



***Qawlan Ma'rūfa* in the Act of Giving Wealth: A Study of *Tafsīr al-Mizān* by *al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī* with an Introduction to Islamic Communication**

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the meaning of *qaulān ma'rūfa* ("kind speech") in the practice of giving wealth according to *Tafsīr al-Mizān* by Muhammad Husain Ṭabāṭabā'ī. The research adopts a qualitative interpretive approach and employs a library research method. To uncover deeper insights, it applies hermeneutic interpretation, thematic analysis, and an intertextual approach. Despite the growing interest in Islamic communication, few studies have explored its epistemological roots in Qur'anic exegesis, particularly in *Tafsīr al-Mizān*. This study fills that gap by analyzing how *qaulān ma'rūfa* functions not only as a moral injunction but also as a communicative act that reflects compassion, respect, and ethical interaction. The findings reveal that the principle of *qaulān ma'rūfa* forms the ethical foundation of social communication—emphasizing sincerity, maintaining human dignity, and avoiding harmful speech. Theoretically, the study contributes to the development of an Islamic communication framework grounded in Qur'anic ethics, while practically, it offers insights for da'wah communication models that integrate moral and spiritual dimensions. Thus, this research advances the understanding of communication in Islam as a transformative medium for nurturing ethical and compassionate human relations.

Key Words: *Qaulān Ma'rūfa*, *Charity*, *Tafsīr al-Mizān*, *Islamic Communication*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji makna *qaulān ma'rūfa* ("perkataan yang baik") dalam praktik pemberian harta menurut *Tafsīr al-Mizān* karya Muhammad Husain Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif interpretatif dengan metode studi pustaka. Untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih mendalam, penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan hermeneutik, analisis tematik, dan pendekatan intertekstual. Meskipun minat terhadap kajian komunikasi Islam semakin meningkat, masih sedikit penelitian yang menelusuri akar epistemologisnya dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an, khususnya dalam *Tafsīr al-Mizān*. Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan menganalisis bagaimana *qaulān ma'rūfa* berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai perintah moral, tetapi juga sebagai tindakan komunikasi yang mencerminkan kasih sayang, penghormatan, dan etika interaksi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsip *qaulān ma'rūfa* menjadi landasan etis komunikasi sosial—menekankan ketulusan, menjaga martabat manusia, dan menghindari ucapan yang menyakiti. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan kerangka komunikasi Islam yang berakar pada etika Al-Qur'an, sedangkan secara praktis memberikan wawasan bagi model komunikasi dakwah yang mengintegrasikan dimensi moral dan spiritual. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini memperkaya

pemahaman tentang komunikasi dalam Islam sebagai media transformatif untuk menumbuhkan hubungan kemanusiaan yang etis dan penuh kasih. temporer dalam membangun peradaban Islam yang komunikatif dan penuh kasih.

Kata Kunci: *Qaulān Ma'rūfa, Memberi Harta, Tafsir al-Mizān, Komunikasi Islam*

INTRODUCTION

As the sacred scripture and the primary foundation of Islamic teachings, the Qur'an requires continuous interpretation so that its meanings can be properly understood, remain relevant, and be applied in everyday life (Muttaqin, 2021; Ali & Isnaini, 2024). An interdisciplinary approach to the revealed text has become increasingly important in modern scholarship. This includes efforts to integrate Qur'anic exegesis with the study of Islamic communication (Pakeeza & Bushra, 2022). Such urgency arises because the Qur'an is regarded not only as a normative text but also as a communicative revelation delivered to humanity through the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who functioned both as a messenger and as a divine communicator (Rafiq, 2021). However, despite growing interest in communication-oriented interpretations, the communicative dimension of Qur'anic ethics—particularly the principle of *qaulān ma'rūfa* in social giving and wealth distribution—remains underexplored. Examining this concept through the lens of *Tafsir al-Mizān* thus provides an opportunity to uncover how the Qur'an embeds ethical and dialogical principles within its guidance on social interaction, enriching contemporary understandings of Islamic communication.

