

CHAPTER III

MUHAMMAD QURAIISH SHIHAB AND *TAFSIR AL-MISHBAH*

A. Biography and Works of Muhammad Quraish Shihab

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is an expert on Qur'anic exegesis who regularly preaches on national television in Indonesia. He is noted as a progressive scholar who teaches Qur'anic exegesis using context and simple language. He is an author of many Islamic books, including *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. He served as Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs in 1998 and also as Chairman of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI-Indonesian Ulama Council) since 1984. Muhammad Quraish Shihab was also a rector of State Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah, 1992-1998.¹

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is a Muslim scholar in the sciences of the Qur'an and former Minister of Religion in *Kabinet Pembangunan VII* (1998). He was born in Rappang on 16 February 1944. Quraish Shihab's parents are Mr. Abdurrahman Shihab and Mrs. Asma Aburisyi. He came from an educated family of Arab descent. His father, Abdurrahman Shihab is a scholar and professor of exegesis. Quraish Shihab comes from a family of influential scholars in Ujung Pandang (nowadays known as Makassar). He is the fourth of 12 children. His three brothers, Nur, Ali and Umar and their two siblings, Wardah and Alwi Shihab, were also born in Rappang. The other seven siblings, Nina, Sida Nizar,

¹Abdallah Schleifer and the Team, *The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2019* (Amman: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2018), 130.

Abdul Mutalib, Salwa, and twin sisters Ulfa and Latifah, were born in Buton Village.

His father, Abdurrahman Shihab (1905-1986) was a professor in the field of interpretation. Abdurrahman Shihab is one of the scholars, businessmen, and politicians who have a good reputation among the people of South Sulawesi (South Celebes). Contribution to the field of education proved to foster two colleges at Makassar, Universitas Muslim Indonesian (UMI), a largest private university in the eastern Indonesia, and IAIN Alauddin Ujung Pandang (now become UIN Alauddin Makassar). He is also listed as the rector of the college, UMI 1959-1965 and UIN Alauddin 1973-1979.²

After completing his education in Makassar, he continued his secondary education in Malang, which he did while attending the Darul Hadits al-Faqihiyyah Islamic Boarding School. In 1958 he left for Cairo, Egypt, and was accepted to Class II Thanawiyyah al-Azhar. In 1967, he reach the Lc (S-1) degree at the Faculty of Islamic Education, Department of Interpretation and Hadith al-Azhar University. He continued his education in the same faculty and specialization in the field of Interpretation of the Qur'an with a thesis named *al-al-I'jāz al-Tashrī'i li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.

Upon his return to Makassar, Quraish Shihab was trusted to support the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at the Alauddin IAIN, Ujung Pandang (Makassar). In addition, he was also entrusted with other positions, both

²Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Lentera al-Qur'an: Kisah dan Hikmah Kehidupan* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2008), 5.

in and out of the campus environment, such as the Eastern Indonesia Region VII Private College Coordinator, as well as outside of the campus, such as the Assistant Chief of the East Indonesian Police in the Field of Mental Development. While in Ujung Pandang, he also has several studies, including research on the theme "*Application of Religious Harmony in Eastern Indonesia*" (1975) and "*South Sulawesi Waqf Problems*" (1978).

Quraish Shihab married Fatmawaty Assegaf on February 2, 1975 in Solo. They are blessed with five children, Najla, Najwa, Nasywa, Ahmad, and Nahla. Najla is married to Ahmad Fikri Assegaf and has three children, Fathi, Nishrin and Nihlah. The second daughter, Najwa Shihab married Ibrahim Syarief Assegaf and had two children, Izzat and Namiya. Third daughter, Nasywa, married Muhammad Riza Alaydrus, and has two daughters, Naziha and Nuha. Ahmad Shihab, the only son of Quraish Shihab, married Sidah al-Hadad.

In 1980, Quraish Shihab returned to Cairo and continued his education at his old alma mater. In 1982 he reach his doctorate in the field of the Qur'anic Sciences with dissertation entitled *Naẓm al-Durār li al-Biqā'iy, Tahqīq wa Dirāsah*, he was obtained with the graduation *Summa Cum Laude*, Award for Achievement Level I (*mumtāz ma`a martabāt al-syarāf al-'ulā*).

