

## **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF QURAISH SHIHAB AND NASARUDDIN UMAR'S QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS ON LOVE AND TOLERANCE TO GLOBAL HARMONY**

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**Abstract:** *Studies on love and tolerance in Qur'anic interpretation have been dominated by the normative-theological perspectives of Middle Eastern exegetes, until now, which do not accommodate social-cultural contexts and local wisdom. This is because there has been little exploration of the dimensions of interpretation based on local wisdom that are relevant to the discourse of global harmony. This study aims to fill this gap through a comparative analysis of the thoughts of M. Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar. The method used is a literature study with a qualitative-comparative approach to the works of Quraish Shihab, Tafsir al-Mishbah, and Nasaruddin Umar, such as Deradikalisasi Pemahaman Al-Qur'an (Deradicalization of the Understanding of the Qur'an). The results show that Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar share the view that local values such as mutual cooperation and deliberation can serve as the foundation for global peace. The difference in their thinking is that Quraish Shihab emphasizes universal compassion and humanity, while Nasaruddin Umar emphasizes equality and plurality. Their thinking offers a model of contextual interpretation that is relevant to the contemporary world and contributes significantly to the development of peaceful, inclusive, and transformative Islamic studies. This study not only contributes to the understanding of Indonesian Qur'anic hermeneutics but also proposes an integrative model of contextual exegesis relevant to global ethical discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Comparative Study, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Love and Tolerance, Global Harmony.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of love and tolerance within Qur'anic exegesis has become increasingly urgent in the twenty-first century, as global societies face rising religious intolerance, sectarianism, and cultural polarization. The Qur'an, as the central text of Islam, holds an essential moral and theological foundation for promoting peace and coexistence among humanity. However, the interpretation of its message on love (maḥabbah) and tolerance (tasāmuḥ) has often been confined to normative-theological discussions, primarily shaped by Middle Eastern exegetical traditions. These traditions, while rich and valuable, frequently neglect the socio-cultural and local wisdom contexts of diverse Muslim societies, including Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.

Indonesia's cultural setting—rooted in *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (deliberation), and *ukhuwah insāniyyah* (universal brotherhood)—offers a unique hermeneutical lens through which Qur'anic teachings on love and tolerance may be interpreted contextually. However, there remains a notable research gap: despite Indonesia's rich exegetical tradition, few comparative studies have examined how leading Indonesian scholars interpret the Qur'an's ethical messages of love and tolerance in relation to local values and global harmony.



This gap becomes particularly significant considering the prominence of M. Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar within contemporary Indonesian Qur’anic scholarship. Quraish Shihab, through *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, has provided one of the most comprehensive modern commentaries written in Indonesia, marked by linguistic precision, theological balance, and an explicit commitment to moderation (*wasatiyyah*). Meanwhile, Nasaruddin Umar offers a distinct, complementary perspective through his gender-sensitive, spiritually informed, and socio-humanitarian approach, seen in works such as *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an*.

Both scholars stand out not merely for their influence but for their methodological sophistication, national and international scholarly recognition, and their explicit engagement with Indonesian cultural values as interpretive resources—something less pronounced in other Indonesian exegetes. Their works not only bridge classical Islamic scholarship with modern humanitarian concerns but also articulate an Indonesian model of Qur’anic interpretation capable of contributing to discourses on global harmony. For these reasons, selecting Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar is both methodologically justified and academically strategic for addressing the identified research gap.

Quraish Shihab, through his monumental work *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, seeks to present the Qur’an as a source of enlightenment (*miṣbāḥ*) for contemporary life, emphasizing compassion (*raḥmah*), balance (*tawāzun*), and moderation (*wasatiyyah*) as key Qur’anic values that sustain peace and coexistence.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Nasaruddin Umar, a leading contemporary scholar of gender and spirituality in Islam, focuses on the spiritual, inclusive, and plural dimensions of Qur’anic ethics, particularly through his work *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an*.<sup>2</sup> Both scholars advocate interpretations that move beyond dogmatic boundaries and instead articulate the Qur’an’s universal messages of love, justice, and tolerance within Indonesia’s plural society and the global community.

