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## Challenging The Interpretation Of The Verse On Hijab By M. Quraish Shihab: A Critical Analysis Review

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### Abstract

*There is a variety of interpretations regarding the verse on the hijab in the Qur'an. Some commentaries demonstrate strong arguments, while others appear to be subjective and ambiguous. This article examines the thoughts of Quraish Shihab on the hijab verse and critically analyzes them. The research falls under the category of library research, utilizing a descriptive analysis method to explain research findings based on the study's focus with a critical analysis to produce objective results. The approach employed is content analysis. The primary sources for this research are the Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah. The research findings indicate: First, Quraish Shihab argues that wearing the hijab is not obligatory but merely a recommendation and is applicable only in the time of Prophet Muhammad. Scholars also do not agree on the limits of women's modesty, and the rules of the hijab are considered part of Arab cultural traditions, not applicable to other nations that do not wear the hijab. Second, Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the hijab verse lacks strong arguments in the context of Islamic studies. The wording of the command in the hijab verse is still regarded as an obligation and cannot be transformed into a recommendation due to the lack of supporting evidence. Scholars have unanimously agreed on the limits of women's modesty, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes, excluding the face and the palms of the hands. The law of the hijab remains in effect until the end of time, even though it was revealed under specific conditions and in specific regions, as Islam is considered a universal religion.*

**Keywords:** *Exegesis of the verse on hijab; Quraish Shihab; Critique.*

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### الملخص

هناك تنوع في التفسيرات المتعلقة بأية الحجاب في القرآن. تظهر بعض التعليقات حججًا قوية، في حين يبدو البعض الآخر ذا طابع استع متعلق بالرأي الشخصي وغامض. يفحص هذا المقال أفكار قريش شهاب حول آية الحجاب ويحللها بنقد بناء. تندرج هذه البحث ضمن فئة أبحاث المكتبة، حيث يتم استخدام أسلوب التحليل الوصفي لشرح نتائج البحث بناءً على تركيز الدراسة مع تحليل نقدي لإنتاج نتائج موضوعية. النهج المعتمد هو تحليل المحتوى. المصادر الأساسية لهذا البحث هي تفسير المشبهه وجليباب بكين وانيتا مسلمة. تشير نتائج البحث إلى: أولاً، يُقدم قريش شهاب حججًا تؤكد أن ارتداء الحجاب ليس إلزاميًا بل مجرد توصية وينطبق ذلك فقط في زمن النبي محمد. العلماء أيضًا لا يتفقون حول حدود الحشمة للنساء، ويُعتبر قانون الحجاب جزءًا من تقاليد الثقافة العربية، ولا ينطبق على الأمم الأخرى التي لا ترتدي الحجاب. ثانيًا، تفتقر تفسيرات قريش شهاب حول آية الحجاب إلى حجج قوية في سياق الدراسات الإسلامية. يُعتبر لفظ الأمر في آية الحجاب لا يزال مُعتبرًا واجبًا ولا يمكن تحويله إلى توصية بسبب عدم وجود دعم داعم. اتفق العلماء بالإجماع على حدود الحشمة للنساء، من أعلى الرأس إلى أطراف الأصابع، باستثناء الوجه وراحتي اليدين. يظل قانون الحجاب ساري المفعول حتى نهاية الزمن، على الرغم من أنه كشف تحت ظروف محددة وفي مناطق محددة، حيث يُعتبر الإسلام دينًا عالميًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تفسير آية الحجاب؛ قريش شهاب؛ نقد.

## Introduction

The interpretation of the Qur'an is considered an established science. Nevertheless, interpretation will always undergo development and adjustment according to the perspective and needs of each commentator.<sup>6</sup> This claim is evident with the emergence of various exegesis works in every era and location, starting from Al-Farrā's exegesis (d. 207 H) written in Baghdad<sup>7</sup>, to the present time in Indonesia, for example, with the appearance of al-Mishbah exegesis by Quraish Shihab. The implication of this is that numerous diverse interpretations of the Qur'an will arise, and it is possible that interpretations written by different individuals will differ both in terms of interpretative patterns and the conclusions drawn.

The interpretations of the Qur'an that exhibit the most diversity are usually related to the exegesis of legal verses. Among the legal verses that are often debated among scholars is the verse regarding the obligation of wearing the hijab<sup>8</sup>. In various classical exegesis books, scholars have unanimously

<sup>6</sup> Faisal Haitomi, "Menimbang Hermeneutika Sebagai Mitra Tafsir," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 5, no. 2 (2020): 45–69, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v5i2.90>.

<sup>7</sup> Abū Bakar Ahmad bin Ali Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād Wa Żuyūluh* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 1417), 14: 154.

<sup>8</sup> Al Faiz Muhammad Rabbany Tarman, Arifah Cahyo Andini Suparmun, and Isral Naska, "Progressive Interpretation Of The Qur'an In Tafsir At-Tanwir: Muhammadiyah's Collective

agreed on the obligation for Muslim women to wear the hijab. This obligation is established based on verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab [33] and also verse 31 of Surah An-Nur [24]<sup>9</sup>. However, recently, there have been interpretations that differ from existing exegeses, stating that the hijab is not obligatory<sup>10</sup>. The reason given is that this obligation only applied during the time of Prophet Muhammad, when the tradition of slavery was still prevalent, making it difficult to distinguish between free Muslim women and enslaved women. Therefore, the Qur'an mandated that free Muslim women wear the hijab to avoid harassment by men who typically mistreated enslaved women<sup>11</sup>. By wearing the hijab, a clear distinction could be made between free Muslim women and enslaved women<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, the imperative sentence in the hijab verse does not necessarily have to be understood as a mandatory command; sometimes, it can be interpreted as a recommendation<sup>13</sup>.

The interpretation emerged from an Indonesian scholar from Rappang, South Sulawesi, namely Quraish Shihab<sup>14</sup>. His thoughts are articulated in his exegesis titled "Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an (Al-Mishbah: Messages, Impressions, and Harmony of the Qur'an)" and in his book titled "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah" (The Hijab: Attire for Muslim Women). Quraish Shihab's exegesis has generated considerable debate within the community<sup>15</sup>. Many scholars, commentators, and intellectuals in Indonesia have sought to criticize it, with some even suggesting that he has departed from the

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Identity On Environmental Issues," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 2 (March 15, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i2.3717>.