Upon his return to Indonesia, since 1984, Quraish Shihab was assigned to the Faculty of Islamic Education and the Post-graduate Syarif Hidayatullah Faculty of the IAIN, Jakarta. In addition, off-campus, he is also entrusted to occupy various positions among: Chairman of the Central Indonesian Ulama

Council (MUI) (since 1984); Member of the Ministry of Religion's Lajnah Pentashih al-Qur'an (since 1989); Member of the National Education Advisory Board (since 1989).

Quraish Shihab is also involved in a number of professional organizations, including the Management of the Shari'ah Sciences Association; Management of the Ministry of Education and Culture's Consortium of Religious Sciences; and Assistant General Chair of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (ICMI).

Nowadays, Quraish Shihab is actively writing articles, books and works published by Lentera Hati Publishers. One of his famous works is *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, which is a complete interpretation consisting of 15 volumes.

Aside from being a writer, on a daily basis, Quraish Shihab leads the Qur'anic Study Center, a non-profit institution that supports introducing the Qur'an to a pluralistic society and creates, teaches and forms a professional exegete cadre (interpreter) of the Qur'an.³

In addition to the intellectual career as mentioned above, Shihab has also been a spiritual adviser to the Soeharto family, the second president of the Republic of Indonesia. Especially in moments of religious events such as the Tien Soeharto's *tahlil* event. Because of this closeness as mentioned before, he even served as minister of religion in the 6th Kabinet Pembangunan even though his position did not last long as the Soeharto's government fell in May 1998. At that

³Elha Omni Media, "About" at <http://quraishshihab.com/about/>, accessed on 22 March 2019.

time people thought that his reputation as a scientist had fallen with Soeharto's resignation. But after sinking from public coverage, sometime later he reappeared by being appointed as the Indonesian ambassador to Egypt.⁴

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is known as an intellectual (*ulama*) for interpretation of the Qur'an who's famous in Indonesia and even in Southeast Asia. Based on the strong academic background that he lived through formal education and supported by the ability to express opinions and ideas in a simple way, but through the tendency of straight, rational, and moderate thinking, he appeared as a speaker and writer who could be accepted by all society. Starting from an early age, he consistently devoted his life to the field of the Qur'an. As a result, all scientific works are based solely on the study of the Qur'an.⁵

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is very active as a writer. There are several books that he produces including:

1. *Tafsīr*'s works

- a. *Tafsīr Mawḍu'ī* (thematic)

Tafsīr al-Qur'an which is compiled based on certain themes. The following works are thematic interpretations or use thematic interpretation approaches: *Wawasan al-Qur'an* (Mizan, 1996), *Secercah Cahaya Ilahi* (Mizan, 2000), *Menyingkap Tabir Ilahi: al-Asma' al-Husna dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 1998) *Yang Tersembunyi: Jin, Malaikat, Iblis, Setan* (Lentera Hati,

⁴Saifuddin and Wardani, *Tafsir Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2017), 45.

⁵Muhammad Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab" at *Jurnal Tsaqafah* Vol. 6, No. 2, October 2010, 248.

1999), *Jilbab: Pakaian Wanita Muslimah, Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer* (Lentera Hati, 2004), *Perempuan: Dari Cinta Sampai Seks, Dari Nikah Mut'ah sampai Nikah Sunnah, Dari Bias Lama sampai Bias Baru* (Lentera Hati, 2004), *Pengantin al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2007).

b. *Tafsīr Tahlīlī*

Tafsīr al-Qur'an which is arranged based on the verse order or *Sūrah* in the Mushaf al-Qur'an and covers a variety of issues relating to it, which fall into this category as follows: *Mahkota Tuntunan Ilahi: Tafsīr Sūrah al-Fatihah* (Untagma, 1988), *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm: Tafsīr atas Sūrah-Sūrah Pendek Berdasarkan Urutan Turunnya Wahyu* (Pustaka Hidayah, 1997), *Tafsir al-Mishbah* (Lentera Hati, 2000), *Perjalanan Menuju Keabadian: Kematian, Surga, dan Ayat-Ayat Tahlil* (Lentera Hati, 2001), *Menjemput Maut: Bekal Perjalanan Menuju Allah swt.* (Lentera Hati, 2002).