This paper therefore aims to explore and compare the Qur’anic exegesis of Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar concerning love and tolerance as pathways to global harmony. By employing a comparative qualitative approach, it seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How do Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar interpret the concepts of love and tolerance in the Qur’an?; 2) What similarities and differences exist between their exegetical approaches?; 3) How can their interpretations contribute to the global discourse on peace and coexistence?

The significance of this study lies not only in its comparative contribution to Qur’anic studies but also in its potential to enrich global conversations about religion and peace. In a time when religion is often misused to justify division and violence, returning to the Qur’an’s essential message of compassion and justice becomes an ethical and intellectual imperative.

<sup>1</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur’an*, Vol. I (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 9.



## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative-comparative methodology focusing on textual and thematic analysis. It examines primary sources—Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al-Mishbah* and Nasaruddin Umar's *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur'an*—to explore their interpretations of Qur'anic concepts related to love and tolerance. Supporting secondary literature includes journal articles, conference papers, and other works on contextual Qur'anic hermeneutics.

The research method involves three analytical stages:

1. Textual Analysis: Identifying key Qur'anic verses related to love (*maḥabbah*), mercy (*raḥmah*), and tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), such as Q. 3:159, Q. 5:8, Q. 49:13, and Q. 21:107.
2. Exegetical Interpretation: Analyzing how each scholar interprets these verses, emphasizing hermeneutical principles, contextual reasoning, and ethical implications.
3. Comparative Evaluation: Contrasting their perspectives to identify convergence (shared themes) and divergence (distinct emphases or methodologies).

This approach is inspired by the hermeneutical contextualism framework proposed by Abdullah Saeed, which emphasizes historical awareness, socio-ethical application, and interpretive pluralism.<sup>3</sup> In this framework, the interpreter plays an active role in linking the Qur'anic text to contemporary moral and social realities.

Furthermore, this study situates both scholars within the broader discourse of Indonesian *tafsir*—a growing field characterized by the integration of local wisdom and universal ethics. The Indonesian hermeneutical tradition tends to harmonize between *tafsir maudhu'i* (thematic interpretation) and *tafsir ijtimai'i* (social interpretation), producing readings of the Qur'an that address modern human challenges, including peace, pluralism, and gender justice.

By applying comparative textual analysis, this research aims to demonstrate how Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar rearticulate Qur'anic values of love and tolerance into a constructive paradigm for global harmony—a vision deeply rooted in Islamic ethics yet responsive to the world's plural realities.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Existing literature on Qur'anic ethics of love and tolerance is dominated by theological-normative frameworks, often centered on divine love (*maḥabbat Allāh*) and human obedience. Classical exegetes like al-Ṭabarī,<sup>4</sup> al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr emphasized love primarily as a divine attribute, reflecting the believer's devotion to God through obedience and submission. Tolerance, in these interpretations, is often discussed in relation to the concept of *jihād* and the treatment of non-Muslims, grounded in verses such as *lā ikrāha fī al-dīn* (There is no compulsion in religion, Q. 2:256) and *lakum dīnukum wa liya dīn* (To you your religion, and to me mine, Q. 109:6).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), 38–40.

<sup>4</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954),

<sup>5</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2006), 35.



However, modern exegetes, responding to contemporary social issues, have shifted focus toward the ethical and social dimensions of love and tolerance. Scholars such as Fazlur Rahman and Abdullah Saeed advocate for contextual interpretation (tafsir siyāqī) that connects Qur’anic principles to real-world challenges like pluralism, justice, and human rights.<sup>6</sup> Rahman’s double movement theory and Saeed’s contextualist hermeneutics both call for a dynamic engagement with the Qur’an, reading its universal messages within historical and cultural contexts.

In the Indonesian context, this ethical turn in Qur’anic interpretation finds expression in the works of Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar. Quraish Shihab extends the tradition of rational and linguistic tafsir while rooting it in Indonesia’s plural society. He argues that the Qur’an’s moral vision centers on love, mercy, and harmony among humans, as reflected in the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا  
 “O mankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.” (Q. 49:13).