<sup>9</sup> Ismiatul Jamilah, "Ayat-Ayat Jilbab Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Atas Pandangan Mufasir Klasik Dan Kontemporer)" (INSTITUT AGAMA ISLAM NEGERI MADURA, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Abdurrahman Abulmajd, "WHAT IS THE MODEL OF MUSLIM RELATIONS WITH THE KAABA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE QUR'AN," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 16, 2023): 107–45, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.3583>.

<sup>11</sup> Azizah Romadhona, Muhamad Subhi Apriantoro, and Laila Muhammad Rasyid, "EXPLORING THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF INDONESIAN TAFSIR AL-QURAN: A STUDY OF SHEIKH ABDUL LATIF SYAKUR'S AD-DA'WAH WA AL-IRSYAD ILA SABILI AR-RASYAD," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 16, 2023): 91–106, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.2912>.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Quraish Shihab, "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer," *Jakarta: Lentera Hati*, 2006, 141–142.

<sup>13</sup> M. Quraisy Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*, Cet. 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 8: 309.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Hasdin Has, "Kontribusi Tafsir Nusantara Untuk Dunia (Analisis Metodologi Tafsir Al-Misbah Karya M. Quraish Shihab)," *Al-Munzir* 9, no. 1 (2016): 71.

<sup>15</sup> Yahya Fathur Rozy, Yohei Matsuyama, and Dina Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, "THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUR'AN COMMENTATORS' REQUIREMENTS: FROM THE AFFIRMATIVE ERA TO THE REFORMATIVE ERA," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 15, 2023): 75–90, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.2910>.

ranks of scholars<sup>16</sup>. From this standpoint, the author is keen to critically examine Quraish Shihab's comprehensive interpretation of the verses on the hijab in the Qur'an. Subsequently, the assessment will explore the relevance of his interpretation to the evidence and principles of interpretation that he employs. Thus, the purpose of this writing is to scrutinize or reconsider Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the hijab verses in the Qur'an.

Quraish Shihab's thoughts on the hijab have been extensively explored by researchers. Tiara Wahyuni, Syamsul Bahry<sup>17</sup>, and Siti Mu'awiyah<sup>18</sup> have attempted to elucidate Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the hijab; Riza and Hidayah<sup>19</sup> have examined the hermeneutical aspect of Quraish Shihab regarding the hijab verse; even 'Ashri<sup>20</sup> and Sidiq<sup>21</sup> have endeavored to compare Quraish Shihab's thoughts on the hijab with the ideas of Ibn Kasir and Said Ramadhan Al-Buthi. Furthermore, there is a closely related study by Nandra<sup>22</sup>, who aims to present various criticisms from several Indonesian Muslim scholars regarding Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the hijab verse. However, Nandra's study appears to lack focus on the weaknesses and has not critically examined the fundamental arguments in Quraish Shihab's exegesis<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, this research can continue the unfinished study and contribute to

<sup>16</sup> Bamba Abdoulaye, Yahya Fathur Rozy, and Ahmadou Siendou Konate, "MUHAMMAD IBN ABDUL WAHHAB'S PERSPECTIVE ABOUT THE VERSES OF THE QUR'AN REGARDING THE SCIENCE OF THEOLOGY," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 15, 2023): 57-74, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.2913>.

<sup>17</sup> Wahyuni Tiara and Samsul Bahry Harahap, "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Tentang Jilbab Menurut Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al- Misbah," *Sosial Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2021): 17-32.

<sup>18</sup> Siti Mu'awiyah Roni, "Penafsiran Tentang Pemakaian Jilbab Menurut Pandangan Pemikiran Prof. KH. M. Quraish Shihab," *An-Nahdhoh: Jurnal Kajian Islam Aswaja* 1, no. 2 (2021): 109-15.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Himmatur Riza and Vika Rachmania Hidayah, "Hermeneutika Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Studi Penafsiran Surat Al-Ahzab Ayat 59," *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 4, no. 2 (2022): 83-94, <https://doi.org/10.20871/tjsq.v4i2.186>.

<sup>20</sup> M. Noor 'Ashry and Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Pemikiran Sa'id Ramadhān Al-Būthī Terhadap Isu-Isu Feminisme (Kajian Atas Penafsiran Sa'id Ramadhān Al-Būthī Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Hijab, Kepemimpinan Perempuan, Hak Waris, Dan Poligami)," *Jurnal Online Studi Al-Qur'an* 18, no. 1 (2022): 111-33, <https://doi.org/10.21009/jsq.018.1.06>.

<sup>21</sup> Umar Sidiq, "DISKURSUS MAKNA JILBAB DALAM SURAT AL-AHZAB AYAT 59 Menurut Ibnu Kathir Dan M. Quraish Shihab," *Kodifikasia* 6, no. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.21154/kodifikasia.v6i1.194>.

<sup>22</sup> Nandra Sagitarius & Tjeptjep Suhandi, "Kritik Cendekiawan Muslim Terhadap Penafsiran Quraish Shihab Tentang Ayat Jilbab," *FAI Universitas Ibn Khaldun (UIKA) BOGOR* 1, no. 1 (2013): 57-92.

<sup>23</sup> Ismu Ridha et al., "THE QUR'AN'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE ETIQUETTE OF DEALING WITH THE HOLY QUR'AN FROM SAYYID QUTB'S PERSPECTIVE IN HIS INTERPRETATION OF (ADH-DHILAL): AN ANALYTICAL STUDY," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 13, 2023): 40-56, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.2874>.

enriching the perspective of critical analysis of Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the hijab.

## Method

This research is a qualitative study. The writing method utilizes a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves describing the research based on a focal problem. The employed approach is content analysis<sup>24</sup>. The primary sources for this research are Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an, and the book *Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah*, both of which are works by Quraish Shihab. Meanwhile, the secondary sources include relevant books, articles, and journal publications related to the research theme.

## Result and Discussion

### Setting-Social M. Quraish Shihab and Tafsir Al-Mishbah

His full name is Muhammad Quraish Shihab. Born in Lotassalo, Sindenreng Rappang (Sidrap), South Sulawesi, on February 16, 1944, he grew up in a family environment characterized by a strong inclination towards both scholarship and religion. His father, Abdurrahman Shihab, was an influential figure in the region and a professor with a high reputation in the field of Qur'anic exegesis at IAIN Alauddin, Makassar. Since childhood, Shihab received a rigorous education from his father with the aim of fostering his interest in understanding the Qur'an. Through this intensive upbringing, Shihab developed a profound interest in dedicating himself to the study of the Qur'an<sup>25</sup>.

