

***kināyah* In Qur'an 2:187: A Study of Qur'anic Aesthetics,  
Linguistic Ethics, And Legal Implications**

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**Abstract**

This article examines *kināyah* in Qur'an 2:187 as a Qur'anic mode of expression that integrates aesthetic refinement, linguistic ethics, and legal clarity. The study addresses the tendency to separate the verse's rhetorical beauty from its ethical and juridical functions, especially in discussions of marital intimacy, fasting, and *i'tikāf*. Using a qualitative textual-hermeneutical method, the article analyses the Arabic text of Q. 2:187 through selected expressions, including *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum*, *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, *bāshirūhunna*, and *al-khayṭ al-abyaḍ min al-khayṭ al-aswad*. The analysis combines Arabic rhetorical theory, Qur'anic stylistics, linguistic ethics, and Islamic legal hermeneutics. The findings show that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 functions first as disciplined Qur'anic indirection, allowing intimate realities to be expressed clearly without vulgarity. Second, the garment imagery constructs marital intimacy through reciprocity, protection, concealment, and dignity. Third, the verse establishes a linguistic ethics of sexual discourse by sustaining modesty and legal intelligibility at once. Fourth, rhetorical indirection does not weaken legal meaning; rather, it supports the verse's rulings on conjugal permission during Ramadan nights, the temporal boundary of fasting, and the prohibition of sexual relations during *i'tikāf*. The article contributes to Qur'anic Studies, Arabic rhetoric, Islamic legal hermeneutics, and linguistic ethics by reframing *kināyah* as a Qur'anic strategy in which aesthetics, ethics, and law are mutually constitutive.

**Keywords:** *kināyah*, Qur'anic aesthetics, linguistic ethics, Islamic legal hermeneutics, quran 2:187

**Abstrak**

Artikel ini mengkaji *kināyah* dalam Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:187 sebagai mode ekspresi Qur'ani yang memadukan kehalusan estetis, etika kebahasaan, dan kejelasan hukum. Kajian ini berangkat dari kecenderungan memisahkan keindahan retorik ayat dari fungsi etis dan yuridisnya, terutama dalam pembahasan tentang relasi intim suami-istri, puasa Ramadan, dan *i'tikāf*. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif tekstual-hermeneutis, artikel ini menganalisis teks Arab Q.S. 2:187 melalui beberapa ungkapan kunci, yaitu *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum*, *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, *bāshirūhunna*, dan *al-khayṭ al-abyaḍ min al-khayṭ al-aswad*. Analisis dilakukan dengan memadukan teori retorika Arab, stilistika Al-Qur'an, etika kebahasaan, dan hermeneutika hukum Islam. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *kināyah* dalam Q.S. 2:187 pertama-tama berfungsi sebagai strategi ketidaklangsungan Qur'ani yang disiplin, sehingga realitas intim dapat diungkapkan secara jelas tanpa jatuh pada vulgaritas. Kedua, metafora pakaian membangun gambaran relasi suami-istri sebagai hubungan yang timbal balik, melindungi, menutupi, dan memuliakan. Ketiga, ayat ini membentuk etika bahasa tentang seksualitas dengan menjaga kesantunan sekaligus kejelasan hukum. Keempat, ketidaklangsungan retorik tidak melemahkan makna hukum, tetapi mendukung ketentuan ayat tentang kebolehan hubungan suami-istri pada malam Ramadan, batas waktu puasa, dan larangan hubungan seksual ketika *i'tikāf*. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada studi Al-Qur'an, retorika Arab, hermeneutika hukum Islam, dan etika kebahasaan dengan mereposisi *kināyah* sebagai strategi Qur'ani yang menyatukan estetika, etika, dan hukum.

**Kata kunci:** *kināyah*, estetika Qur'ani, etika kebahasaan, hermeneutika hukum Islam, quran 2:187



## Introduction

The Qur'an speaks about human intimacy with a linguistic delicacy that is neither evasive nor crudely explicit. This feature is especially visible in Qur'an 2:187, a verse revealed within the legal and devotional context of fasting, yet articulated through a language of remarkable rhetorical restraint. The verse regulates eating, drinking, marital intimacy, dawn, nightfall, and devotional retreat, but it does so through expressions such as *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum*, *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, *bāshirūhunna*, and *al-khayṭ al-abyaḍ min al-khayṭ al-aswad*. These expressions show that the Qur'an does not separate law from style, nor ethics from linguistic form. Its legal discourse is mediated through metaphor, indirection, and semantic refinement. In the Arabic rhetorical tradition, this mode of expression is closely related to *kināyah*, a figurative device in which meaning is conveyed indirectly while remaining intelligible to the audience. Unlike ordinary euphemism, however, Qur'anic *kināyah* does not merely soften taboo subjects; it produces an ethical form of speech that protects modesty, preserves clarity, and sustains legal precision.

The broader significance of this topic lies in the continuing centrality of Qur'anic language in Muslim religious life.<sup>1</sup> Islam constitutes one of the world's largest religious traditions, with Muslims representing roughly one quarter of the global population according to recent demographic data.<sup>2</sup> For this global community, Qur'anic verses are not only objects of theological belief but also sources of law, ritual discipline, moral formation, and everyday speech. Qur'an 2:187 is particularly important because it governs one of the most widely observed Islamic practices: fasting in Ramadan. The verse clarifies that sexual intimacy between spouses is permitted during the nights of fasting but prohibited during the fasting day and during *i'tikāf*. Yet the formulation is not merely juridical. The verse frames conjugal intimacy through the image of mutual clothing—"they are garments for you and you are garments for them"—thereby turning a legal allowance into a statement about reciprocity, protection, nearness, and dignity.<sup>3</sup>