Shihab interprets this verse as an ontological and ethical foundation for equality and cooperation among human beings.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, Nasaruddin Umar integrates spiritual and gender-inclusive approaches to interpretation, viewing the Qur’an as a text of compassion (rahmah) that affirms human dignity and diversity. He argues that tolerance is not a mere sociopolitical necessity but a divine command rooted in the Qur’an’s anthropology of equality.<sup>8</sup> His analysis draws from the prophetic ethos of rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn (mercy for all creation, Q. 21:107), positioning love and tolerance as interrelated expressions of divine mercy.

## A. Quraish Shihab’s Exegesis on Love and Tolerance

M. Quraish Shihab stands as one of Indonesia’s most influential modern exegetes, known for his attempt to contextualize the Qur’an’s moral and ethical values in response to the social realities of contemporary Muslims. His magnum opus, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, written in 15 volumes, represents a monumental effort to make the Qur’an relevant to Indonesia’s plural society. Shihab views the Qur’an as a “lamp” (miṣbāḥ) that illuminates human life, guiding individuals toward balance (tawāzun), compassion (rahmah), and mutual understanding (ta’āruf).<sup>9</sup>

For Shihab, the concept of love (maḥabbah) in the Qur’an is not limited to spiritual affection between humans and God but extends to an ethical principle that governs human relationships. He refers to verses such as:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

“Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.” (Q. 5:42).

<sup>6</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 6–7.

<sup>7</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 12 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), 355.

<sup>8</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an*, 77.



This verse, according to Shihab, demonstrates that divine love is conditioned upon ethical action—specifically, justice and fairness.<sup>10</sup> Love, therefore, is not a passive emotion but a moral force that drives social harmony. The Qur'an's repeated use of "God loves" (yuḥibbu Allāh) in relation to just, patient, and pure-hearted individuals indicates that love in Islam has a social dimension: it binds human beings through shared moral responsibility.

In his interpretation of Q. 3:159, "So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them...", Shihab explains that gentleness (rifq) and forgiveness ('afw) are manifestations of prophetic love.<sup>11</sup> The Prophet's character, grounded in mercy and empathy, provides the model for human interaction. Love, in this sense, is not abstract but embodied in compassion and forgiveness toward others.

Regarding tolerance (tasāmuḥ), Shihab grounds his interpretation in verses such as lā ikrāha fī al-dīn (Q. 2:256) and lakum dīnukum wa liya dīn (Q. 109:6), which he reads as the Qur'an's ethical declaration of religious freedom.<sup>12</sup> He rejects exclusivist readings that weaponize these verses to claim superiority over others, arguing that the Qur'an's ultimate aim is peaceful coexistence, not theological uniformity.

In Tafsir al-Mishbah, Shihab writes that the essence of Islam is silm—peace—and that Muslims must embody this peace both internally and externally.<sup>13</sup> He often highlights the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً

"O you who have believed, enter into peace entirely." (Q. 2:208).

He interprets this as a universal call for comprehensive peace—spiritual, social, and global. Islam, he argues, is not merely a religion of rituals but a civilization of ethics built upon mutual respect, dialogue, and understanding.

Furthermore, Shihab draws from Indonesia's cultural values of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and musyawarah (deliberation) to demonstrate how Qur'anic ethics can inspire local expressions of harmony.<sup>14</sup> He envisions a form of tafsir nusantara (archipelagic interpretation) that unites global Islamic values with Indonesian pluralism. Thus, Shihab's exegesis of love and tolerance functions as both a theological reflection and a cultural bridge—articulating Islam's universal compassion in terms accessible to Indonesia's diverse society.

