

# The Meaning of *Nafs* in the Qur'an Based on Quraish Shihab's Interpretation

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**Abstract:** the word *nafs* (soul) in the context of human speech shows a side in human that has good and bad potential. In the Qur'an, *nafs* is mentioned 295 times. The type of this research is *library research*, namely research through library data that is representative and relevant to the research object in the form of notes, transcripts, books, interpretation books, and Arabic language dictionaries etc. The collection of research data is obtained by collecting and analyzing data relating to the *nafs* and books relating to human personality data sources using primary data, secondary data, and tertiary data. The research method used in this research is the method of *Maudhu'i's* (thematic) of interpretation that is interpreting the Qur'an according to a particular theme or topic. The results of this study indicate that *the meaning of first nafs* is the power of lust anger and stomach contained in the human soul and is the source of the emergence of despicable morals. As for *the second meaning, nafs* is a spiritual soul that is *lathif*, spiritual and rabbani. This *nafs* in the second sense is what constitutes human rights which distinguishes from animals and other creatures. He classified the *Nafs* into three, those are: *First, Al-Nafs al-Muthmainnah*, namely: A clear and bright soul with the remembrance of Allah and eradication of the influence of lust and despicable qualities; *second, al-Nafs al-Lawamah*, namely the soul that regrets itself; third, *al-Nafs al-Amarah*, which is the soul that always commands evil.

**Keywords:** *Nafs*, al-Qur'an

## Introduction

The Qur'an was revealed as a guide (hudan) for all humans to the end of time. The Qur'an has given the statement that noble humans are not determined by how much wealth they have or how good their physical appearance is that they are profane not eternal. But the most noble people are those who are most devoted. Allah said in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ  
لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

*O man, Verily we created you from a man and a woman and made you nations and tribes so that you would know one another. Surely the noblest person among you is on the side of Allah who is the one who most taqwa among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing (QS. Al-Hujurat -49: 13)<sup>1</sup>*

Some of the Prophet's hadith also explain that Allah does not see physical conditions (material elements) but what is witnessed is the heart and deeds. Like the following hadith:

*Tell us 'Amr al-Naqid from Kathir Ibn Hisham from Ja'far Ibn Burqan from Yazid Ibn al-Asam from Abu Hurairah: The Prophet sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam said,' Verily Allah does not look at your likeness and not property you, but he looks at your heart and your deeds. '(Narrated by Muslims).<sup>2</sup>*

The Qur'an has claimed that worship and service in the frame of self-servitude (*ubudiyah*) to God is the main goal of the creation of humans and jinn. It is through self-servitude that humans and jinn can obtain happiness in the world and the hereafter as promised by

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Religion RI, Al-qur'an dan Terjemahnya, (Jakarta 1990) p . 847

<sup>2</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj Abu al-Husain al-Qushairi al-Nisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, ( Beirut : Dar hadis,2001 ), Juz VIII, p.363

the Qur'an itself.<sup>3</sup>

However, in today's modern life, humans are increasingly preoccupied with various worldly affairs and are supported by various sophisticated technological facilities, increasingly making people forget about their identity, so that the main goal of human creation becomes increasingly blurred and lost.

This phenomenon of deterioration in understanding and awareness of identity cannot be separated from the influence and potential that exists and is embedded in every human being. In nature, humans have basic potential in themselves, and this potential depends on the impulse of the soul that is in each person.

The good and bad of human behavior is very much determined by the strong weaknesses and influence on the potential that exists. If the dominance of this influence is good, then humans will tend to do good, and vice versa if the bad and evil influences dominate, then humans will have bad and evil tendencies and get away from God. The potential referred to here is lust.

The *nafs* itself contains several meanings, including soul, self, lust and others. Lust can also mean emotion or anger and ambition or desire in humans (in Indonesian it is called *lust*). The above meanings are often used among tasawwuf experts, because they interpret the word *nafs* as something that includes despicable traits in humans. That is why they assert about the need to fight lust or curb it.

Humans are expected to be able to control the lust that is on him so as not to exceed the limit. In other words, the *nafs* itself can affect the nature or personality of a person who at first was born into a state of *fitrah* to become uncontrollable and ugly personality. Therefore it is necessary for humans to understand what passion is and how to control or curb lust.

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<sup>3</sup> See the example QS.Adz-Dzaariyaat : 56, *Alquran dan Tafsirnya*, ( Jakarta: Lentera Abadi, 2010), Jilid IX, p 485.

