

Interpretation of Interreligious Marriages from the Perspective of Tafsir Ahl al-Kitab: A Comparative Study of Classical and Contemporary

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Abstract

This study discusses the interpretation of interreligious marriage in the perspective verse of the Ahl al-Kitab in comparative study of classical and contemporary interpretation. This study aims to identify how mufasir of various eras understood and applied the verses that allowed marriage between Muslim men and women of Ahl al-Kitab, as well as how social developments and modern religious perspective influencing these interpretations. Different marriages provide a perspective evolution of interreligious marriage in the marriage verse of the Ahl al-Kitab. This research discusses the transformation of classical and contemporary interpretations related to interreligious marriage in the practice of marriage in the modern era. This is a library research with a literature study approach and the methodology used was comparative. The data related to this study were collected through primary data and secondary data. The data is presented with technical analysis of muqaranah and content analysis. The results of the study stated that classical interpretation generally prioritizes the legality aspect with little attention to the long-term impact, while contemporary interpretation emphasizes the importance of social context and challenges faced in modern life. The shifting reflect a transformation in religious thinking, where the moral aspect and stability of faith in the household are the main concerns. Interreligious marriage in Islam cannot be hidden because it was legalized in the salaf era, the classical interpretation highlights the possibility of marriage to the ahlu'l from the group of Dzimmī or Harbiy. Meanwhile, there are pros and cons about its possibilities and haram by the view of contemporary interpretation, because the different ways in defining the terminology of the Ahl al-Kitab.

Keywords: *Marriage, Interreligion, Ahl Al-Kitab, Classical, Contemporary.*

Introduction

Allah created man from one individual, Adam, and created his partner, Hawa, from himself, of the same kind. From both, Allah bred human posterity into various ethnic groups with different skin colors and languages. In a household, religion plays an important role in perpetuating relationships. There are many evidence that affirm the importance of building a household on the basis of religion. This is emphasizes religion as the key to prosperously in choosing a life partner. Factors such as race, appearance, or social status do not guarantee happiness and affection in the household. Islam emphasizes equality, so true marriage can connect different races and backgrounds.

Religion is the main foundation of a marriage, ensuring its continuity and success (As-Shābūnī: 1981, p. 637). The power of the household depends on the belief in God and His value (M. Quraish Shihab, 2002: p. 576). Islam provides guidance to both men and women to marry someone who has strong religious beliefs, especially when choosing a future wife. As mentioned in surah Al-Baqarah Verse 221. “And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave man is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness, by His permission. And he makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember” (Depag RI, 2010, p. 112).

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Quraish Shihab explains that the Qur'an prohibits marriage to polytheistic women until they believe in Allah SWT (QS Al-Baqarah: 221). Polytheistic women are feared to influence their husbands and children, particularly regarding the education of faith, ethics, and character. Islam emphasizes the important role of mothers in shaping children's beliefs as the foundation of a purposeful life. In fact, marrying a believing Muslim slave woman is considered better than marrying an attractive or high-status polytheistic woman, as faith fosters a harmonious family (Shihab, p. 576).

Allah prescribes marriage with the values of *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (mercy), emphasizing the importance of harmony in faith to prevent conflicts in belief (Gusman, 2003, p. 337). Ibn Jarir al-Thabari restricts the prohibition to Arab polytheistic women (Al-Thabari, 1422/2001, p. 713). Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh extend the interpretation, permitting marriage to non-Arab women such as Hindus, Buddhists, or Confucians who have a concept of God and sacred scriptures (Rashid Rida, t.th, p. 281). his approach underscores the significance of faith as the foundation for family harmony, as reflected in several verses, including Surah Al-Baqarah verse 221, which uses the term *الْمُشْرِكَاتِ*. “And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave man is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness, by His permission. And he makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember” (Depag RI, p. 112).

Then, with the terms *اهل الكتاب* and *الْمُحْصَنَاتُ* mentioned in Surah Al-Maidah verse 5. “This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking [secret] lovers. And whoever denies the faith -his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers”(Depag RI, p. 208)

Then, with the terms *الصَّابِئِينَ* and *مَجُوسٍ* mentioned in Surah Al-Hajj verse 17. Indeed, those who have believed and those who were Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associated with Allah – Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, over all things, Witness (Depag RI, p. 305).

Table 1. Term of Non-Muslim

No	Term of Non Muslim	Meaning
1	الْمُشْرِكَاتِ	Polytheistic Woman
2	اهل الكتاب	<i>Ahlul Kitab</i> (Expert of Holybook)
3	الْمُحْصَنَاتُ	<i>Mubsan</i> Woman
4	الصَّابِئِينَ	Sabiyy
6	مَجُوسٍ	Majusi (Fire Worshiper)

The understanding of Qur'anic verses regarding interreligious marriage varies, influenced by different approaches and historical contexts. Some contemporary scholars support it, referring to the practice of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as his marriages to Maria Qibtiyah and Sopiiah, as well as the companions, such as Uthman ibn Affan, who married Nailah binti Farāfisah and Hudzaifah who married a Jewish woman in Medina (Ibn Abdil al-Barr, t.th, p.271.). These facts indicate a precedent for marriage with Ahl al-Kitab.

