Revisiting Polygamy in the Qur'an: A Futuristic Interpretation in Dialogue with Ancient Middle Eastern Culture

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Abstract

This study re-examines the Qur'anic discourse on polygamy in the context of the patriarchal social structures of ancient Middle Eastern societies, where women were often regarded as property and denied bodily autonomy. Within this historical setting, the Qur'an introduced a significant ethical intervention by limiting the practice of polygamy and imposing a strict condition of justice. This restriction was not a validation of male privilege, but a moral correction aimed at gradually reforming an unequal social order. The result of this research has been collected through a qualitative method by using the scriptures as main sources. A transdisciplinary and futuristic hermeneutical approach has helped the authors in analyzing how the Qur'an allows polygamy with certain conditions for the sake of gender equality. The researchers emphasize a contextual and progressive moral framework responding social change which has not been discussed by previous research. It also recognizes the possibility of future shifts in human and ecological conditions that may influence the ethical balance of gender relations.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Discourse; Polygamy; Gender Justice; Patriarchal Society.*

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Introduction

The Qur'anic discourse on polygamy has long been a field of debate between theology, ethic, and social reform [1], [2]. This issue often mirrors how sacred texts are understood in the context of patriarchal culture[3], as well as a test of Islamic reformative power in responding to social and gender inequality. In the patriarchal social structure of ancient Middle Eastern societies, women were often seen as private property without having authority over their bodies. This culture has long been rooted in the civilizations of the Ancient Roman region, China, Middle East, and almost all other parts of the world [4]. In the midst of this reality, the Qur'an serves as a revolutionary ethical intervention, limiting the number of wives to four and requiring the practice to be carried out with absolute justice . This limitation is not a legitimacy for male domination, but a moral correction to ingrained social inequality [2], [5].

previous studies have discussed the issue of polygamy from various perspectives, ranging from legal and interpretive approaches to sociological and feminist studies. Early reformist thinkers such as Qasim Amin considered that the restriction of polygamy in the Qur'an was a step towards restriction, not a justification for the practice [6]. Meanwhile, feminist scholars such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Riffat Hassan have introduced the hermeneutics of justice (*tafsir al-'adl*), which reads the Qur'an through the lens of equality. In the Indonesian context, Musdah Mulia, Quraish Shihab, and Nur Rofiah interpret polygamy as a transitional ethical phase towards monogamy and gender equality.

These scholarly contributions have significantly deepened the understanding of the socio-historical and ethical dimensions of the Qur'an concerning polygamy and gender justice within contemporary contexts. In continuity with this spirit of contextual interpretation, the present study positions itself by advancing a *futuristic hermeneutic* approach, one that reads the Qur'anic message not only through its historical horizon but also within an anticipatory framework attentive to the emerging realities and moral challenges of the future.

This study employs a futuristic hermeneutical approach grounded in a transdisciplinary framework, integrating insights from gender studies, moral philosophy, and environmental ethics. It argues that the Qur'anic regulation of polygamy should be understood as a pedagogical stage, a moral framework guiding society from patriarchal dominance towards the ethical ideal of monogamy and justice. Within this interpretive horizon, justice ('*adl*) is conceived not merely as legal equity, but as a dynamic and evolving ethical principle,

responsive to the development of human consciousness and the transformations of social life.

Furthermore, this study highlights the visionary dimension of the Qur'an, asserting that its moral message remains profoundly relevant to the challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond. The Qur'an can thus be read as a text that anticipates potential demographic and ecological transformations, including imbalances in gender ratios and environmental crises that may reshape the structure of human society. Accordingly, the Qur'anic regulation of polygamy should not be perceived as a static prescription, but rather as a progressive moral discourse, one that is adaptive to the evolving dynamics of humanity. Although, previous researchers have written on how polygamy created injustice towards women, what has not been discussed is how Islam allowing polygamy for the sake of protecting women and how onerous the term and condition applied for such.