The main problem addressed in this article is the tendency to separate the aesthetic, ethical, and legal dimensions of Qur'an 2:187. Classical rhetorical discussions often treat *kināyah* as a figure of eloquence within *'ilm al-bayān*, emphasizing its ability to convey meaning indirectly while preserving refinement of expression. Legal discussions, by contrast, usually focus on the rulings derived from the verse: the permissibility of marital relations at night during Ramadan, the temporal boundary of fasting, and the prohibition of sexual relations during devotional retreat. Modern gender and ethics scholarship has examined Islamic sexual norms, marital rights, and the legal construction of intimacy, but often without sustained attention to the rhetorical mechanisms through which the Qur'an articulates these matters.<sup>4</sup> The unresolved issue is therefore not whether

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<sup>1</sup> Al Fiqri Ardiansyah et al., "THE IMPACT OF ANCIENT QURANIC MANUSCRIPTS ON CONTEMPORARY LINGUISTIC AND EXEGETICAL STUDIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS" 5, no. 2 (2023): 60–76; A L Fiqri Ardiansyah and Konsentrasi Tafsir, "ARAH EPISTEMOLOGI TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN DI INDONESIA, ANTARA AKADEMIK ATAU APOLOGETIK (Kajian Kritis Bibliometrik Atas Publikasi Artikel Jurnal Terindeks Scopus (2010–2025))," 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, "How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020" (Pew Research Center, 2025), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/how-the-global-religious-landscape-changed-from-2010-to-2020/>.

<sup>3</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Study Qur'an* (New York: HarperOne, 2015); M Shah and M A Haleem, *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies, The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.001.0001>.

<sup>4</sup> Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*, Revised edition (London: Oneworld, 2016); Anver M Emon and Rume Ahmed, eds.,

Qur'an 2:187 has aesthetic, ethical, or legal significance; rather, it is how these dimensions interact within the verse's own linguistic architecture.

Previous studies provide valuable but partial foundations. Research on Qur'anic rhetoric has demonstrated that the Qur'an's persuasive force lies not only in doctrine but also in arrangement, rhythm, imagery, and semantic density.<sup>5</sup> Studies of Qur'anic interpretation have shown that meaning emerges through grammar, context, reception, and exegetical tradition rather than through isolated lexical translation.<sup>6</sup> Scholarship on Islamic law has clarified how Qur'anic verses become sources of practical norms through juristic reasoning, interpretive plurality, and legal classification.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, linguistic studies of taboo and euphemism show that indirect speech often functions as a social and ethical strategy for regulating sensitive topics.<sup>8</sup> These bodies of research are relevant, but they remain insufficiently integrated when applied to Qur'an 2:187.

This article identifies three research gaps. Conceptually, *kināyah* in Qur'anic discourse is often reduced either to aesthetic indirectness or to polite substitution, whereas Qur'an 2:187 shows that indirect expression can also carry legal and ethical work. Methodologically, many studies of Qur'anic legal verses privilege juristic outcomes without analysing the rhetorical form through which those outcomes are communicated. Interpretively, discussions of sexuality in the Qur'an sometimes focus on norms of prohibition and permission while overlooking the verse's linguistic ethics: its refusal to vulgarize intimacy, its preservation of mutuality, and its ability to speak about sexual relations without diminishing their moral seriousness. These gaps justify a focused study of Qur'an 2:187 as a site where *balāghah*, ethics, and law converge.

Accordingly, this article asks three questions. First, how does *kināyah* operate in Qur'an 2:187 through expressions of marital intimacy, clothing, physical contact, and temporal imagery? Second, how does the verse use indirect language to construct an ethics of speech around sexuality, modesty, and conjugal reciprocity? Third, what legal implications emerge when the verse's figurative language is read alongside its normative rulings on fasting and *i'tikāf*? The objectives are to analyse the aesthetic structure of *kināyah* in Qur'an 2:187, to explain its ethical function in the Qur'anic treatment of sexuality, and to clarify how rhetorical indirection contributes to legal meaning without weakening legal clarity.

The theoretical framework of this study combines Arabic rhetoric, Qur'anic stylistics, linguistic ethics, and Islamic legal hermeneutics. From Arabic rhetoric, the study draws on the concept of *kināyah* as indirect signification that allows a

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*The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Law* (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199679010.001.0001>.

<sup>5</sup> Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* (Routledge, 2006), [https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic Rhetoric A Pragmatic Analysis Abdul-Raof; M Cuyper, The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis, The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis, 2015, https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85049160610&partnerID=40&md5=aa8750643913d2761fa34e5097f48c07](https://www.routledge.com/search?kw=Arabic+Rhetoric+A+Pragmatic+Analysis+Abdul-Raof;+M+Cuyper,+The+Composition+of+the+Qur'an:+Rhetorical+Analysis,+2015,+https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85049160610&partnerID=40&md5=aa8750643913d2761fa34e5097f48c07); Navid Kermani, *God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran* (Polity Press, 2015), [https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book\\_slug=god-is-beautiful-the-aesthetic-experience-of-the-quran-9780745645261](https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=god-is-beautiful-the-aesthetic-experience-of-the-quran-9780745645261).

<sup>6</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Shah and Haleem, *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*.

<sup>7</sup> John L Esposito and Natana J DeLong-Bas, *Shariah: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/shariah-9780199325059>.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), [https://www.cambridge.org/core/search?q=Forbidden Words Taboo and the Censoring of Language](https://www.cambridge.org/core/search?q=Forbidden+Words+Taboo+and+the+Censoring+of+Language).

meaning to be understood without blunt assertion.<sup>9</sup> From Qur'anic stylistics, it adopts the view that meaning is produced through arrangement, imagery, semantic relations, and the interaction between explicit and implicit expression. From linguistic ethics, it reads indirect language not as concealment but as disciplined speech suited to morally sensitive subjects. From Islamic legal hermeneutics, it treats legal meaning as inseparable from textual form, context, and juristic reasoning.<sup>10</sup>

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated reading of Qur'an 2:187. Rather than treating the verse only as a legal text on fasting or only as an example of rhetorical beauty, the article argues that *kināyah* functions as the meeting point of Qur'anic aesthetics, ethical speech, and legal regulation. This approach contributes to *Ushuluddin*, Qur'anic Studies, Arabic rhetoric, and Islamic legal studies by showing that the Qur'an's treatment of intimate life is neither linguistically accidental nor merely juridical. Its indirect language is part of its normative wisdom: it teaches not only what may or may not be done, but also how ethically charged realities should be spoken about.

## Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual-hermeneutical design to examine *kināyah* in Qur'an 2:187 as a rhetorical, ethical, and legal phenomenon. A qualitative design is appropriate because the study is not intended to measure the frequency of figurative expressions or quantify reader responses, but to interpret how indirect Qur'anic language produces meaning within a specific textual, ethical, and juridical context.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, the research combines close textual reading, Arabic rhetorical analysis, Qur'anic hermeneutics, and legal-textual interpretation. This combination is necessary because Qur'an 2:187 is not merely a literary passage, but also a normative verse regulating fasting, marital intimacy, and devotional retreat. The study therefore treats the verse as a unified textual site in which aesthetic form, linguistic ethics, and legal meaning interact.

The primary source of this study is the Arabic text of Qur'an 2:187, with particular attention to the expressions *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum*, *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, *bāshirūhunna*, and *al-khayṭ al-abyaḍ min al-khayṭ al-aswad*. These expressions are selected because they contain indirect, figurative, or ethically restrained language central to the verse's treatment of marital intimacy, fasting time, and devotional discipline. The study also consults selected classical and modern exegetical sources to understand how Muslim scholars have interpreted the linguistic, ethical, and legal dimensions of the verse. In addition, classical Arabic rhetorical works are used to define *kināyah* as a category of *'ilm al-bayān*, particularly in relation to indirect signification, contextual intelligibility, and refined expression.<sup>12</sup> This allows the analysis to avoid reducing *kināyah* to a modern notion of euphemism detached from its Arabic rhetorical genealogy.

The source selection follows purposive and criterion-based sampling. A textual unit is included in the analysis when it fulfils three criteria: first, it appears

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<sup>9</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2004), <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=Dalail+al-Ijaz+al-Jurjani+Mahmud+Muhammad+Shakir>; Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Qazwīnī, *Al-Īdāh Fī 'ulūm Al-Balāgha: Al-Ma'ānī, Al-Bayān, Wa-Al-Badī'*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2023), <https://www.al-ilmiyah.com/search?search=الإيضاح في علوم البلاغة>.

<sup>10</sup> Emon and Ahmed, *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Law*.

<sup>11</sup> John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Sage Publications, 2018); Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (Sage, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il Al-I'jāz Fī Al-Qur'ān*; Al-Qazwīnī, *Al-Īdāh Fī 'ulūm Al-Balāgha: Al-Ma'ānī, Al-Bayān, Wa-Al-Badī'*; Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*.

directly in Qur'an 2:187 and contributes to the verse's discussion of intimacy, fasting, time, or devotional restriction; second, it has rhetorical significance because it conveys meaning through indirection, metaphorical association, or contextual implication; and third, it contributes to at least one of the study's three analytical concerns: Qur'anic aesthetics, linguistic ethics, or legal implication. Expressions are excluded when they function only as grammatical connectors or legal details without significant relevance to *kināyah*. This sampling strategy follows the principle of theoretical relevance rather than statistical representativeness, since the study seeks to interpret the depth of a specific Qur'anic verse rather than generalize across all figurative expressions in the Qur'an.<sup>13</sup>

The analytical framework consists of three interrelated layers. The first layer is Arabic rhetorical theory, especially the concept of *kināyah* as indirect expression in which an intended meaning is understood through contextual inference while the literal meaning remains linguistically possible. This layer is used to analyse how Qur'an 2:187 speaks about intimate matters through refined and non-vulgar language. The second layer is Qur'anic stylistics, which examines how imagery, rhythm, semantic density, and lexical choice shape meaning within the verse. This is particularly relevant to the phrase *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, where the image of clothing conveys intimacy, concealment, protection, mutuality, and moral dignity.<sup>14</sup> The third layer is Islamic legal hermeneutics, which examines how the verse's rhetorical form contributes to legal meaning concerning the permissibility of marital relations at night during Ramadan, the temporal boundary of fasting, and the restriction of sexual relations during *i'tikāf*.<sup>15</sup> These three layers are applied together because isolating rhetoric from law would reduce the verse to literary beauty, while isolating law from rhetoric would overlook the ethical language through which the ruling is communicated.

The interpretive procedure is conducted in five stages. The first stage is lexical identification, in which key expressions in Qur'an 2:187 are identified and examined according to their Arabic wording, grammatical construction, and immediate syntactic environment. The second stage is rhetorical classification, in which the selected expressions are analysed to determine whether they operate as *kināyah*, metaphor, indirect expression, or broader figurative imagery. The third stage is contextual interpretation, in which the expressions are read within the internal structure of the verse, especially its movement from marital intimacy to fasting discipline and devotional restraint. The fourth stage is exegetical comparison, in which selected tafsīr and legal discussions are compared to identify how the verse has been interpreted in relation to sexuality, fasting, and marital ethics. The fifth stage is synthetic evaluation, in which the findings are organized around the three main research concerns: aesthetic function, linguistic ethics, and legal implication. This staged procedure is consistent with hermeneutical analysis, which requires movement between textual parts, the whole verse, and the wider interpretive horizon.<sup>16</sup>

This study modifies conventional qualitative content analysis by adding a rhetorical-legal hermeneutical layer. Standard qualitative content analysis is useful for identifying and classifying textual patterns, but it is insufficient on its

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<sup>13</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Nasr, *The Study Qur'an*.