## **B. Nasaruddin Umar's Exegesis on Love and Tolerance**

Nasaruddin Umar, a scholar of Qur'anic spirituality and gender equality, presents a distinctive interpretive framework rooted in tafsīr ruhānī (spiritual exegesis). His works emphasize that the Qur'an's primary mission is to cultivate compassion (raḥmah), equality, and justice across human differences. In *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur'an*,

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol. 3, 241

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, 88

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 199

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, 54

<sup>14</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 47.



he warns against rigid literalism that detaches Qur’anic texts from their moral and spiritual essence.<sup>15</sup>

For Umar, love (*maḥabbah*) is the ontological core of divine-human relations. He builds on the verse:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

“My mercy encompasses all things.” (Q. 7:156).

According to Umar, this divine statement establishes *raḥmah*—which includes love, compassion, and care—as the metaphysical foundation of creation.<sup>16</sup> He interprets love as the most profound expression of *tawḥīd* (oneness), in which all creatures are bound by divine mercy. Humanity’s moral task is therefore to mirror this divine love in social relationships.

In discussing tolerance, Umar refers to Q. 49:13 as the Qur’an’s declaration of pluralism and equality. He argues that human diversity is not accidental but divinely willed for mutual recognition (*li ta’ārafū*). Tolerance, in his view, emerges not from indifference but from acknowledgment of divine wisdom in difference.<sup>17</sup> He elaborates that “the Qur’an does not merely tolerate diversity; it celebrates it as part of God’s creative design.”

Umar also expands the meaning of tolerance beyond interfaith relations to encompass gender, ethnicity, and culture. In his spiritual reading, intolerance and discrimination are forms of spiritual blindness—failures to perceive divine unity within multiplicity.<sup>18</sup> Thus, genuine tolerance arises from spiritual consciousness (*ma’rifah*) that sees God’s signs (*āyāt Allāh*) in every human being.

Furthermore, Umar integrates Sufi hermeneutics into his exegetical approach. Drawing upon Ibn ‘Arabī’s notion of *al-ḥubb al-ilāhī* (divine love), he argues that love is both the origin and goal of creation. In his view, “the universe is a manifestation of divine love, and every act of compassion brings humans closer to the divine source.”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, his interpretation transforms love from an ethical principle into an ontological and cosmological reality.

In practical terms, Umar connects Qur’anic love and tolerance to contemporary issues of deradicalization, gender justice, and social inclusion. He emphasizes that reinterpreting the Qur’an through compassionate hermeneutics can counter extremist readings that promote hatred and exclusion. His method, which combines *tafsīr maudhu’i* (thematic exegesis) and *tafsīr isyārī* (symbolic interpretation), allows him to harmonize textual analysis with mystical intuition.

Ultimately, Umar presents an inclusive vision of Islam in which love and tolerance are not optional virtues but central to human salvation and global peace. His exegesis thus

<sup>15</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 4

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 79

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 111

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 139



offers a spiritual and ethical response to the challenges of modern pluralism and radicalism.

### **C. Comparative Analysis: Toward an Indonesian Hermeneutics of Global Harmony**

While both M. Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar share an overarching commitment to love (*maḥabbah*) and tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*) as the Qur'an's moral imperatives, the foundations of their exegetical methods diverge significantly in epistemological orientation, hermeneutical strategy, and emphasis on the socio-cultural context of Indonesia. This section articulates these differences while demonstrating how both scholars collectively contribute to a uniquely Indonesian paradigm of Qur'anic interpretation oriented toward global harmony.

From a hermeneutical perspective, both scholars embody what may be termed a contextualist Qur'anic humanism, but they operationalize it differently. Quraish Shihab's approach represents a systematic-linguistic hermeneutic, rooted in classical *tafsīr* methodology yet reinterpreted through modern sensibilities. His method reflects *tafsīr al-maudhu'i* (thematic exegesis), which seeks coherence between Qur'anic verses while integrating rational inquiry (*'aql*) and linguistic analysis (*lughah*). He believes that the eternal values of love and tolerance must be understood through the Qur'an's self-consistent semantic field, where key terms such as *rahmah*, *ḥubb*, and *silm* coalesce into a holistic theological vision. Shihab maintains that global harmony can only emerge when Muslims internalize divine compassion and express it through moderation, justice, and respect for human dignity.