From this perspective, the study contributes to broadening the horizon of contemporary Qur'anic scholarship by bridging classical exegesis, gender ethics, and futuristic thought. It affirms that the Qur'anic discourse on marriage is not merely a matter of legal prescription, but a moral compass guiding humanity towards justice, equality, and the continual evolution of ethical consciousness. This paper aims to provide the answers for understanding how Islam protecting women and society through polygamy and why a man is allowed to commit polygamy limited to four women.

This study seeks to explore three main research questions. First, how was the practice of polygamy conducted in societies prior to the emergence of Islam? Second, how has polygamy been interpreted and understood in the contemporary era, particularly within modern Islamic thought? Third, why does Islamic scripture permit polygamy while simultaneously promoting an ethical ideal of monogamy? These questions aim to critically examine the historical, hermeneutical, and theological dimensions of polygamy in Islamic discourse.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method based on library research, focusing on the textual analysis of the Qur'an through a futuristic hermeneutical approach. This approach was selected as it enables a reading of religious texts and scriptures that are simultaneously historical, ethical, and visionary, thereby producing an interpretation relevant to both contemporary and future challenges. The data for this research were derived from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprise the Qur'anic text itself, along with both classical and modern exegetical works. The secondary sources comprise

scholarly articles, monographs, and recent academic studies that address issues of polygamy, gender, and Islamic ethics.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the understanding that interpreting verses about polygamy in the Qur'an requires a connection between the historical context, the ethical orientation of the Qur'an, and the dynamics of social and human change in the future. Conceptually, this study views the text of the Qur'an as a moral discourse born of specific socio-historical conditions, but at the same time possessing an ethical vision that transcends its time. Therefore, this study begins with a reconstruction of the context of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arab society as the background for the formation of the discourse on polygamy. This context is then analyzed through the moral principles of the Qur'an, particularly justice, protection of vulnerable groups, and social responsibility to identify the ethical orientation that constitutes the core message of these verses.

Furthermore, these moral values are projected into a futuristic hermeneutic perspective that considers the development of gender relations, the transformation of family structures, advances in biotechnology, and ecological challenges that have the potential to change the landscape of human life. Thus, this conceptual framework positions polygamy not only as a legal issue, but as an ethical issue that needs to be interpreted through a dialogue between text, history, and future possibilities. This conceptual model allows for a more inclusive, progressive, and relevant reading of the Qur'an in line with evolving moral values.

Result and Discussion

Within the cultural networks of the ancient Middle East, particularly in the Arab world prior to the prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h), the status of women was exceedingly low, rendering their social and legal identity almost negligible. Women were denied inheritance rights and were regarded as property, transferable from one male guardian to another. Male ownership over women was unrestricted, encompassing both wives and slaves [7]. In the Qur'anic depiction of that era, men were referred to as *ba'lun*, denoting owner (*malik*), master, ruler (*sayyid*), or caretaker (*rabb*). This conferred upon husbands a broad authority over their wives [8]. Notably, the term *ba'l* also carried the connotation of pre-Islamic idols worshiped by the Arabs, symbolically equating men's societal position with that of venerated deities of the period [9].

Building upon this contextual understanding of women's subordinate status in pre-Islamic Arabian society, the discussion now turns to specific legal and social domains that illustrate the transformative impact of the Qur'anic revelation. The following sections will examine women's inheritance rights, the

regulation of polygamous marriages, and their roles as legal witnesses, among other aspects. By doing so, the analysis highlights how the Qur'an systematically challenged entrenched patriarchal norms and introduced principles aimed at promoting justice, equity, and social responsibility.

After conducting in-depth research using a number of sources, the author concluded that there are four different but interrelated themes: (1) Women and Inheritance Rights; (2) Women and the Essence of Marriage; (3) Women and Polygamous Marriage; and (4) A New Reading of Polygamy in Islam. These four themes will be explained more explicitly below.