The legal perspectives on interreligious marriage are divided into two groups. **First**, which is absolutely prohibited, including marriage with Ahl al-Kitab, because it is considered polytheistic. This perspective is held by scholars such as Abdullah bin Umar, Fakhruddin Al-Razi, Sayyid Qutb, and scholars from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). **Second**, it is permissible under certain conditions, particularly allowing Muslim men to marry women from Ahl al-Kitab. This opinion is supported by Abdullah bin Abbas, Imam Malik, Sofyan Ats-Tsauri, as well as scholars of the Shafi'i and Maliki madhhabs. Furthermore, Ibn Jarir Al-

Tabari and Rashid Rida interpret the term *mushrik* in QS. Al-Baqarah/2:221 as referring specifically to idol worshippers, not Ahl al-Kitab.

Research Methods

This study examined the transformation of understanding regarding interreligious marriage in the context of Ahl al-Kitab marriage verses using a qualitative method with a literature-based approach. The focus was on analyzing classical interpretations, such as the works of Ibnu Jarir Ath-Thabari, Ibnu Katsir, dan Imam Qurthubi, as well as contemporary interpretations from Buya Hamka, M. Quraish Shihab, and Wahbah az-Zuhaili. The purpose of the study was to identify the differences in understanding between classical and contemporary interpretation, highlighting the universal value of the Qur'an, the methodology of interpretation, and the results of interpretation.

Primary data includes verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah: 221 dan QS. Al-Ma'idah: 5 alongside other supporting verses. The analysis methods employed are content analysis, comparative analysis, thematic analysis, conceptual analysis, and semantic analysis, emphasizing changes in interpretation and their relevance within the context of modern Islamic law. This study enriched the discourse on Islamic law by offering a comprehensive understanding of the issue of interreligious marriage and the challenges of its application in contemporary contexts.

Result and Discussion

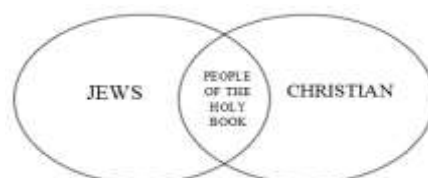
The Term of Interreligious Marriage in the Perspective of the Qur'an

Ahlu Al-Kitâb

The term *ahl* [أهل] originates from two root words. The first is *ihalah*, which etymologically means fat that is sliced and cut into small pieces. The second root word is *ahl* [أهل] itself, whose meaning becomes clear when combined with other words to form compound phrases. This is reflected in the Qur'an, including its plural form, *ahlun* [أهلون] (Shihab, p. 62).

When the word *ahl* [أهل] is combined with the name of a place, it signifies the inhabitants or residents living in specific locations, such as *ahl al-Madyan* [أهل المدين], *ahl al-Quro'* [أهل القرى], *ahl al-Qaryah* [أهل القرية], *ahl al-Bait* [أهل البيت], *ahl al-Madinah* [أهل المدينة] and *ahl al-Nar* [أهل النار]. The term *ahl al-Bait* [أهل البيت] is often used specifically to refer to the family of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Shihab, p. 63).

The term Ahl al-Kitab [أهل الكتاب] is mentioned 30 times in the Qur'an, referring to adherents of Abrahamic religions revealed to them, specifically followers of Judaism and Christianity (Shihab, p. 63). These two communities are explicitly known to share a close connection and theological ties with Muslims. Moreover, Allah emphasizes that the Qur'an was revealed to confirm certain teachings of the Torah [the sacred scripture of Judaism] and the Gospel [the sacred scripture of Christianity] while also correcting certain aspects of them (Ruslani, 2000, p.111).



The Qur'an also informs that Prophet Isa invited the followers of Judaism to adhere to the teachings he brought, as these teachings are a continuation of the religion delivered by Prophet Musa and also foretold the coming of Muhammad SAW after him, as stated in QS. al-Saff /61:6. "And [mention] when Jesus, the

son of Maryam, said, “O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad [Muhammad].” But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, “This is obvious magic.” (QS. Al-Shaff/61;6)

The concept of *Ahl al-Kitab* refers to both Jewish and Christian communities. Some early Islamic scholars (salaf), including the Prophet’s companions, regarded them as polytheists (*mushrik*). For instance, Abdullah ibn Umar, based on a narration from Nafi, rejected the marriage of a Muslim to a Jewish or Christian woman, citing the verse: “Allah has prohibited Muslim men from marrying polytheistic women,” (QS. al-Baqarah/2:221). Ibn Umar emphasized, “I do not know of a polytheism greater than their belief that their Lord is Isa (Jesus) or one of Allah’s servants.”

This perspective influenced later scholars’ interpretations, such as al-Tabarshi (w. 548 H/1154 M) and al-Razi (w. 606 H/1209 M). They supported the opinion that Ahl al-Kitab fall under the category of mushrik, referring to QS. al-Taubah/9:30: “*wa qalati al-Yahudu Uẓayrun ibnu Allah wa qalati al-Naşarā al-Masiḥu ibnu Allah.*” This is also supported by QS. al-Maidah/5:73 (Hasbullah, 2013; p. 179).