c. *Tafsīr Ijmālī*

An interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an by expressing the meaning of the verse in outline, global, by following the order of chapters in the Qur'an as the method of the *Tahlīlī*. The work that explains the essence of the content of the verses of the Qur'an is: *al-Lubab: Makna, Tujuan, dan Pelajaran dari Sūrah-Sūrah al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2012).

d. Qur'an Translation

Starting from dissatisfaction with the translation of the Qur'an which has been circulating so far, this work was born. Many scholars assert that the Qur'an cannot be translated in a transcendent sense, because there is no language in the world rich enough to encapsulate all the meanings it contains. His work is entitled: *al-Qur'an dan Maknanya* (Lentera Hati, 2010)

2. *Maqālāt Tafsīriyyah* (Interpretation Articles)

Membumikan al-Qur'an (Mizan, 1992), *Lentera Hati* (Mizan, 1994), *Menabur Pesan Ilahi: al-Qur'an dan Dinamika Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Lentera Hati, 2006), *Membumikan al-Qur'an Volume 2* (Lentera Hati, 2011).

3. *Ulum al-Qur'an* and Interpretation Methodology

*Tafsīr al-Manār: Keistimewaan dan Kelemahannya*⁶ (IAIN Alauddin, 1984), *Studi Kritis Tafsīr Al-Manār, Karya Muhammad Abduh dan M. Rasyid Ridha* (Reissued by Pustaka Hidayah Bandung, 1994), *Rasionalitas al-Qur'an: Studi Kritis atas Tafsīr al-Manār* (Reissued by Lentera Hati, 2005), *Filsafat Hukum Islam* (Departemen Agama, 1987), *Mukjizat al-Qur'an* (Mizan, 1996), *Kaidah Tafsīr* (Lentera Hati, 2013).

4. *Thaqāfah Islāmiyyah* (Islamic insight)

Haji Bersama M. Quraish Shihab (Mizan, 1998), *Dia Di Mana-Mana* (Lentera Hati, 2004), *Wawasan al-Qur'an tentang Zikir dan Doa* (Lentera Hati,

⁶Summarized from one part of the contents of the book entitled "*Berguru kepada Sang Mahaguru: Catatan Kecil (Seorang Murid) tentang Karya-Karya dan Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab*" by Muchlis M. Hanafi.

2006), *Logika Agama: Kedudukan Wahyu dan Batas-Batas Akal dalam Islam* (Lentera Hati, 2005), *Sunnah-Syiah Bergandengan Tangan! Mungkinkah? Kajian atas Konsep Ajaran dan Pemikiran* (Lentera Hati, 2007), *Yang Ringan Jenaka* (Lentera Hati, 2007), *Yang Sarat dan yang Bijak* (Lentera Hati, 2007), *M. Quraish Shihab Menjawab 1001 Soal Keislaman yang Patut Anda Ketahui* (Lentera Hati, 2008), *Ayat-Ayat Fitna: Sekelumit Keadaban Islam di Tengah Purbasangka* (Lentera Hati and Pusat Studi al-Qur'an, 2008), *Berbisnis dengan Allah* (Lentera Hati, 2008), *Doa Harian bersama M. Quraish Shihab* (Lentera Hati, 2009), *M. Quraish Shihab Menjawab 101 Soal Perempuan yang Patut Anda Ketahui* (Lentera Hati, 2010), *Membaca Sirah Nabi Muhammad saw dalam Sorotan al-Qur'an dan Hadits-Hadits Shahih* (Lentera Hati, 2011), *Doa Asmaul Husna: Doa yang Disukai Allah* (Lentera Hati, 2011), *Haji dan Umrah Bersama M. Quraish Shihab* (Lentera Hati, 2012), *Kematian adalah Nikmat* (Lentera Hati, 2013), *M. Quraish Shihab Menjawab pertanyaan Anak tentang Islam* (Lentera Hati, 2014), *Birrul Walidain* (Lentera Hati, 2014).⁷