<sup>15</sup> Emon and Ahmed, *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Law*.

<sup>16</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004); Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

own for analysing Qur'anic *kināyah*, because Qur'an 2:187 does not present language as a neutral communicative object. Its wording carries theological authority, moral instruction, and legal consequence. For this reason, the analysis does not stop at coding expressions as indirect, figurative, or metaphorical. It also evaluates how indirectness shapes the ethical mode of speech and how rhetorical refinement supports, rather than weakens, legal clarity. This methodological modification is justified because the object of study requires attention to both linguistic form and normative function.<sup>17</sup>

To ensure methodological transparency, the analysis applies consistent categories to each selected expression: literal meaning, implied meaning, rhetorical form, ethical function, legal relevance, and interpretive implication. Literal meaning refers to the surface lexical sense of the expression. Implied meaning refers to the intended meaning understood through context. Rhetorical form identifies whether the expression operates as *kināyah*, metaphor, symbolic imagery, or temporal figure. Ethical function examines how the verse maintains modesty, dignity, and restraint in discussing intimate matters. Legal relevance identifies the ruling or juristic issue connected to the expression. Interpretive implication explains how the expression contributes to the article's broader argument about the unity of Qur'anic aesthetics, linguistic ethics, and law. This coding structure helps prevent impressionistic interpretation and allows the analysis to remain systematic, transparent, and academically evaluable.

Because this is a textual study, it does not involve participants, interviews, questionnaires, or field observation. The validity of the analysis is maintained through textual triangulation, conceptual triangulation, and interpretive consistency. Textual triangulation is achieved by comparing the Qur'anic verse, Arabic rhetorical concepts, and selected exegetical or legal interpretations. Conceptual triangulation is achieved by reading the verse through rhetoric, stylistics, ethics, and legal hermeneutics rather than through a single disciplinary lens. Interpretive consistency is maintained by applying the same analytical sequence to all selected expressions and by distinguishing clearly between linguistic description, rhetorical interpretation, and legal implication. Through this method, the study provides a transparent and academically accountable way to examine *kināyah* in Qur'an 2:187 as a Qur'anic mode of expression that unites aesthetic refinement, ethical speech, and juridical meaning.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Kināyah* as Qur'anic Indirection: Reframing Q. 2:187 beyond Literal-Legal Reading**

The principal finding of this subsection is that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 functions as a Qur'anic strategy of disciplined indirection, not as a mere substitution for explicit sexual vocabulary. The verse speaks about marital intimacy within the legal framework of fasting, yet it does so through a language that is neither evasive nor blunt. Expressions such as *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum* and *bāshirūhunna* indicate conjugal relations clearly enough to generate legal consequences, but their phrasing avoids vulgar exposure of the intimate act. This balance is central to the verse's rhetorical intelligence: the Qur'an communicates what must be legally known while preserving the dignity of what should not be crudely displayed. In this sense, *kināyah* becomes a linguistic bridge between juridical clarity and moral refinement.

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<sup>17</sup> Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E Shannon, "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis," *Qualitative Health Research* 15, no. 9 (2005): 1277-88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>.

The immediate textual evidence lies in the structure of the verse itself. Q. 2:187 moves from the permission of night-time intimacy during Ramadan to the metaphor of spouses as garments, then to the practical boundaries of eating, drinking, dawn, nightfall, and *i'tikāf*. This movement shows that the verse does not treat sexuality as an isolated bodily act. It places intimacy within a wider order of discipline, reciprocity, time, and worship. The phrase *al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum* does not simply name sexual access; it situates intimacy within marital relation. Likewise, *bāshirūhunna* carries the sense of direct bodily closeness without reducing the spouses to objects of desire. The result is a form of speech that is legally intelligible but ethically restrained.

This reading challenges a narrowly literal-legal approach to Q. 2:187. A purely legal reading may correctly identify the rulings of the verse—permissibility of intercourse at night, prohibition during fasting hours, and restriction during *i'tikāf*—but it risks missing the rhetorical mode through which those rulings are communicated. Recent scholarship on Qur'anic ethics and law has shown that legal meaning in the Qur'an cannot be separated from moral language, social relations, and the formation of virtuous conduct.<sup>18</sup> Q. 2:187 supports this point because its legal content is embedded in a refined discourse of conjugal mutuality. The verse does not merely regulate conduct; it educates the reader in how intimate conduct should be spoken about.

The hermeneutical significance of *kināyah* becomes clearer when the verse is read beyond a flat opposition between literal and figurative meaning. Galadari's work on Qur'anic hermeneutics emphasizes that Qur'anic meaning often emerges through layered relations among wording, context, and intertextual resonance rather than through isolated lexical extraction.<sup>19</sup> Applied to Q. 2:187, this means that the indirect expressions must not be treated as linguistic decoration added to a legal rule. They are part of the verse's semantic architecture. *Kināyah* allows the Qur'an to communicate intimate realities by activating inference, modesty, and contextual understanding at the same time.

This finding also refines gender-sensitive readings of Qur'anic discourse. Studies of gender and family ethics in Islamic thought have shown that discussions of marriage, sexuality, and moral responsibility are often shaped by inherited interpretive assumptions about authority, embodiment, and domestic life.<sup>20</sup> Q. 2:187 offers an important corrective because its rhetoric does not frame sexuality only from the perspective of male entitlement or legal permission. The verse's language of mutual nearness and its avoidance of coarse expression create a discursive space in which intimacy is regulated without being degraded. Thus, *kināyah* does not conceal sexuality out of shame; rather, it renders sexuality speakable within a moral grammar of dignity.

