

Kaffarah For the Violation of Personal Oaths: A Tafsir Perspektive on QS Al-Māidah [5]: 89

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 12-05-2026 Revised: 11-07-2026 Accepted: 13-07-2026 Published: 16-07-2026 Keywords: Kaffarah, Personal Oaths, QS al-Māidah [5]: 89	This study examines the <i>kaffarah</i> for the violation of personal oaths from the perspective of the interpretation of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. The study is motivated by the limited public understanding of the consequences of breaking personal oaths and the obligation of <i>kaffarah</i> as prescribed in the Qur'an. Furthermore, previous studies on oaths have prescribed in the Qur'an. Furthermore, previous studies on oaths have predominantly focused on legal, cultural and social aspects, while research specifically addressing personal oaths from a Qur'anic exegesis (<i>tafsir</i>) perspective remains limited. This study aims to analyze the nature of <i>kaffarah</i> , its various forms, and the implications of violating personal oaths according to QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. It employs a qualitative method using a library research approach and <i>tafsir tablili</i> (analytical exegesis). Primary data consist of the Qur'an and classical as well as cotemporary <i>tafsir</i> works, while secondary data are obtained from relevant books, scholarly articles, and academic journals. The findings reveal that <i>kaffarah</i> serves as a form of legal accountability for intentionally breaking an oath, while also functioning as a means of fostering moral integrity, spiritual awareness and social responsibility. The prescribed forms of <i>kaffarah</i> include feeding ten poor people, providing them with clothing, freeing a slave and fasting for three days for those who are unable to perform the first three forms. The study also demonstrates that the regulations concerning <i>kaffarah</i> encompass not only legal consequences but also promote individual responsibility and contribute to social welfare. This research contributes to enriching Qur'anic exegesis studies on <i>kaffarah</i> through an analysis of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89, with a particular focus on the violation of personal oaths.
Info Artikel	Abstrak
Kata Kunci: Kaffarah, Sumpah Pribadi, QS al-Māidah [5]: 89.	Penelitian ini mengkaji kaffarah atas pelanggaran sumpah pribadi dalam perspektif tafsir QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masih rendahnya pemahaman mengenai konsekuensi pelanggaran sumpah pribadi serta kewajiban kaffarah sebagaimana dijelaskan dalam al-Qur'an. Di sisi lain, penelitian tentang sumpah selama ini lebih banyak menitikberatkan pada aspek hukum, budaya dan praktik sosial, sedangkan kajian yang secara khusus membahas sumpah pribadi dalam perspektif tafsir masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hakikat kaffarah,

bentuk-bentuk kaffarah serta implikasi pelanggaran sumpah menurut QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan *library research* dan analisis tafsir tahlili. Sumber data primer berupa al-Qur'an dan kitab-kitab tafsir, sedangkan sumber data sekunder diperoleh dari buku, artikel dan jurnal ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kaffarah merupakan bentuk pertanggungjawaban syariat atas pelanggaran sumpah yang dilakukan dengan sengaja, sekaligus menjadi sarana pembinaan moral, spiritual dan kepedulian sosial. Bentuk kaffarah meliputi memberi makan sepuluh orang miskin, memberi pakaian, memerdekakan budak dan berpuasa selama tiga hari bagi orang yang tidak mampu melaksanakan tiga bentuk sebelumnya. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa ketentuan kaffarah tidak hanya mengandung konsekuensi hukum, tetapi juga membentuk tanggungjawab individu dan mewujudkan kemaslahatan sosial. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memperkaya kajian tafsir al-Qur'an mengenai kaffarah melalui analisis QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 yang berfokus pada pelanggaran sumpah pribadi.



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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is the revelation of Allah swt, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad saw gradually over a period of twenty three years as a guidance for humankind (Zaid, 2005). Its contents encompass various styles. Among these is the of oaths, which serve as a reminder for people to refrain from certain actions or to remain steadfast in fulfilling their commitments. The oaths of Allah emphasize His divine messages through the use of the elements of *qasam* (oath). Without these elements, an expression cannot be classified as an oath (Sahdiah Desriana Karim, 2025). Within the framework of Islamic law (*syari'ah*), an oath is understood as a solemn affirmation made in the name of Allah, and its violation entails legal consequences (Perdana, 2018). As a manifestation of divine mercy, Islam prescribes *kaffarah* as atonement for the violation of an oath, as explained in QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. Although this verse serves as the normative basis for the obligation of *kaffarah* in cases of broken oaths, its interpretation continues to raise several academic issues. Qur'anic exegetes (*mufasssir*) and Islamic jurists have expressed differing views regarding the types of oaths that require *kaffarah*, the scope of its application, and the procedures for its implementation. These differences indicate that the concept of *kaffarah* extends beyond its legal dimension and requires a comprehensive exegetical understanding of the verse. Therefore, the study of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 remains relevant, particularly in clarifying the status and implications of personal oaths.