Tafsir al-Mizān by Allāmah Muhammad Husain Ṭabāṭabā'ī is one of the most influential exegetical works distinguished by its methodological rigor, philosophical depth, and integrative reasoning (Muhaqqiqi & Muhammad Jafari, 2022; Morshedi, 2024). To attain a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an, Ṭabāṭabā'ī employs the method of *tafsir al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*—a hermeneutical approach that interprets a verse by referring to and comparing it with other verses in the Qur'an (Lutfiah et al., 2025; Arzroomchilar & Olamaiekopaie, 2022). This method is particularly suitable for a communication-oriented interpretation, as it reveals the intra-textual dialogue within the Qur'an, where divine messages interact across verses to form coherent ethical guidance. Moreover, Ṭabāṭabā'ī's rationalist hermeneutics emphasizes principles such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), dialogue (*hiwār*), and reasoned persuasion (*hikmah*), all of which correspond to the core values of Islamic communication. Thus, *Tafsir al-Mizān* provides not only a theological framework for interpreting revelation but also a communicative model in which understanding, reflection, and ethical speech become central to human engagement with the divine word (Al-Tabataba'i, 2001).

At the same time, the field of Islamic communication—particularly in Indonesia—has made significant progress. Prof. Dr. Zainal Arifin, M.A., through his work *Pengantar Komunikasi Islam* (Introduction to Islamic Communication), has played a key role in advancing this discipline. In his book, Islamic communication is described not merely as the transmission of messages, but as an act grounded in transcendental values such as *tawhīd*, *amānah*, *tabligh*, and

faṭānah. These values constitute the foundation of human communication within the framework of faith (Arifin, 2021). This perspective allows for revelation to be understood as an ideal model of communication, serving as an analytical foundation for exegetical studies, including the interpretation of *al-Mīzān*.

Within this context, applying Islamic communication methods—such as *tabligh* (propagation), *hiwār* (dialogical engagement), and *da'wah bil hikmah* (persuasive communication through wisdom)—to the study of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* becomes essential. Such an approach enables an examination of how exegetes construct, frame, and transmit the communicative dimensions of revelation when conveying divine messages (Pakal, 2021; Zakiyah, 2023). By operationalizing these methods within *tafsīr* analysis, the study explores how *al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's* interpretive discourse reflects principles of ethical communication, dialogical reasoning, and audience-centered meaning construction. This integration opens new opportunities for scholarly synthesis between Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic communication by linking the Islamic communication framework formulated by Arifin (2021) with the hermeneutical methodology employed in *al-Mīzān*. Consequently, the analysis contributes to uncovering the communicative ethics embedded in revelation and enriches our understanding of how divine-human interaction is expressed through Qur'anic interpretation (Zulfa, 2024).

This research carries both theoretical and practical relevance. Theoretically, it advances the formulation of an epistemological synthesis between Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic communication, demonstrating how exegetical principles in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* can inform the conceptual foundations of communicative ethics, dialogical engagement, and meaning transmission within Islamic discourse. This integration contributes to the development of an epistemology of Islamic communication that is not merely derived from modern theory but anchored in the Qur'an and its interpretive tradition (Halil, 2025). Practically, the findings provide a framework for constructing *da'wah* communication models and moral education strategies that reflect the communicative values of revelation—such as wisdom (*hikmah*), compassion (*rahmah*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*). By bridging classical Qur'anic interpretation with the communicative challenges of contemporary Muslim societies, the study offers a transformative contribution to the disciplines of Islamic communication and broadcasting, fostering a more ethically grounded and dialogical approach to religious communication in modern contexts.

The primary aim of this study is to build a bridge between two disciplines that have thus far evolved independently—Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic communication. The integrative approach adopted seeks to generate new perspectives for understanding revelation in ways that are contextual, dialogical, and responsive to the communicative realities of contemporary Muslim societies, particularly within the domains of Islamic communication and *da'wah*. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) formulate a synthesis between philosophical-exegetical approaches and the foundational principles of Islamic communication;

(2) develop interpretive models of revelation that highlight communication, dialogue, and participation as central dimensions of divine-human interaction; and (3) construct a methodological framework for Islamic communication studies rooted directly in authoritative exegesis and the original Qur'anic text.

To ensure analytical clarity, the discussion will center on selected verses that illustrate divine-human communication and the ethics of speech—notably, QS. al-Baqarah [2]:30–37, which presents the dialogue between God and the angels regarding Adam; QS. Taha [20]:9–14, which depicts the communicative call of revelation to Prophet Musa; and QS. al-Rahman [55]:1–4, which emphasizes divine teaching through the act of speech. By focusing on these passages, the study seeks to concretize the intersection between exegesis and communication, demonstrating that Qur'anic discourse itself constitutes a model of ethical and dialogical communication.