Al-Musyrikāt

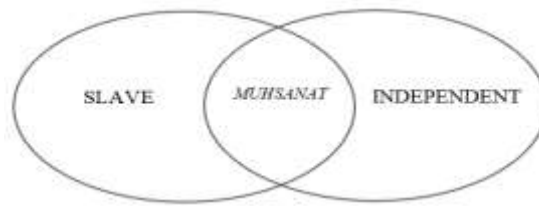
Mushrik (مشرك) is the active participle (*ism al-fa'il*) of the verb (أشرك – يشرك – إشراك – مشرك), while shirk refers to the act itself. Ibn Manzur defines *shirk* as *sharik* (شريك) atau *nashib* (نصيب), meaning partnership or share. Similarly, Raghīb al-Asfahani interprets it as *mukhalatatu sharikain* (مخالطة الشريكين), which denotes the mixing of two ownerships, whether in substance or meaning, such as in inheritance or trade (Al-Asfahani, t.th; p. 259). Thus, linguistically, a *mushrik* refers to someone who engages in partnership or association.

Terminologically, *shirk* is making something other than Allah as a worship, either in the form of living, inanimate, material, or immaterial things. A *mushrik* denies the oneness of Allah regarding His essence, attributes, or actions, which implies a denial of Allah’s omnipotence as the creator (Shihab, p. 664-665). *Shirk* is categorized into three types: *shirk rububiyah* (شرك ربوبية), belief in the existence of other forces involved in creation; *shirk uluhiyyah* (شرك ألوهية), worship of deities other than Allah; and *shirk 'ubudiyah* (شرك عبودية), associating others with Allah in acts of worship (Shihab, p. 664-665).

Shirk is further divided into *shirk akbar* (major *shirk*), such as worshipping entities other than Allah, and *shirk asghar* (minor *shirk*), such as ostentation (*riya*). The concept of shirk is mentioned in the Qur'an 168 times, including in QS. Luqman/31:14, QS. Saba'/34:22, QS. Fathir/35:40, dan QS. al-Ahqaf/46:4 (Abdul Baqi, 1991/1411, p. 481-484). Prophet Ibrahim rejected all forms of *shirik* (QS. al-An'am/6:74-79). QS. al-Baqarah/2:221 prohibits marrying polytheistic women, which scholars interpret as applicable only to Arab polytheistic women and not to Ahl al-Kitab (Ghalib, 1998, p. 73).

Al-Muhsanāt

The term *al-Muhsanāt* derives from the root letters [ح, ص, and ن], which convey meanings of being firm, strong, or pure from disgraceful actions (Ibn Faris, 1415/1994, p. 264). In QS. al-Māidah/5:5, Ibn Jarir al-Thabari interprets *al-Muhsanāt* as women who have embraced Islam, (Shihab, p. 415) while the phrase *المحصنات من المؤمنات* refers to women who were born into Muslim families (Madkur, 1380/1960, p.186). Mujahid defines *al-Muhsanāt* as free women, whereas Ibrahim Madkur emphasizes the element of preserving dignity (*al-Iffah*). Al-Kalibi added four criteria: Islam, women, *al-Iffah*, and *al-Hurriyah*. However, in the context of QS. al-Māidah/5:5, Al-Kalibi argues that Islam and being a woman are irrelevant due to the phrase *من الذي أتوا الكتاب*, consequently, marrying a female slave from *Ahl al-Kitab* is permissible if *al-Muhsanāt* is understood as *al-Iffah*, but prohibited if interpreted as *al-Hurriyah* (Al-Alusi al-Baghdadi, t.th, p. 66).



Regarding the marriage of a Muslim man with a woman from *Ahl al-Kitab*, there are two distinct views: one prohibits it, while the other permits it (Ar-Rāzi t.th, p. 59-61).

Ash-Shabiyy

Al-Sabi'in [صابئين] or *al-sabi'un* [صابئون] refers to individuals who leave one religion and enter another, deriving from the root word sha-ba-a [ص-ب-ا] which means to exit. Raghīb al-Asfahani describes them as followers of the religion of Prophet Nuh, while other interpretations define them as anyone who converts to a different faith or changes their religion (al-Asfahani, t.th, p. 274). In the Qur'an, this term appears three times (QS. al-Baqarah/2:62, al-Maidah/5:69, al-Hajj/22:17). QS. al-Baqarah/2:62 refers to individuals who believed in Prophet Muhammad SAW or previous scriptures but felt their faith was incomplete (Shihab, p. 891). According to al-Maraghi, *al-sabi'un* are the Muwahhidun [موحدون] those who believe in monotheism, acknowledge the influence of celestial bodies, and recognize prophets (Shihab, p. 891), meanwhile, al-Nawawi identifies them as former Christians, such as Qais bin Sai'dah, Waraqah bin Naufal, and Salman Al-Farisi (Shihab, p. 891).

Al-Majuz

The term *al-Majusi* [المجوسى] refers to adherents of the Magian religion, with their faith being called *Majusiyah* [مجوسية] (Shihab, p. 560). In *Mu'jam al-Wasith*, Ibrahim defines *al-Majus* as worshippers of the sun, moon, and fire. This term has been in use since the 3rd century CE and is also broadly associated with sorcery (Madkur, p.889). According to Ibn Manzur in *Lisan al-'Arab*, *al-Majus* can refer to a specific tribe or, in Persian, *minj-kush*, meaning "people with small ears." The poet Imru' al-Qais uses the expression *ka naari Majūs* (كنار مجوس), illustrating the worship of fire (Shihab, p. 561).