The phenomenon of oath violations in contemporary society reflects a growing tendency for people to make oaths casually without giving due consideration to their consequences. Oaths are not only found in formal settings, such as official inaugurations or appointments, but also in everyday life, including personal oaths made as expressions of individual commitment. In practice, however, such oaths are frequently broken without awareness of the obligation to perform *kaffarah* as prescribed in QS al-Māidah [5]: 89. This situation reflects a gap between the normative teachings of Islam and the social realities experienced by society. On the one hand, the violation of oaths is often regarded as a trivial matter with no clear legal implications. This phenomenon underscores the need for a more in depth study to understand the meaning, scope and consequences of oaths, particularly personal oaths, from the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis. QS al-Māidah [5]: 89

provides a solution for the violation of oaths through the institution of *kaffarah* as a form of expiation. Nevertheless, Muslim scholars differ regarding the proper procedure for fulfilling this obligation. The majority of scholars maintain that *kaffarah* must be performed sequentially by first choosing one of the three prescribed forms feeding ten poor people, providing them with clothing, or freeing a slave and resorting to fasting only when one is unable to perform any of these options. This view is based on the structure of the verse, which they interpret as indicating a sequential order. In contrast, some scholars argue that these forms of *kaffarah* are alternative options rather than sequential obligations, allowing a person who has broken an oath to choose whichever form is most appropriate to his or her circumstances.

This phenomenon highlights an unresolved academic issue concerning the status of personal oaths from the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis. On the one hand, many people assume that the violation of a personal oath carries no legal consequences. On the other hand, QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89 prescribes the obligation of *kaffarah* for breaking an oath without explicitly specifying the need for a closer examination of how Qur'anic exegetes (*mufasssir*) have interpreted the verse and how their interpretations may be applied to the practice of personal oaths in contemporary society.

Several studies have examined oaths from various perspectives. Indra Perdana and Sri Wahyu Nengsi, for example, analyze oaths within cultural and ritual contexts, arguing that they function as a medium of symbolic and magical communication in society (Perdana, 2018) & (Nengsih, 2020). Meanwhile, Riswan Munthe investigates the oath of *li'an* within the framework of Islamic family law, focusing on its role in resolving allegations of adultery between spouses. The study concludes that the oath serves as a legal means of proof in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) (Riswan Munthe, 2016). Rizal Rahman, on the other hand, examines the practice of official oaths from the perspective of the living Qur'an. His findings indicate that the use of the mushaf (physical copy of the Qur'an) in oath taking tends to be symbolic and ceremonial in nature (Rizal Rahman, 2024). Rizky Alamsyah Putra and Zuraidah examine the permissibility of taking an oath without using the Qur'an in the Religious Courts. Their findings indicate that the validity of an oath is determined primarily by procedural requirement and formal legal provisions (Rizky Alamsyah Putra and Zuraidah, 2024). These studies indicate that existing scholarship on oaths has primarily focused on cultural dimensions, Islamic family law, judicial practices and living Qur'an phenomena. By contrast, studies specifically addressing *kaffarah* for the violation of personal oaths from the perspective of the exegesis of QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89 remain scarce.

Research on oaths has largely focused on cultural aspects, formal legal issues, and socio-religious practices. In contrast, studies specifically examining *kaffarah* for the violation of personal oaths from the perspective of the exegesis of QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89 remain very limited. This issue has significant implications for the understanding of Islamic law within Muslim communities, given that personal oaths are frequently made in everyday life without adequate awareness of the obligation of *kaffarah* when such oaths are broken. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the nature of personal oaths, the forms of *kaffarah* prescribed in QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89, and the relevance of Qur'anic expected that the findings of this study will enrich the field of Qur'anic exegesis, particularly with regard to the law of oaths, while also providing a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of *kaffarah* for the violation of personal oaths.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs the *tafsir tablihi* approach using descriptive analytical methods. The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89 was identified as the primary object of the study. Second, the *asbab nuzul* were analyzed to understand the historical