The main focus of this research is to analyze *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* by Ṭabāṭabā'ī through the conceptual framework of Islamic communication as elaborated in the works of Prof. Dr. Zainal Arifin, M.A. The scope of this study is delimited to sections of *al-Mīzān* that discuss revelatory communication, particularly verses addressing da'wah, *risālah*, dialogue, and the divine-human relationship. What distinguishes this study is its interdisciplinary synthesis—it connects the philosophical depth of Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *tafsīr* with the ethical and dialogical dimensions of Islamic communication theory. By situating exegetical insights within a communicative paradigm, the research introduces a new analytical lens that interprets revelation not only as a theological text but also as a communicative event that models sincerity, reciprocity, and moral responsibility in human interaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs library research as the primary method of data collection, adopting an interpretive qualitative approach (Fazal & Chakravarty, 2021). The main sources include Surah al-Baqarah (2:263), *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* by Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and Zainal Arifin's *Pengantar Komunikasi Islam*, while secondary data consist of works on Islamic communication, thematic exegesis, and relevant scholarly studies. To interpret the meaning of the text and its relationship with the principles of Islamic communication, the study applies thematic, hermeneutical, and intertextual techniques of data analysis. The analytical process involves identifying key communicative themes within the selected verses, interpreting them through the lens of *al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's* exegetical framework, and comparing these interpretations with Arifin's communicative principles to construct conceptual convergence. Hermeneutic triangulation—through cross-reading between the Qur'anic text, exegetical commentary (Dabengwa et al., 2023), and communication theory—serves to validate interpretive consistency and ensure analytical depth.

Table 1. Analytical Framework

Component	Explanation
Textual Object	Qur'an 2:263 – <i>qaulān ma'rūfa</i> in the context of giving wealth
Literal Meaning	Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury
Exegetical Meaning	<i>Ṭabāṭabā'ī</i> : Philosophical social ethics in Qur'anic communication
Communicative Meaning	Zainal Arifin: Prophetic communication that preserves the dignity of the recipient
Integrative Meaning	Convergence between Qur'anic ethical communication and the principles of Islamic communication

The Meaning of Qaulān Ma'rūfa in the Qur'an

In Surah al-Baqarah, verse 263, the Qur'an states: "Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing." This verse conveys an important message on social ethics in the practice of giving: gentle words and an attitude of forgiveness are superior to charity accompanied by criticism or reproach. In this context, the concept of *qaulān ma'rūfa* serves as the ethical foundation of Islamic communication, particularly when a person is in the position of giving.

The Perspective of Tafsīr al-Mizān by Ṭabāṭabā'ī

Ṭabāṭabā'ī interprets *qaulān ma'rūfa* as a reflection of sincerity, respect for the dignity of the recipient, and awareness of social responsibility. He emphasizes that kind speech strengthens human relationships and may even surpass the value of charity accompanied by hurtful words. His interpretation situates this verse within the broader framework of social relations. Grounded in spiritual rationality, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* views good deeds not only as physical acts but also as communicative expressions infused with metaphysical dimensions and moral values.

The Perspective of Islamic Communication by Prof. Dr. Zainal Arifin, M.A.

The prophetic foundations of communication rest upon *rahmah* (compassion), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), and *ṣidq* (truthfulness). In the act of giving wealth, communication should never humiliate or demean the recipient. Islamic communication, therefore, requires the observance of *adab* (proper etiquette), respect toward the recipient, and the cultivation of spiritual awareness and strength.

Intertextual and Communicative Hermeneutical Analysis

Tafsīr al-Mizān and Islamic communication theory complement one another in affirming that *qaulān ma'rūfa* is an integral strategy for effective social *da'wah*. From the perspective of communicative hermeneutics, communication is understood as a moral act grounded in divine values. When giving is combined

with *qaulān ma'rūfa*, the act itself acquires transformative significance, embodying the very essence of *da'wah*.