Humans are created by God to have lust as a driver to work to make ends meet or avoid the dangers that might befall, such as appetite and sex. If humans do not have appetite and drink, of course he will be weak and sick or die. If there is no sexual lust, of course humans will not breed and no one will enliven and change this earth. Likewise, if humans do not have the desire to defend themselves, humans will perish and be destroyed.

But if humans indulge in lust, of course he will act against the boundary. As a result, it not only destroys itself, but also other humans and surrounding beings. Therefore lust needs to be controlled so that it continues to run and does not deviate on evil as the word of Allah surah Al-mukminun verse 71:

وَلَوْ أَتَّبَعَ الْآحِقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ  
بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

*And if that truth obeys their desires, surely sky and earth will be destroyed, and all that is in it. We even warned them, but they turned away from the warning. (QS.Al Mukminun)<sup>4</sup>*

Lust is likened to a horse vehicle which, although always held by the reins so that the journey is straight towards the destination, and if it is not controlled can deviate left and right until lost. People who can control their passions (can control themselves) then in general those people who get progress and contiguity in life, because he will be kept away from the bad consequences of lust.

Lust is one of the troops and the heart is shepherded. But it was the strongest opposing and disputing force with it. Whoever believes it, the kingdom will be chaotic and the intruders will enter it.<sup>5</sup>

To explain the verses that explain the nafs, the method used by

<sup>4</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Alquran dan Terjemahnya*, p. 534

<sup>5</sup> Ali ibn Muhammad ad-Dihami, *Mengendalikan Hawa nafsu*, (Jakarta: Qisthi Press 2011), p 7-8

maudhui, The interpretation of the *maudhu'i* is a method of interpretation which is triggered by the scholars to understand the meanings in the verses of the Qur'an. Before we know deeply about the interpretation method, the researcher will describe the meaning of this interpretation method.

Language interpretation follows the wazan "taf'il", derived from the word al-Fasr, which means explaining, revealing or explaining abstract meanings. The verb follows wazan "*dharaba-yadhribu*" and *nashara yanshuru*". It is said, "*fasara (ash-syai'a) yafsiru*" and "*yafsuru, fasran*" and "*fasarahu*" means *abanahu* (explain). The word *at-tafsir* and *al-fasr* means to explain and reveal the closed.<sup>6</sup>

The word interpretation is taken from the Arabic expression: *fassartu al-faras* (الفرس فسرت), which means I release the horse. This is analogous to an interpreter who releases all of his thinking abilities to be able to decipher the meaning of the Qur'anic verses hidden behind the text and difficult to understand.

In the Qur'anic verse also explained, surat al-Furqan verse 33:

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

Do not the unbelievers come to you (bring) something strange, but We bring you the truth and the best explanation.<sup>7</sup>

When viewed from all the meanings above, then interpretations in language have the meaning of revealing a meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. While the interpretation in terms of terminology or the terms of the scholars in defining different opinions on the editorial side, but if viewed in terms of meaning and purpose have the same understanding. Understanding interpretation has two points of view, some interpretations as scientific disciplines that interpret

<sup>6</sup> Manna Khalil al Qathtan, *Pengantar Studi Ilmu Al Quran*, terj. Aunur Rafiq El-Mazni, (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2006), p. 408.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Rais, dkk, *The Noble: AlQuranul Karim*, (Depok: Nelja, 2012), p. 363

interpretations as activities or activities. However, according to researchers more agree to the first opinion, namely interpretation as a science.

Here are some interpretations in terms of the terminology:

1. According to Az Zarkasy quoted by al-Suyuthi, interpretation means the knowledge of understanding the book of Allah Swt. What was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, explained its meaning and issued laws and wisdom.<sup>8</sup>
2. According to Abu Hayyan, followed by al-Alusi, interpretation is a scientific discipline that examines the way the legal pronunciation, both the particular (*juz'i*) and the global (*kulli*), and the meanings contained in it.
3. Interpretation is the science that examines the aspects which include the Qur'an which are concentrated on the purposes of Allah SWT. which is contained in the Qur'an to the degree of human ability.

In general, if you see the explanation above, that interpretation is a science that is used to study the Qur'an comprehensively. Interpretation is also a scientific activity that functions to understand and explain the contents of the Qur'an with the sciences used.

The *maudhu'i* is attributed to the *al-maudhu'*, which means the topic or material of a discussion. In Arabic the *maudhu'i* comes from Arabic (موضوع) which is the isim maf'ul of fi'il madhi (وضع) which means putting, making, insulting, lying, and making.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hasbiy Asshiddieqy also give same opinion that interpretation is understand the meanings of the Qur'an, laws, behaviours, and others directions to get happiness in the world and hereafter. Hasbiy Asshiddieqy, *Sejarah dan pengantar ilmu AlQuran dan tafsir*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), p. 174. Also see on Chaerudji Abd. Chalik, *Ulum AlQuran*, (Jakarta; Diadit Media, 2007), p. 221.