context of the verse. Third, the munasabah of the verse was examined to identify the connection between QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 and the preceding as well as the preceding as well as the subsequent verses. Fourth, a linguistic analysis was carried out on the key vocabulary and linguistic structures related to oaths and *kaffarah*. Fifth, the interpretations of selected Qur'anic exegetes were compared to identify similarities and differences in their views regarding *kaffarah* for the violation of oaths. Finally, the findings of these analyses were synthesized to formulate an exegetical understanding of *kaffarah* for the violation of personal oaths based on QS al-Māidah [5]: 89

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Analysis of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 on *Kaffarah* for Broken Oaths

1. The Text of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 and Its Translation

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Translation:

“Allah will not call you account for your unintentional oaths, but He will hold you account for the oaths you deliberately make. The expiation (*kaffarah*) for breaking such an oath is to feed ten poor people with the average food you provide for your own family, or to clothe them, or to free a slave. But whoever cannot afford this must fast for three days. This is the expiation for the oaths you have sworn. Therefore, be mindful of your oaths. Thus does Allah make His revelations clear to you so that you may be grateful”.

2. Asbab Nuzul (Occasions of Revelation)

Following the revelation of this verse, several Companions of the Prophet Muhammad saw, who had previously sworn not to consume lawful food as an act of devotion to Allah swt, asked, “what about the oaths we have made?” This verse clarifies that “Allah will not call you to account for your unintentional oaths,” referring to statements in which a person mentions the name of Allah without intending to make a binding oath. However, “He will hold you account for the oaths you deliberately make,” namely those in which the spoken words correspond to the intention of the heart. If such an oath is broken, its *kaffarah* is to feed ten poor people with the average food normally provided to one’s family, to clothe them with garments sufficient to cover their *‘awrah*, or to free a Muslim slave capable of working. If a person is unable to perform any of these acts, the *kaffarah* for oaths that have been violated or revoked. Therefore, Muslims are instructed not to swear carelessly if an oath concerns a righteous matter, it should be fulfilled, and if it is broken, the prescribed *kaffarah* must be performed. In this way Allah makes His rulings clear so that believers may be grateful. According to al-Biqā’i in *Nazm al-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat wa al-Suwar*, the occasion of revelation of this verse should be understood in relation to its contextual setting rather than as a direct cause of revelation, since not every reported occasion of revelation corresponds precisely to the context of the verse, as illustrated by the opening verses concerning the Battle of Uhud in Surah Ali-Imran. In this case, the verse was revealed within the context of legal regulations, as the prohibition of something that is otherwise lawful may arise either from a vow or from an oath. (Al-Biqā’i, n.d.).

3. The Munasabah of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89

a. The Munasabah Between QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 and 88

The preceding verse in Surah al-Māidah emphasizes the command to consume what is lawful (*halal*) and wholesome (*tayyib*) and to remain mindful of Allah through *taqwa*. The subsequent verse then continues by warning believers against violating their oaths and by prescribing *kaffarah* as an means of rectifying such violations, while reminding them to remain grateful to Allah for providing a path toward repentance and moral accountability (M. Quraish Shihab, 2002). The relationship between these two verses lies in their shared emphasis on reminding Muslims to obey the commandments established by Allah and to remain grateful for guidance and blessings He has bestowed upon them.

b. The Munasabah Between QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 and 90

The relationship between verses 89 and 90 lies in their sequential emphasis on adherence to Allah commandments. Verse 89 warns believers about the consequences of violating their oaths and prescribes *kaffarah* as the required expiation, as discussed in *Tafsir al-Misbah*. This is followed by verse 90, which prohibits the consumption of intoxicants (*kehamr*), gambling, idol worship, and divination by arrows, all of which are declared unlawful in Islamic teaching (Imam al-Qurtubi, 2013). The prohibitions contained in this verse indicate that such acts distance believers from Allah and weaken their faith. The munasabah between verses 89 and 90 is reflected in their shared warning to Muslims after cautioning against the violation of oaths in verse 89, the Qur'an proceeds in verse 90 to prohibit even graver acts, such as the consumption of *kehamr* gambling, idol worship and divination. This progression emphasizes the need for Muslims to exercise greater caution in their words and actions and to remain steadfast in obeying Allah commandments.