Women and Inheritance Rights

Within the cultural fabric of the ancient Middle East, particularly in Mesopotamia and pre-Islamic Arabia, women occupied a markedly inferior position, devoid of legal agency over property or their own personhood. Following centuries of male dominance under the notion of *ba'lun*, women were treated as objects of possession rather than as juridical subjects. It was in this deeply entrenched patriarchal order that the Qur'an emerged as a revolutionary moral and legal discourse, introducing structural reforms that redefined the status of women. Among these reforms, the recognition of women's right to inheritance represents one of the most transformative ethical shifts in the Abrahamic tradition.

During the Sargonic Empire (2334–2197 BCE) in Mesopotamia, a few women attained high social positions, yet these were largely derivative of male kinship ties. Female members of royal families, such as Enheduanna, the daughter of King Sargon and high priestess of the moon god in Ur, possessed considerable wealth and influence [10]. However, this access was the privilege of lineage, not a reflection of systemic gender equity. Legal documents from the Ur III period (2112–2004 BCE) indicate that women were excluded from inheritance when male heirs were present. Occasionally, they appeared as witnesses in court, but lower-class women endured harsh punishments, forced labor, and ritual exploitation. The state's purported concern for widows and orphans, though rhetorically invoked, never crystallized into a coherent welfare structure [10]. Thus, the inheritance system of Mesopotamia primarily functioned to preserve patriarchal continuity and economic control within male hands.

A gradual transformation occurred within the Judaic tradition as recorded in the Torah (Old Testament). Deuteronomy 21:15–17 and Numbers 27:8 stipulated that the firstborn son should receive a double portion of inheritance, while daughters could inherit only in the absence of male offspring. As noted by Permana and Manan (2019, p. 9), this regulation marked a transitional phase in Israelite family law, acknowledging women's rights only contingently. Although

it represented a step forward from the total exclusion of women, the structure remained fundamentally androcentric, prioritizing the continuity of male lineage as the custodians of family wealth [11].

Islam, to further the dynamic of law, introduced a more comprehensive and ethically balanced system of inheritance. Surah *An-Nisā'* (4:11) explicitly affirms women's entitlement to inheritance, whether or not male heirs exist, while adjusting the proportions to reflect the socio-economic obligations of men as providers. The oft-cited principle that a woman receives half the share of a man should not be construed as inequality but rather as a rational and moral equilibrium grounded in social responsibility. Men are obliged to provide *mahr* (dowry) and sustenance, whereas women's property remains fully their own, free from financial obligations towards dependents [12]. The Qur'an thereby transformed women from objects of inheritance into subjects of ownership and agency, ensuring both legal recognition and moral dignity.

Beyond the realm of inheritance, the Qur'an extended its ethical vision to the domain of marital relations. It describes the relationship between husband and wife through the metaphor of mutual protection: *"They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them"* (Q. 2:187). This Qur'anic metaphor of *libas* (garment) symbolizes intimacy, mutual protection, and shared dignity, rather than the domination of one over the other [13]. Likewise, the command to grant *mahr*, *"Give the women their bridal gifts graciously"* (Q. 4:4), emphasizes both male obligation and female autonomy in managing her own wealth. These teachings collectively establish a moral economy in which both genders share responsibility, respect, and spiritual parity.

Consequently, the Qur'anic inheritance law functions as a counter-narrative to the patriarchal absolutism of the ancient Middle East, while simultaneously preventing the emergence of a reversed matriarchal imbalance. Rather than positioning men and women in opposition, the Qur'an envisions an ethical equilibrium grounded in justice, compassion, and mutual accountability. In this sense, inheritance in Islam transcends mere legal distribution; it becomes a spiritual regulation, an affirmation that property, power, and moral virtue are inseparable dimensions of the human condition.