In the Qur'an, the term *al-Majus* [المجوس] is mentioned only once, in QS. Al-Hajj/22:17. This verse categorizes humanity based on their beliefs: believers, Jews, Christians, Sabians, Magians, and polytheists. Most Islamic scholars do not classify the Sabians and Magians as *Ahl al-Kitab*, although there is some divergence of opinion (Shihab, p. 561).

Interpretation of Classical and Contemporary related to Interreligious Marriages in the Marriage Verses of Ahl al-Kitab

Wedding Verses of Ahl al-Kitab

Surah al-Baqarah verse 221

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُ ۖ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ
وَلَا تُنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا ۚ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ
أَعْجَبَكُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ
بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ وَيُبَيِّنُ ءَايَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave man is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those

invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness, by His permission. And he makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember” (QS. Al-Baqarah; 221).

Surah Al-Maidah Verse 5.

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَالٌ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَالٌ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ه

“This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking [secret] lovers. And whoever denies the faith - his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”(QS. Al-Maidah; 5).

Surah Al-Hajj Verse 17

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“Indeed, those who have believed and those who were Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associated with Allah – Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, over all things, Witness”.

Marriage with Ahl al-Kitab from the Perspective of Classical Tafsir

Husain al-Dhahabi and Manna' Khalil al-Qattan divide the periods of tafsir into two: the classical period (the time of the Prophet, companions, and tabi'in) and the period of codification (from the late Umayyad Caliphate to the early Abbasid Caliphate, 1st-2nd century AH) (Al-Dhahabi, 1396/1976). Regarding the interpretation of QS. Al-Maidah/5:5, which addresses marriage between Muslim men and women from Ahl al-Kitab, the majority of scholars permit such marriages but differ in their understanding of *al-Muhsanat*: either as free women (*al-Harair*) or women who preserve their chastity (*al-Afa'if*).

Abu Bakar allowed marriage with free women from Ahl al-Kitab who hold *dzimmi* status, excluding those in a state of war (*barbi*), aligning with the majority view of the companions except for Ibn Umar, who prohibited it (Al-Jasas, t.th, p. 461). Umar bin al-Khattab, in the case of Hudhaifah, advised divorce but did not declare it forbidden. He emphasized that *al-Muhsanat* refers to women who preserve their chastity (Al-Jasas, t.th, p. 459). Uthman married Nailah, a Christian woman who converted to Islam before consummation (Kathir, t.th., p. 163). Ali was more cautious, prohibiting the consumption of meat from Arab Christians due to their drinking of khamr. Ibn Abbas r.a. allowed marrying a *dzimmi* woman in accordance with QS. Al-Maidah/5:5 and QS. Al-Baqarah/2:221 as an exception (*istisna'*) (Al-Zarkasyi, t.th, p. 29) Abdullah ibn Jubayr cited a hadith: (*We may marry the women of Ahl al-Kitab, but their men may not marry our women*) (Al-Zarkasyi, t.th, p. 29).

Although the chain of narration (sanad) is debated, its substance is agreed upon by scholars (Al-Zarkasyi, t.th, p. 29). Ibn Umar rejected marriage with Ahl al-Kitab, considering them polytheists (*mushriki*), as indicated in QS. Al-Baqarah/2:221. In a narration recorded by Al-Bukhari and Al-Nuhas, Ibn Umar stated: (*Allah forbids polytheistic women over Muslim men, and I know no greater polytheism than the woman who says her lord is Jesus, a servant of Allah*) (HR. Al-Bukhari, 5285).

The companions' views on marriage with Ahl al-Kitab varied. Abu Bakar allowed marriage to free and *dhimmi* women, Umar permitted it with the condition of preserving chastity (*al-Muhsanat*), Uthman held the

same view, while Ali disapproved without declaring it forbidden. Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Mas'ud did not oppose it, but Ibn Umar prohibited it, considering Ahl al-Kitab as polytheists.

Table 2. Allowing and Forbidding

Allowing	Forbidding
Abu Bakar (Dzimmi)	Abdullah bin Umar (People of The Holy Book are Polytheist)
Umar bin al-Khattab (<i>Afa'if</i>)	
Usman bin Affan	
Ali bin Abu Thalib (Denounce)	
Abdullah bin Abbas	
Abdullah bin Mas'ud	

Ath-Tabari (W. 310 H)

Ibn Jarir interpreted QS. al-Maidah/5:5 as allowing a Muslim man to marry a lady of the Ahl al-Kitab as long as the woman is included in *al-Muhsanat*, which is either free (*al-Hara'ir*) or protected (*al-Afa'if*) (Al-Tabari, p. 130). He emphasized that the Ahl al-Kitab are not polytheists and that those who may marry are Jewish or Christian women who follow their teachings, (*Ibid*, p. 129) have their honor safeguarded, and are not slaves, according to QS. al-Nisa'/4:25 (*Ibid*, p. 147). In contrast to popular belief, Ibn Jarir allows marriage with a free woman from the Ahl al-Kitab, even if she has committed adultery.