The theoretical implication is that Qur'anic *kināyah* should be understood as a form of ethical intelligibility. It enables the text to say enough for law, imply enough for reflection, and restrain enough for moral discipline. This also has methodological significance. Researchers analysing Q. 2:187 should not isolate

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<sup>18</sup> Ramon Harvey, *The Qur'an and the Just Society* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-the-qur-an-and-the-just-society.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Abdulla Galadari, *Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Between Science, History, and the Bible* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/quranic-hermeneutics-9781350070039/>.

<sup>20</sup> Z Ayubi, "Rearing Gendered Souls: Childhood and the Making of Muslim Manhood in Pre-Modern Islamic Ethics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 87, no. 4 (2019): 1178–1208, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfz072>; Celene Ibrahim, *Women and Gender in the Qur'an* (Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/women-and-gender-in-the-quran-9780190067236>.

individual words from the verse's rhetorical sequence, nor should they reduce figurative language to euphemism. The proper unit of analysis is the interaction between lexical choice, syntactic placement, legal context, and ethical effect. Such an approach expands existing scholarship by showing that *kināyah* is not simply a figure within Arabic rhetoric, but a Qur'anic mode of meaning-making in which language, law, and moral formation are mutually constituted. As Bauer's broader study of ambiguity in Islamic civilization suggests, interpretive richness does not necessarily weaken normativity; it can become the very means through which religious discourse sustains precision without sacrificing depth.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Aesthetics of Marital Intimacy: Garment Imagery and the Moral Beauty of Qur'anic Expression**

The principal finding of this subsection is that the phrase *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna* in Q. 2:187 constructs marital intimacy through an aesthetic of reciprocity rather than through a merely biological or legal description of sexual access. The metaphor of clothing does not function as an ornamental addition to the verse; it is the central image through which the Qur'an reframes conjugal relation as nearness, protection, concealment, warmth, and mutual dependence. The verse could have spoken about marital relations in direct juridical vocabulary, yet it chooses an image that makes intimacy intelligible without reducing it to physical gratification. This suggests that Qur'anic aesthetics is not detached from moral meaning. Beauty in this verse emerges from the precision with which an intimate reality is expressed through a dignifying image.

The textual evidence is concentrated in the symmetry of the formulation: *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*. The expression is not one-directional. It does not describe women as garments for men alone but immediately reverses the image and describes men as garments for women. This reciprocal syntax is significant because it prevents the metaphor from becoming an image of possession. Instead, the verse presents marital life as mutual covering and mutual belonging. The aesthetic force of the phrase therefore lies in its balance: each spouse is represented as a source of closeness and protection for the other. In this respect, the verse's beauty is inseparable from its ethical architecture.

This finding supports recent approaches in Qur'anic Studies that read Qur'anic meaning through form, structure, and audience effect rather than through lexical translation alone.<sup>22</sup> The Qur'an Seminar project, for instance, shows that Qur'anic passages often require collaborative attention to literary form, rhetorical sequence, and interpretive plurality.<sup>23</sup> In Q. 2:187, the clothing metaphor performs this kind of layered work. It joins physical intimacy to emotional security, legal permission to moral restraint, and bodily nearness to spiritual discipline. The image does not replace the legal meaning of the verse; it refines the way that meaning is received.

The metaphor also challenges readings that isolate legal verses from Qur'anic literary artistry. Studies gathered in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* and *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* emphasize that the Qur'an must be approached through multiple intersecting dimensions: philology,

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas A4 - Biesterfeldt Bauer Hinrich A4 - Tunstall, Tricia, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2021), <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/a-culture-of-ambiguity/9780231170659>.

<sup>22</sup> Marhamah Annazah Tambunan Al Fiqri Ardiansyah, "From Normative Citation to Critical Analysis: Evaluating Methodological," *Dialogues in Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 01, no. 1 (2026): 1–26.

<sup>23</sup> Mehdi Azaiez et al., eds., "The Qur'an Seminar Commentary: A Collaborative Study of 50 Qur'anic Passages" (De Gruyter, 2016).

rhetoric, reception, interpretation, and normativity.<sup>24</sup> Q. 2:187 confirms this methodological point. A legal-rulings approach can identify when sexual relations are permitted or restricted during Ramadan, but it cannot fully explain why the Qur'an places those rulings inside an image of clothing.<sup>25</sup> The metaphor reveals that law is communicated through a language that shapes sensibility, not merely behaviour.

The semantic richness of *libās* is crucial here. Clothing covers the body, but it also adorns, protects, warms, and marks social dignity. When this image is applied to spouses, marital intimacy becomes a relation of ethical shelter. The Qur'an does not represent sexual life as a private zone outside moral formation; rather, it integrates desire into the discipline of fasting and the dignity of marriage.<sup>26</sup> Sinai's work on Qur'anic key terms is useful for this analysis because it demonstrates that Qur'anic vocabulary often carries meaning through networks of usage, semantic range, and conceptual association rather than through a single fixed equivalent.<sup>27</sup> The term *libās* therefore should not be flattened into "clothing" in a merely literal sense. Its force lies in the associations it gathers around the body, modesty, protection, and relational identity.

This reading also refines the study of Qur'anic narrative and address. Alhassen argues that Qur'anic discourse frequently works by engaging its audience through carefully structured scenes, images, and shifts in perspective, rather than by delivering abstract propositions alone.<sup>28</sup> Although Q. 2:187 is not a narrative passage, it similarly works through scene-making. It situates the believer between night and dawn, desire and restraint, spouse and worship, private intimacy and divine boundary. The garment image stands at the centre of this scene, giving marital sexuality a moral shape before the verse turns to fasting limits and *i'tikāf*.

The theoretical implication is that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 should be read as moralized aesthetics. The indirectness of the verse does not obscure the subject of sexuality; it dignifies it. Methodologically, this means that researchers should analyse the phrase not only as a metaphor, but as a rhetorical structure that organizes legal, affective, and ethical meanings at once. Academically, this subsection contributes to Qur'anic rhetorical studies by showing that the beauty of the verse lies in its ability to speak about intimacy with clarity, restraint, and relational depth. The Qur'an's aesthetic achievement here is not decorative softness, but the transformation of conjugal language into a disciplined expression of mutual care.