Table 1. Comparison of Women's Inheritance Rights in the Ancient Middle Eastern Tradition to Islam

Aspects	Ancient Mesopotamia (±2334–2004 BCE)	Jewish Tradition (Torah/Old Testament)	Islam (Al-Qur'an)
Legal status of women	Women do not have independent legal rights; is considered to belong to a father, husband, or brother.	Women are recognized as family members, but their rights are minimal and depend on the existence of men.	Women are recognized as legal individuals who have their own inheritance, property rights, and economic rights.
Primary beneficiary rights	Not entitled to inheritance if there are brothers; only get a share if there are no male heirs.	Daughters only get an inheritance if there are no sons (Numbers 27:8).	Women still get their share of the inheritance even though there are men; "the boy's share is twice the girl's share" (Q.S. An-Nisā': 11).
Proportion of inheritance	There is no proportional division; The entire inheritance falls to the male heirs.	The firstborn son received twice as much as his brothers (Deuteronomy 21:15–17).	Men get twice the share of women, but men are obliged to provide and give dowries.
Socio-economic position	Depends entirely on men; Lower-class women were often slaves or ritual offerings.	Women were not economically free, except in the special case of noble descent.	Women have the right to manage their own property; It is not obligatory to provide maintenance, and dowry is a full right.

Women and the Essence of Marriage

In Old Babylonian Mesopotamia, the institution of marriage followed a gradual, ritualised sequence of phases: the negotiation of a marital agreement (the consultative stage), the declaration of intent or betrothal (the pre-marital stage), the formalisation of the marriage (the nuptial stage), cohabitation (the connubial stage), and finally, the familial phase marked by childbirth [14]. Once the bride's father and the groom reached an accord and the couple resided with the husband's family, the man was legally entitled to determine several subsequent actions: (a) he might take another wife if his first did not bear children; (b) he could acquire a concubine; (c) he could demote his wife's status while elevating that of a concubine; (d) he retained the right to divorce his wife even after she had borne him children; and (e) the firstborn son was to receive a double inheritance [14].

The earliest biblical accounts echo similar patriarchal arrangements. In Genesis 16:2, Sarai (Sarah) offers her slave-girl Hagar to Abram (Abraham) as a surrogate to bear him a child: *"Take my slave-girl; perhaps through her I shall have a son."* Yet this act, while socially tolerated, was fraught with tension, its outcome perceived as disorderly, since a slave who bore a child could challenge her

mistress's authority. Proverbs 30:22–23 poetically captures this anxiety: *"Under three things the earth trembles, four it cannot bear: a slave who becomes king… and a slave who supplants her mistress."*

The story of Hagar in Genesis 16:2 encapsulates the profound social tensions between servitude, fertility, and female agency within a patriarchal order. When Sarai is unable to conceive urges Abram to "go in to her maidservant," Hagar becomes both the vessel of Sarai's hope and the embodiment of her anxiety. Yet once Hagar conceives, the fragile hierarchy between mistress and servant collapses. This moment of inversion finds poetic resonance in *Proverbs 30:22-23*: "Under three things the earth trembles… under four it cannot bear: a slave when he becomes king, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress." The verse reflects an ancient cultural anxiety over the reversal of established hierarchies, particularly when a woman, and a slave at that, assumes a position of moral and maternal honor. The biblical narrative thus unveils the patriarchal unease with the subversion of social structures, wherein fertility and divine favor become arenas of rivalry and exclusion.

In contrast, during the Assyrian period of Mesopotamia, men were permitted to marry two wives concurrently, typically residing in separate localities. If both wives remained barren, they were allowed to purchase slave-girls to bear children on their behalf. The title "wife" applied solely to the first marriage; the second woman was termed a "holy woman" if residing in the city, or a "slave" if she lived in the colonies. This differentiation functioned to underscore the secondary status of the second wife [14]. Such discriminatory norms mirror the plight of Hagar, whose exile from Sarai's household symbolizes the social marginalization of the secondary spouse.

Before the advent of Islam and the revelation of the Qur'an in Arabia, the region was a mosaic of diverse faiths and traditions, paganism, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and remnants of Abrahamic monotheism (the *hanifiyyah* of Isma'il and his descendants). Within this plural and tribal milieu, the Prophet Muhammad's mission was not to eradicate all pre-Islamic customs but to reform them through moral elevation and gradual legal transformation [7]. This socio-historical setting thus provides the backdrop against which Qur'anic revelation reconfigured marriage law and women's status in a progressive, humane trajectory.