Other activities are also important to know is that he was also wrote in the *Pelita* under the rubric “*Pelita Hati*”, the author remains rubric “*Tafsīr al-Amānah*” in the magazine, *Amānah*. Also as the Editorial Board of *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*, ‘*Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, *Mimbar Ulama*, *Religious Studies and Reflections journal and Philosophy*. All of these publications are in Jakarta. Muhammad Quraish Shihab is the scholar who are

⁷Elha Omni Media, “Work” at <http://quraishshihab.com/work/>, accessed on 26 March 2019.

fluent in speaking and writing fluently. He was very prolific producing scientific works, in addition to giving lectures and presentations at various scientific forums.⁸

B. Methodology of *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*

Tafsir al-Mishbah is the monumental work of *Tafsīr* by an Indonesian Islamic scholar, Muhammad Quraish Shihab. Published by Lentera Hati, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* is the first complete 30 Juz interpretation of the Qur'an in the last 30 years. The *Tafsīr* is aimed at interpretation of the Qur'an in relations to contemporary issues. *al-Mishbah* means "lantern", the connotation for it is the meaning of life and things illuminated by the light of the Qur'an. As is the name, the author aims to preach the Qur'an to be more "grounded" and easy to understand. *Tafsir al-Mishbah* was originally planned to be no more than three volumes, but apparently in its development was completed for approximately four years by the author who began writing in Cairo, and finished it in Jakarta in 15 volumes.⁹

Muhammad Quraish Shihab explaining the purposes of interpreting God's word in accordance with the cultural and conditional environment surrounding the person, and how science and the messages of the Qur'an can be extracted. According to Muhammad Quraish Shihab, the majesty of God's word can accommodate all the different conditions lived by the person. He also mentions

⁸MaHFudz Masduki, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah M. Quraish Shihab: Kajian atas Amsal al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 13-15.

⁹Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, vol. 15 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 759.

regarding *mufassīr*, who demanded to explain the values which are in line with the development of society, so that the Qur'an can actually serve as a guide. There's also the issue of the separation between the *ḥaq* (reality) and *bāṭil* (vanity) and the way out for everyday problem human being faces, which is required as well for *mufassīr* to remove the misunderstanding towards the Qur'an or the content of the verses.¹⁰

According to the expert interpreter of al-Azhar University, Abdul Hay al-Farmawi, in the interpretation of the Qur'an there are four types of interpretation methods, namely the method of *taḥlīlī*, the method of *ijmālī*, the method of *muqāran*, and the method of *mawḍū'ī*.¹¹

Specifically, it seems that *Tafsir al-Mishbah* can be categorized in the method of *taḥlīlī* interpretation. In *harfiyah*, *taḥlīlī* means to be loose or decompose.¹² The method of interpretation of the *taḥlīlī* is a way of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an by describing the descriptions of the meanings contained in the verses of the Qur'an by following the orderly arrangement of letters and verses as in the order of the Qur'anic manuscripts, and more or less carried out the analysis in it: in terms of language, cause why it came down, hadith or *ṣaḥābah* comments related to the correlation of verses and *Sūrah*.¹³

¹⁰See: Akhmad Muawal Hasan, "Quraish Shihab: Pertimbangan Budaya dalam Studi Al-Quran" at <https://tirto.id/cb4s>, accessed on 28 March 2019.

¹¹Muhammad Amin Suma, *Ulumul Qur'an* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2014), 379.

¹²Muhammad Amin Suma, *Ulumul Qur'an*, 379.

¹³Abd al-Ḥay al-Farmāwī, *Metode Tafsir Maudh'iy* translated by. Suryan A. Jamrah, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996), 12

This *Tafsīr* was first published in 2000 which was then warmly welcomed by the community, especially the Qur’anic lovers. *Tafsir al-Mishbah* collects more than 10,000 pages with 15 volumes with the following details:

