

QAWĀ'ID AL-TAFSĪR: THE APPLICATION OF SYNTAX, MORPHOLOGY, AND RHETORIC BY M. QURAIISH SHIHAB (B. 1944)

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Abstract: M. Quraish Shihab (Shihab) is one of the great exegetes in the Indonesian archipelago. He is well known for applying *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* in interpreting the Quran. These rules are popular among many exegetes to support their interpretations aligned with the teachings and goals of the Quran. Furthermore, to ensure the interpretations do not deviate from the valid message of the Quran. This paper adopts an analytical approach in *Tafsīr Al-Mishbah* to describe the Syntax, Morphology, and Rhetoric of selected Quranic verses. It shows that *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* is an essential tool in Quranic exegesis. Mastering these rules can help interpret certain verses that have similar meanings. This paper also proves that Shihab had adopted *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* that earlier exegetes used.

Keywords: Morphology; *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*; Quranic Exegesis; Rhetoric; Syntax

Abstrak: M. Quraish Shihab (Shihab) adalah salah seorang ahli tafsir terkenal di kepulauan Nusantara, Indonesia. Beliau telah menerapkan *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* dalam menafsirkan Al-Qur'an. Aturan-aturan ini populer di kalangan banyak penafsir untuk mendukung interpretasi mereka yang sesuai dengan ajaran dan tujuan al-Qur'an. Hal ini untuk memastikan interpretasi tidak menyimpang dari pesan al-Qur'an yang sah. Penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan analitik dalam *Tafsīr Al-Mishbah* untuk mendeskripsikan Sintaks, Morfologi, dan Retorika dari ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an terpilih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* adalah alat penting dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an. Menguasai kaidah-kaidah ini dapat membantu menafsirkan ayat-ayat tertentu yang memiliki makna serupa. Hasil penelitian ini juga membuktikan bahwa Shihab telah mengadopsi *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* yang telah digunakan oleh para mufassir sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci: Morfologi; *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*; Retorik; Sintaksis; Tafsir

1. Introduction

Shihab (b.1944) is one of the most famous exegetes in Nusantara (Southern Malay Archipelago) and has produced a complete exegetical work called *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. It aims to unravel Qur'anic verses' meaning, message, and compatibility. Quraish interprets elaboration techniques (Mohamad et al., 2015; Usman et al., 2015). He opines that a high level of knowledge of Arabic Literature and fluency in the Arabic language is a must to comprehend the true meaning of Qur'anic verses. A deep understanding of the verses, covering all aspects, is crucial for clarity (Ibrahim & Usman, 2013; Shihab, 2006).

The scholars used these interpretation rules to explain every verse he studied persistently and consistently in the sura. Shihab was very particular about pronouncing verses or phrases in the Qur'an, and he often referred to language and literary experts to ascertain the correct meaning.

Additionally, he was critical of how the words and verses were used in the Qur'an. In short, he attempted to understand the importance of the verses based on the Qur'anic terms. According to Gusmian (2003), the rules are essential as the semantics used in the Qur'an are fluid, which means a different meaning was given for the same word.

The importance of mastering the interpretation rules can be found in Shihab's statement (Shihab, 2011). Muslim experts have approved several rules in their respective fields of knowledge, and the rules are also known as *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*. Any interpretation techniques contradicting the previous scholars' previously agreed will be labelled as deviation and misguided followers.

The *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*, according to al-Qaṭṭān (b. 1925), is based on sound grammar, a basic understanding of the language, appreciation of language style, and mastering its subtext (al-Qaṭṭān, 1992). Therefore, a good command of Arabic is the main criterion for a deep and accurate understanding of the Qur'an. For example, *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* is based on the fact that meanings that contradict, Qur'anic views will not be recognised as knowledge from the Qur'an. This indicates the importance of the Arabic language in interpreting the Qur'an (al-Qaṭṭān, 1992). Additionally, *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* ensures the compatibility of Qur'anic terms and words with new terms (modern) and has emphasised that mastering Arabic vocabulary is essential in interpreting the Qur'an (al-Sabt, 2001). In the Arabic language, *al-Nahw* (Syntax), *al-Ṣarf* (Morphology), and *al-Balāghah* (Rhetoric) are essential (al-Ghalāyaynī, 1989).

Therefore, scholars have created a few *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* that serve as a guideline for exegetes to ensure they do not deviate from the right track. It is hoped they will produce a masterpiece that contains good morals and achieves the objectives (*maqāṣid*) of the Quran (Ibrahim & Usman, 2013). There are only a few Malay scholars who have expertise in *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*. A dearth of publications in this field point to this (Shihab, 2011). Hence, this paper analyses the rules of Shihab based on his *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* by providing explanations supported by renowned Quranic scholars' perspectives.