Nasaruddin Umar, by contrast, adopts a transformative-spiritual hermeneutic that merges textual study with experiential and anthropological interpretation. His readings emphasize the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law) and the *bāṭinī* (inner) dimensions of revelation, inspired by Sufi epistemology and contemporary human sciences. Umar argues that love and tolerance are ontological principles that sustain creation itself, and therefore, the Qur'an's ethical system must be reconstructed in light of contemporary realities—especially gender inequality, interreligious conflict, and social injustice. Unlike Shihab, who maintains a cautious balance between reason and revelation, Umar's interpretive method is more inclusive and dialogical, encouraging Muslims to view diversity (*ikhtilāf*) as a divine blessing rather than a threat.

Furthermore, their comparative contribution is profoundly shaped by Indonesia's pluralistic environment. Both scholars consciously position their exegesis as a response to global challenges—religious extremism, identity politics, and the erosion of interfaith trust. More importantly, their interpretive approaches directly address the research questions outlined in the introduction: (1) how the Qur'an conceptualizes love and tolerance, (2) how these concepts are interpreted by leading Indonesian exegetes, and (3) how such interpretations contribute to global harmony.

Regarding the first question, both scholars affirm that Islam's universal message of peace is inseparable from contextual wisdom (*ḥikmah mawḍū'iyah*), where love and tolerance function as ethical imperatives grounded in divine revelation. In response to the second question, they embed local Indonesian values—such as *gotong royong* (mutual



cooperation) and *musyawarah* (deliberation)—as hermeneutical tools that help operationalize Qur’anic ethics within lived social realities. Their interpretations thus demonstrate how indigenous values can illuminate the practical dimensions of Qur’anic teachings.

With respect to the third research question, the synthesis of Qur’anic principles and Indonesian cultural ethics enables both Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar to articulate an “Indonesian hermeneutics” that transcends geographical boundaries. Their works form part of a broader intellectual movement associated with *Islam Nusantara*, which asserts that localized expressions of Islam can enrich global Islamic discourse without compromising orthodoxy. By integrating revelation, reason, and culture, both thinkers show that love and tolerance are not merely personal virtues but foundational pillars for a cosmopolitan Islamic civilization rooted in empathy, dialogue, and justice. Through this framework, their interpretations offer a constructive model for enhancing global harmony in an age marked by fragmentation and polarization.

#### **D. Epistemological and Methodological Foundations**

Quraish Shihab’s epistemology is rooted in a **theocentric-universal paradigm**, emphasizing divine mercy (*rahmah*) as the organizing principle of the Qur’an. His hermeneutic draws heavily on the Qur’an’s self-referential unity — interpreting verses in light of others (*tafsir al-Qur’an bi al-Qur’an*) and balancing literal and allegorical readings through what he terms “contextual moderation.” For Shihab, understanding the Qur’an’s message of love and tolerance requires grasping both the **semantic network of Qur’anic vocabulary** and the **social wisdom** embedded in divine revelation.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, Nasaruddin Umar’s methodology is **anthropocentric and gender-inclusive**, drawing upon a synthesis of *ta’wil* (esoteric interpretation), phenomenology, and social anthropology. He treats the Qur’an not as a closed text but as a living discourse that engages historical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Umar often invokes the *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* (objectives of Islamic law) to prioritize values of justice, equality, and peace above textual literalism. His approach is influenced by Sufi hermeneutics and modern social theory, particularly emphasizing that divine love manifests through human empathy and recognition of the “Other.”<sup>21</sup>

Where Shihab tends to preserve the **normative universality** of Qur’anic ethics, Umar foregrounds the **transformative potential** of love and tolerance within plural and unequal social realities. Both positions enrich Qur’anic studies in Indonesia by demonstrating that revelation must always be interpreted in relation to the lived context (*waqi’iyah*).

#### **E. Hermeneutics of Love and Tolerance: Interpreting the Qur’an Contextually**

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<sup>20</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur’an*, Vol. I (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 45.