Contemporary Social and Da'wah Relevance

In terms of community empowerment, the concept of *qaulān ma'rūfa* is highly relevant, particularly in the distribution of *zakāt*, *infāq*, and *ṣadaqah*. In today's social media era, communication that wounds the recipient often emerges, especially in the form of ostentatious or performative charity. As such, *qaulān ma'rūfa* functions as a social critique of philanthropic practices that neglect *adab* and humanitarian values. Consequently, its principles must serve as a moral reference for constructing dignified social communication within an Islamic framework.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The concept of *qaulān ma'rūfa* (a kindly word) reflects the sincerity of intention and respect for social dignity, forming the moral foundation of interpersonal conduct. In contrast, Prof. Zainal Arifin interprets it within the framework of Islamic communication as a mode of prophetic communication rooted in compassion, empathy, and moral persuasion (O'Lynn, 2023). When these two perspectives are brought into dialogue, they reveal a complementary relationship: *Ṭabāṭabā'i's* exegetical approach emphasizes the ethical and theological grounding of speech acts extends these principles into the practical realm of communicative interaction. Both converge on the idea that empathy is not merely an emotional response but a communicative virtue central to *da'wah* and social relations. Yet, their points of emphasis differ—*Ṭabāṭabā'i* situates *qaulān ma'rūfa* within the moral ontology of revelation, whereas Arifin operationalizes it as a methodological principle guiding human communication. This synthesis highlights that communication in the act of giving—whether through *zakāt* or *ṣadaqah*—is not only an economic transaction but a spiritual dialogue that embodies Islamic *adab* and sustains social harmony.

Biography of *Tabataba'i*

The full name of Syaikh Tabataba'i is Sayyid Muhammad Husain bin Sayyid Muhammad bin Mirza Ali Asygar Tabataba'i Al-Tabrizi Al-Qadhi. He was born in Tibriz on the 29th of Dzulhijjah 1321 H, or 1892 CE. He grew up in a family that was religious and loved knowledge. His family originated from prominent Shia scholars in the Tibriz region, known for their wisdom and depth of knowledge (Morshedi, 2024; Montazeri, 2023). Syaikh Tabataba'i's scientific education was received in the holy city of Najaf. His father, Muhammad, was a famous scholar of his time and came from the lineage of Mirza Ali Ashgar, who was highly respected in the Shia scholarly tradition. His grandfather, Muhammad Husain, was one of the students of the compiler of the book *al-Jawahir*. Growing up as a Muslim scholar with broad insight and mastery of

various disciplines, Syaikh Tabataba'i came from a family background rich in scholarly tradition.

To expand his knowledge, Syaikh Tabataba'i undertook an intellectual journey to many cities, including Tehran, Qum, and Tibriz. He studied under many famous teachers in Najaf, including Syaikh Muhammad Husain Al-Na'ini, Syaikh Muhammad Husain Al-Kambani, and Sayyid Husain Al-Badakubi, among others (Putri et al., 2025). During his studies, he mastered various Islamic disciplines such as philosophy, ethics (*akhlāq*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), principles of jurisprudence (*ushul fiqh*), and other disciplines (Fauzan, 2018). Throughout his life, Syaikh Tabataba'i actively wrote and produced many important and respected academic works. *Tafsir al-Mizān* is one of his most famous works and remains a reference until today. In addition, he wrote many other significant works that demonstrate the depth of his thought, such as *Risālatul I'jāz*, *Risālah fil Burhān*, *Uṣūlul Falsafah*, and *Risālah fil I'tiyārāt* (Fauzan, 2018). In November 1402 H or 1981 CE, the famous Shia scholar Syaikh Tabataba'i passed away and was buried in the city of Qum.

Systematics of *Tafsir al-Mizan*

The analytical method (*metode tahlili*) used by Syaikh Ṭabāṭabā'ī in interpreting the Qur'an represents a form of *tafsir bi al-ra'y*, which emphasizes rational reflection and contextual understanding of each verse (Wahid & Ibrahim, 2023). This approach not only seeks to uncover linguistic and historical meanings but also aims to discern the moral and philosophical implications embedded within the Qur'anic discourse. The method follows the textual arrangement of the *mushaf* while exploring the interrelation between verses (Achmadin et al., 2024), their linguistic coherence, and the circumstances of revelation (*asbābun nuzūl*). However, what makes Ṭabāṭabā'ī's application of this method distinctive is his effort to integrate rational inquiry with ethical reflection, enabling the identification of value structures and communicative norms implied in the text. In the context of *qaulān ma'rūfā*, such a rational-analytical approach helps reveal not only the lexical meaning of "kind speech" but also its function as a moral communication act that promotes sincerity, empathy, and respect. Therefore, the *tafsir bi al-ra'y* method serves as a bridge between exegetical analysis and communicative ethics, showing that reasoned interpretation can illuminate how Qur'anic speech acts model ethical interaction in social and *da'wah* contexts (Pakal, 2021).

