital bond but also on the practical application of Qur'anic teachings in relationships among spouses, parents, and children. Religiosity and spirituality serve as the primary foundation from which other moral and relational values develop, while affection, mercy, patience, and mutual responsibility contribute to maintaining family harmony and strengthening the marital relationship.

The study also highlights the importance of respecting the rights and responsibilities of every family member. The Qur'an emphasizes proper conduct between spouses and the obligations of children to honor their parents through gratitude, prayer, kindness, and benevolence. As explained in *Tafsir al-Mizan*, respect for parents and the fulfillment of family responsibilities are essential to maintaining family integrity and social cohesion. Conversely, neglecting these obligations can weaken relationships and undermine family harmony. These findings position mutual respect and reciprocal responsibility as practical expressions of religious commitment within family life.

The contribution of this study lies in synthesizing Qur'anic teachings and their interpretations in *Tafsir al-Mizan* into a framework that connects spiritual foundations with ethical behavior, emotional well-being, and interpersonal responsibilities. This framework provides a basis for further discussion in Qur'anic studies, Islamic family education, and family development. However, because the study relies on textual analysis of selected Qur'anic verses and their interpretations, its findings do not establish empirical relationships between the identified indicators and measurable family outcomes. Future research could compare Tabataba'i's interpretation with other Qur'anic commentaries and examine how these indicators are understood and practiced in contemporary families. Such investigations would help clarify the relevance of Qur'anic family values across different social and cultural contexts.

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