Regarding the verse Marriage is legal as long as it is not intended for adultery or to create a concubine. Ibn Abbas said this marriage is lawful with a dowry and witnesses and that those who oppose the Prophet Muhammad SAW's teachings will face the consequences (*Ibid*, p. 149-150).

Al-Baghawi (W. 516 H)

According to al-Baghawi, Ahl al-Kitab includes both Jews and Christians. In discussing interfaith marriage, he mentioned the majority of scholars, including Mujahid, who allow marriage with al-Muhsanat women, whether they are believers or members of the Ahl al-Kitab, protected (Afifah) or not (Al-Baghawi, 1409, p. 19). However, some scholars do not permit it, such as in QS. An-Nisa'/ 4:25 regarding Muslim males marrying Ahl al-Kitab slave women, in contrast to the viewpoint of Ibn Abbas who regards such marriage as valid only after paying tax, QS. At-Taubah/9:29 [يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ حَتَّى]. Al-Baghawi likewise agrees with al-Hasan and al-Sya'bi on the issue of protected women (*Ibid*, p. 149-150).

Az-Zamakhsyari (W. 1144 H)

Al-Zamakhsari interprets QS. al-Maidah/5:5 regarding Ahl al-Kitab as *al-Muhsanat* women, namely women who are free and whose honor is maintained. In agreement with the ulama in general, al-Muhsanat is considered a woman worthy of marriage. However, for those who are not independent, as in Abu Hanifah's opinion, this is the same as for other Muslims, even though it is contrary to the al-Shafi'i School which quotes the opinion of Ibn Umar which states that the Ahl al-Kitab are polytheists (QS. Al-Baqarah/2:221). Al-Zamakhsari stated that marrying an Ahl al-Kitab woman is a relief (*rukhsah*), not a desire because believers are superior to Ahl al-Kitab (*Ibid*, p. 149-150).

Al-Qurthubi (W. 671 H)

According to Al-Qurthubi in his explanation of QS. Al-Maidah/5:5, this verse solely addresses the marriage of a Muslim to an Ahl al-Kitab woman who only fits the standards of al-Muhsanat and has no other status. Al-Qurthubi mentioned other scholars' discussions about the criterion for Ahl al-Kitab, namely whether

they are kafir harbi or kafir mu'ahad. *Al-Muhsanat's* criteria included a remark from Ibn Abbas, who indicated that they were awake and sensible ladies (*'Ajjafat and 'Aqilat*) (Al-Qurthubi, 1427/2006, p. 321). Meanwhile, according to al-Sha'bi, they avoid adultery and bathe after performing the major hadats (*jinabah*). Mujahid deemed them free ladies. Abu Ubaid considers that marrying an Ahl al-Kitab slave is haram because it violates the QS. Al-Maidah/5:25, as does al-Razi. However, Al-Qurthubi did not justify these opinions (Al-Qurthubi, 1427/2006, p. 321). He tends to state that Ahl al-Kitab women who meet the requirements of *al-Muhsanat*, who do not deny the teachings of Islam, may be married (Al-Qurthubi, 1427/2006, p. 321).

Ibnu Katsir (W. 774 H)

In his commentary, Ibn Kathir recounted a narration from Ibn Jarir al-Thabari concerning QS. al-Maidah/5:5 about *al-Muhsanat*, which refers to women who retain their honor (*ajjafah*) and are free (*hurrah*), not slaves. According to Mujahid, *al-Muhsanat* are free women who keep their honor, (Ibn Kathir, 1421/2000, p. 82.) as the majority of scholars believe. Qur'an al-Nisa'/4:25 states: (*...women who take care of themselves, not adulterers, and not women who take men as pets*) (QS. al-Nisa' / 4:25).

Scholars have different opinions about Ahl al-Kitab in QS. al-Maidah/5:5 (Kathir, p. 82). Some, such as the Shafi'i school of thought, call them Israeliyat women; others state that women are zimmi, not harbi, according to the QS. al-Taubah/9:29: (*...fight those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day*)(QS. al-Taubah/9:29).

Ibn Kathir emphasized that QS. al-Maidah/5:5 allows marrying women of the People of the Book who are free and maintain their honor (Kathir, p. 296). Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal emphasized that marriage with an adulterous woman is not valid before she repents, strengthening the importance of the concept of "*ihsan*" in maintaining honor (Kathir, p. 297).

Al-Baidhawi (W. 685 H)

Al-Baidawi provided a detailed interpretation of QS. al-Ma'idah/5:5, claiming that marriage with the People of the Book is permitted only with women who have the status of *al-Muhsanat*, i.e. free women (*al-Hara'ir*) and shielded (*al-Afa'if*) from adultery. He emphasized that women of the People of the Book with the status of al-Harbiyat, i.e. polytheistic women with the position of kafir Harbi, are not allowed to marry (Al-Baidawi, 1416/1996, p. 298). Regarding food, Al-Baidawi described Ali bin Abi Thalib as saying that the Christians of Bani Tagallub, who consume alcohol, are not among the People of the Book. For magi, even though they are required to pay Jizyah, their marriage and food are still prohibited for Muslims. The Prophet SAW said: *Treat them as you would treat the Ahl al-Kitab* (*Ibid*, p. 148).