In his commentary, Syaikh Ṭabāṭabā'ī often employs a dialogical approach, engaging with the perspectives of classical scholars to test and refine his interpretations. He does not merely cite earlier opinions but critically evaluates them to strengthen his arguments, affirm his own reasoning, and reject narrations considered weak or irrelevant (Rezvankehah & Keshawarz, 2022). In interpreting verses, he also categorizes them based on their historical and contextual background (*asbābun nuzūl*) and adheres to the *tartīb al-āyāt* (canonical

order of verses). To reinforce his interpretive conclusions, he integrates insights from various scholarly disciplines and applies the method of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*, interpreting one verse through its connection with others, while also referencing Prophetic hadith, Companions' opinions, and classical scholarship.

What makes this dialogical process particularly significant is its resonance with Islamic communication ethics. *Ṭabāṭhabā'i's* willingness to engage in respectful disagreement, evaluate opposing views with reason and fairness, and ground argumentation in textual evidence mirrors the principles of constructive and ethical discourse in Islamic communication. This alignment demonstrates that his exegetical method is not only hermeneutical but also communicatively ethical, modeling how intellectual dialogue in Islam embodies *adab al-hiwār*—the etiquette of dialogue grounded in respect, clarity, and the pursuit of truth.

The *al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an* method is a way of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an by looking at and comparing them with other verses that share the same meaning. According to Syaikh Thabathaba'i, every verse in the Qur'an has a semantic and thematic relationship that complements one another. Irhas states in his journal article titled "Application of Tafsir Al-Qur'an bi Al-Qur'an (Study on the Book *Tafsir Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad Husain Al-Thabathaba'i)" that Syaikh Thabathaba'i uses this method in two ways: First, he uses other relevant verses when interpreting a verse; second, he uses those verses as a fundamental basis for the arguments employed in his interpretation.

Furthermore, It should be understood that the term "style" or "al-laun" in Arabic refers to a particular characteristic, direction, or tendency of thought that dominates *Tafsir al-Mizān*. This style indicates the main color of the method or concept used to interpret the verses of the Qur'an (Dye, 2021). It is quite clear that *Thabathaba'i's Tafsir al-Mizān* has a strong theological nuance. In other words, this commentary exhibits a theological style of interpretation, often referred to as a philosophical style (*corak falsafi*) in the academic world.

Qaulan Ma'rufa in Giving Wealth

Surah An-Nisa (4):5

"And do not entrust to those who are deficient in judgment (sufahā') their property, which Allah has made a means of sustenance for you. But feed them and clothe them out of it, and speak to them words of kindness (qaulan ma'rūfa)." (QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 5)

This verse contains an important teaching on Islamic social ethics, especially concerning the manner of controlling and providing wealth to those who lack the capacity to manage it properly. The term "*as-sufahā'*" refers to those who are mentally and emotionally immature, such as orphans, people with mental disabilities, or those who are not yet capable of taking financial responsibility.

The command mentioned in this verse is not only aimed at preventing assets from being misused but also encompasses aspects of social nurturing and moral protection. This is reflected in the instruction to fulfill essential needs—such as food and clothing—and to address recipients with *qaulān ma'rūfa*, meaning kind, appropriate, and respectful speech. The phrase underscores the value of gentle and ethical communication that preserves the recipient's dignity, particularly in contexts of financial assistance. Hence, the verse does not merely concern economic regulation or asset management; it also highlights the educative and relational dimensions of communication within Islamic ethics.

In the context of modern communication, the moral implications of *qaulān ma'rūfa* remain profoundly relevant. The principle of speaking kindly and respectfully extends to digital charity initiatives, social media-based fundraising, and interpersonal acts of giving, where tone, intention, and message framing shape the ethical quality of interaction. Applying this Qur'anic principle encourages communicators to uphold sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), empathy, and respect even in virtual spaces—ensuring that the act of giving remains both materially beneficial and spiritually ennobling. Thus, *qaulān ma'rūfa* serves as a timeless model for constructive and compassionate communication in both classical and contemporary social practice.