<sup>9</sup> Warson Munawir, *Kamus Al-Munawir Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap*, (Surabaya: Pustaka Progesif, 1997), p. 1564-1565.

Semantically, the interpretation of *maudhu'i* means interpreting the Qur'an according to a particular theme or topic.

In Indonesian it is commonly called a thematic interpretation.<sup>10</sup> Interpretation of *maudhu 'i* in the opinion of the majority of scholars' is "*Collecting all the verses of the Qur'an which have the same purpose and theme.*"<sup>11</sup>

All the verses related to a theme are reviewed and collected related. The study is in depth and complete from various aspects related to it such as *asbāb an-nuzūl*, vocabulary and so on. All are explained in detail and thoroughly and are supported by arguments or facts that can be accounted for scientifically, both arguments come from the Qur'an, hadith, and rational thought.<sup>12</sup>

The Qur'an indeed brings together themes that need to be explored using the *maudhu'i* method. If interpreting the Qur'an with a method like this we will be able to establish syari'ah that is suitable for every time and place.<sup>13</sup> From there we can establish life laws that are ready to deal with changes in the dynamics of life, the laws of *wadh'iyyah* and the external elements that we face in daily diversity.<sup>14</sup>

During the journey of the presence of the Qur'an, it is believed that it will always keep dialogue with each generation and condition. The Qur'an must be able to answer all the challenges of life that are very diverse so that the values contained can be

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<sup>10</sup> Usman, *Ilmu Tafsir*, (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2009), p. 311

<sup>11</sup> Abdul Hayy Al-Farmawi, *Al-Bidayah Fi Al-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i*, (Mesir: Dirasat Manhajiyah Maudhu'iyyah, 1997), p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> Nashiruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran Alquran*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012) cet. IV, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> M. Baqir Hakim, *Ulumul Quran*, terj. Nashirul Haq, dkk, (Jakarta: Al-Huda, 2006), p. 507.

<sup>14</sup> 12Abdul Hayy Al-Farmawi, *Al-Bidayah Fi Al-Tafsir Al-Maudhu'i*,

realized ideally. One of the paths taken is interpreting the Qur'an with the *maudhu'i* (thematic) method.<sup>15</sup>

In accordance with the name *thematic*, then the main characteristic of this method is to highlight the theme, title, or topic of discussion, so there is someone who calls it a *topical* method. Mufassir will look for themes that exist in the community that are in the Qur'an or from others. The themes chosen will be thoroughly reviewed from various aspects according to the instructions in the verses that will be interpreted. The problems that exist must be thoroughly studied in order to get a solution to the problem.<sup>16</sup>

To solve the problems in question, the method of interpretation is born and follows the rules of scientific development that often occur in interpretation methods. So from that this method has several stages or periods which at first this method is based on the classical interpretation method which acts as the guardian, then after being independent, this method separates and has the characteristic of the Qur'anic themes which are separated from the general framework classical interpretation method.<sup>17</sup>

Using this method, the explanation of the *nafs* becomes deeper and has a strong meaning so that it can get a clearer and deeper understanding of the *Nafs*.

### **Definition of *Nafs***

In the large Indonesian dictionary, the *nafs* (lust) is also understood as a strong impulse to do bad things<sup>18</sup>, whereas in the Qur'an the *nafs* does not always have a negative connotation.

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<sup>15</sup> M. Alfatih Suryadilaga, dkk, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir*, (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2010), cet. III, p 49.

<sup>16</sup> Nashiruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran Alquran*, p. 152.

<sup>17</sup> M. Baqir Hakim, *Ulumul Quran*, terj. Nashirul Haq, dkk, p. 510.

<sup>18</sup> Depdikbut, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1994), cet ke-3 p. 679.



The study of the *nafs* is from the study of the nature of man himself. Humans are creatures that can put themselves into subjects and objects at once. Human studies are always interesting, reflected in developing scientific disciplines, both pure science and applied science.

The *nafs* itself in the Qur'an has various meanings. In surat al-Maidah / 5: 32, it says *نفسا قتل من* pointing to the meaning of totality in humans, while in surat al-Rad / 13: 11 which reads *ما يغير لا الله إن* pointing to what is contained in the human self that produces behavior, and in Surat al-An'am / 6: 12 which reads *الرحمة نفسه على كتب* refers to God. The *nafs* in the context of the talk of man refers to the inner human side that has good or bad potential.