THE INFORMATION ABOUT *TAFSIR AL-MISHBAH*

Volume No.	<i>Sūrah</i>	Number of Pages
1	al-Fātihah - al-Baqarah	624
2	Āli Imrān - al-Nisā	659
3	al-Māidah	257
4	al-An’ām	367
5	al-A’rāf - al-Taubah	765
6	Yunus - al-Ra’d	613
7	Ibrāhīm - al-Isrā’	585
8	al-Kahfi - al-Anbiyā	524
9	al-Hajj - al-Furqān	554
10	al-Shu’arā - al-Ankabūt	547
11	al-Rūm – Yāsin	582
12	al-Şaffāt - al-Zukhruf	601
13	al-Dukhān - al-Wāqī’ah	586
14	al-Hadīd - al-Mursalāt	695
15	al-Nabā - al-Nās	646

Meanwhile, the taking of the term “*al-Mishbah*” has several reasons and considerations. By Shihab, this interpretation is named so because it is inspired by the verse 35 of surah al-Nur.¹⁴ The reason for taking the name “*al-Mishbah*” as stated by Muhammad Quraish Shihab in the preface that *al-Mishbah* means lights, lamps, lanterns or other objects that function similarly, namely giving illumination to those who are in darkness. By choosing this name, it can be assumed that Muhammad Quraish Shihab hoped that the interpretations he wrote could provide information in seeking guidance and life guidelines especially for those who had difficulty understanding the meaning of the Qur’an directly because of language constraints. The Qur’an is a guide, but because the Qur’an is delivered in Arabic, so many people have difficulty understanding it. This is where the benefits of *al-Mishbah*’s interpretation are to help those who have difficulty understanding the Qur’an. Mainly in Indonesian. The background of the writing of the *Tafsir al-Mishbah* begins with the previous interpretation entitled *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Karim* which was published by Hidayah Library in 1997 which is considered to be less attractive to many people, even judging rambling in describing the meaning of vocabulary or rules which is presented. Finally, Muhammad Quraish Shihab did not continue the effort.¹⁵

In particular, Muhammad Quraish Shihab before interpreting the Qur’an explained in advance about the letter which was intended to be interpreted from the meaning of the *sūrah*, the place to descend the letter, the number of verses in the *sūrah*, because the letter descended, the priority of the *sūrah*, to the content of

¹⁴Afrizal Nur, *Tafsir al-Mishbah dalam Sorotan* (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2018), 2.

¹⁵Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, vol. 1, ix.

sūrah in general. Then Muhammad Quraish Shihab wrote verses in a sequential and thematic manner, meaning, combining several verses which were considered to speak a certain theme. Furthermore, Muhammad Quraish Shihab translates verses one by one and interprets them using correlation analysis between verses or *sūrah*, linguistics analysis, related narrations, and the opinions of scholars in the past. So with it, method and system of writing of this interpretation were by writing the verses to be interpreted firstly, then translating the verse accompanied by the explanations of *asbab al-nuzul* and the verses before and after too, then be interpreted with interpretation that taken from various of thought or *madhab*.¹⁶

In determining the flow of interpretation, as well as the style of interpretation, from an interpretation book, what is considered is the dominant thing in the interpretation, namely the interpretation of *bi al-Ma'thūr*, the interpretation of *bi al-Ra'y*, or *bi al-Isyārah*. The interpretation style can be in the form of *al-Ṣūfī*, interpretation of *al-Fiqhī*, *al-Falsafī* interpretation, *al-'Ilmī* interpretation, and interpretation of *al-Adabī al-Ijtimā'ī*, *al-tarbāwī*, or *al-akhlāqī*.¹⁷

From the writer's observation on *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, this interpretation is predominantly *bi al-ra'y* with the interpretation of *al-Adabī al-Ijtimā'ī*. This style of interpretation is concentrated on the disclosure of *balaghah* and miracles of the Qur'an, explaining the meaning and content according to natural law and improving the social order of the people which are packaged through verse points

¹⁶Afrizal Nur, *Tafsir al-Mishbah dalam Sorotan*, 10.

¹⁷Muhammad Amin Suma, *Ulumul Qur'an*, 395.

with a particular theme, *mawḍū'ī*, although this interpretation is also overall adopting the method of *tahlīlī* as well as *muqāran*.