Jalalain (W. 864 H)

Jalaluddin Al-Mahalli and his students, Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, read Qs. Al-Baqarah/2:221 by the mufasssirs' general position, which forbids marriage between a Muslim and a polytheist (infidel) woman, except women of the People of the Book, as stated in Qs. Al-Maidah/5:5. The restriction also applies to Muslim women who seek to marry a polytheist or infidel man, to avoid invites that can lead to Hell [يدعو النيران], as Islam advocates for the path to Heaven (Al-Suyuti, t.th, p. 35).

Al-Khazin (W. 741 H)

According to al-Khazin's interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah/2:221, polytheism encompasses all forms of polytheism, including idol worship, fire, and people of the book (Jews and Christians). This verse is exclusively for free women from the Ahl al-Kitab, according to QS. al-Maidah/5: 5. According to Ibn Abbas r.a., "*muhsanat*" refers to Arab women who worship idols or do not possess sacred texts, as Qatadah contended. Most scholars agree that the prohibition on marrying polytheist women in general (QS. al-Taubah/9:30), includes Jews, Christians, and idol worshippers,(Al-Bagdadi, t.th, p. 432-433), even if they are wealthy, to avoid slander and calls to damnation (يدعو النيران). Non-harbi Ahl al-Kitab women who

refrain from adultery are allowed to marry. Al-Razi advised marrying free women (الحرائر) (*Ibid.*, p. 433), while Al-Qurthubi and al-Baidawi allowed marrying Ahl al-Kitab women who were muhsanat and free.

Al-Suyuti (W. 911 H)

Al-Suyuti interprets QS. al-Maidah/5:5, allows a Muslim to marry an Ahl al-Kitab woman, but not vice versa. Al-Suyuti did not specify the criteria for al-Muhsanat, but instead mentioned two criteria for Ahl al-Kitab, as quoted from the Qatadah history, namely: (1) women who believe and maintain their honor, and (2) cleanse themselves from major hadath (*jinabah*). The opinion of Ibn Abbas. also confirms that it is halal for Ahl al-Kitab to marry because they believe in the Torah and the Gospel (Al-Suyuti, 1424/2003, p. 198).

This opinion is justified in accordance with the words of the Prophet Muhammad who permitted this kind of marriage with his words. People of the Book may marry the women of the Ahl al-Kitab, but their men may not marry our women (Ibn Kathir, p. 265).

Al-Alusi (W. 1270 H)

According to Al-Alusi, in understanding QS. al-Maidah/5:5, it is permissible to marry an Ahl al-Kitab woman as long as she is a believer. Al-Alusi opposes Muslim men marrying women based on the QS. al-Mujadilah/58:22 because they are considered enemies of Islam. This disagreement does not make it haram, but it is unacceptable because marriage is supposed to bring harmony and love (QS. al-Taubah/30:20) (Al-Baghdad, t.th, p. 66). Al-Alusi allows al-Muhsanat women to marry individuals who have converted to Islam or are original believers. This opinion contradicts Ibn Umar who prohibited it based on the Prophet's hadith: "*The Messenger of Allah forbade marrying women except those who believe among the muhajirin.*" (Al-Baghdad, t.th, p. 66). *We may marry the women of the Ahl al-Kitab, but their men may not marry our women* (Kathir, 265).

Table 3. Jalalain

No	Intepretation	Law
1	Ibn Jarir al-Tabari	The Ahl al-Kitab are not polytheists. Ahl al-Kitab women who are allowed to marry by Muslims are those who are free (al-Hara'ir) and have their honor maintained (Afa'if), whether Jews or Christians and who follow the precepts of their religion, whether they are Bani Israel or not.
2	Al-Baghawi	It is allowed to marry Muhsanat women who are autonomous and believe in the Ahl al-Kitab, regardless of whether they are protected women (afa'ifah).
3	Al-Zamakshari	Al-Muhsanat women are free and honorable women who are worthy of marriage.
4	Al-Qurthubi	It is permissible to marry a woman from Ahl al-Kitab, which is only a general al-Muhsanat [maintained] criterion, without any other criteria or restrictions.
5	Al-Baidawi	It is permissible to marry an al-Muhsanat woman who is free, and protected from adultery.
6	Al-Khazin	Al-Muhsanat women who have the status of Dhimmi are not Harbi, whether they are Jews or Christians who are protected from adultery they can marry.
7	Ibn Kathir	He permits marriage between women from Ahl al-Kitab who believe, are free [hara'ir], and are immune to allegations of adultery.
8	Jalalain	It is permissible, but there is fear over their invitation, which may lead to a wrong turn (hell).
9	Al-Suyuti	Marrying muhsanat ladies is allowed because they are honorable women who shield themselves from vile nature and bathe in hadath from every Jinabah.