This article analyses *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* in Tafsir Al-Mishbah and its application in syntax, morphology, and rhetoric of selected Quranic verses. It is crucial to study Shihab's rules of interpretation since he has emphasised the significance of understanding *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* to tackle and eradicate ignorance within the Muslim community. According to his viewpoint, *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* is a requirement, mainly due to the lack of comprehension among numerous Muslims regarding the significance and interpretation of Qur'anic passages, which is further complicated by several interpretations of these verses. Shihab highlights that a significant obstacle is the lack of literature and publications on *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* in other languages.

This article uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand various concepts in the research process, using content analysis techniques and library research. Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods currently available for analysing data and interpreting its meaning (Schreier, 2012).

As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). For the prerequisite and successful content analysis, the data of this study was reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by creating categories, ideas, a model, a conceptual system, or a conceptual map (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Morgan, 1993). At the same time, the research library in this article uses the types and sources of secondary data obtained from research results, articles, and reference books that discuss topics related to the research theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study uses an analytical approach in Tafsir Al-Mishbah to examine the Syntax, Morphology, and Rhetoric of specific Quranic verses. The findings demonstrate the significance of *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* as a crucial tool in Quranic exegesis. Proficiency in these rules enables the interpretation of verses with comparable meanings. Furthermore, this research confirms that Shihab has embraced the utilisation of *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*, which other exegetes previously employed.

2. The Rules of Interpretation (*Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*): A Brief Overview

The rules of interpretation in the Arabic language combine two words: *qawā'id* (rules) and *al-tafsīr* (exegesis). *Qawā'id* is the plural of *qā'idah* (rule or principle), and it means the foundation of something (Ibn Manẓūr, 2008; Usman et al., 2021). A rule (*qā'idah/qawā'id* in plural) is defined as primary or pillar if it is related to buildings or means something whole, covering every section (Adam & Altine, 2019; Mustafā, 2001). 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (1009-1078) defined the rule as a general summary that touches every point of its section (al-Jurjānī, 1985). The rule is also a general setting known for its location in detail (al-Sabt, 2001).

According to a renowned Muslim scholar of the Arabic language, literary theorist, and grammarian, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078) and an Arabic lexicographer, Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb al-Fairūzabādī (d. 817/1414), *al-tafsīr* is defined in terms of language as "explaining something and making it clearer and more distinct" or "uncovering something hidden" (al-Jurjānī, 1985; al-Fairūzabādī, 1986; Wansbroug, 1968). However, al-Zarkashī (2008) defined it as a body of knowledge used to gain the best understanding of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by clarifying its meaning, extracting rulings of Islamic law, and wisdom contained in it, using linguistics, Arabic grammar, Principles of Jurisprudence, the occasions of revelation, as well as the abrogation and abrogated. According to these definitions, the rule of interpretation is a universal set of rules that exegetes use to guide studying the Qur'anic meanings and learning the rules for obtaining its pearls of knowledge (Abdul Kadir et al., 2020).

Thus, interpretation rules are resolutions that cover a significant portion of it and not the whole section (*kullī*) that help the exegetes understand the meaning of the messages of the Qur'an (Shihab, 2011). *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* is a discipline that guides exegetes in evaluating and interpreting the Qur'an (Mat Sin, 2014). This science also deals with the theories and approaches of the Prophet's Companions in interpreting Islamic legal texts, either Qur'anic verses or Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh). It emphasises the use of linguistic methodology to interpret any verbal statements in Arabic (Abdul Rahman, 2008; Kamaruddin, et al., 2021).

However, each scholar's rules are conceptually different (Nofmiyati & Miftahuddin, 2020). For example, al-Sa'dī (2001) favoured broadening the rule in general through a religious lens, such as Islamic law and theology. Meanwhile, al-Suyūṭī (1996), al-Qaṭṭān (1992), and al-Sabt (2001) expanded on this further. Some experts also hold divergent perspectives on the interpretation's rules. According to some, the rule is enforceable and must be observed by other exegetes. Others disagree; the rule serves as a guideline for any exegete. In this scenario, another view is that because exegesis is a dynamic endeavour that evolves in lockstep with social, knowledge, and language growth, the rules of interpretation can be used as a working guideline. In this regard, the rule does not compel other exegetes to follow the same guideline; nonetheless, all exegetes retain the right to deviate from the prescribed methodological framework. In other words, interpretation rules guide exegetes, ensuring that the exegeses created are impartial, academic, and accountable (Embong & Hanapi, 2017; Gusmian, 2015; Usman et al., 2021).