In Babylonian law, a childless marriage (*kinunu belu*) was deemed incomplete, as progeny were considered essential for inheritance and male pride [14]. Similar anxieties appear in the plea of Prophet Zakariyya: *"I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren, so grant me from Yourself an heir"* (Qur'an, 19:5). The belief that infertility stemmed from a "fault in the man"[14] compelled some to

adopt sons, often at the cost of erasing their original lineage rights to secure continuity of property and name.

Against this patriarchal heritage, the Qur'an positioned the Prophet Muhammad as the moral agent who dismantled inherited hierarchies. The verse, *"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets"* (Qur'an, 33:40), refuted accusations surrounding his marriage to Zainab, the former wife of his adopted son Zayd [15]. This verse aligns with 33:5, which prohibits the reattribution of lineage, a reform that safeguarded genealogical integrity and prevented future incestuous unions [15].

Neighboring Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula's harsh environment compelled men to seek sustenance through raiding and warfare, leaving women confined to domestic spaces. Economic hardship fuelled the tragic practice of female infanticide, viewed as a grim measure to reduce dependents. The Qur'an intervened decisively with a profound ethical reorientation:

> **"***And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is a great sin***."** (Qur'an, 17:31)

The Prophet himself endured social stigma for not having surviving male heirs, earning the derisive label *abtar* (cut off). In response, the Qur'an declared: *"Indeed, your enemy, he is the one cut off"* (Qur'an, 108:3), redefining true continuity as moral, not biological. The Prophet's lived experience of fathering only daughters embodied the Qur'anic subversion of patriarchal pride. His teachings that daughters are "a shield against the Fire and companions in Paradise" [16] signified not rhetoric but lived reform, a prophetic praxis that dismantled the male lineage obsession at its core [17], [18].

Women and Polygamous Marriage

A relief from the Assyrian palace of Sennacherib depicts a man accompanied by two women, presumably his wives, seated across from him amid tall reeds in a marshland. The existence of two wives in such imagery is commonly attributed to the failure of the first to produce an heir. For, in principle, marriage in the ancient world was predominantly monogamous, structured around a single man, a single woman, and their offspring. Only later, with the rise of royal customs involving the exchange of gifts, among which women were often included to secure political alliances, did the practice of polygamy become widespread.

Fig.1: A man hides with two women from Assyrian soldiers patrolling a marsh in southern Iraq, 620 BC. Relief in the palace at Nineveh. *British Museum, London*. [14]

Kings in ancient Mesopotamia, besides maintaining two wives, also possessed numerous harems. A text from the kingdom of Arapha, an eastern Assyrian state near modern-day Kirkuk (dating between 1450 and 1330 BCE), records that kings across several cities maintained multiple palaces, harems, and queens [14]. These harem were not merely domestic servants; they also performed dances and songs for the king. The number of harem members varied from one ruler to another; the greater their number, the more illustrious the monarch was considered to be. In Yasmah-Addu (c. 1500 BCE), there were reportedly some 600 women in the royal harem, 200 of whom were musicians and slaves, while the rest were assigned to domestic duties and harp playing [14].

A scarab inscription from Egypt further records the royal dowry of Keluhepa, daughter of Suttarna II, ruler of Naharina in Mesopotamia:

"A marvel brought to His Majesty, the daughter of Suttarna, ruler of Naharina, Keluhepa, and women of the harem, 317 in number."[14]

Such evidence indicates that the proliferation of wives, concubines, and offspring among the nobility was regarded as a symbol of social prestige. This notion echoes the Qur'anic verse: "*Beautified for mankind is love of desires, of women and sons and heaped-up treasures of gold and silver*" (Q 3:14). Alongside polygamy, records also attest to the occurrence of polyandry in parts of southern Arabia:

"One woman is for everyone, and the man who comes in first, after first leaving his staff in front of the door, has intercourse"[14].