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<sup>24</sup> A Rippin and J Mojaddedi, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān, Second Edition, The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān, Second Edition*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118964873>; George Archer, Henry Bainbridge, and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (Routledge, 2021), <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Companion-to-the-Quran/Archer-Bainbridge-Amir-Moezzi/p/book/9781138350867>.

<sup>25</sup> Marhamah Annazah Tambunan, "Mekanisme Psikologis Dalam Proses Tazkiyah Al-Nafs Menurut Al-Qur'an: Studi Interdisipliner Antara Tasawuf Dan Psikologi Kontemporer," *AL-YAMIN Journal Of Islamic Studies And Culture* 1, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>26</sup> A F Ardiansyah et al., "Qiwāmah And Epistemic Violence: A Critical Socio-Legal Analysis of Gendered Authority In Islamic Family Law," *Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 605–26, <https://doi.org/10.52496/mjhki.v3i2.100>.

<sup>27</sup> Nicolai Sinai, *Key Terms of the Qur'an: A Critical Dictionary* (Princeton University Press, 2023), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691241319/key-terms-of-the-quran>.

<sup>28</sup> Leyla Ozgur Alhassen, *How the Qur'an Works: Reading Sacred Narrative* (Oxford University Press, 2023), <https://global.oup.com/academic/search?q=How the Qur'an Works Reading Sacred Narrative Alhassen>.

### **Linguistic Ethics of Sexual Discourse: Modesty, Clarity, and Moral Restraint in Q. 2:187**

The principal finding of this subsection is that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 establishes an ethics of speaking about sexuality in which modesty and clarity are not opposed but mutually sustained. The verse does not avoid the reality of bodily desire, marital intimacy, or sexual permission during the nights of Ramadan. Rather, it disciplines the manner in which these realities are expressed. The Qur'anic use of indirect language shows that intimate matters can be named with sufficient clarity for legal understanding while still being framed through a register of dignity. This is why the verse's language is not merely polite in the social sense; it is ethically formative. It teaches the audience that speech about the body must neither collapse into vulgar exposure nor become so obscure that moral and legal meaning disappears.<sup>29</sup>

The textual evidence appears in the verse's careful selection of expressions. *Al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum* points to sexual relations without crude explicitness, while *bāshirūhunna* evokes bodily closeness through a softened verbal form rather than through a blunt description of intercourse. These expressions are surrounded by other ethically charged elements: the metaphor of spouses as garments, the discipline of fasting from dawn to night, and the boundary of *i'tikāf*. The verse therefore places sexual discourse inside a wider moral grammar of restraint, reciprocity, and worship. In this structure, *kināyah* is not a linguistic mask; it is a disciplined form of disclosure in which the Qur'an makes intimate realities speakable without stripping them of moral gravity.

This finding can be clarified through contemporary sociopragmatic theory. Recent studies of politeness and impoliteness emphasize that indirectness is not simply a matter of avoiding offence; it is a way of managing relational vulnerability, social norms, face-work, audience sensitivity, and the moral consequences of speech.<sup>30</sup> Q. 2:187 demonstrates a higher form of this principle. The verse addresses a topic that is socially sensitive, bodily direct, and legally consequential, yet it avoids both shame-based silence and uncontrolled explicitness. The Qur'anic mode of expression therefore refines ordinary politeness theory by locating indirect language within divine instruction, not merely interpersonal etiquette. Its restraint is not a sign of avoidance but a mode of ethical precision.<sup>31</sup>

The ethical force of the verse also becomes visible when read alongside recent scholarship on gender and Qur'anic interpretation. Barlas argues that patriarchal readings often emerge when Qur'anic language is detached from its broader ethical structure and absorbed into inherited social hierarchies.<sup>32</sup> Mubarak's study of modern Qur'anic commentaries likewise shows that gendered meanings are shaped not only by the scriptural text but also by the interpretive assumptions brought to it.<sup>33</sup> Applied to Q. 2:187, these insights indicate that sexual language in

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<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Culpeper, Michael Haugh, and Daniel Z Kadar, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)Politeness* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-37508-7>; Michael Haugh, Daniel Z Kadar, and Marina Terkourafi, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociopragmatics* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-handbook-of-sociopragmatics/>; Ayubi, "Rearing Gendered Souls: Childhood and the Making of Muslim Manhood in Pre-Modern Islamic Ethics."

<sup>30</sup> Culpeper, Haugh, and Kadar, *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)Politeness*.

<sup>31</sup> Alhassen, *How the Qur'an Works: Reading Sacred Narrative*.

<sup>32</sup> Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, Revised edition (University of Texas Press, 2019).

<sup>33</sup> Hadia Mubarak, *Rebellious Wives, Neglectful Husbands: Controversies in Modern Qur'anic Commentaries* (Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/rebellious-wives-neglectful-husbands-9780197553305>.

the Qur'an should not be read as mere permission granted to one party over another. The verse's indirectness, reciprocal imagery, and restrained diction construct intimacy as a shared moral space rather than as a unilateral entitlement. This reading is further supported by studies that examine gendered morality, marital ethics, and embodied responsibility in Islamic thought, where sexuality is treated not only as a legal category but also as an ethical field shaped by discipline, reciprocity, and interpretive care.