Shihab has stressed the importance of mastering *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* to address and eliminate ignorance among Muslims. Based on his experience as an academic, he found that the Institution of High Islamic Education only teaches 40 verses of the Qur'an every semester (Shihab, 2011). In other words, only 10% of the Qur'anic verses are elaborated in the lecture room, and not all of their contents are mastered by the students. Therefore, he invited the Qur'an Research Team in every educational institution to focus on the rules of interpretation. Mastering the rules will allow the students to gain guidance (through the rules) while studying the same verse, even though they have not learned the verses in class. *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr*, in his opinion, is an obligation, especially since many Muslims do not understand the meaning of Qur'anic verses and their importance, compounded by the fact that there are many different versions of the verses. According to Shihab, one of the main challenges is the

absence of articles and books on *Qawā'id al-Tafsir* in Bahasa, Indonesia. Therefore, his book *Membumikan Al-Qur'an Jilid 2* discusses this science of interpretation.

It is difficult to limit the number of *Qawā'id al-Tafsir* that are available. In addition, new rules exist that scholars study from time to time. For example, a new rule proposed by al-Sha'rāwī (1911-1998): "If the Qur'an has mentioned the names of the figures in terms of their history, this shows the same event will not be repeated. Nevertheless, the same occasion can be repeated if it does not mention the names." Shihab (2011) cited 'Āishah 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1913-1998), who said, "The term *na'ūm* used in the Qur'an means the pleasure of the Afterlife." Therefore, every time the term is used, it will always contain the same meaning: the pleasure of the Afterlife (Shihab, 2011).

Also, there are various interpretations in different fields of knowledge, such as linguistics and principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*) (Kamaruddin & Ab Aziz, 2021; Shihab, 2011; Syofrianisda, 2018). Linguistics scholars in Basrah and Kufah (in Iraq) differ regarding specific Qur'anic readings. There are also differences between Shafiite and another Islamic school of thought. For example, there are differences of views in *asbāb al-nuzūl* (causes of revelation); is the *al-ibrah bi 'umūm al-laḥz lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* (guide in understanding the verse is editorial in general and not the cause of the occasion) or is it the opposite? Shihab (2011) argued that although people claim similar meanings in this context, it is essentially different.

Hence, Shihab (2011) stresses the importance of good *Qawā'id al-Tafsir* to decipher the Qur'an, as ignoring this crucial aspect will lead the person astray. Therefore, mastering these rules is vital for exegetes as they interpret verses that may contain the same meaning but may confer different meanings if a wrong technique is adopted. Hence, exegetes will save time in understanding the Qur'anic verses.

Rules of Interpretation (Qawā'id al-Tafsir) Related to Syntax

An essential syntax component is its singular form (*al-Mufrad*) and plural form (*al-Jam'*). Scholars have summarised a few *Qawā'id al-Tafsir* related to these forms, for example:

Rule: "A few of the terms in the Quran use a singular form to show specific meaning, where the plural form is used to declare certain meanings, or it is used to show a singular meaning or the opposite."

This rule (in Arabic بعض ألفاظ القرآن يكون إفراده لمعنى خاص، وجمعه لإشارة معينة، أو يؤثر جمعه على إفراده أو العكس) was discussed by al-Qaṭṭān (1992, p. 192), and it focuses on two main aspects:

First, the use of Singular and Plural in the Qur'an refers to their meaning.

If an exegete has found a verse that uses a singular term in the Qur'an, the meaning can be singular and vice versa. In his book *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Shihab uses the term *al-riyāḥ* in sura *Al-A'Rāf* verse 57 as an example.

Shihab (2010, p. 148) explained that the Qur'an usually uses a plural term for the word wind, and therefore, it refers to the meaning of the *rahmah* in general, either as rain or freshness. In contrast, if the term was used in singular form (*rīḥ*), it means disaster. This is plausible because the wind that gathers force can wreck a disaster. Therefore, Shihab interprets the term *al-riyāḥ*, which uses a plural form to convey a cool breeze. Both meanings were created from a singular and plural form, which will always guide the exegetes when they encounter the verses using the same term. The paper found that the rule used by Shihab is by narration by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, from Ubay ibn Ka'ab, who stated, "The term *al-riyāḥ* in the Qur'an means blessing, and if the term *al-rīḥ* is present, then the context is a disaster" (al-Suyūṭī, 1996, p. 300).