He completed his elementary and junior high school education up to the second grade in Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi. In 1956, he went to Malang to continue his education at Pesantren Darul Hadits al-Fiqhiyyah. In 1958, his educational journey took him to Cairo, Egypt, where he was accepted into the second-grade class at Tsanawiyah Al-Azhar. In 1967, he successfully earned his Bachelor's degree (Lc. / S.1) from the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Department of Hadith Exegesis at Al-Azhar University. Subsequently, in his educational development, he pursued a Master's degree (S.2) in the same faculty at Al-Azhar University, obtaining his Master's degree (MA) in 1969 with a specialization in Qur'anic exegesis, with the thesis titled "Al-I'jāz al-Tasyrī'iy li al-Qu'rān al-Karīm" (The Legal Aspects of the Miraculous Nature of the Noble

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<sup>24</sup> Jaffer Ali Khan et al., *Research Methodology (Methods, Approaches And Techniques)* (San International Scientific Publications, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.59646/rmmethods/040>.

<sup>25</sup> Rahmatullah, Hudriansyah, and Mursalin, "M. Quraish Shihab Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Dinamika Studi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Indonesia Kontemporer," *Suhuf* 14, no. 1 (2021): 132, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v14i1.618>.

Qur'an). After returning from his intellectual journey in Egypt in 1973, Quraish Shihab was appointed as the Assistant Rector for Academic and Student Affairs at IAIN Alauddin Ujung Pandang, a position he held until 1980. Additionally, he served as the Coordinator of Kopertais Region VII Eastern Indonesia and Assistant Chief of East Indonesian Police in the field of mental development<sup>26</sup>.

Not content with his previous education, in 1980, he decided to return to his alma mater to pursue a Ph.D. In the next two years, he successfully obtained a Doctorate with the predicate Summa Cum Laude or the award *Mumtāz ma'a Martabat al-Syaraf al-Ūlā* (First-Level Award). This achievement made Quraish Shihab the first doctor in Southeast Asia to receive such an honor. Upon returning to his homeland, Quraish Shihab was assigned to the Faculty of Ushuluddin and the Postgraduate Program at IAIN (now UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. Several key responsibilities and strategic positions were entrusted to him, including serving as the Chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) since 1984, becoming a member of the Committee for the Improvement of the Qur'an Manuscript of the Ministry of Religious Affairs since 1989, and being a member of the National Education Advisory Board since 1989. In addition, he was actively involved in the management of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Scholars (ICMI), the Association of Sharia Sciences, and the Consortium of Religious Sciences of the Ministry of National Education<sup>27</sup>.

Eventually, he held the position of Rector at IAIN Jakarta for two terms, namely in the periods 1992-1996 and 1997-1998. Quraish Shihab was also entrusted with the role of Minister of Religious Affairs for about two months in early 1998, in the final cabinet of President Soeharto, namely the Development Cabinet IV. In 1999, M. Quraish Shihab was appointed as the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Arab Republic of Egypt, based in Cairo<sup>28</sup>. While serving as the ambassador, Quraish Shihab created his monumental work, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, consisting of 30 volumes and divided into 15 sets. *Tafsir al-Mishbah* stands as a comprehensive work produced by an Indonesian intellectual after more than 30 years of a hiatus in writing exegesis. The completion of *Tafsir al-Mishbah* further strengthened Quraish's reputation as a leading exegete in Indonesia, even on a Southeast Asian level<sup>29</sup>.

This exegesis was written using the *tahlilī* method, where each verse of the Quran is interpreted one by one and examined from various aspects in

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<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab," *Tsaqafah* 6, no. 2 (2010): 250, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v6i2.120>.

<sup>27</sup> Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab."

<sup>28</sup> Riza and Hidayah, "Hermeneutika Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Studi Penafsiran Surat Al-Ahzab Ayat 59."

<sup>29</sup> Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab."

accordance with its sequence in the mushaf. The first volume of this exegesis was first printed in 2000, while the last volume (volume 15) was first published in 2003. According to Quraish's account, the process of completing this exegesis took four years, beginning in Egypt on Friday, 4 Rabi'ul Awwal 1420 H/June 18, 1999, and concluded in Jakarta on Friday, September 5, 2003. On average, Quraish spent seven hours a day to complete the exegesis<sup>30</sup>. When entrusted by President B.J. Habibie to serve as the Ambassador and Plenipotentiary for Egypt, Somalia, and Djibouti, Quraish Shihab began writing Tafsir Al-Mishbah. The writing process did not take much time, allowing him sufficient opportunity to immerse himself in the exegesis writing process<sup>31</sup>.

### Hijab in the Quran

The Qur'an contains numerous explanations regarding various matters, be it related to worship, transactions, social, economic, political issues, and even the general aspects of human life. One of the topics addressed in the Qur'an is the hijab. As the primary legal source in the Islamic religion, the Qur'an provides rich guidance and instructions regarding clothing, including the hijab. This investigation will explore the Qur'anic verses related to the hijab, delving into the meanings and purposes behind the command to wear the hijab. By examining the Qur'an's perspective on the hijab, profound insights can be gained into the values and teachings of Islam concerning the use of clothing as an expression of identity and spirituality.

The Qur'anic verses that explicitly address the hijab are found in two verses, namely, verse 31 of Surah an-Nur [24] and verse 59 of Surah al-Ahzab [33]. In Surah an-Nur [24], verse 31, Allah commands believing women to guard their gaze and preserve their chastity. The verse continues:

...وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ...

"...and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof. And let them draw their headcovers over their chests..."

The verse above uses the term "khimar" to refer to a cloth commonly used to cover the head. Meanwhile, the verse that explicitly uses the term "jilbab" is found in Surah al-Ahzab [33], verse 59:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِزَوَّاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.

<sup>30</sup> M Quraish Shihab, *Menabur Pesan Ilahi: Al-Qur'an Dan Dinamika Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Lentera Hati, 2006), 310.

<sup>31</sup> Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab."

"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."

The mentioned verse is more explicit in stating the command for the believing women to observe the hijab. Thus, there are two terms used, and although they carry similar connotations, the specific terms are khimar and jilbab.