If the property of an orphan is managed by a guardian who is "lacking in judgment" or does not understand well, the property still belongs to the orphan. Although certain considerations have been set for managing that wealth, it is not permissible for the property to be misused or wasted by someone incapable of managing wealth, such as a child or a person of unsound mind. Consequently, those who are unable to manage property should not be given custody of it.

According to Qur'an saying, "But feed them and clothe them out of it," feeding means providing food to meet basic human physical needs, and clothing means protecting the body from heat and cold. However, the term "feeding and clothing" has a broader and symbolic meaning in the Qur'an. This term includes all forms of fulfilling basic human needs, such as shelter and other necessities. Furthermore, the command, "and speak to them words of kindness" serves as a moral guideline to treat the orphans with respect and compassion. They should not be treated harshly, demeaned, or with hurtful words, even if they are less capable of managing their own property. They must be spoken to gently, with *honor*, and upholding their human dignity.

Surah An-Nisa (4):6

This verse affirms important principles related to the management of orphans' assets. Allah asks the guardians to test the ability of the orphans until they reach maturity and possess soundness of judgment (*rasyīd*), which is indicated by their ability to manage wealth wisely. The property must be returned if they are capable and mature.

The verse, in this regard, warns guardians not to rush to consume the orphans' wealth before they mature. This is done due to greed and the fear that the wealth will be depleted. A wealthy guardian should refrain from taking a share of the property. On the other hand, a poor guardian is permitted to take a share of the property merely for their needs, but still in a *ma'ruf* manner (good and proper according to *shari'a*). To prevent fraud or disputes later, the property handed over to the orphan must be witnessed. This affirmation shows the importance of transparency, accountability, and ethics in safeguarding the orphans' wealth. Allah reminds us that He is always watching all human actions, including how we protect the orphans' wealth.

According to the command "And test them," guardians must test the orphans (*rasyīd*) to determine if they have reached intellectual maturity. The property must be returned to them if they appear mature enough to act independently. This indicates that it is not merely age that is required for an orphan to receive back the right to manage their property; the mature intellectual level is more crucial.

This testing takes place continuously and is not instantaneous. Since the child shows signs of wisdom, the guardian must begin to observe and test them until they reach adulthood or are ready for marriage, which is a sign that they have become "men" socially and legally. This is important because a single test cannot measure maturity of thought. To ensure that the ability to manage wealth has become part of the child's character and nature, especially after reaching puberty and then the age fit for marriage, repeated evaluations are necessary.

Surah An-Nisa (4):7

This verse establishes an equitable system for the distribution of inheritance. According to this verse, all individuals have an equal right to receive a portion of the property left by their parents or relatives, regardless of the size of the wealth. This indicates that the Islamic law of inheritance is given not only to men, as was the tradition in the *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic) era, but also to women, who were often neglected and did not receive a share of the inheritance at that time. The share of inheritance is given as an enactment (*haqqan mafrūdā*), or a right that has been clearly established by Allah, according to this verse. Therefore, the right to inheritance may not be reduced, neglected, or transferred to either men or women.

Therefore, this verse demonstrates the values of justice, equality, and protection of family rights, especially the rights of women and children, within the Islamic social structure. It simultaneously serves as a normative basis to state that the distribution of inheritance is a divine law that must be carried out in a manner compliant with the *shari'a*.

The statement, "For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave," is universal and not limited to specific conditions. The right to inheritance applies to every male in the lineage, regardless of his age or maturity, because

the subject, "men," is general and encompasses all males, including minors. In addition, the statement "and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave" confirms that this also applies to women. This provision, as mentioned before, is comprehensive and not restricted by specific qualifications or conditions. It includes all women, irrespective of their social status, age, or personal circumstances.

The concept of "whether small or large" becomes even clearer. This shows that the right to inheritance must be given no matter how much wealth is left. It is not permissible to disregard or omit the distribution of inheritance just because it is considered unimportant or too little in value. According to this verse, the right of every heir must be fully respected.