Research on human nature or at least about human traits is naturally inherent in humans, or laws that apply to the human psyche in this case the concept of the *nafs* in the Qur'an is very important. The importance of research on the *nafs* is not only limited to knowledge needs, but also to the interests of parsing, predicting and controlling human behavior, both individually and in groups, both in relation to the field of da'wah or education and in the interest of mobilizing the community in national development.

The Qur'an implies that the *nafs* as the inner side of human is related to behavioral impulses, attitudes and behavior itself.

In Arabic, the word *nafs* has many meanings,<sup>19</sup> but the object of study in this paper is the *nafs* as referred to in the Qur'an. The term *nafs* in the Qur'an, all are referred to in the form of *ism* or nouns, namely *nafs*, *nufus* and *anfus*. Whereas the word *تنفس* in Surah al-Takwir / 81: 18 (*يتنافس* and *ادانتفس والصيح*) in surah al-Muthaffifin / 83: 26 (*المنافسون فالينا*) even though the words come from the word

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<sup>19</sup> Arabic language use term *nafs* to mention many things such as soul, human, the nature of something, blood, brother, possession, mysterious, measure, body, closeness, matter, eyes, hugeness, and attention (See ibn Manzhar, *lisan al-Arab* (ttp: dar al-Ma'arif tth), jilid p. 4500-4501)

*nafasa / nafisa*, in such an inverse word has a meaning that is not related to *nasf*.

Ancient Arabic literature uses the word *nafs* to refer to oneself or someone, while the word spirit is used to refer to breath and wind. At the beginning of the decline of the Qur'an the word *nafs* is used to refer to the soul or the Side in man, while the spirit is used to refer to the angel Gabriel or the special gift of God.<sup>20</sup> Only in the period after the whole Qur'an in the Islamic world, the word *nafs* is used by Arabic literature to refer to soul and spirit crossly, and both are used to refer to spirituality, angels and jinn. Arabic also uses the terms *nafsiyun* (نفسِي) and *nafsaniyun* (نِي نَفْسَا) to mention things related to the *nafs*.

In the Qur'an, the word *nafs* has several meanings:

1. *Nafs*, as self or someone, as mentioned in the letter Ali Imron / 3: 61 (ونفسكم نفسنا وا) and surat Yusuf / 12: 54 اتو الملك وقال افلا انفسكم وفي surat al-Dzariyat / 51:21 تَبْصُرُونَ
2. *Nafs*, as God, Surat al-An'am / 6: 12,54 - الرحمن نفسه على ربكم كتب الرحمه نفسه على كتب
3. *Nafs*, as a person something in Surat al-Furqon / 25: 3 واتخذوا ولانفعا ضرا لانفسهم ولايملكون يخلقون وهم شيئا لا يخلقون الهة دونه من
4. *Nafs*, as spirit, surat al-an'm / 6:93 غمرات في اظالمون ترى ولو أنفسكم أخرجو يهم ايد باسطوا والملئكة الموت
5. *Nafs* as soul, letter As-Shams / 97: 7 and surat al-Fajr / 89: 27 سواها وما ونفس المتمننه النفس يأيها
6. *Nafs* as human totality, surat al-Maidah / 5: 32 بغير نفس قتل من جميعا الناس قتل نما فكا الارض في فساد او نفس
7. *Nafs* as the human side which gives birth to behavior, surat ar-Rad / 13: 11 بانفسهم يغيرو اما حتى يقوم يغير ما لا الله ان

<sup>20</sup> For instance surah al-Mujadalah/58:22 وأتدهم يرح منه contain the meaning of Allah's help, and surah al-Syura/42:52 وكذلك اوحينا اليك روحا من امرنا contain the meaning of revelation of the Qur'an. See surah al-Syura/26:193, Q.s al-Nahl/16:102, Q.s al-Maarij/70:4, Q.s al-Naba/78:38, Q.s al-Qadr/97:4

In the context of humans, besides the use of the *nafs* to refer to human totality, many verses of the suggest the idea of the *nafs* as something within human beings that influences its actions, or *nafs* as the inner side of human, as opposed to the outside.