The term "khumar" linguistically originates from the verb "khamarā-yakhmuru," with equivalent meanings and plural forms being "akhmirah," "khumr," and "khumur." In *Lisān al-'Arab*, Ibn Manẓūr explains that "khumar" refers to a cloth used by women to cover their heads<sup>32</sup>. In another instance, he clarifies that the cloth used for head covering should be half the length of their regular garment<sup>33</sup>. Thus, linguistically, "khumar" means a head-covering cloth that is half the length of a woman's usual attire<sup>34</sup>.

On the other hand, "jilbab" is derived from the verb "jalbaba-yujalbibu-jilbāban," with the plural form "jalābīb," signifying a long woman's garment that can cover up to the thighs<sup>35</sup>. According to Ibn Faris's analysis, the original form of the word "jilbāb" is derived from the trilateral verb "jalaba," indicating something that completely and broadly covers another thing<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, linguistically, the meaning of "jilbab" as women's clothing is broader than the term "khumar."

In terminology, many scholars have provided definitions for the terms "khumar" and "jilbab." Ibn Kathir defines "khumar" as women's clothing used to cover the head down to the chest, ensuring that nothing (aurat) is visible<sup>37</sup>. This definition differs from the definition of jilbab, according to which jilbab is a garment that is wider than khimar<sup>38</sup>. The majority of scholars agree with such a definition, and even more explicitly, as stated by Al-Qurthubi in *Al-Mahalli*,

<sup>32</sup> Jamāluddīn Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arāb*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar Ash-Shadir, n.d.), 4: 257.

<sup>33</sup> Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arāb*.

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Maga Sule, "RESPONSE TO MUSLIMS DA'WAH ACTIVITIES' BY NON-MUSLIMS IN AKWANGA AND NASSARAWA EGGON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 5, 2023): 23–39, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.3110>.

<sup>35</sup> Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arāb*.

<sup>36</sup> Ahmad bin Faris bin Zakariya, *Mu'jam Maqāyīs Al-Lughah*, Cet.1 (Kairo: Dar Ibn Al-Jauzi, 2018), 1: 469.

<sup>37</sup> Ismā'il bin Umar bin Kašīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-'Azīm*, ed. Sami bin Muhammad Salamah, 2nd ed. (Dār Ṭayyibah, 1999), 6: 46.

<sup>38</sup> Kašīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-'Azīm*.



that jilbab is a garment worn from the top of the head to the tips of the toes<sup>39</sup>. Thus, there is a difference in size between khimar and jilbab, even though both are garments worn by women<sup>40</sup>. Khimar covers from the head to the chest, while jilbab covers from the head to the feet<sup>41</sup>.

Explicitly, both of the above verses command Muslim women to cover their modesty with khimar or jilbab. It turns out that the verse about jilbab in Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 59, has a background of revelation (asbāb al-Nuzūl). Abu Malik narrated that women during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW often went out of their homes for a specific purpose<sup>42</sup>. Outside, many hypocritical men would approach and disturb them. The situation was reported to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Then, the hypocrites claimed that they only did that to slave women, not to Muslim women<sup>43</sup>.

Thus, to distinguish between free Muslim women and those who are not, they were commanded to wear the jilbab. Therefore, Muslim women would be easily recognized and protected from various harmful approaches by hypocritical men.

## Exegesis of the Verse on Hijab from the Perspective of M. Quraish Shihab

As discussed earlier, the regulation of the hijab for Muslim women is found in Surah An-Nur [24]: 31 and Al-Ahzab [33]: 59. In Surah An-Nur [24] verse 31, Allah states:

...وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ...

"...and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof. And let them draw their headcovers over their chests..."

<sup>39</sup> Abu Iqbal Al-Mahalli, *Muslimah Modern: Dalam Bingkai Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits* (Yogyakarta: LeKPIM/Mitra Pustaka, 2000), 172.

<sup>40</sup> Nazar Fadli, "CONTRIBUTION OF ACEHNESE SCHOLARS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QURANIC EXEGESIS IN INDONESIA: A STUDY OF TENGKU MUHAMMAD HASBI ASH-SHIDDIEQY AND HIS WORK "TAFSIR AN-NUUR,"" *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 3, no. 1 (December 5, 2023): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v3i1.3381>.

<sup>41</sup> Salman Abdul Muthalib and Sri Kiki Novianda, "Interpretasi Khimar Dan Jilbab Dalam Al-Qur'an," *TAFSE: Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2022): 54, <https://doi.org/10.22373/tafse.v5i1.12555>.

<sup>42</sup> Andri Nirwana, Syamsul Hidayat, and Suharjianto Suharjianto, "أصول التفسير وقواعده عند تفسير عبد الله بن عباس," *Jurnal Online Studi Al-Qur'an* 16, no. 2 (July 30, 2020): 137-64, <https://doi.org/10.21009/JSQ.016.2.02>.

<sup>43</sup> Wahbah bin Muṣṭafā Al-Zuhailī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fī Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'Ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, 2nd ed. (Damaskus: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Ma'āshir, 1418), 22: 107; Winona Lutfiah et al., "Interpretasi Ayat-Ayat Tentang Jilbab: Studi Perbandingan Terhadap Muṣṭafa Al-Marāḡi Dan Hamka," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 3 (2021): 182, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15114>.

When interpreting the verse, Quraish Shihab stated that what is meant by khimar in that context is a long head covering. He then continued:

*"Sejak dahulu, wanita menggunakan penutup kepala itu, hanya saja sebagian mereka tidak menggunakannya untuk menutupi, tetapi hanya dililitkan di punggung mereka. Nah, ayat ini memerintahkan kepada mereka untuk menutupi dada mereka dengan kerudung panjang itu. Ini berarti kerudung itu diletakan di kepala karena memang sejak semula ia berfungsi demikian, lalu diulurkan ke bawah hingga menutup dada".<sup>44</sup>*

"Since ancient times, women have been using head coverings; however, some of them did not use them to cover, but only wrapped them around their backs. Well, this verse commands them to cover their chests with that long veil. This means that the veil is placed on the head because from the beginning it functions that way, then extended downward to cover the chest."

The explanation gives the impression that Quraish Shihab agrees regarding Muslim women, that they should extend their khimar from the head to the chest. However, after that, he discusses the legal aspects of wearing the khimar<sup>45</sup>. Citing various opinions of scholars, including Ṭāhir bin 'Āsyūr, Quraish Shihab states that not every imperative sentence must be understood as an obligation; sometimes it should be understood as a recommendation<sup>46</sup>. Quraish gives an example in the case of writing debts in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 282, which uses imperative sentences but means recommendation<sup>47</sup>.