The style of *al-Adabī al-Ijtimā'ī* is one of the interpretive features developed by contemporary commentators. If we look etymologically the word *al-Adabī*, seen from its form, it was a *maṣḍar* (infinitive) and the verb “*aduba*” is mean manners.¹⁸ Lexically, the word means norms that are used as a guide for someone in behaving in his life and in expressing his artwork. While the words “*al-ijtima'iy*”, which are rooted in the letters *jim*, *mim* and ‘*ain*, *jama'a* can mean to unite something.¹⁹ This word becomes a form of “*ijtima'a*”, which mean to *ijtima* in infinitive, it is means “a lot of social or social associations”.²⁰

So, etymologically, the interpretation of *al-Adabī al-Ijtimā'ī* is an interpretation that is oriented towards cultural and social literature, which Mu'in Salim refers to as an interpretation of the socio-cultural approach.²¹ In terms of terminology, the interpretation of *al-Adabī al-Ijtimā'ī* as mentioned by Farmawi is the style of interpretation which emphasizes the explanation of the verses of the Qur'an on the aspects of accuracy of the editorial, then arranges the content in a beautiful editor with prominent aspects of the Qur'an for life, and connects the

¹⁸Muhammad Ali al-Ṣabuniy, *al-Tibyan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* translated by. Aminuddin (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 1998) 245.

¹⁹Usman, *Ilmu Tafsir untuk UIN, IAIN, STAIN, PTAIS* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2009) 298.

²⁰Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mahmud Yunus aa Dzurriyyah, 2010), 93.

²¹Abdul Muin Salim, *Konsepsi Kekuasaan Politik dalam al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1994), 2.

meaning of the verse with the natural law that applies in the world community and development.²²

Among the idiosyncrasy of this interpretation is that the author never missed discussing *al-munāsabah* reflected in six things namely harmony of words in one *sūrah*, harmony of the content of the verse with the closing of the verse (*fawāṣil*), harmony in the relationship of verse with the next verse, harmony of the initial description/*muqadimah* one *sūrah* with its closing, harmony of the *sūrah* closing with the initial description/*muqadimah* *Sūrah* afterwards, and harmony of the *sūrah*'s theme with the name of *sūrah*.²³

The issue of *munāsabah* basically is not something new, even this is a norm in a commentary, but in *al-Mishbah* the author's explanation is presented in a style of writing that is easily understood by all circles, from academics to the wider community. Explanation of the meaning of a verse is written with imagery which increasingly attracts the attention of the reader to examine it. This is what makes this interpretation so special with the method of *mawḍu'iy* which this method has strong roots in the work of al-Biqā'i (d. 885 AH / 1480 AD), a figure whose work *Nazm al-Durār* was studied by Muhammad Quraish Shihab and also found in Muhammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Ashur, *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr* which is one of the references of *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. Al-Biqā'i is a figure in which the thoughts of the commentators on the importance of the Qur'anic interpretation method

²²Hasan al-Banna, *Muqaddimah fi al-Tafsir Ma'a Tafsir al-Fatihah wa Awa'il Surah al-Baqarah* (Kuwait: Dar al-Qur'an al-Karim, 1971), 12-13.

²³Wikipedia, "Tafsir al-Mishbah" at https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir_Al-Mishbah, accessed on 28 March 2019.

through the correlation (*munāsabah*) verse and *sūrah* reach the culmination point.²⁴

Ibn ‘Ashur also once said, “On this basis (that the arrangement of the verses of the Qur’an is based on the instructions of the Prophet). So the principle that applies to the verses of the Qur’an is the harmony in terms of the purpose between a verse and it’s afterward, or when there is a displacement, or something like that in terms of conversation, which is actually bound strong and interconnected”. Ibn Ashur himself perfected the descriptions of the *munāsabah* of al-Biqa’i which he said were not satisfactory. The idea of the importance of the *munāsabah* analysis was more clearly explain with the idea of the importance of analyzing the main objective or theme of the *sūrah* by Shalṭut. The method of interpreting the Qur’an by understanding the purpose or main theme of the *sūrah* has a logical relationship with the idea of *munāsabah* because it is based on the belief that the systematics of the Qur’an in the *sūrah* and verses have a coherence, not contradictory, because there are ideas, the main thing that connects logically and coherently the themes that seem to shift from verse to verse or from *sūrah* to *sūrah*. The belief that the systematics of the Qur’an is have a miracle (mu’jiz) becomes the theological basis of the idea of *munāsabah*.²⁵

Farahi and Iṣlāhi even more clearly expressed his idea of understanding the Qur’an (sequence) through what he called the “pillar” (*‘amud*) *sūrah* which essentially had no difference with the main purpose or theme of the *sūrah* applied

²⁴Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur’an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2014), 112.