### Nafs in the Qur'anic Perspective

The Qur'an calls the Nafs in several forms (يتنفس - تنفس - انفس - نفس). In the Qur'an there are 140 verses which mention the *nafs*, in the form of the jama' *nufus* there are 2 verses, and in other forms of jama' *anfus* there are 153 verses. Means in the Qur'an the word *nafs* is mentioned 295 times. This word is contained in 63 letters, most of which are contained in Surat al-Baqarah (35 times), Ali Imran (21 times), al-Nisa' (19 times), al-An'am and al-Taubah (17 times, and al-A'raf and Yusuf (13 times each).<sup>21</sup>

The term *nafs* referred to here is the Arabic term used in the Qur'an. Language in al-Munjid dictionary, *nafs* (jama'nya *nufus* and *anfus*) means *ruh* (spirit) and *'ain* (yourself).<sup>22</sup> Whereas in the dictionary al-Munawir mentioned that the word *nafs* (plural are *anfus* and *nufus*) that means spirit and soul, also means *al-jasad* (body), *al-sahsh* (person), *al-sahsh alinsan* (self person), *al-dzat* or *al'ain* (yourself).<sup>23</sup>

Of the many verses listed in the Qur'an relating to the *Nafs*, researchers chose three verses in three different surah, namely:

#### 1. QS. Yusuf Verse 53

وَمَا أُبْرِيئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۗ إِنَّ رَبِّي

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi, *Mu'jam al-Mufahrash li Ifadli Alquran al-Karim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1994), 881-885.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis Makluf, *al-Munjid fi al-Lughah wa A'lam*, (Beirut: Daar al-Masyriq, 1986), 826.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawir, *al-Munawir Kamus Arab Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: PustakaProgressif, 1984), 1545.

غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

*"And I do not free myself (from mistakes), because actually lust always tells evil, except blessed by my Lord. My Lord is Forgiving, Most Merciful."*

2. QS. Al Qiyamah Verse 2

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾

*And I swear by a very sorry soul (himself)*

3. QS. Al-Fajr Verses 27-28.

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً ﴿٢٨﴾

*Hi calm soul. Return to your god with satisfied heart and his blessed.*

The reason of researchers chose this verse is that of the many discussions of the three verses of the *Nafs* in the most concerning the human soul. So these three verses are very important to study.

وَمَا أَكْبَرُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ ۗ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي

غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

*"And I do not free myself (from mistakes), because actually lust always tells evil, except blessed by my Lord. My Lord is Forgiving, Most Merciful."<sup>24</sup>*

M.Quraish Shihab in his interpretation of the opinion of Al Biqa'i who judged the last verse was the statement of Yusuf as. Yusuf further said, "And I did not relieve myself of any mistakes. However, even so, I am grateful that I was looked after by God and gave him taufik. I do not demand my release from mistakes just for the cleansing of my name, because in fact one type of human desire is lust which always tells to evil, except when it is blessed by my

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<sup>24</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Alquran dan Terjemahnya*, ( Bandung: Gema Risalah Press, 1993) p. 460

Lord by blocking it from telling me; or except by protecting someone so that Allah SWT hinders his lust, or except what Allah blessed him from the types of lust so that lust does not command evil. Verily my god who always does good to me is Forgiving for all the sins of the Most Merciful for those whom He wills.<sup>25</sup>

M.Quraish Shihab in his interpretation also took the opinion of Imam Ibn Kathir, this verse is a continuation of the words of al-Aziz's wife who tempted Yusuf, after his previous confession, he continued that, "I did not free myself from mistakes and sins because lust always whispered and craving. Because such lust is the case, then I tease him. Indeed lust always tells evil, except those which are nourished by God. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving, Most Merciful. "

Furthermore, M.Quraish Shihab included the opinion of contemporary Ulama who is also the highest leader of Al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Thanthawi who also understood this verse and the previous verse as a description of the words of al-Aziz's wife. He argued that the woman seemed to say: "Even though I admit that he belonged to the righteous group, and also admitted that I did not betray him behind him, but, despite all that, I did not liberate myself or purify it from tendencies and desires lust and efforts to accuse him with false accusations. I am the one who conveyed to my husband when I was shocked (met at the door) and when my emotions peaked that, *was the retaliation against someone who had a bad intention towards your wife, other than being imprisoned or a painful punishment?*

Actually there is nothing to encourage al-Aziz's wife to say it except her lust. Indeed, human lust very much drives its owner to evil unless the soul is blessed by Allah and is maintained from irregularities and deviations like the soul of Yusuf, "Thanthawi

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<sup>25</sup> M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002) J.VI, p 628

said.<sup>26</sup>

The Qur'an introduces three types or ranks of human lust. *First, an-nafs al-ammarah* as in this verse, which is always encouraging the owner to do evil. *Second, an-nafs al-lawwamah* who always criticizes the owner once he makes a mistake, resulting in regret and promises not to repeat mistakes. And *the third, is an-nafs al-muthma'innah*, which is a calm soul because it always remembers Allah and is far from all transgressions and sins.