<sup>21</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur’an dan Hadis* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 112.





Quraish Shihab identifies al-ḥubb (love) and al-silm (peace) as the Qur'an's dual foundations for ethical action. For instance, his commentary on “wa mā arsalnāka illā raḥmatan lil-‘ālamīn” (Q. 21:107) — “We have not sent you except as a mercy to all creation” — frames love as the core essence of prophethood.<sup>22</sup> In Tafsir al-Mishbah, Shihab writes that divine mercy is not limited to believers but extends universally to all of creation, including those of different faiths and even the natural world. This universalist vision, he argues, demands a form of religious tolerance that transcends sectarian exclusivism.

Nasaruddin Umar, meanwhile, extends the Qur'anic concept of raḥmah to gender, ethnic, and religious pluralities. He interprets “yā ayyuhā al-nās innā khalaqnākum min dhakarīn wa unthā wa ja'alnākum shu'ūban wa qabā'ila li ta'ārafū” (Q. 49:13) — “O humanity, We created you from a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes so that you may know one another” — as a theological imperative for intercultural engagement and mutual recognition.<sup>23</sup> Umar argues that the verse establishes equality as a divine design, not a sociological accident. Love (maḥabbah) in this sense is not merely emotional but ethical and structural — a social contract that sustains peace and justice across human diversity.

## **F. Sociocultural Dimensions: Local Wisdom and Global Relevance**

Both thinkers demonstrate that the Qur'anic ideals of love and tolerance resonate deeply with Indonesia's local wisdom traditions — such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (deliberation), and *tepa selira* (empathic restraint). Shihab sees these as cultural embodiments of the Qur'anic *ummah wasaṭ* — the “middle nation” that upholds balance and justice (Q. 2:143).<sup>24</sup> Umar extends this by describing Indonesian Islam as inherently *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn*, a model capable of contributing to global harmony through soft power and moral diplomacy.

This localized hermeneutic stands in contrast to the rigidity of some Middle Eastern exegetical traditions that prioritize legalistic orthodoxy over contextual adaptability. By emphasizing inclusivity and dialogue, both scholars challenge the hegemony of textual literalism and present a humanistic *tafsir* paradigm aligned with Indonesia's multicultural ethos. Their approaches illustrate that the Qur'an's ethical values must be interpreted through the lived realities of a community, rather than confined to abstract theology.

For Quraish Shihab, the integration of *gotong royong* and *musyawarah* into Qur'anic ethics demonstrates that social solidarity is an expression of divine compassion. He often argues that Islam's spiritual mission is incomplete without the realization of communal justice and cooperation. In his view, these values mirror the Qur'an's call to *ta'āwanu 'ala al-birri wa al-taqwā* — “cooperate in righteousness and piety” (Q. 5:2). Meanwhile, Nasaruddin Umar interprets *tepa selira* and tolerance as reflections of the Prophet's

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>23</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 212

<sup>24</sup> Nasaruddin Umar, *Fikih Kebangsaan: Membangun Islam Cinta Tanah Air* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2019), 178.



inclusive ethics, showing that cultural empathy and interfaith dialogue are forms of worship when grounded in sincerity (*ikhlas*).

Their synthesis of local wisdom and universal revelation not only indigenizes Qur’anic interpretation but also globalizes Indonesia’s moral identity. It projects an alternative model of Islamic civilization — one that prioritizes coexistence, compassion, and cross-cultural understanding as vehicles for global harmony. In doing so, both Shihab and Umar demonstrate that local Islamic values can serve as a universal language of peace.

### **G. From Indonesian Tafsir to Global Harmony**

The convergence of Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar’s thought signifies the emergence of what may be termed an “Indonesian hermeneutics of global harmony.” This paradigm integrates Qur’anic revelation, Sufi spirituality, and local wisdom to foster interreligious and intercultural coexistence. Theologically, it situates love as the *raison d’être* of creation and tolerance as the mechanism of global peace. Philosophically, it aligns with the Islamic principle of *ta’aruf* (mutual knowing) as the foundation of human civilization.