This analysis also challenges the assumption that clarity requires explicitness. In Q. 2:187, the legal meaning is clear: conjugal relations are permitted during the nights of fasting and restricted during fasting hours and *i'tikāf*. Yet the verse achieves this clarity through refined expression rather than clinical or vulgar terminology. This is important methodologically because it shows that the study of Qur'anic legal language must attend not only to what ruling is produced, but also to how the language of the ruling shapes ethical sensibility. The Qur'an's linguistic restraint is part of the norm being taught. In this respect, the verse supports approaches in Qur'anic Studies that read legal, ethical, and rhetorical dimensions as mutually embedded rather than separately functioning domains.<sup>34</sup>

Recent work on Arabic language and politeness further supports the relevance of this analysis. Arabic communication contains rich sociopragmatic resources for managing respect, indirectness, and appropriateness across contexts; computational studies of Arabic politeness have also shown that politeness is not a marginal linguistic feature but a culturally embedded communicative phenomenon.<sup>35</sup> While these studies concern modern Arabic usage rather than Qur'anic revelation directly, they help explain why refined indirectness in Arabic vagueness is not necessarily. It can be a precise communicative strategy shaped by context, audience, register, and moral expectation. The Qur'anic use of *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 therefore belongs to a broader Arabic sensitivity to appropriateness, but it also exceeds ordinary sociolinguistic convention because its indirectness is tied to revelation, worship, and legal consequence.<sup>36</sup>

The theoretical implication is that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 should be understood as linguistic ethics. It is not only a figure of *balāghah* but a Qur'anic method for regulating how morally sensitive realities are made speakable. Methodologically, this requires researchers to analyse the relation between lexical choice, implied meaning, audience recognition, pragmatic context, and ethical effect. Academically, this subsection contributes to Qur'anic rhetoric by showing that the verse's indirect language does more than beautify sexual discourse. It constructs a moral discipline of speech in which intimacy is acknowledged, law is clarified, and human dignity is protected through the very form of expression.

### **Legal Implications of *Kināyah*: Fasting, Conjugal Permission, and the Limits of *I'tikāf***

The principal finding of this subsection is that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 does not weaken legal clarity; rather, it enables the Qur'an to articulate precise rulings through a morally refined linguistic form. The verse establishes three connected legal matters: the permissibility of conjugal relations during the nights of

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<sup>34</sup> Harvey, *The Qur'an and the Just Society*; Rippin and Mojaddedi, *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Qur'ān, Second Ed.*

<sup>35</sup> Imane Guellil et al., "Arabic Natural Language Processing: An Overview," *ArXiv*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1903.02784>.

<sup>36</sup> Hend Al-Khalifa et al., "ADAB: Arabic Dataset for Automated Politeness Benchmarking--A Large-Scale Resource for Computational Sociopragmatics," *ArXiv*, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2602.13870>.

Ramadan, the temporal limit of eating and drinking before dawn, and the prohibition of sexual relations during *i'tikāf*. These rulings are not presented in detached legal prose, but through a sequence of images, permissions, boundaries, and warnings. This shows that Qur'anic legal discourse is not merely prescriptive. It forms legal consciousness by joining normative instruction with rhetorical discipline.

The textual evidence is explicit in the movement of the verse. The phrase *uḥilla lakum laylat al-ṣiyām al-rafath ilā nisā'ikum* establishes permission after earlier restriction, while *bāshirūhunna wa-btaghū mā kataba Allāhu lakum* confirms lawful conjugal relations within marriage. The command to eat and drink “until the white thread becomes distinct from the black thread at dawn” sets the temporal boundary of fasting, and the closing restriction—*wa-lā tubāshirūhunna wa-antum 'ākifūna fī al-masājid*—marks the special legal status of *i'tikāf*. The verse therefore moves from permission to boundary, from intimacy to worship, and from bodily need to ritual discipline. In this structure, *kināyah* is not a decorative cover for law; it is the form through which the law becomes ethically speakable.

This finding refines the study of Islamic legal hermeneutics. Legal interpretation in Islam has historically depended not only on isolated commands, but also on language, context, juristic reasoning, and the management of ambiguity.<sup>37</sup> Rabb's study of legal maxims and interpretive doubt demonstrates that Islamic law developed sophisticated techniques for handling uncertainty, textual implication, and evidentiary limits.<sup>38</sup> Q. 2:187 confirms the relevance of that insight at the level of Qur'anic language. The verse does not require crude explicitness to generate binding legal meaning. Instead, its meaning becomes clear through context, lexical relation, and the larger ritual frame of fasting.

Classical legal exegesis further supports this point. Works such as *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* read legal verses through grammar, context, juristic inference, and school-specific legal reasoning.<sup>39</sup> In this tradition, Q. 2:187 is not approached as a rhetorical passage separate from law, but as a legal text whose wording demands close linguistic attention.<sup>40</sup> This is methodologically important because it shows that legal implication and rhetorical form are not competing layers. The figurative or indirect phrasing of the verse does not make the ruling less determinate; it requires the interpreter to attend more carefully to how the ruling is produced.

The verse also has implications for marital ethics. The legal permission granted in Q. 2:187 is not framed as unrestricted sexual entitlement. It appears within the reciprocal metaphor of spouses as garments and within the discipline of fasting. Recent scholarship on Islamic law and family ethics has shown that

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<sup>37</sup> Ummatul hasanah Riski Suriani Lubis, Jesimawati, “Reframing Qur'anic Hermeneutics Beyond the Text–Context Binary: A Dialogical Model for Contemporary Interpretation,” *Dialogues in Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 01, no. 1 (2026): 27–49; Yessy Sunday Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, Abdul Aziz Hasibuan, “Competing Qur'anic Authorities in the Public Sphere: Textual Meaning, Social Contestation, and Interpretive Politics in Contemporary Indonesia,” *Dialogues in Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 01, no. 1 (2026): 102–24.