²⁵Wardani, *Metodologi Tafsir al-Qur’an di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 2017), 191.

by Muhammad Quraish Shihab. According to Farahi, each *sūrah* of the Qur'an has a controlling theme called '*amud*. The word '*amud* (literally meaning: an axis of a pillar or pole) is the center for a *sūrah*, and all the verses in the *sūrah* revolve around it. In an effort to find the unity of a *sūrah*, Farahi's central concern was directed at how to limit '*amud sūrah*. Several times reading the *sūrah* can help in marking certain points where the substitution of certain types of themes appears in it so that it can make parts to classify the *sūrah*. Each section is carefully studied until the main idea appears and can unite the verses gathered in that section. Furthermore, the effort taken is to find a great idea (master idea) that overshadow the main ideas contained in all parts one by one so that it can be incorporated into it and where the big idea is developed logically in the *sūrah* according to how the contents of the *sūrah* are from the beginning to the end. And the way of Muhammad Quraish Shihab in finding the main objectives or themes of the *sūrah*, although methodologically adopted and developed from al-Biqā'i and more applicable than Mahmud Shalṭut, but it turns out that its application is more similar to the method of Farahi and Iṣlahi in finding "pillars" (*'amud*) *Sūrah*, which is by marking certain points where the change of certain types of themes appears in it, so that they can make parts to classify the *sūrah*. The concrete form is to divide the *sūrah* into groups of verses, for example, 1-7, 8-16, 17-20 with each theme being interrelated and centered on the main idea.²⁶

The philosophy of the Qur'an as a "Divine Banquet", which actually originated from the hadith adopted by Muhammad Quraish Shihab became the

²⁶Wardani, *Metodologi Tafsir al-Qur'an di Indonesia*, 190-193.

basic element of the thematic method that was applied. This philosophical basis underlies the way of reading and understanding the Qur'an. We can say that the ontological status of how the actual depiction of the holy book of the Qur'an in the eyes of the interpreter will determine the epistemological foundations about the choices of methods, sources, and measures of truth. It seems that, according to Muhammad Quraish Shihab, the "Divine Banquet" would be more precisely "served" in the form of a persuasive thematic method (*al-Tafsīr al-mawḍū'ī li al-sūrah*) if the choice of interpretation is the interpretation of the entire verse of the Qur'an based on the demands of the *mushaf* (*al-tartīb al-mushafī*). This method departs from examining what is in the *sūrah* which is the main idea or main idea of the *sūrah*.²⁷

In *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Muhammad Quraish Shihab expressed many opinions or thoughts of prominent commentators, so that what was stated in this interpretation became very argumentative and worthy of being a reference for lovers of the Qur'an, then the argument was reinforced by the hadith that comes from the Prophet, as well as the opinions of *ṣaḥabah* and the opinions of the scholars. In terms of quoting the opinions of other scholars, Muhammad Quraish Shihab mentioned the names of the scholars in question. Among the scholars who were the source of the quotations were Muhammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Ashūr in his interpretation of *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*; Muhammad Husain al-Ṭabāṭabā'i in his interpretation of *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, al-Bīqa'i, al-Sha'rawi, al-Alusi, al-Ghazali. And many others. Although in interpreting the Qur'an, Muhammad

²⁷Wardani, *Metodologi Tafsir al-Qur'an di Indonesia*, 33-34.