At the end of the interpretation of verse 31 of Surah An-Nur, he states that: *"Kita boleh berkata bahwa yang menutup seluruh badannya kecuali wajah dan (telapak) tangannya telah melaksanakan bunyi ayat, bahkan mungkin berlebih. Namun, dalam saat yang sama kita tidak wajar menyatakan terhadap mereka yang tidak memakai kerudung (khimar), atau menampakan sebagian tangannya, bahwa mereka "secara pasti telah melanggar petunjuk agama". Bukankah al-Qur'an tidak menyebut batas aurat? Para ulama pun ketika membahasnya berbeda pendapat"<sup>48</sup>.*

<sup>44</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*.

<sup>45</sup> Andri Nirwana An et al., "Pelatihan Metode Tajdid Untuk Peningkatan Membaca Al-Qur'an Siswa SD Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kottabarat (Tajdid Method Training to Improve Al-Qur'an Reading for Muhammadiyah Elementary School Students Kottabarat Special Program)," *Jurnal PEMA Tarbiyah* 50, no. 1 (2023): 50-68, <http://jurnaltarbiyah.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/pematarbiyah>.

<sup>46</sup> Andri Nirwana AN, "Qawaid Tafsir Dan Ushul Tafsir Siti Aisyah Dalam Kitab Sahih Muslim," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 18, no. 2 (November 19, 2021): 152, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v18i2.11281>.

<sup>47</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*.

<sup>48</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*.

We can say that those who cover their entire body except the face and hands have fulfilled the wording of the verse, perhaps even exceeding it. However, at the same time, it is not reasonable to assert that those who do not wear a headscarf (khimar) or show some of their hands have 'definitely violated religious guidance.' Doesn't the Qur'an specify the limits of the aurat? Scholars themselves have different opinions when discussing it.

The statement implies that, according to Quraish Shihab, wearing a headscarf is not an obligation but rather a recommendation. This is supported by his assertion that those who do not wear a headscarf or khimar cannot be definitively considered to have violated the religion. If it were obligatory, then those not wearing the khimar could be considered as having violated it.

The explanation above is his interpretation of khimar. However, regarding his interpretation of jilbab in Surah Al-Ahzab [33]:59, Quraish Shihab expresses his stance more explicitly. Before presenting his interpretation of jilbab, it is also necessary to mention some of his explanations about jilbab in several of his written works<sup>49</sup>. According to Quraish, jilbab is a loose traditional garment with the addition of a headscarf as a head covering. This guidance strongly encourages Muslim women to wear clothing that distinguishes them from non-Muslim women who might wear inappropriate clothing that could attract inappropriate attention or comments<sup>50</sup>. The verse about jilbab is found in Surah Al-Ahzab [33]:59 as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِزَوَّاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.

"O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (Q.S Al-Ahzab [33]:59).

According to Quraish Shihab's perspective, the verse does not instruct Muslim women to wear the jilbab, because when viewed in its historical context, during that time, some women had already worn the jilbab. However, it is essential to note that the way the jilbab was worn at that time did not conform to the instructions given in this verse. This interpretation is based on the formulation of the verse stating that the jilbab worn by women of the past did not comply with the guidance, namely, "they should lengthen them." This

<sup>49</sup> Andri Nirwana et al., "SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF WHERE IS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE MEANING OF THE WORDS QALB AND FUAD IN THE QUR'AN?," *Jurnal STIU Darul Hikmah* 9, no. 1 (March 28, 2023): 12–20, <https://doi.org/10.61086/jstiudh.v9i1.38>.

<sup>50</sup> M Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*, Mizan Pustaka, 2007, 172.

indicates that even though they had worn the jilbab, it did not meet the desired extension standards, especially for those who had not worn it before<sup>51</sup>.

Then, when interpreting the verses from Surah Al-Ahzab that discuss the jilbab, as in the wording of the above verse, Quraish mentions that scholars have written that "the way of wearing the jilbab varies according to the conditions and traditions of women<sup>52</sup>. However, the purpose of this command, as conveyed in the verse, is 'so that they may be recognized as good Muslim women, and not harassed.'" But what about the verses that use imperative wording? The common response in discussions is: aren't all commands in the Qur'an considered obligatory? This statement is indeed correct. For example, the command to write down debts (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 282) is an exhortation. However, what about the numerous hadiths? The answer is the same; Thahir ibn Ashur states that many hadiths using imperative wording are actually exhortations or prohibitions and should be understood as recommendations or prohibitions rather than obligations that must be carried out<sup>53</sup>.

Moreover, he also states that the jilbab Sharia is a teaching that takes into account the traditions of Arab society, so for other nations that do not wear the jilbab, this provision does not apply to them. He also states that the way of wearing the jilbab can vary according to the circumstances and traditions of each woman. This view is also reinforced by Quraish Shihab, who agrees that the verses regarding the jilbab take into account local customs and culture. Nevertheless, according to Quraish Shihab, what is more important in the context of women's clothing is wearing respectable attire in line with the positive cultural developments of a society that values them, so they do not face disturbances related to their attire<sup>54</sup>.

Then Quraish Shihab also argues that hair is not considered part of the body that should be covered (aurat), as he believes that there are other parts of the body that have a greater stimulating effect than hair. Examples include a melodious voice, a beautiful body shape, and in the context of today, the diversity of powder and makeup used is also considered part of the aurat. Therefore, according to this perspective, when the face is covered by various makeup, its stimulating effect is much greater than just highlighting the beauty

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<sup>51</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*.

<sup>52</sup> Andri Nirwana et al., "Kajian Kritik Pada Bentuk Dan Pengaruh Positif Al-Dakhil Dalam Tafsir Jalalain Tentang Kisah Nabi Musa Dan Khidir," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 5, no. 2 (November 2, 2021): 717, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v5i2.2774>.

<sup>53</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*.

<sup>54</sup> Quraish Shihab, "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer."

of a woman's hair because the face is considered the most precious ornament for women<sup>55</sup>.

Related to verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab, specifically the command to wear jilbab, Quraish Shihab understands that this instruction is only applicable during the time of the Prophet, when there was still a slavery institution. At that time, it was necessary to differentiate the appearance between women who were slaves and those who were free, aiming to prevent harassment from immoral men. In his view, before this verse was revealed, there was no significant difference in the way free and slave women dressed, whether modestly or immodestly. Therefore, mischievous men often harassed women without considering their appearance. This verse was revealed to avoid such harassment and to emphasize the dignity of Muslim women by displaying their modesty<sup>56</sup>.