M. Quraish Shihab and al-Qurtubi both maintain that QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 is closely connected to the preceding and the subsequent verses, although they emphasize different aspects of this relationship. Quraish Shihab highlights the continuity of faith formation through the commands to consume what is lawful, uphold one's oaths and avoid prohibited acts. In contrast, al-Qurtubi places greater emphasis on the legal dimension of oaths and the responsibility of believers to fulfill them, as well as the prohibition of actions that may undermine one's faith. These differing emphases demonstrate that the munasabah of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 not only reflects the thematic continuity between adjacent verses but also illustrates the balance between the guidance of Islamic law, moral responsibility and ethical development in the life of a Muslim.

4. Mufradat Analysis

The word **يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ** is derived from the root **أَخَذَ** which literally means "to take" or "to seize" something and gather it. In Arabic usage, this act of taking may refer to **التَّأَوُّلُ**, meaning to grasp, seize or take hold of something (Al-Ashfahani, 1438). In this verse, the term **يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ** signifies that Allah imposes accountability only for deliberate oaths, rather than for oaths uttered unintentionally.

The word **أَوْسَطَ** is derived from the root **وَسَطَ** which is understood as **وَسَطَ الشَّيْءُ** (the middle of something) it is the of something that has two ends of equal distance (Al-Ashfahani, 1438). In this verse, the word **أَوْسَطَ** indicates that the food provided as *kaffarah* should be of moderate and appropriate quality, reflecting one's means without being either excessive or inadequate.

The word **النَّوَ** refers to an oath uttered unintentionally or without the intention of making a binding oath, and is therefore regarded as an ordinary statement (Al-Ashfahani, 1438). Such an oath does not give rise to the legal obligation of *kaffarah*.

The word **أَيْمَانُكُمْ** is derived from the root **يَمَنَ** which originally refers to the right hand, a part of the human body. The root is also associated with the attribute of strength and blessing. In Arabic from the term **اليمن** came to denote an oath, as it is derived from the meaning of the right hand, since it was customary for people to raise or extend their right hands when making oaths and pledges (Al-Ashfahani, 1438).

The word **عَقَّدْتُمْ** is derived from the root **عَقَدَ** which means “to tie”, “to bind”, or “fasten” together the ends of something. Originally, this root was commonly used in reference to tangible objects, such as tying a rope or constructing a building. Over time, however, its usage expanded to include abstract and non physical meanings. For example, the expression **عقد البيع** refers to the conclusion of a sales contract, while the phrase **بما عقدتم الأيمان** means “for the oaths that you have deliberately made” (Al-Biqā’i, n.d.). In this verse, the term **عقدتم** signifies that *kaffarah* applies only to oaths that are made deliberately and accompanied by a firm intention or binding commitment.

5. Exegesis of QS Al-Māidah [5]: 89

The exegesis of this verse explains that Allah does not hold a person accountable for oaths uttered without genuine intention. The obligation to perform *kaffarah* applies to those who swear to carry out an act in the future but fail to fulfill it, or who swear to refrain from a particular act but subsequently violate their oath by committing it (Imam al-Qurtubi, 2013). It may also be understood as statements that contain the wording of an oath but are uttered without deliberate intention, such as, “No, by Allah”, and “Yes, by Allah.” By contrast, a deliberate oath is one that is consciously intended and made with firm determination (Ad-dimasyqi, n.d.)

The meaning of this verse indicates that when a person breaks an oath and fulfills the prescribed *kaffarah*, Allah swt will not hold that person accountable for the violation. On this basis, an oath cannot render something *halal haram*. This understanding serves as evidence for the opinion of Imam a-Syafi’I, who maintained that declaring a lawful matter unlawful through an oath has no legal effect, just as something prohibited cannot become lawful merely by a person’s declaration. The verse specifies three forms of *kaffarah* from which the individual may choose, while fasting is prescribed as an alternative for those who are unable to perform any of the first three. Accordingly, Muslim jurists generally agree that the expiation for a broken oath may be fulfilled by selecting one of the prescribed forms of *kaffarah*.