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٦٦﴾

*And I swear by a very sorry soul (himself)*<sup>27</sup>

According to M. Quraish Shihab in his interpretation of the word *Lawwamah* taken from the old word (لام) which means to criticize, what is meant here is regret that criticizes yourself. The soul that bears this trait, is among the other two souls, namely *al-muthmainnah*, which is always obedient to Divine guidance and feeling at ease with Him, and *Al-Ammarah* which is always lawless and encourages its owner to disobey His commands and follow his desires.<sup>28</sup>

M. Qurura Shihab in his commentary also quoted the opinion of Al-Biq'a'i that remorse and criticism could be done by those who are obedient or who are lawless. If the person regrets and criticizes him for his iniquity he will be saved, and if instead criticizes and regrets his good deeds, he will be harmed. Regret and condemnation will reach its peak later in the day. Therefore all people, even though they have tried to do good, will also regret it later when it is time for them to feel that when they live in the world there is an opportunity for them to add virtue, but they do not use it.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, p.629

<sup>27</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Alquran dan Terjemahnya*, ( Bandung: Gema Risalah Press, 1993) p. 1195

<sup>28</sup> M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, J.XIV, p.624

<sup>29</sup> M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, J. XV.

It is reported that al-Hasan al-Basri said: "Believers for Allah's sake you did not find them but condemned themselves (and always said: What do I want from my words? What do I mean by my food? What do I aim at from the whisper of my heart? regret him."

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً ﴿٦٨﴾

*Hi calm soul. Return to your god with satisfied heart and his blessed.*<sup>30</sup>

In the history of Ibn Abi Hatim originating from Buraidah that the word of Allah *Ya ayya-tuhan-nafsul muthma-innah* (hi calm soul) descended with regard to Hamzah who died as a martyr.<sup>31</sup>

In another story, it was stated that the Prophet SAW said: "who will buy a well to release thirst, may Allah forgive his sin. The well was bought by Usman, the Prophet SAW said: "Are you willing to make the well a source of drinking water for everyone?, Usman agreed. So Allah revealed this verse.

M. Quraish Shihab in his interpretation said that the previous verse explained about the regret of the lawless man, and his torment or fear. Whereas the verse above describes the condition of the human being who is obedient to his Rab without following the slightest lust If the previous verse depicts regret, the verse above illustrates God's welcome to his obedient servant.

Still according to M. Qurasih Shihab when the soul left his body or when he rose from his grave: O calm soul again felt safe and secure because many of the zikr and remembered Allah who did not indulge in the *Nafs* which plunged him back namely death and rise in the day to God the Sustainer and your guide with a heart that is willing to be satisfied with the divine rewards is redeemed by God and even all beings, therefore enter into my group of obedient

<sup>30</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Alquran dan Terjemahnya*, (Bandung: Gema Risalah Press, 1993) p. 1256

<sup>31</sup> K.H. Shaleh Dahlan dkk, *Asbabun Nuzul*, (Bandung: CV Penerbit Diponegoro, 2000) p. 543

servants who receive honor from me, and enter into my heaven which I have prepared for those who obey.

While ulama '*understand an-nafs al muthmainnah* in the sense of a calm soul, that is, the manifestation of Allah or His promises accompanied by sincerity of charity.

The beginning of this surah began with the oath of Allah to prove the inevitability of the resurrection, finally speaking of the resurrection. The lawless man rises to regret his life and the devout rises in a state of pleasure and is blessed and is welcome to enter into heaven. thus meeting the beginning of this surah and the end.

In the *Lisan al-Arab* book, Ibn Manzur explains that the word *nafs* in Arabic is used in two senses namely *nafs* in the sense of life, and *nafs* which contains the overall meaning of something and its essence refers to the personal self. Every human has two *nafs*, *nafs* mind and *nafs* ruh. The loss of the *nafs* makes humans unable to think but it remains alive, this is seen when humans are sleeping. While the loss of *nafs ruh*, causes loss of life.<sup>32</sup>

According to the term, the *Nafs* has two meanings, *the first meaning* is the power of anger lust and stomach contained in the human soul and is the source of the emergence of despicable morals. As for *the second meaning*, *the nafs* is a spiritual soul that is *lathif*, spiritual and rabbani. It is this *nafs* in the second sense which is the human right that distinguishes it from animals and other creatures.<sup>33</sup>

*Nafs* can contain the meaning of the soul, but also at the same time means the self, *the nafs* in the sense of the soul is understood as the totality of spiritual powers and its internalization and actualization in human life. *Nafs* also means someone's person, *the nafs* can also mean the heart that gives command to regulate all

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<sup>32</sup> Ibnu Manzur Muhammad Ibnu Mukarram al-Anshari, *Lisan al-Arab, Juz VIII*, (Kairo: Dar al-Misriyah li al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjamah, 1968), 119-120.