Not only in his writings, but also during an interview on one of the private television shows, Quraish Shihab appeared to firmly hold onto his stance. Tiara Wahyuni documented the program and wrote that there was a mother who asked about the jilbab. Then, a discussion about the meaning of jilbab unfolded between Quraish Shihab and the mother. When Quraish asked her if she was correctly wearing her jilbab, confidently, she answered that she was wearing the jilbab as commanded in the Quran, as her appearance was neat and covered her aurat. However, Quraish Shihab mentioned that there were still scholars who believed that the mother had not fully covered her aurat and should wear a veil. On the contrary, some scholars emphasized that the most important thing was to wear respectable clothing. Although he considered the jilbab a good thing, he believed that people should not be forced to wear it since some scholars argue that the jilbab is not obligatory<sup>57</sup>.

### **Critical Analysis of M. Quraish Shihab's Exegesis of the Jilbab Verse**

Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verse on the headscarf, as previously discussed, has sparked various reactions, particularly among scholars. In this regard, the author will critically analyze some of his interpretations and will be outlined in several sections below:

Firstly, regarding the definition of a woman's modesty (aurat). Quraish Shihab believes that scholars have differing opinions on the boundaries of a

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<sup>55</sup> Quraish Shihab, "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer."

<sup>56</sup> Quraish Shihab, "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer."

<sup>57</sup> Tiara and Harahap, "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Tentang Jilbab Menurut Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al- Misbah."

woman's modesty, and according to him, each opinion is based solely on logic, personal inclinations, and heavily influenced by the social conditions of their time. Therefore, he argues that the verse does not explicitly establish the limits of a woman's modesty, and as such, it should not be used as a basis to affirm the standards of a woman's modesty<sup>58</sup>. The author finds this opinion to be very risky, as it could lead to a relativistic view where everything is considered relative, and the clarity of which truth to adhere to becomes uncertain. Furthermore, scholars have reached a consensus (ijma) on the boundaries of a woman's modesty<sup>59</sup>. Aṭ-Ṭabari, in his commentary *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, mentions that scholars have unanimously agreed that the boundaries of a woman's modesty extend from the top of her head to the tips of her toes, excluding only her two palms and her face<sup>60</sup>. Ibn Kaṣīr also notes that Aṭ-Ṭabari's opinion is the most well-known and widely accepted among scholars<sup>61</sup>.

The consensus on the boundaries of modesty is supported by an authentic hadith narrated by 'Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her). Once, Asma binti Abu Bakar Al-Ṣiddiq entered the house of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) wearing thin clothing. Upon seeing this, the Prophet turned his gaze away and said:

يَا أَسْمَاءُ، إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ إِذَا بَلَغَتْ الْمَحِيضَ، لَمْ يَصْلُحْ أَنْ يُرَى مِنْهَا إِلَّا هَذَا وَهَذَا -  
وَأَشَارَ إِلَى وَجْهِهِ وَكَفَّيْهِ.<sup>62</sup>

"O Asma! Verily, when a woman experiences menstruation, nothing should be visible except for this and this," while indicating towards the face and both palms of the hands."

The hadith simultaneously refutes Quraish Shihab's understanding that hair is not part of the modesty (aurat). According to him, leaving the hair uncovered is permissible. However, it is clear from the mentioned hadith how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) specified that only the face and the palms of the hands are allowed to be visible. Therefore, the issue of defining

<sup>58</sup> Quraish Shihab, "Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lalu Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer."

<sup>59</sup> Andri Nirwana AN and Syardan Jalil, "QURANICPRENEUR: INNOVATION OF THE NEURO NADI METHOD TOWARDS LEARNING OF THE QUR'AN IN BANDA ACEH," *PROCEEDINGS: Dirundeng International Conference on Islamic Studies*, May 31, 2022, 165-74, <https://doi.org/10.47498/dicis.v1i1.1022>.

<sup>60</sup> Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarīr Al-Ṭabārī, *Jami' Al-Bayān Fi Takwīl Ay Al-Qurān*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Syakir, 1st ed. (Kairo: Muasasah Al-Risalah, 2000), 19: 158.

<sup>61</sup> Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-'Azīm*.

<sup>62</sup> Abū Dāud Sulaimān bin Al-As'as As-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Daud*, ed. Syu'aib Al-Arnauth (Dar Ar-Risalah Al-'Alamiyyah, 2009), 6: 199. Hadis tersebut menurut pendapat Al-Albani adalah hadis yang sah.

a woman's modesty should no longer be a subject of debate, as it has been unanimously agreed upon by the scholars.

In reality, the ongoing discussion among scholars revolves around whether the face and palms of the hands are obligatory to be covered or not. Some scholars argue that covering the face is not obligatory, while others assert that it is mandatory. Among those who do not deem it obligatory to cover the face are Sheikh Al-Albani in his book "Hijāb al-Mar'ah al-Muslimah"<sup>63</sup> and the majority opinion of Al-Azhar scholars. On the contrary, those who insist on covering the face include Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz and Abu Al-'la Al-Maududi in his book "al-Hijāb"<sup>64</sup>. Therefore, it is incorrect for Quraish Shihab to claim that the definition of a woman's modesty is debated among scholars, turning it into a matter of difference of opinion (khilafiyah), as it is not the case.

Secondly, regarding the ruling on wearing the headscarf (jilbab), Quraish Shihab asserts that although the verse about the headscarf is phrased as a command, it does not necessarily imply an obligation because not all command sentences convey a sense of obligation. According to him, the command in that context signifies a recommendation. He analogizes his opinion by referring to the command sentences in the case of debts in Surah Al-Baqarah [2] verse 282, where the ruling is not a command but merely a recommendation. His statement that not all command sentences should be interpreted as obligatory is correct. However, the transformation of a command into a recommendation is limited by the presence of an indication (qorinah) supporting such an interpretation. In this case, Quraish Shihab does not mention the indication. However, in the principles of interpretation (tafsir) that he also wrote about, it is stated that a command is inherently indicative of obligation unless there is evidence to divert it. This principle is recorded by Khalid As-Sabt in his book titled "Qawāid al-Tafsir jam' an wa dirāsatan" with the wording:

الْأَمْرُ الْمُطْلَقُ يَقْتَضِي الْوَجُوبَ إِلَّا لِمَصَارِفٍ.<sup>65</sup>

A principle like this initially applies within the realm of Ushul Fikih<sup>66</sup>, a discipline that serves as a knowledge base for deriving legal rulings from the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Thus, as long as there is no evidence diverting the imperative sentence, the ruling

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<sup>63</sup> The work of Al-Albani has been translated into Indonesian with the title of the translated edition, 'Jilbab Wanita Muslimah.' See: Muhammad Nashiruddin Al-Albani, *Jilbab Wanita Muslimah* (Yogyakarta: Media Hidayah, 2002).