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505) stated that the way to understand the Qur'an is based on the abovementioned rule. The term *al-rīḥ* in the plural (*al-riyāḥ*) means the wind that blows brings different blessings in terms of its nature and its use. It means that if there is a breeze, then there must be another source of wind that will balance it. The calm breeze is very beneficial for animals and plants. The term *al-rīḥ* in a singular means the wind has nothing to balance it, and in this context, it means disaster (al-Suyūṭī, 1996, p. 300). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292–1350), in his book *Badā'ī' al-Fawā'id*, also supported this statement (al-Jawziyyah, 1996).

Even so, Shihab (2010, p. 172) believes that using the rule above is not always applied to the term *al-rīḥ*. For example, in sura Yūnus [10] verse 22, the word *al-rīḥ* in the phrase *bi rīḥin ṭayyibah* should be in plural form, which is *bi riyāḥin ṭayyibah* and the meaning of the verse should be a blessed breeze. According to al-Suyūṭī (1996, p. 300), it can be singular for two reasons: First, the word *al-rīḥ* in verse *rīḥin ṭayyibah* can be compared (*muqābalah*) with the word *al-rīḥ* in the verse *rīḥun 'āṣifun*. Second, it can be observed based on the meaning that it shows the perfection of the blessing based on one type of breeze, not with different breezes coming from different directions, because the ship will not sail unless the source of wind comes from only one direction. If not, the ship will be easily destroyed. Because of that, the term *al-rīḥ* in verse has a good nature (*al-ṭayyibah*). This is similar to sura al-Shūrā [42] verse 33.

Al-Suyūṭī (1996, p. 302) stated that the verse contradicts the rule as the breeze saves the ship's owner from disaster. Therefore, the rule in suras Yūnus verse 22 and al-Shūrā verse 33 is approved. Even so, it needs a deep understanding of the context of the verse.

Second, the plural form is allowed to refer to the singular meaning or the opposite.

If an exegete finds the Qur'an uses a plural term but refers to a singular meaning, close attention must be given to its norms used by Arabs. Another rule of interpretation supports this statement: "The norms are the Arabs use a singular meaning, and it contains the meaning of a plural term or vice versa." (al-Sabt, 2001, p. 327). For example, Shihab's (2010, p. 529) interpretation of sura *Al-Baqarah* [2] verse 199. Where the term *al-nās* (people), according to him, means Prophet Abraham, but in other verses, he was named by the people (*ummah*) (al-Nahl [16]: 20). He had many followers.

Based on the above, it is clear Shihab has interpreted the term *al-nās* in plural form as Prophet Ibrahim AS, which contains a singular meaning. Thus, his interpretation was perfect based on the rules mentioned above. In addition, the rule was supported by al-Ṭabarī (838-923), who found the Arabs, though using the plural form, its meaning is singular. This is clear when what Allah stated in suras Āli 'Imran [3] verse 173 and al-Mu'minūn [23] verse 51 (al-Ṭabarī, 2001, p. 191).

An example where the singular form can refer to plural meaning can be seen in sura al-Sajdah [32] verse 11 as interpreted by Shihab. He stated that the verse refers to death in the presence of one angel as the term *Malak* is in singular form, whereas the plural form of it is *malā'ikah*. The question is: Is the Angel of Death one or many? (Shihab 2010, 371).

The answer is based on the style of the language. The plural form is allowed when the term's meaning includes a group, as the verse discusses all of humanity. This is because every living human will face death in the presence of only one angel (though the total number of humans exceeds billions). Though this verse uses a singular form, everyone will face death in the presence of only one angel. Concerning singular and plural forms, as explained above, Shihab (2010, p. 672) has also started a few terms in the Qur'an that will always be singular if the meaning refers to singular, for example, *al-nār*, *al-arḍ*, *walī al-mu'minīn*, and many others. Few terms will always be in the plural form if the former has a variety of meanings, such as *al-zulumāt*, *al-samāwāt*, *awliyā' al-kāfirīn*, and many others.

Rules of Interpretation (Qawā'id al-Tafsīr) Related to Morphology

In Morphology, pronouns (*al-damīr*) are essential. Scholars have concluded a few rules of interpretation related to this topic, for example:

Rule: "Sometimes there are two mentioned, but the pronoun only refers back to one of them because it is enough to cover the other, even though it is meant for both."

This rule (in Arabic قد يذكر شيان ويعود الضمير على أحدهما اكتفاء بذكره عن الآخر, مع كون الجميع مقصودا) means the Quran will refer to two different things but use only one pronoun to refer to one of them. This is because the pronoun has covered both of the items mentioned. Scholars support the use of this rule (al-Qurtubī, 1964; al-Sabt, 2001; al-Zarkashī, 1988; 'Āshūr, 1984).