Such practices, devoid of orderly family structures, rendered kinship lines indeterminate and risked future incestuous unions.

War, hunting traditions, and the exchange of female slaves as diplomatic gifts gradually entrenched polygamy within societal customs. Over time, both warfare and polygamy became intertwined, not merely as contests for female possession, but as mechanisms of reclaiming wealth once granted by divine law to women. The Qur'anic provision for multiple marriages must be read within this historical frame. After the Battle of Uhud in Medina, where many Muslim men perished, numerous widows and orphans remained. The verse thus revealed states:

> "If you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan women, then marry those that please you of women, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one, or those your right hands possess. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]." (Q 4:3)

These widows and orphans often inherited property but lacked the education or economic skills to manage it. Male guardians, driven by greed, would sometimes marry them merely to seize their inheritance or prevent them from remarrying, ensuring that wealth remained under male control. Such unions, rooted in avarice rather than compassion, led to injustice, abuse, and the reckless exploitation of women's wealth [19].

The Qur'anic command *"if you cannot deal justly, then [marry] only one"* or "those your right hands possess" was intended not to perpetuate servitude but to gradually emancipate enslaved women, much like the Biblical precedent of Abram's union with the African bondwoman Hagar, which led to her liberation from bondage.

A persistent theological question arises: why does the Qur'an not explicitly prohibit polygamy, despite acknowledging that *"You will never be able to be perfectly just between wives, even if you desire to do so"* (Q 4:129)? The answer lies partly in the anthropological notion of "the fault in man", the ancient belief that the inability to produce a male heir was the husband's failure. Though the Qur'an itself never advances this claim, modern medical science reveals that the Y chromosome, carried solely by men, determines male offspring and is highly sensitive to acidic conditions, which can reduce its viability. Thus, the preponderance of female births may have represented exceptional rather than normative circumstances, precisely the kinds of contingencies the Qur'an sought to accommodate with cautious flexibility, rather than rigid prohibition.

A New Reading of Polygamy in Islam

The Qur'an teaches that every human decision must emerge from dialogue and social engagement grounded in the principles of humanity and justice [17], [20]. Its endeavor to elevate the dignity of humankind represents a radical transformation on an unprecedented scale when compared to the legal systems of earlier revelations. This radicalism is rooted in the Qur'an's role as the *Final Covenant,* after which no further divine law would descend. Hence, all legal and moral principles had to be perfected within its own revelation and embodied through the Prophet Muhammad as the living exemplar of divine jurisprudence [21], [22].

A reading of polygamy within this framework demands a broader understanding, for Islamic law does not stand as a rigid social product but as a value system that responds dynamically to the moral evolution of humanity. Thus, when we observe the persistence of polygamy in the modern era, we are in fact witnessing the continuation of the same human dilemmas, desires, needs, and social imbalances that have existed since the dawn of civilization [23].

Even in contemporary contexts, the practice of polygamy often endures not merely because of religious or cultural sanction but due to persistent personal impulses and social motivations. Many men justify their actions on emotional, sexual, or reproductive grounds [24], such as the wish for progeny, the pursuit of variety, or the preservation of social status, revealing that, despite shifting legal and moral frameworks, the underlying drives remain profoundly human and historically continuous.

Yet this historical continuity does not amount to normative legitimacy. It is precisely here that the Qur'an intervenes to construct a new ethical order governing relations between men and women. In matters of inheritance and dowry, the Qur'an elevated the position of women above that of men in terms of financial security and protection [17], [22]. In the realm of marital ethics, however, it established a framework of mutual respect, positioning men and women as equals in both moral and spiritual standing. Within this ethical system, polygamy does not represent justice, but rather an exception permitted only under extraordinary circumstances.

The Qur'an explicitly affirms monogamy as the ideal form of marriage:

"You will never be able to be perfectly just between wives, even if you desire to do so." (Q. 4:129)

Accordingly, polygamy is not prescribed as a norm but acknowledged as a pragmatic response to particular historical or demographic conditions, such as periods when the male population was depleted by war or natural catastrophe.