<sup>38</sup> Intisar A Rabb, *Doubt in Islamic Law: A History of Legal Maxims, Interpretation, and Islamic Criminal Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>39</sup> Warda Mardiana Tambunan, Tiara Hidayah B, and Miftahur Rahmah, “In Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis Cannot Always Be Addressed Satisfactorily through a Rigidly Formalist Reading of Legal Verses . Vision by Moving from Specific Historical Rulings to General Ethical Principles and Then Back,” *Journal of Qur'anic Legal Studies and Exegesis* 01, no. 1 (2026): 21–39; Ummi Amaliyah, Ida Safitri, and Shofwatun Niswah, “The Qur'ān as Legal Proof: Authority, Language, and Juristic Argument in Al-Jaṣṣāṣ' s A ḥ Kām Al-Qur' Ān,” *Journal of Qur'anic Legal Studies and Exegesis* 01, no. 1 (2026): 1–3.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmad ibn Ali al-Razi al-Jassas, *Ahkām Al-Qur'an*, ed. Abd al-Salam Muhammad Ali Shahin (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2020), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahkām\\_al-Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahkām_al-Qur'an).

marital obligations and permissions cannot be read only as contractual rights; they are embedded in wider ethical structures concerning care, responsibility, and household life.<sup>41</sup> This perspective is useful for Q. 2:187 because the verse joins conjugal permission to mutuality and ritual self-restraint. The legal permission is real, but its rhetorical environment prevents it from being reduced to bodily access alone.

This analysis also challenges modern assumptions that law becomes more precise when its language becomes more technically explicit. Islamic legal history shows that legal authority is often produced through a combination of textual formulation, interpretive institutions, and social application rather than through bare literalism.<sup>42</sup> Q. 2:187 illustrates this dynamic in a Qur'anic form. Its indirect language is not a defect in legal communication; it is a means of preserving both normative clarity and moral decorum. The verse can regulate fasting and marital intimacy while still teaching believers how to speak about bodily matters with restraint.

The theoretical implication is that *kināyah* should be understood as legally productive rhetoric. It is not only a figure of Arabic eloquence, but a mode through which law is communicated with ethical depth. Methodologically, the analysis of Q. 2:187 requires attention to the interaction between wording, legal inference, ritual context, and moral effect. This has contemporary significance as well, since recent work on Islamic legal reasoning in digital systems shows that religious legal interpretation requires source precision, awareness of juristic plurality, and sensitivity to context rather than isolated textual extraction.<sup>43</sup> Academically, this subsection contributes to Qur'anic legal studies by showing that the Qur'an's legal language can be simultaneously precise, indirect, ethical, and aesthetically refined.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that *kināyah* in Q. 2:187 functions as a Qur'anic mode of expression that integrates aesthetic refinement, linguistic ethics, and legal clarity. The verse does not merely employ indirect language to soften discussion of marital intimacy; rather, it uses *kināyah* to construct a disciplined form of speech in which sensitive bodily realities are expressed with dignity while remaining legally intelligible. This finding directly answers the first research objective by showing that *kināyah* operates through expressions such as *al-rafāth ilā nisā'ikum*, *hunna libās lakum wa-antum libās lahunna*, *bāshirūhunna*, and *al-khayṭ al-abyaḍ min al-khayṭ al-aswad*, each of which contributes to the verse's rhetorical, ethical, and normative structure.

In relation to Qur'anic aesthetics, the study demonstrates that the beauty of Q. 2:187 lies in its ability to speak about intimacy without reducing it to explicit bodily description. The garment imagery presents marital relations as reciprocal, protective, concealing, and dignifying. This aesthetic structure is not decorative; it shapes the moral reception of the verse and frames conjugal intimacy as a

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<sup>41</sup> Marion Holmes Katz, *Wives and Work: Islamic Law and Ethics before Modernity* (Columbia University Press, 2022), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/katz20240>.

<sup>42</sup> Iza R Hussin, *The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites, Colonial Authority, and the Making of the Muslim State* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo22817452.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Ezieddin Elmahjub et al., "IslamicLegalBench: Evaluating LLMs Knowledge and Reasoning of Islamic Law across 1,200 Years of Islamic Pluralist Legal Traditions," *ArXiv*, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2602.21226>; Mohamed Amine Mouhoub, "Islamic Large Language Models: From Knowledge Acquisition to Trustworthy and Hallucination-Resistant AI" (arXiv, 2026), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2606.16629>.

relationship of mutual care rather than mere sexual permission. Thus, the Qur'an's aesthetic achievement in this verse is inseparable from its ethical vision.

The study also shows that Q. 2:187 establishes a linguistic ethics of sexual discourse. Its indirect expressions preserve modesty without sacrificing clarity. The verse neither silences sexuality nor exposes it in vulgar terms, but places it within a moral grammar of restraint, reciprocity, fasting discipline, and worship. This indicates that *kināyah* functions as an ethical mechanism through which the Qur'an teaches not only what may be done, but also how morally sensitive realities should be spoken about.

Regarding legal implications, the study finds that rhetorical indirection does not weaken the verse's juridical force. Q. 2:187 clearly establishes the permissibility of conjugal relations during the nights of Ramadan, the temporal boundary of eating and drinking before dawn, and the prohibition of sexual relations during *i'tikāf*. The verse therefore demonstrates that legal precision and rhetorical refinement can operate together. Its indirect language clarifies law through context, imagery, and normative sequence rather than through crude explicitness.

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in reframing *kināyah* as a Qur'anic strategy where aesthetics, ethics, and law are mutually constitutive. This approach contributes to Qur'anic Studies, Arabic rhetoric, Islamic legal hermeneutics, and linguistic ethics by showing that figurative language in legal verses should not be treated as secondary ornamentation. More broadly, the study implies that Qur'anic legal discourse must be read not only for its rulings, but also for the ethical mode of expression through which those rulings are communicated. Future research may extend this framework to other Qur'anic verses dealing with family law, sexuality, bodily discipline, and ritual practice, or compare the use of *kināyah* across tafsīr, fiqh, and contemporary religious discourse.

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