The exegesis of this verse explains that the intended recipients of *kaffarah* are those in need of assistance, particularly the poor and individuals who are unable to meet their basic necessities. The food referred to in this verse has been interpreted by some exegetes as bread and oil, while others maintain that it should consist of food moderate quality, representing a standard between the customary meals of the poor and the wealthy. The prescribed clothing has been interpreted as providing each poor person with a garment, such as an “*abayah*.” Another form of *kaffarah* is the emancipation of a believing slave. If none of these options can be fulfilled, the final alternative is fasting for three days, which, according to different scholarly opinions, may be observed either consecutively or non consecutively (Ad-dimasyqi, n.d.)

These three forms of *kaffarah* demonstrate that Islamic law prioritizes the expiation of broken oaths through acts that generate social benefit. Providing food and clothing is intended to meet the basic needs of those who are economically disadvantaged, while the emancipation of slaves, at the time of the Qur'anic revelation, served as a means of protecting human dignity and gradually reducing the practice of slavery. This sequence indicates that *kaffarah* is not merely intended as an act of individual expiation but also as a mechanism for promoting social welfare (*maslahah*). In the contemporary context, where slavery is no longer a common institution, the underlying values of *kaffarah* remain relevant by encouraging social responsibility and assistance to those in need in accordance with the objectives of the *syari'ah*.

The differences of opinion among Muslim scholars regarding the manner of performing *kaffarah* do not alter the primary objective of this verse. Whether *kaffarah* is understood as offering alternative options or as requiring a sequential order of performance, all prescribed forms ultimately aim to cultivate moral and social responsibility in those who have violated their oaths. This demonstrates that the essence of *kaffarah* lies not merely in the manner of its performance but in the individual's sincere commitment to atoning for the violation through acts that benefit others.

B. The Nature of *Kaffarah* for Personal Oaths in the Perspective of QS Al-Mā'idah [5]: 89

Kaffarah refers to an expiation performed by a person to remove the sin resulting from violating an oath or failing to fulfill a sworn commitment. A person performs *kaffarah* due to an oath or pledge that he or she has made, in which the individual establishes a commitment, often expressed with seriousness and accompanied by consequences if it is not fulfilled. In QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89, the essence of *kaffarah* refers to an act intended to erase the sin or wrongdoing committed by a person, particularly in relation to the violation of Islamic legal obligations. In Islamic legal terminology, *kaffarah* may take several forms, including the emancipation of slaves, providing charity, or fasting under specific conditions. The essence of *kaffarah* lies in the removal of the sin resulting from the violation of an oath that has been deliberately made with sincere intention. This regulation provides a means for individuals to overcome difficulties while encouraging them to be more cautious in making oaths and not to treat them as something trivial (Hamka, 2003).

Kaffarah represents a form of religious responsibility for the deliberate violation of an oath. In QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89, *kaffarah* is not merely understood as an expiation to remove legal consequences, but also as a means of moral cultivation that encourages individuals to be more cautious in making oaths. This provision demonstrates that Islam does not merely impose sanctions, rather, it provides a way to rectify mistakes through acts of worship that generate social benefit. Therefore, the essence of *kaffarah* in this verse lies in the balance between accountability before Allah and the development of social responsibility toward others, ensuring that the violation of an oath does not end merely in regret but is transformed into actions that bring benefit.

This demonstrates that the essence of *kaffarah* in QS al-Mā'idah [5]: 89 is not merely as a sanction for the violation of an oath, but also as a means of moral and spiritual education. *Kaffarah* teaches responsibility for one's pledged words, encourages individuals to be more cautious in making oaths, and instills awareness that every commitment carries consequences for which one must be held accountable. Furthermore, the provision of *kaffarah* reflects the principles of ease and mercy in Islamic law, as it provides those who violate their oaths with an opportunity to rectify their mistakes and attain forgiveness through the prescribed acts of worship.