Surah An-Nisa (4):8

This verse provides moral guidance for the distribution of inherited wealth, especially for the poor, orphans, and distant relatives who do not have a legal right to inheritance. A person can still receive a portion of the inherited wealth even if they are not legitimate heirs according to *shari'a*, according to this verse. This giving serves as a moral recommendation as a form of social care and respect for human rights. "Give them a share of it and speak to them words of kindness," words that emphasize the importance of giving in a loving and empathetic way.

Not only does this instruction encourage material giving, but it also highlights the importance of ethical communication. Those who do not have the right to participate must be treated respectfully and gently, without undermining their dignity. Therefore, this verse demonstrates the social aspect of Islamic inheritance law, balancing formal legal rules with moral and humanitarian principles, and supporting the principle of social justice in society.

The presence referred to is not when a person dies and draws up a will; it is the presence of relatives, orphans, and the poor when the heirs divide the inherited wealth. Here, the word "relatives" can be interpreted as poor relatives, as indicated by their mention alongside the poor and orphans, two groups that usually live in conditions of need.

The command "give them a share of it and speak to them words of kindness" is a moral appeal to the heirs and executors of the will to be compassionate and kind towards the people present, even if they are not the legal recipients of the inheritance. There is no set portion established in this verse for them, making it more akin to an ethical recommendation than a legal obligation.

Therefore, it is not appropriate to consider this verse abrogated (*mansūkh*) by the verses on inheritance law that explicitly set the heirs' shares. Furthermore, the context of this verse does not contradict the law of inheritance because it merely recommends voluntary giving as a form of social solidarity, not a legal mandate requiring a specific distribution. This indicates that the command to

"give" found in this verse is suggestive and serves to reinforce the values of Islamic social concern.

Table 1. The Strengths and Weaknesses of *Tafsir al-Mizān*

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Richness of Knowledge Thabathaba'i incorporates a broad range of scholarly disciplines, offering a comprehensive and argumentative interpretation of the Qur'an.	1. Limited Hadith Chain Information Only the main source of the hadith is provided, without the full chain of narrators (sanad), and virtues of surahs are not discussed.
2. Accuracy in Quoting Narrations He is selective and cautious when quoting narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ), the Companions, and the tabi'in.	2. Potential Fanaticism for Shia Creed In some parts of the commentary, there is a noticeable emphasis on Shia aqidah, which may seem biased to readers from other sects.
3. Selective towards Sources Thabathaba'i references only relevant and beneficial sources for interpreting the verses.	3. Shia-centric References Many of the sources used in the commentary are drawn from Shia scholars, which may limit its appeal to readers from other Islamic traditions.
4. Strong Tarjīh View He clearly states his reasoning behind interpretations, allowing readers to understand the foundations of his views.	
5. Moderate Approach to Madhhab: Although a Shia scholar, Thabathaba'i presents Sunni perspectives alongside his own, which makes his commentary more balanced and inclusive.	

Syaikh Thabathaba'i's *Tafsir al-Mizān* is considered a monumental work in the field of Qur'anic exegesis due to its richness in knowledge and the depth of analysis that goes into each interpretation. Thabathaba'i's approach not only reflects his strong academic background but also his meticulousness in selecting reliable narrations and sources. However, the commentary's main weakness lies in its occasional bias towards Shia perspectives. This bias is particularly evident in the use of predominantly Shia sources and the subtle emphasis on Shia theology, which might make the commentary less appealing to readers from other Islamic sects. Moreover, the absence of complete hadith chains and a lack of focus on the virtues of surahs reduces the depth of hadith-based analysis, making it less comprehensive in those areas. Despite these shortcomings, *Tafsir al-Mizān* remains an important and influential text, especially for those interested in a balanced approach to Qur'anic interpretation within a Shia-Sunni context.

Introduction to Islamic Communication

The concept of *qaulan ma'rūfa* (kindly word) embodies four fundamental dimensions ethical speech, empathy, justice, and empowerment which function as moral principles and social ethics in interpersonal relationships, particularly in managing wealth and engaging with the economically disadvantaged. While

Arifin (2021) conceptualizes these dimensions as communicative imperatives guiding da'wah and social interaction in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, interprets *qaulan ma'rūfa* as an expression of moral consciousness (*al-wa'y al-akhlāqī*) rooted in sincerity and divine accountability (Achmad et al., 2020; Elmi, 2022). Thus, The relational and dialogical aspects of communication, whereas *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* situates it within the framework of spiritual intentionality and the purification of motives in speech.