10	Al-Alusi	It is acceptable to marry them while there are no Muslim women during the conflict, however after Fathu Makkah, this marriage status no longer applies.
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Marriage of the People of the Book from a Contemporary Tafsir Perspective

Muhammad Abdub and Rasyid Ridha (W. 1323 H dan W. 1354 H)

In his interpretation, Rashid Rida raises contemporary issues related to the meaning of *al-Muhsanat* in the QS. Al-Maidah/5:5, which reads: *The translation: "And (it is permissible for you to marry) women who maintain honor among believing women and women who maintain honor among those who were given the book before you."* (QS. Al-Maidah Verse 5)

Rashid Rida defines *al-Muhsanat* as *al-Afa'if* (protected from something bad) (Abdub dan Ridha, t.th, p. 283). This means that married spouses must uphold honor and avoid disgusting behaviors like infidelity (*Ibid.*, p. 351). This differs from Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, Ibn Abbas, and Mujahid, who saw *al-Muhsanat* as a free woman (*al-Hara'ir*). Rashid Rida further emphasized that marrying an Ahl al-Kitab man is equivalent to the restriction on marrying a polytheist man for grounds of family leadership, given the ulama's agreement on family leadership status (Abdub dan Ridha, t.th, p. 283).

Al-Maraghi (W. 1371 H)

After clarifying the legality of slaying the Ahl al-Kitab, it is stated that they are not permitted to marry their wives except under particular conditions. Ahl al-Kitab women who are legally married must have muhsanat status, be liberated (*bara'ir*), and believe. This applies to Jewish or Christian women who have paid their dowry (Al-Maraghi, 1365/1945, p.59). However, if the Ahl al-Kitab are unbelievers or polytheists, marrying their men is forbidden under Nas al-Sunnah and Ijma'. This is because men occupy a more dominating position in the household, therefore non-Muslim husbands can introduce polytheism, upset family unity, and cause divorce (Al-Maraghi, p.154). Abu Hanifah emphasized the strictness of these conditions in order to maintain the honor of both parties, because violations of the Shari'a make the marriage invalid.

Muhammad Sayyid Qutb (W. 1385 H)

In the context of social interaction, interacting with Ahl al-Kitab is permitted even though Islam rejects religious freedom. This does not mean ignoring the importance of cooperation, including in marital relationships. Sayyid Qutb agrees with the permissibility of marrying Muhsanat women from the Ahl al-Kitab who are *faithful* and awake (أَفَافٍ), apart from having to be free (حَرَائِر) (Sayyid Qutb, t.th, p. 176.). Sayyid Qutb regarded their marriage as acceptable due to their shared faith in the divine religion. The stipulations include providing a dowry, not dishonoring the woman, and not treating her like a pet. Islam came to improve their dignity and provide a better existence. Sayyid Qutb quoted Ibn Kathir as saying that it was permissible to marry Jewish women, like in the narrative of Huzaifah. Sayyid Qutb stated in that marriage with a non-Muslim does not bring salvation in this world or the hereafter (Sayyid Qutb, t.th, p. 241).

Wahbah Az-Zuhaili (W. 1436 H)

Wahbah Zuhaili agrees with the Jumhur Ulama in allowing food slaughtered by the Ahl al-Kitab, which includes Jews and Christians, because they obtained insights through the prophets and their books, notably the Torah and Gospel. The halal character of their slaughter is reciprocal for Muslims, however in marriage, only Muslim men can marry Ahl al-Kitab women, and Ahl al-Kitab men cannot marry Muslim women (Al-Zuhaili, t.th, p. 94). In terms of marriage, Wahbah Zuhaili decided to marry a woman of *al-Muhsanat*, believing woman from the Ahl al-Kitab who is free, protected from adultery and obligated to pay dowry (Al-Zuhaili, p. 95).

Ali Ash-Shabuni (W. 1442 H)

Ali Ash-Shabuni criticized the concept that the verse of al-Maida allows for marriage. However, Ibn Umar declined because he was concerned that the marriage would have a negative influence, particularly on the husband and children. Marriage can develop love, which has an impact on both family life and children. Children are frequently closer to their mothers than to their fathers. If defamation is no longer an issue, the ulama has no cause to oppose the marriage (Al-Shabuni, 1420 / 1999, p. 384).

Ayy-Sya'rawi (W. 1419 H)

Al-Muhsanat has two meanings: (1) free women, and (2) married women. The word *Ihsan* (إحسان) means to guard oneself from undesirable company. During the Jahiliyah period, free women were known to be able to keep their honor and avoid engaging in acts of adultery, which were solely committed by slaves. When Hindun, Abu Sofyan's wife, enquired about the conduct of adultery, Rasulullah stated that free women had never been accused of being engaged (Al-Sha'rawi, 2006, p. 536). According to Mutawwali Al-Sha'rawi, *al-Muhsanat* is a more appropriate definition of married women because they can refrain from adultery, both believing women and Ahl al-Kitab, in exchange for a dowry (Al-Sha'rawi, 2006, p. 536).

Muhammad Yunus (W. 1402 H)

According to Mahmud Yunus in *Tafsir Qur'an Indonesia*, apart from allowing eating food slaughtered by the Ahl al-Kitab (Jews and Christians), Islam also allows marrying *Muhsanat* women from among the Ahl al-Kitab, provided they pay a dowry, do not intend to commit adultery, and do not make them secret friends (Yunus, 1414/1993, p. 146). This viewpoint is comparable to that of the Ministry of Religion Team, which emphasizes the legality of marrying believing women who are free rather than slaves. However, Muslim women are not allowed to marry an Ahl al-Kitab man who is an infidel. (*Al-Muhsanat* is a woman who protects her honor) (*Ibid.*, p. 379).