<sup>64</sup> Abul A'la Al-Maududi, *Al-Hijab* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, n.d.), 300-302.

<sup>65</sup> Khalid Ustman As-Sabt, *Qawaid At-Tafsir Jamān Wa Dirasatan* (Dar Ibn Affan, n.d.), 2: 479.

<sup>66</sup> One of the reference books in the field of Ushul Fiqh is the book 'Al-'Uddah' by Judge Abu Ya'la. In the first volume, in the chapter titled 'Al-Awāmīr,' it is mentioned that the absolute imperative sentence indicates obligation, except if there is evidence diverting it. See the complete details: Al-Qāḍī Abu Ya'lā, *Al-'Uddah Fī Uṣūl Al-Fiqh*, Cet. 2, 1990, 1: 224.

remains obligatory. Another implication of this principle is that the presence of a command implies a prohibition against doing the opposite<sup>67</sup>.

An example application of the above principle can be seen in the case of the worship command in Surah An-Nisa [4] verse 36. The worship command in that verse is absolute, with no evidence diverting its meaning, thus the ruling remains obligatory. On the other hand, an example of a command sentence being understood as a recommendation is found in the case of witnessing in financial transactions in Surah Al-Baqarah [2] verse 282.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ...

The imperative sentence "faktubūh" in the mentioned verse is understood as a form of recommendation because, fundamentally, financial transactions are permissible (mubah) and not obligatory. Therefore, the command to write them is merely a recommendation or a directive<sup>68</sup>.

Regarding Quraish Shihab's opinion that the obligation to wear the headscarf (jilbab) is not mandatory and is merely a recommendation, he fails to provide any indication diverting the meaning from obligatory to recommended. Thus, the ruling on wearing the headscarf remains as originally established, which is obligatory, and Quraish Shihab's opinion lacks strong arguments in Islamic jurisprudence.

Thirdly, concerning the element of locality in the legislation of the headscarf, Quraish Shihab also states that the headscarf's Sharia takes into account the traditions of Arab societies. Therefore, for other nations that do not wear the headscarf, this provision does not apply to them. He also asserts that the way of wearing the headscarf can vary according to the circumstances and traditions of each woman<sup>69</sup>. This perspective is further supported by Quraish Shihab, who agrees that the verses regarding the headscarf consider local customs and culture. However, according to Quraish Shihab, what is more important in the context of women's clothing is to wear dignified attire in line with the positive cultural developments of societies that value them, so they do not face disturbances related to their attire.

This element of locality forms the basis of Quraish Shihab's argument for not equating the Arab states of that time with the present conditions. He adopts this opinion from Ibn 'Āsyūr with some expansion in translation. He states that M. Tāhir bin 'Āsyūr, a recognized authority in scholarship, wrote in his book titled "maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah" that the customs of one community should not be

<sup>67</sup> As-Sabt, *Qawaid At-Tafsir Jamán Wa Dirasatan*.

<sup>68</sup> As-Sabt, *Qawaid At-Tafsir Jamán Wa Dirasatan*.

<sup>69</sup> Andri Nirwana An et al., "Implementasi Metode Tafsir Tahlili Terhadap Qs Ar-Rum Ayat 30 Tentang Fitrah Manusia Dalam Tafsir Azhar Untuk Membendung Embrio Paham Atheis," *Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Tafsir* 6, no. 2 (2021).



imposed on another in the name of religion<sup>70</sup>. One example of such customs is related to the headscarf. Quraish Shihab continues his citation by stating that the teaching of the headscarf considers the customs of the Arab people, so other nations that do not use it do not partake in this teaching. The complete statement of Ibn 'Āsyūr's opinion is:

فَهَذَا شَرْعٌ رُوعِيَّتٌ فِيهِ عَادَةُ الْعَرَبِ. فَالْأَقْوَامُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَتَّخِذُونَ الْجَلَابِيبَ لَا يَنَالُهُمْ مِنْ هَذَا التَّشْرِيعِ نَصِيبٌ<sup>71</sup>.

In fact, if objectively examined, Ibn 'Āsyūr's statement is not directly related to the Sharia of the headscarf but rather pertains to the model or style of the headscarf that had become a customary practice among the Arab people. This conclusion is drawn from the context of Ibn 'Āsyūr's discussion, where the mentioned statement is placed under the subtitle 'umūm syarī'ah al-Islām (the generality of Islamic Sharia). This implies that the Sharia of the headscarf is part of the universally applicable Sharia, not limited to the Arab region. In the opening sentence, Ibn 'Āsyūr explains:

مَعْلُومٌ بِالضَّرُورَةِ مِنَ الدِّينِ أَنَّ شَرِيعَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ جَاءَتْ شَرِيعَةً عَامَّةً دَاعِيَةً جَمِيعَ الْبَشَرِ إِلَى اتِّبَاعِهَا، لِأَنَّهَا لَمَّا كَانَتْ خَاتِمَةَ الشَّرَائِعِ اسْتَلْزَمَ ذَلِكَ عُمُومَهَا - لَا مَحَالَةَ - سَائِرَ أَقْطَارِ الْمَعْمُورَةِ، وَفِي سَائِرِ أَرْزَمَةِ هَذَا الْعَالَمِ.<sup>72</sup>

"It is well-established in religious knowledge that Islamic Sharia comes with universal principles, inviting all layers of society to adhere to it. When Islamic Sharia is considered the final and comprehensive law, it necessitates the universality of its principles across different places and times."

Ibn 'Āsyūr's statement indirectly refutes Quraish Shihab's assumption that the headscarf's Sharia only applies to the Arab people and not to others. Ibn 'Āsyūr emphasizes that all Sharia within Islam, including the Sharia of the headscarf, is universally applicable across different places and times<sup>73</sup>. This serves as a kind of rationalization within Islam itself, recognized as the final

<sup>70</sup> Andri Nirwana et al., "Analysis of Behaviors of Sidodadi Market Traders Based on Tafsir Al-Jamī' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān Imam Al-Qurṭubī About Characteristics of Madyan Traders," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 6, no. 2 (2021): 281-300, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v6i2.3255>.