C. Formas of *Kaffarah* for the Violation of Personal Oaths in QS al-Māidah [5]: 89

1. Feeding Ten Poor People

The form of *kaffarah* involving the provision of food refers to the customary food consumed in daily life, rather than an exceptional or luxurious meal. Although some interpretations understand it as referring to “the finest quality,” the former view is considered more convincing because it corresponds with the Islamic principle of moderation (M. Quraish Shihab, 2002). According to the Maliki and Syafi’i schools, the food must be transferred to the poor as full ownership, allowing them complete possession of it. (Ad-dimasyqi, n.d.). The opinions of Ibn ‘Abbas, Sa’id ibn Jubayr and ‘Ikrimah emphasize that the intended meaning refers to the food that is commonly provided for one’s family, while ‘Atha al-Khurasani interprets it as the type of food that is generally served (Ad-dimasyqi, n.d.). Imam Malik established the measurement of one *mudd* as the standard applied in Madinah, while emphasizing that the amount of *kaffarah* may be adjusted according to local economic conditions. The majority of scholars stipulate that the recipients must be poor Muslims, whereas Abu Hanifah permits it to be given to poor non Muslims. In practice, according to Abu Hanifah, feeding one person for ten days is considered sufficient, while other scholars require that the food be given to ten different individuals (Isham Muhammad As-Syarif, 2005). This obligation applies only to those who are capable, namely individuals who possess surplus wealth beyond their basic needs. Furthermore, *kaffarah* may not be given to the wealthy or to those whose maintenance is already the responsibility of the giver, because its purpose is to provide assistance to the poor who are genuinely in need.

The differences of opinion among scholars regarding the type, quantity and recipients of the food indicate that the provision of food as *kaffarah* emphasizes the achievement of the objectives of Islamic law rather than adherence to specific technical procedures of implementation. The essence of this provision lies in fulfilling the basic needs of the poor as a form of social responsibility for the violation of an oath. Therefore, adjustments to the type and amount of food according to the economic conditions of society remain consistent with the principle of *maslahah*, as long as the rights of the recipients are properly fulfilled.

2. Providing Clothing

The provision of clothing as *kaffarah* is understood as giving appropriate clothing that covers the required parts of the body according to local customs. Imam al-Qurtubi explains that a single garment is sufficient as long as it covers the parts of the body that are required to be concealed. According to Abu Hanifah, *kaffarah* may be fulfilled by providing a complete set of clothing, such as a garment, lower garment, or head covering. For men, the clothing should cover the entire body, while for women, it should at least be clothing suitable for prayer, such as a *jubbah* and a headscarf (Imam al-Qurtubi, 2013). The majority of scholars hold that the clothing referred to in this verse is clothing that is commonly worn, particularly among the poor. Therefore, simple garments such as a shirt and trousers or a lower garment are considered sufficient, whereas accessories such as a cap, turban, or shoes are not valid as *kaffarah*. Furthermore, scholars differ regarding the required form of clothing. Al-Hasan al-Basri and Ibn Sirin require two pieces of clothing, while Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib emphasizes a combination of a head covering and body garment. Ibn ‘Abbas, however, considers one garment sufficient, whereas Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal maintain that the clothing must be appropriate for prayer and suitable according to the gender of the recipient. (Isham Muhammad As-Syarif, 2005)

The diverse views among scholars regarding the form and quantity of clothing indicate that the provision of *kaffarah* is not intended to burden the person performing it, but rather to ensure the fulfillment of the recipient's basic clothing needs. This reflects the concern of Islamic law for preserving human dignity through the provision of adequate basic necessities. In the contemporary context, providing clothing as *kaffarah* remains relevant as long as it fulfills the principles of appropriateness and provides tangible benefits for the poor in accordance with the social conditions of society.

3. Emancipating a Slave

Imam Abu Hanifah held that the requirement of *kaffarah* could be fulfilled by emancipating either a non Muslim slave or a Muslim slave. In contrast, Imam al-Syafi'i and other scholars maintained that the slave to be emancipated must be a believing (Muslim) slave (Ad-dimasyqi, n.d.). They interpret the unrestricted expression in this verse in light of the restricted expression found in the verses concerning the expiation for homicide and zihar, where the Qur'an states "*fatahriiru raqabatini mu'minah*" (then [the expiation is] the emancipation of a believing slave (QS al-Nisa [4]: 92 (Isham Muhammad As-Syarif, 2005).

The differing opinions reflect distinct exegetical approaches to interpreting the term *raqabah* in QS al-Maidah [5]: 89. Imam Abu Hanifah maintains the general meaning of the verse and therefore does not require the emancipated slave to be a Muslim. In contrast, Imam al-Syafi'i interprets this verse in light of QS al-Nisa [4]: 92, which specifies the emancipation of a believing slave, and therefore stipulates that the slave must be a believer. These differences illustrate the breadth of scholarly *ijtihad* in interpreting the textual evidence without altering the primary objective of *kaffarah*, namely, to make the emancipation of a slave a means of assuming responsibility for violating an oath while simultaneously promoting social welfare. In the contemporary context, where slavery is no longer practiced, the underlying values embodied in this form of *kaffarah* remain relevant as a means of restoring human dignity through various forms of empowerment and assistance to those living in conditions of vulnerability.