Hamka (W. 1401 H)

According to QS. al-Baqarah/2:256 (لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ) a Muslim is allowed to marry an Ahl al-Kitab woman (Jews and Christians) without first converting to Islam. This demonstrates remarkable Islamic tolerance, as it includes two permissions: eating Ahl al-Kitab sacrifices and marrying their women (Hamka, 1982, p.144). A Muslim with the light of monotheism becomes the head of the household and a role model for his wife and children. Hamka understands *al-Muhsanat* as free women, including mu'minat and Ahl al-Kitab, who are not adulterers or slaves. According to QS. al-Maidah/5:5, the legal standing of Muslim wives and Ahl al-Kitab women is equal; however, marriage to Ahl al-Kitab women is prohibited for Muslims who are weak in their faith in upholding their akidah (*Ibid.*, p. 145).

Muhammad Qurays Shihab (L. 1363 H)

According to Quraish Shihab, in the verse al-Maidah/5:5, *al-Muhsanat* is a woman who maintains honor and must be given priority in marriage, whether she is a believer or from the Ahl al-Kitab. He also interpreted that *al-Muhsanat*, when combined with *al-Kitab* experts, means women are free and their honor is maintained. Quraish Shihab highlighted the importance of equality of religion and outlook on life for household harmony, as reflected in (Shihab, 2000, p. 29). He permitted the slaughter and marriage of Muslim men with women of the People of the Book but warned them to be careful because disbelief could result in punishment in the hereafter (Shihab, 2000, p. 29).

Nurcholis Majid (W. 1426 H)

The first verse revealed about marriage with non-Muslims is QS. al-Baqarah/2:221, which prohibits marrying polytheists. However, the following verse enables marriage with women of the People of the Book (Christians and Jews), which is an abrogation (*nasikh*) and specialization (*mukhsas*) of the preceding verse. According to Nurchalis Madjid, under fiqh rules, the last verse, QS. al-Maidah, takes precedence over the

law of QS. Al-Baqarah (Madjid, 2004),p.162.). He further emphasized that the scripture and hadith make no clear prohibition against Muslim women marrying non-Muslim men. Hadith According to Nurchalis, those who prohibit it are not genuine and are included in the mauquf hadith (Al-Tahhan, 2001, p. 130-284).

Table 4. Interpretation

NO	Interpretation	Law
1	Muhammad Abduh dan Rasyid Ridha	Ahl al-Kitab women who are al-Afa'if (preserved) are free to marry, however married men and women must protect themselves from infidelity.
2	Al-Maraghi	It is not allowed to marry a Muhsanat woman unless she has fulfilled the absolute requirements of being free (hara'ir) and a believer.
3	Sayyid Qutub	It is permissible to marry a Muhsanat woman who is a believer, protected and protected (afa'if), and free (hara'ir).
4	Al-Sha'rawi	It is permissible to marry Muhsanat mukminah and Ahl al-Kitab women who maintain honor and avoid bad deeds, provided that a dowry is given.
5	Ali al-Sabuni	It is permitted to marry a Muhsanat woman who is a believer, protected (afa'if), and free (hara'ir).
6	Muhammad Yunus	It is acceptable to marry Muhsanat, or women who believe in the Ahl al-Kitab, after paying their dowry, but not to commit adultery or take a secret friend.
7	Wahbah Zuhaili	It is permissible to marry al-Muhsanat (المحصنات) women from Ahl al-Kitab, both Jews and Christians, provided they are independent, looked after and pay a dowry.
8	Hamka	It is acceptable to marry al-Muhsanat women based on samahah (tolerance), to women who are fortified, free, and honorable, and are not adulterers or slaves.
9	Quraish Shihab	It is permitted to marry a free woman; her honor is preserved, as long as she is of the same religion and shares her attitude on life, for family tranquility.
10	Nurchalis Madjid	The permissibility of Muslim men to marry Christian or Jewish women (Ahl al-Kitab) repeals and clarifies the restriction on marrying polytheist women.

Conclusion

The Qur'an mentions Ahlu al-Kitab / أهلالكتاب 30 times, referring to adherents of monotheistic religions, particularly Jews and Christians. This topic sheds light on interfaith marriage. The phrase Al-Musyrikāt / المشركات appears 168 times with diverse derivations, indicating a prohibition on marriage with idol worshippers. The term "*al-Muhsanāt*" (المحصنات) refers to liberated and honorable women. In addition, the word Ash-Shabiyy / الصَّبِيَّة is used in the context of faiths other than Islam, such as in QS. al-Baqarah/2:62, QS. al-Maidah/5:69, and al-Hajj/22:17, as well as al-Majusi / المجوسى, which refers to worshippers of fire and heavenly bodies.

Classical commentaries, including Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Al-Baghawi, and Ibn Kathir, conclude that it is allowed to marry a lady from the People of the Book who is faithful, independent, and honorable, but is afraid of being influenced by heretical ways. Some argue that this marriage is not legitimate after Fathu Makkah. Contemporary scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Wahbah Zuhaili argue that marrying a lady from an Expert of the Book who meets the conditions, such as being a believer and free of adultery, is permitted. They also emphasized the significance of religious equality in preserving peace within the family.

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