<sup>33</sup> M. Solihin, *Penyucian Jiwa dalam perspektif Tasawuf Al-Ghazali* (Bandung : Pustaka setia, 2000),44-45



human potential, and the nafs also has meaning "I" man.

The word *nafs* also means lust, but *the nafs* in the sense of lust is different from *pejorative* lust, the *nafs* is neutral can be good or bad, but basically *the nafs* has a good tendency. *The nafs* also means soul or life, but different from the soul, the nafs has a general meaning, is material as well as immaterial. From this concept of *nafs*, philosophers and Sufism experts develop theories of human personality in an Islamic perspective.

Whereas according to Sukanto, *the nafs* is a creature of Allah which belongs to living beings, and hence the nafs can also be turned off.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, according to Robert Frager, Nafs is a process produced by the interaction of spirits and bodies, not a static psychological structure.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, M. Quraish Shihab mentions, even though the Qur'an affirms that *the nafs* has the potential to be positive and negative, there is also a signal that in essence human positive potential is stronger than its negative potential, only the attraction of evil is stronger than the attraction of goodness. Therefore humans are required to maintain the sanctity of *the nafs* and not impurity it:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّهَا ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّهَا ۖ ﴿٩-١٠﴾

"Surely it is fortunate that the person who purifies the soul, and indeed is the one who corrupts it". (Q.S. Al-Shams: 9-10).

That his tendency to goodness is stronger understood from the cues of several verses, including his words:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ

"God does not burden someone but according to his ability. he

<sup>34</sup> Sukanto Mm dan A Dardiri Hasyim, *Nafsiologi Refleksi Analisis tentang Diri dan Tingkah Laku Manusia* (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 1995), 39

<sup>35</sup> Robert Frager, *Hati, Diri dan Jiwa Psikologi Sufi untuk Transformasi* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2005), 86.

*gets the reward (from virtue) which he strives ". (Q. Al-Baqarah: 286).*

The word *kasabat* in the above verse points to good effort so that it gets rewards, it is the patron that is used in Arabic to describe the work done easily, while *iktasabat* is the patron used to show things that are more difficult. This implies that the nafs is essentially easier to do good things than to do evil, and in turn implies that humans are basically created by God to do good.<sup>36</sup>

### **Reflection on the Meanings of the Nafs in the Qur'an**

The Qur'an has explained in Surah al-Shams verse 9-10 that the Nafs was created perfectly by God, but he must keep his sanctity, because he can be damaged if littered with immoral acts. The quality of each person varies depending on how the effort to keep it from Eve (Q.S al-Naziat verse 40) that is from his tendency to lust, because obeying the impulse is an animal behavior with which humans have squandered the potential of reason that marks its privilege.

In the view of the Koran, *nafs* was created by Allah in a perfect condition has function to accommodate and encourage people to do good and bad and therefore, in this human side the Qur'an is recommended to be given greater attention.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾

*"For the sake of the soul and its perfection (creation), then Allah inspired the soul (path) of wickedness and piety". (Q.S. Al-Shams: 7-8).*

Inspiring means giving the potential so that humans through the nafs can catch the meaning of good and bad, and can encourage them to do good and bad.<sup>37</sup> Rasulullah SAW said:

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*,378-379.

<sup>37</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Quran, Tafsir Tematik atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2007), p.377

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى وعبد الأعلى بن حماد. قالوا، كلاهما: قرأت على مالك عن ابن شهاب، عن سعيد بن المسيب، عن أبي هريرة، أن رسول الله ﷺ قال: ليس الشديد بالصرعة. إنما الشديد الذي يملك نفسه عند الغضب

*"It is not a strong person (who is actually) with (always defeating his opponent in) struggles (fights), but no other strong person (the real one) is one who is able to control himself when angry"*<sup>38</sup>

This is a commendable power and gets the primacy of Allah Ta'ala, which is very little owned by most humans. Imam al-Munawi said, "The meaning of this hadith: strong people (the real ones) are people who (are able) to hold back their emotions when their anger is turbulent and they (are able) to resist and subdue their desires (at that time). So the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* in this hadith carries the meaning of the power that is born into inner strength. And whoever is able to control himself at that time then really he has (been able) to defeat his strongest and most dangerous enemy (lust).