4. Fasting When Unable to Perform the Other Forms of *Kaffarah*

Fasting as a form of *kaffarah* is prescribed only when a person is unable to perform any of the three preceding forms of expiation, in which case the obligation is to fast for three days. However, scholars differ regarding the manner of its observance. Imam al-Syafi'i, in *al-Umm*, maintains that is also upheld by the Hanafi and Hanbali schools. In contrast, some scholars argue that consecutive fasting is not required, allowing the three days to be observed separately. If a person is temporarily unable to three days to be observed separately. If a person is temporarily unable to fast due to circumstances such as illness, the inability persists, the individual is expected to seek Allah forgiveness. Some scholars further emphasize that fasting may not be undertaken unless the person's inability to perform the other prescribed forms of *kaffarah* has first been established. Meanwhile, Ibn al-'Arabi stresses that the form of *kaffarah* should be determined in accordance with the objective of fulfilling the greatest need, giving priority to the option that provides the greatest benefit to the poor, such as providing food.

This demonstrates that the forms of *kaffarah* prescribed in QS al-Maidah [5]: 89 reflect the flexibility of Islamic law while upholding the principles of justice and *maslahah*. The differences of opinion among scholars regarding the amount, form and manner of its implementation illustrate the scope of *ijtihad* in the application of Islamic law, whereas the essential purpose of *kaffarah*

remains unchanged to restore responsibility for the violation of an oath. The sequence in which feeding the poor, providing clothing, and freeing a slave are prescribed before fasting indicates that Islamic law gives priority to social benefit by addressing the need of others, while fasting serves as an alternative for those who are financially unable to perform the preceding forms of expiation. Thus, *kaffarah* functions not only as an expiation for the violation of an oath but also as a means of fostering moral and spiritual development, as well as social responsibility, in a manner that takes into account the circumstances of the individual performing it.

D. The Implications of Violating Oaths According to QS al-Māidah [5]: 89

The provision of *kaffarah* in QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 demonstrates that the violation of an oath is not merely regarded as a verbal offense but as a form of responsibility that must be resolved through the mechanism prescribed by Islamic law. The distinction between unintentional oaths and those made with deliberate intention indicates that accountability in Islam is fundamentally based on a person's intention and conscious choice. Accordingly, this verse teaches that every oath should be made with full awareness and should not be treated as a statement that can be broken lightly.

The forms of *kaffarah* prescribed in this verse demonstrate that the expiation for violating an oath is not solely concerned with the relationship between a servant and Allah, but also encompasses a social dimension. Providing food, clothing and emancipating a slave represent acts of concern and compassion toward others, while fasting serves as an alternative for those who are unable to fulfill these forms of *kaffarah*. This sequence indicates that Islamic law gives priority to the realization of social welfare before turning to an act of worship that is primarily personal in nature.

Finally, the closing command of the verse, "Guard your oaths", emphasizes that the primary purpose of *kaffarah* is not merely to discharge a legal obligation, but to cultivate individuals who are responsible for every commitment they make. Therefore, the implications of violating an oath in this verse extend beyond the obligation to perform *kaffarah* they also include the development of self discipline, caution in speech and social responsibility toward others as integral components of the objectives of Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

The exegetical study of QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 demonstrates that *kaffarah* constitutes a form of religious accountability for the deliberate violation of an oath. *Kaffarah* functions not only as an expiation for the such violations but also as a means of fostering moral, spiritual and social development by cultivating responsibility, encouraging caution in speech and providing individuals with an opportunity to rectify their mistakes in accordance with the Islamic principles of mercy and ease. The forms of *kaffarah* prescribed in this verse include feeding ten poor people, providing clothing, freeing a slave and fasting for three days for those who are unable to perform the first three forms. The diversity of scholarly opinions regarding the manner of its implementation reflects the breadth of *ijtihad* in interpreting the textual evidence, while its primary objective remains the realization of *maslahah* and social responsibility. Ultimately, the institution of *kaffarah* in QS al-Māidah [5]: 89 affirms that the violation of an oath extends beyond its legal consequences, serving also as a means of shaping the character of Muslims by encouraging them to honor their commitments, take responsibility for their words and strengthen their concern for others through the performance of *kaffarah*.

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