<sup>71</sup> Muhammad Ṭahir bin 'Āsyūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah*, ed. Muhammad Al-Habib (Qatar: Wazarah Al-Auqat wa Asyaun Al-Islamiyyah, 2004), 3: 270.

<sup>72</sup> 'Āsyūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah*, 3: 259.

<sup>73</sup> Dodi Robiansyah et al., "Excessive Lifestyle According To Al Munir Tafsir By Wahbah Az Zuhaili," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 18-43, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i1.1278>.

doctrine among the teachings of earlier prophets<sup>74</sup>. If Quraish Shihab maintains that the headscarf's Sharia only applies within Arab traditions based on Ibn 'Āsyūr's thinking, then Ibn 'Āsyūr, in his *Tafsir al-Tahrīr*, contradicts Quraish Shihab's statement by explaining that the Arab traditions referred to are related to the conditions of how they wear or the style of their clothing.<sup>75</sup> This is highly logical, as clothing styles or models may undergo development and changes according to the needs of a specific time and era. Since Islam does not regulate technical details such as fabric types, stitching styles, and the like, it only mandates the obligation to cover women's modesty. The style and manner of wearing the headscarf are left to each individual's customs, with the crucial aspect being the coverage of the entire modesty.

Fourthly, regarding the duration of the headscarf's Sharia. Quraish Shihab understands that the instructions in the headscarf verse only applied during the time of the Prophet when the institution of slavery still existed. At that time, a distinction in appearance was necessary between women who were slaves and those who were free, aiming to prevent misconduct from immoral men. This statement implies that the headscarf's Sharia could be abandoned when, at some point, free Muslim women could be distinguished from slave women, as the headscarf was considered merely a means to achieve that goal. Even if the headscarf verse is closely related to such conditions, what matters is not the reason for the condition but the general wording, as emphasized in the principle of *asbāb al-Nuzūl*, "*al-'Ibrah bi umūm al-Lafd lā bi khuṣūṣ al-Sabab*" (the guidance is based on the general wording, not the specificity of the cause)<sup>76</sup>.

Quraish Shihab's statement is also contradicted by the opinion of the renowned Tunisian exegete, Ibn 'Āsyūr, who serves as a reference in his commentary<sup>77</sup>. As mentioned earlier, Ibn 'Āsyūr asserts that Islamic Sharia will remain applicable until the end of time, as it represents the final and comprehensive law among the preceding legislations. The basis for his

<sup>74</sup> Ridho Adiansyah and Nurul Faezah binti Yahya, "KHAMR IN THE QUR'AN (THEMATIC STUDY OF TAFSIR IBN JARIR AL-TABARI)," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 30, 2022): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i1.1208>.

<sup>75</sup> Muhammad Thahir bin Asyur, *At-Tahrīr Wa At-Tanwīr: Tahrīr Al-Ma'na As-Sadīd Wa Tanwīr Al-'Aql Al-Jadīd Min Tafsīr Al-Kitāb Al-Majīd* (Tunisia: Ad-Dar At-Tunisiyah, 1984), 22: 107.

<sup>76</sup> Muhammad Quraisy Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir: Syarat, Ketentuan Dan Aturan Yang Patut Anda Ketahui Dalam Memahami Ayat-Ayat Al-Quran*, ed. Abdus Syakur, IV (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2019), 205.

<sup>77</sup> Afrizal, in his research, has demonstrated the influence of Ibn 'Asyur's exegesis on the commentary (tafsir) of Al-Mishbah. He discovered approximately 879 citations from Ibn 'Asyur's tafsir within Quraish Shihab's commentary. For further details, refer to: Hamdi Ishak Afrizal Nur MIS, Mukhlis Lubis, "Sumbangan Tafsir Al-Tahrir Wa Al-Tanwir Ibn 'Asyur Dan Relasinya Dengan Tafsir Al-Mishbah M. Quraish Shihab," *Al-Turath* 2, no. 2 (2017): 172.

argumentation lies in Quranic verses, namely Q.S Saba [34]: 28 and Al-A'raf [7]: 151, along with a hadith reported by Al-Bukhari, which states:

وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى النَّاسِ عَامَّةً.<sup>78</sup>

*"The previous prophets were sent specifically to their own people, whereas I have been sent to humanity at large."*

Therefore, when the Sharia of the headscarf is understood to only apply during the time of the Prophet and not for the periods afterward, it implies a denial of the Prophet's statement mentioned above. Simultaneously, it negates the role of the Prophet as the conveyer of revelation that is applicable until the end of time. Undoubtedly, such an interpretation would not be accepted by any scholars, whether from classical or contemporary times.

## Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, Quraish Shihab has a different perspective compared to other scholars regarding the hijab verse. He states that the imperative sentence in the hijab verse should not necessarily be understood as an obligation; at times, it should be interpreted as a recommendation. Not wearing a headscarf or khimar cannot be considered a violation of the religion according to him. The definition of the boundaries of the 'awrah (parts of the body that should be covered) is not agreed upon by scholars. He also argues that the hijab law is a doctrine that considers the traditions of Arab society, and therefore, it does not apply to other nations that do not wear the hijab. Furthermore, he asserts that the hijab law was only applicable during the time of the Prophet, where slavery still existed, and the hijab served as a distinction between slave women and free women.

Secondly, some of Quraish Shihab's interpretations of the hijab verse lack strong arguments within the realm of Islamic studies. The wording of the imperative in the hijab verse should be understood as an obligation and cannot be interpreted as a mere recommendation because there is no evidence suggesting otherwise. Scholars unanimously agree on the definition of a woman's 'awrah, covering from head to toe, excluding the face and palms. The hijab law remains in effect until the end of time, even though it was revealed under specific conditions and in a particular region, as Islam is a universal religion.

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<sup>78</sup> Şuhaib Abdul Jabbar, *Al-Jāmi' Al-Şaḥīḥ Li Al-Sunan Wa Al-Masānid*, 2014, 1: 340.

## Author Contributions

**Abdul Rohman:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Ghazi Abdullah Muttaqien, Faisal Hamad ALMonawer, Tigran Rumanian:** Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Investigation.

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