This is the meaning of the power loved by Allah *Ta'ala* mentioned in the words of the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, "Believers who are stronger are better and are more loved by Allah than weak believers. The strong meaning in this hadith is strong in faith and strong in struggling to subdue the desires in the way of Allah.

In another history the Prophet Muhammad said:

حدثنا ابراهيم بن ابي العباس ثنا بقرية قال والخبرني بخبر ابن سعيد عن خالد بن معدان قال، قال ابو ذر: ان رسول الله ص.م قال: قد افلح من اخلص قلبه للايمان وجعل قلبه سليما ولسانه صادقا ونفسه مطمئنة وخليفته مستقيمة .

*"It is fortunate for someone who is clean of heart for faith, and makes his heart happy, and his oral honesty, and his desires that are miserable, and his leaders are righteous ... (Narrated by Ahmad)."*<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Sohih Muslim Juz VII , p 408

<sup>39</sup> Ahmad bin Muahmmad bin Hanbal, Al-Musnad (Qahira: Darul Hadis, 1995) p,487

Based on the above, the Qur'an implies a diversity of *nafs* and their ranks, namely: *First, Al-Nafs al-Muthmainnah*, namely: A clear and bright soul by remembering Allah and eradicating the influence of lust and despicable qualities; *second, al-Nafs al-Lawamah*, namely the soul that regrets itself; *third, al-Nafs al-Amarah*, which is the soul that always commands evil.<sup>40</sup>

The first is called *an-nafs al-ammarah* as stated in Surah Yusuf verse 53. The *nafs* at this level is a low desire of human who tends to rule to encourage people to do evil. In general, the evil actions that humans do are caused by this low urge. Low human desires rarely produce good actions. The *nafs* of this category is also called *an-nafs al-hayawaniyyah* (animal soul). *An-nafs al-ammarah* is the lowest level of human spiritual development.

Second, the soul called *an-nafs al-lawwamah* as mentioned in the surah Al-Qiyamah verse 2. The soul of this category is the soul that denounces or blames itself. If the person who deviates from the right path outlined by God in religion, immediate remorse arises in his mind. Honest remorse for wrong actions is very important in order to return (repentance) to God, to always be on His path. The *nafs* who has an awareness of the wrongs he has done has a position or a higher level of the soul which is at the first level. The reason is because the soul who is able to criticize and blame themselves has hope to rediscover the truth and follow it. This is what is called *an-nafs al-insaniyyah* (human *Nafs*).

Third, the *Nafs* which is called the *nafs al-muthmainnah* (calm soul) as mentioned in surah Al-Fajr verses 27-28. This *nafs muthmainnah* is the *nafs* which is excluded in the word of Allah SWT *inna-nafsa la'ammawat bi as-su 'illa ma rahima rabbi* (in fact the desires are surely command to do bad things, except the lust / soul which blessed by my Lord). The soul blessed by God is a lucky soul because he is a calm soul.

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<sup>40</sup> M. Solihin, *Penyucian Jiwa dalam perspektif Tasawuf Al-Ghazali* (Bandung : Pustaka setia, 2000), p 45

## Conclusion

There are in the Qur'an 140 verses which mention the *nafs*, in the form of jama'nya *nufus* there are 2 verses, and in other forms of jama' *'anfus* there are 153 verses. Means in the Qur'an the word *nafs* is mentioned 295 times. This word is contained in 63 letters, most of which are contained in Surat al-Baqarah (35 times), Ali Imran (21 times), al-Nisa' (19 times), al-An'am and al-Taubah (17 times, and al-A'raf and Yusuf (13 times each). The word *nafs* means lust, but the *nafs* in the sense of lust is different from *pejorative* lust, *nafs* is neutral can be good or bad, but basically the *nafs* has a good tendency. *Nafs* also means soul or life, but different from *al-ruh*, the *nafs* has a general meaning, is material as well as immaterial.

M. Quraish Shihab in the interpretation of Al-Misbah introduces three types or ranks of human lust. *First, an-nafs al-ammarah*, which is always encouraging the owner to do evil. *Second, an-nafs al-lawwamah* who always criticizes the owner once he makes a mistake, resulting in regret and promises not to repeat mistakes. And *the third, is an-nafs al-muthma'innah*, which is a calm soul because it always remembers Allah and is far from all transgressions and sins.

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