Such circumstances have recurred throughout history, resulting in a disproportionate number of women to men. Biologically, this phenomenon also has a genetic basis. The ratio of male to female births is influenced by the combination of X and Y chromosomes, determined by the male's sperm [25]. Under the effect of sessions, diet, and profession [25], extreme environmental conditions, such as air pollution [26] [27], malnutrition, chemical exposure, or ecological stress, the likelihood of bearing female offspring (with XX chromosomes) increases, since Y-chromosome-bearing sperm are more vulnerable to fluctuations in temperature and pH [28]. This may explain why, in certain contexts, female populations rise significantly, prompting social adjustments in family structures, including the practice of polygamy.

Beyond this sociobiological dimension, a cosmological reading of the Qur'anic discourse reveals a broader interpretive horizon rarely addressed in conventional exegesis. In this cosmological sense, the Qur'an's tolerance of polygamy may be viewed as a response to ecological disruptions that disturb the natural balance of life, such as environmental pollution, chemical contamination of the earth and water, and biological shifts that affect human reproductive systems [29], [30]. The evolutionary biology studies previously mentioned have shown that fluctuations in environmental pH levels and hormonal balance within the human body can influence the birth ratio between males and females. These findings reinforce an ecological interpretation of a phenomenon that has often been understood merely as a cultural or moral issue

From this perspective, polygamy cannot be understood as an endorsement of inequality, but rather as *bab al-darurah*, an emergency provision, a temporary and context-bound solution designed to safeguard the continuity of humanity and preserve the ethical order of creation from dehumanizing deviations [30], [31], such as the detachment of marriage from its procreative and complementary purposes. Hence, the Qur'an does not legitimize polygamy as a moral ideal, but recognizes it as a form of social engineering suited to specific ecological, biological, and historical contingencies.

Conclusion

The Qur'anic discourse on polygamy, when read through a historical and futuristic hermeneutical lens, reveals not a static legal allowance but an evolving moral pedagogy. Rooted in the patriarchal and androcentric structures of the ancient Near East, polygamy in pre-Islamic societies functioned as an instrument of lineage preservation, property control, and social hierarchy. Against this background, the Qur'an did not simply continue the existing order; it restructured it ethically, introducing the principle of *'adl* (justice) as the condition and limitation for any plural marriage. By doing so, the Qur'an transformed

polygamy from a norm into a moral exception, tolerable only within the bounds of compassion and social necessity.

Throughout history, reformist and feminist scholars have extended this ethical trajectory, arguing that the Qur'an's regulation of polygamy signifies a transitional stage towards monogamy and gender equality. The text's insistence on justice, fairness, and mutual dignity between men and women forms the cornerstone of its moral vision. Within this framework, polygamy emerges not as a divine ideal but as a socio-ethical concession to human imperfection and historical contingency.

This study's futuristic hermeneutical approach further situates the Qur'anic message within an anticipatory moral horizon, acknowledging that the ethical challenges of humanity continue to evolve alongside ecological, demographic, and cultural transformations. The Qur'an's flexibility, its capacity to speak beyond its immediate historical context, marks it as a living discourse of justice, constantly inviting reinterpretation in the light of new realities.

Hence, the Qur'an's engagement with polygamy exemplifies its broader mission to transform inherited social systems into moral frameworks grounded in justice, mercy, and human dignity. In this spirit, ethical consciousness inspired by the Qur'an must also extend to the environment, preserving ecological balance, protecting life in all its forms, and ensuring that human justice encompasses harmony with the natural world. Far from legitimizing male privilege, the Qur'an provides a moral compass guiding humanity towards equilibrium, between men and women, law and compassion, and the temporal and the divine.

Author Contributions

Ainiyatul Latifah was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, development of the methodology, and preparation of the original manuscript. **Khalid Vikriadi** contributed through critical review and editing of the manuscript and provided overall supervision of the research process. **Aubaidillah Doloh** managed the project administration and conducted the investigation activities that supported the research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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