Quraish Shihab quotes the opinions of others, but often he includes his opinions and is contextualized in the state of Indonesia. Then it becomes one of the advantages of this interpretation. Because, this interpretation is very contextual with the condition of Indonesia, in which many respond to some actual things in the Indonesian or international Islamic world. Quraish Shihab was considered honest in reviewing other people's opinions, and in interpreting the verse, Quraish shihab did not eliminate the correlation between verses and *surahs*. However, according to some Muslims in Indonesia, some of Shihab's interpretations are considered out of the borders of Islam, so it is not uncommon for Quraish Shihab to be classified as a liberal Indonesian thinker. For example, his interpretations of headscarves (*hijab*), destiny, and other religious issues.²⁸

Each interpretation certainly has certain references as well as *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. *Tafsir al-Mishbah* is not merely the result of Muhammad Quraish Shihab's *ijtihad*, this is acknowledged by the author himself in his introduction he said:

“Finally, the author (Muhammad Quraish Shihab) felt it was very necessary to convey to the reader that what was served here was not entirely the author's *ijtihad*. The work of previous and contemporary scholars, as well as their views, I mentioned many, especially the views of the commentator expert Ibrahim Ibn Umar al-Baqa'i (d. 887 H / 1480M) whose his interpretations, when still in the form of manuscripts, became a material for the dissertation of the author at Cairo's al-Azhar University, twenty years ago. Likewise, the current interpretation of al-Azhar's supreme leader, Sayyid Muhammad Tañawi, also Sheikh Mutawalli al-Sha'rawi, and did not miss Sayyid Quṭub, Muhammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Ashūr, Sayyid Muhammad Husein al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, and several other commentators.”²⁹

²⁸Mansur, “Makalah Kelebihan dan Kekurangan Tafsir al-Mishbah” at <http://menzour.blogspot.com/>, accessed on 24 July 2019.

²⁹Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, vol. 1, xvii.

Thus, there is a clear point that in the interpretation of *al-Mishbah* Muhammad Quraish Shihab conveyed the messages of the Qur'an using the *bi al-ra'y* and *bi al-ma'thūr* methods at once, because if analyzed, in this interpretation Muhammad Quraish Shihab included many of the opinions of the *mufassīr* to reinforce the arguments he had set forth in the interpretation of *al-Mishbah*. And this interpretation of *al-Mishbah* includes the method of the *tahlīlī* when viewed from the objectives and order of the verses, while in terms of explanations including the method of *muqārin* with the grouping of verses based on the theme according to the author can be considered semi-*mawḍū'ī*. And in terms of interpretation, he tends to emphasize the importance of the use of the *mawḍū'ī* (thematic) interpretation method, namely interpretation by collecting a number of verses of the Qur'an which are scattered in various *sūrah* which discuss the same problem, then explain the overall understanding of the verses and then draw conclusions as answers to the problems that are the subject matter. According to him, with this method can be expressed the opinions of the Qur'an about various problems of life, as well as can be used as evidence that the verses of the Qur'an in line with the development of science and technology and the progress of civilization.³⁰ Then it can be concluded that Muhammad Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* presents al-Quran messages using the *lughāwī* and *al-adabī al-ijtimā'ī* approaches. According to Shihab, the purpose of making this interpretation is to explain the existence of new views expressed by scholars who have not yet spread in Indonesia. Also as a criticism of the argumentation over the non-systematicity

³⁰Dewan Redaksi, *Suplemen Ensiklopedi Islam*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 2011), 112.

of the composition of the Qur'an, which actually has a privilege through its *munasabah*. Also because of his concern, because there are no more commentary works in Indonesia in the past 30 years since Buya Hamka's Tafsir, al-Azhar ³¹

An observer of the work of Nusantara interpretation, Howard M. Federspiel, believes that the works of Muhammad Quraish Shihab commentary confidently assist the contemporary Indonesian society in terms of religious issues.³²

Tafsir al-Mishbah is a complete interpretation of the Qur'an 30 *juz*. Its author gives interesting and distinctive colors and is very relevant to enrich the treasures of understanding and appreciation of the secrets of the meaning of the verse of Allah.³³

³¹Afrizal Nur, *Tafsir al-Mishbah dalam Sorotan*, 5.

³²Abdullah Saeed, *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 78-79.

³³Yusuf Muslim Handoyo, "Konsep Adil menurut Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir al-Mishbah" *Thesis* (Surakarta, Ushuluddin and Dakwah Faculty IAIN Surakarta, 2011), 19.