What distinguishes this Indonesian hermeneutic from other models of Qur’anic interpretation is its dialogical nature. Shihab and Umar’s thought transcends binary oppositions between “Islamic” and “Western,” “traditional” and “modern,” proposing instead a relational epistemology in which truth is discovered through dialogue and shared humanity. They affirm that the Qur’an, while revealed in seventh-century Arabia, contains universal moral codes adaptable to diverse cultural contexts. This approach not only preserves textual integrity but also revitalizes the Qur’an’s transformative function in a plural world.

Furthermore, both thinkers articulate that global harmony cannot be achieved without local authenticity. The universal ethics of the Qur’an—justice, mercy, equality, and compassion—must be translated into culturally meaningful expressions. Through this lens, Indonesia’s plural society becomes a microcosm of the Qur’anic vision of unity-in-diversity (*wa ja’alnā kum shu’ūban wa qabā’ila li ta’arafū*, Q. 49:13). Their hermeneutics thus offers a civilizational message: peace emerges not from homogenization but from the celebration of difference under divine guidance.

Their contributions are not only exegetical but civilizational: they reframe Islam’s global image as a religion of compassion, plurality, and transformative dialogue. In a world fractured by ideological extremism, their works exemplify the prophetic ethos of *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn* — a universal mercy that transcends creed and culture. As Abdullah Saeed notes, contextual Qur’anic interpretation must respond to “real human experiences of justice, peace, and suffering.”<sup>25</sup> Shihab and Umar exemplify this moral hermeneutic by embedding divine love in social ethics and local wisdom, thereby offering a model of contextual, inclusive, and globally resonant *tafsir*.

Their vision contributes to a new global discourse of Qur’anic humanism, one that speaks to the 21st-century search for meaning, peace, and coexistence. By grounding

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<sup>25</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur’an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), 83.



## A Comparative Study of Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar's Qur'anic Exegesis on Love and Tolerance

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universal values in Indonesian experience, they demonstrate that Islam's message remains both timeless and transformative, capable of guiding humanity toward enduring harmony.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comparative study demonstrates how Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar offer significant and distinctive contributions to the global discourse on Islamic peacebuilding through their Qur'anic interpretations of love and tolerance. More importantly, the study highlights a key novelty: the articulation of an Indonesian hermeneutical model in which local wisdom is systematically integrated into Qur'anic ethics, thereby expanding the existing frameworks of contextual interpretation.

Quraish Shihab, through *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, constructs a universal humanism grounded in divine mercy and balance (*tawāzun*), presenting love as the ontological core of human relations. Nasaruddin Umar, through his writings on deradicalization and gender equality, advances a transformative pluralism rooted in empathy, justice, and equality. While previous studies often focus on one of these scholars in isolation, this research offers a novel comparative synthesis that reveals how their differing yet complementary approaches illuminate the Qur'an's ethical vision from multiple angles.

By demonstrating that values such as *gotong royong*, *musyawarah*, and *tepa selira* can serve as hermeneutical tools, the study contributes a new perspective to Qur'anic studies: that Indonesian cultural ethics not only contextualize scripture but also enhance its global relevance. This finding underscores that local wisdom is not merely descriptive background but a constructive framework for interpreting Qur'anic moral principles in ways that speak to contemporary global challenges.

Furthermore, the study shows that the interplay between Shihab's compassion-centered hermeneutic and Umar's equality-based hermeneutic forms a unique epistemic bridge—from text to context, from the universal to the local, and back toward the global. This dynamic interpretive cycle mirrors the Qur'an's own dialogical nature between revelation and lived reality.

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in demonstrating that Indonesian exegetical thought can serve as a paradigmatic model for global Qur'anic humanism. By bringing together two leading Indonesian scholars whose works synthesize revelation, reason, and culture, this study contributes an original framework for understanding how love and tolerance can function as foundations for cosmopolitan Islamic ethics and holistic global harmony.

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