A synthesis of both perspectives reveals that *qaulan ma'rūfa* functions not merely as a linguistic or social norm but as a holistic communicative ethic, integrating moral intention, emotional sensitivity, and social responsibility (Aziz et al., 2025). Interpreted within the context of contemporary communication ethics, these dimensions resonate with the ideals of compassionate discourse, inclusivity, and respect for human dignity—values urgently needed in modern socio-religious engagement (Tunggala, 2025; Tahmasebian, 2024). Hence, the Qur'anic principle of *qaulan ma'rūfa*, as elucidated through both *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*'s frameworks, offers a dynamic model of Islamic communication ethics that bridges classical revelation and contemporary practice (Umumah et al., 2025).

The concept of *qaulan ma'rūfa* emphasizes the importance of encouraging individual independence in a manner that is polite and constructive. It suggests that orphans and individuals who are not yet capable of managing their wealth independently should be provided with incentives that promote both emotional and financial independence. This can be achieved through speech that is respectful, uplifting, and filled with forgiveness and goodness, reflecting the Qur'anic approach of educating others through kind and constructive communication.

Furthermore, *qaulan ma'rūfa* stresses the significance of avoiding hurtful words and actions when giving and receiving wealth. The sixth verse highlights the need for maintaining ethics in these interactions, particularly when giving something to orphans or others in need. It is crucial to ensure that every exchange of wealth is handled with care and respect, using pleasant speech to prevent any harm to feelings. Additionally, the verse underscores the importance of having witnesses to maintain justice and prevent disputes, while Allah's supervision guarantees that all actions will be fairly rewarded. The belief that Allah is All-Seeing and All-Knowing encourages patience among those who may feel wronged, trusting that divine justice will prevail.

Moreover, the seventh verse indicates that *qaulan ma'rūfa* must align with Allah's decree, or *nashīban mafrūdhan*. This is particularly evident in the financial responsibilities that men have towards their female family members, such as sisters and daughters. While the inheritance system may allocate a larger portion to men, this is designed to protect women's rights and ensure that their needs are met. This system highlights the presence of divine justice within the Islamic social structure, ensuring that every individual receives their due share.

The eighth verse broadens the meaning of *qaulan ma'rūfa* in the context of wealth distribution. It calls for respecting and providing a share for relatives,

orphans, and the poor. Here, *qaulan ma'rūfa* is not limited to polite speech but extends to concrete actions, such as offering financial assistance to those in need. This approach not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters a sense of responsibility among those who receive aid, encouraging them to become givers in the future. In doing so, it creates a cycle of mutual social support and empowerment, contributing to a more just and compassionate society.

CONCLUSION

From the two works analyzed, it can be concluded that there are two distinct yet complementary perspectives on interpreting the concept of *qaulan ma'rūfa*. Both interpretations, despite their different approaches, consistently convey the importance of ethical and communicative aspects in understanding this verse. First, both perspectives emphasize the guardianship of property belonging to orphans and those unable to manage their wealth. They highlight the importance of trustworthiness in handling these assets, ensuring that they are used productively for the owner's benefit and returned when the rightful owner matures. The underlying principle is collective welfare, grounded in the belief that wealth ultimately belongs to Allah and is a means to sustain human life. These principles of ethical stewardship provide a framework for managing resources in a way that benefits both individuals and the broader community.

Second, both exegetical readings stress the importance of ethical values as the foundation of legal and social regulations. The Qur'anic command, "And speak to them with a kind word," becomes central to cultivating courteous, constructive, and dignity-affirming communication. Additionally, both perspectives emphasize *tawhīd* (the oneness of Allah) as the core foundation of faith, morality, and social conduct. This theological principle ensures moral coherence and spiritual purpose, even as ethical and legal norms may evolve in practice. Beyond their exegetical value, these interpretations offer broader implications for Islamic communication studies. Theoretically, they provide a framework for understanding communication as an extension of divine ethics, integrating *tawhīd*, moral consciousness, and social responsibility into everyday communicative practice. Practically, they lay the foundation for da'wah and social communication models that are compassionate, dialogical, and ethically grounded.

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