Shihab (2010, pp. 151–152) used the above rule to interpret sura *al-Tawbah* verse 62. According to him, the pronoun *yarḍuhu* in verse is singular, while the term means Allah and His Prophet. Shihab said that the pronoun in verse only refers to one, Allah because in reality, only His Gratitude matters. The gratitude of the Prophet Muhammad is about Allah, and its purpose is not to put Allah in the same position as humans, even though they have a high place next to Him compared with his other creations.

Hence, Shihab interpreted the pronoun *hu* as a singular form in the word *yarḍuhu* as referring to only one Allah, even though the verse was meant for two, Allah and the Prophet. No matter how exalted the Prophet is, he cannot be equated with Allah. However, Ibn 'Aṭīyah (1088-1146) disagreed with this opinion because there are times when the pronoun refers to both of them, such as in Hadith by the Prophet narrated by Muslim Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥajjāj in his book *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* in the chapter *takhfif al-ṣalāh wa al-khutbah*, hadith number 2047 (Muslim, 2005, p. 12).

In this Hadith, it has been clearly stated that a pronoun is used to refer to Allah and the Prophet (*humā*) (Ibn 'Aṭīyah, 2001). However, Ibn 'Aṭīyah also agreed to this rule in this paper. Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (745-794) has explained the secret behind using the singular pronoun that refers to the Prophet in verse. al-Zarkashī (1988) stated that this is because of the duty and unique position of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) in *da'wah* and inviting people to the road of Allah. The name Allah is invoked in this verse to indicate His Excellence (*ta'zīman*), even though the pronoun was used to refer to the Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*). The content of the verse is the same as in sura *al-Anfāl* [8] verse 20 and *al-Nūr* [24] verse 48.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Shihab has applied *Qawā'id al-tafsīr* to use pronouns when interpreting sura *al-Tawbah* [9] verse 62. This rule has received support from well-known exegetes, even though his argument to support his interpretation of that verse has been debated by Ibn 'Aṭīyah (2001).

Rules of Interpretation (Qawā'id al-Tafsīr) Related to Rhetoric

Rhetoric covers three disciplines of knowledge in Arabic Literature, which are *al-Ma'ānī*, *al-Bayān* and *al-Badī'*. This paper only looks at the rules related to *al-Ma'ānī* due to space constraints. In *al-Ma'ānī*, prefixes and suffixes (*al-taqdīm wa al-ta'khīr*) are essential. Some rules related to prefix and suffix in the book *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, such as:

Rule: "The prefix in a term does not mean the beginning of an event or a law."

This rule (in Arabic (التقدم في الذكر لا يعنى التقدم في الوقوع والحكم) means the beginning is not compulsory because, in the Quran, the causes are sometimes mentioned earlier than their law, and vice versa (al-Sabt, 2001; al-Shawkānī, 1993). Prophet Moses instructed his followers to kill a cow in sura *Al-Baqarah* [2], verses 67 until 72. These verses prioritised the law, which is the order to slay the

cows instead of the cause, accusing one another of the killing done by one of them. The miscommunication between them happened first before the order by the Prophet Moses ('Āḍil al-Dimashqī, 1998).

Shihab uses the rule above while interpreting sura al-Ahzab [33] verse 7 (2010/10: 421). He stated this verse mentioned that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is more exalted than the other prophets, the term *minka* (from you) as a sign of respect. After that, the other prophets were mentioned according to their time with the prophets, known as Arch-Prophets (*Ūl al-Amr*).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was mentioned first before Prophet Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (even though they were sent earlier before the Prophet). It does not mean the earlier beginning of an event, but it shows respect for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) compared to the prophets mentioned. al-Suyūṭī (1996) also shared this opinion that one of the secrets of *al-taqdīm* (prefix) in the Quran is *al-tashrīf* (glorification). After that, al-Sabt (2001, p. 380) turned it into a rule: "Arabs will not prioritise something unless referred to as a norm."

Table 1. The norms that Arabs prioritise to utter in advance

No.	Rule of Interpretation	Verses	Words	Meaning
1		<i>Ghāfir</i> [40]: 3	<i>Ghāfir al-dhanb</i> (the forgiver of sin) and <i>qābil al-tawb</i> (acceptor of repentance)	The glorification (<i>al-ta'zīm</i>)
2		<i>al-'Ankabūt</i> [29] verse 21	<i>Yu'adhhibu</i> (He punishes) and <i>yarḥamu</i> (He blesses)	Compatibility (<i>al-munāsabah</i>) is one of the terms prioritised in the context of the verse (<i>al-siyāq</i>).
3	العرب لا يقدمون إلا ما يعتنون به غالباً	<i>Saba'</i> [34]: 46	<i>Mathnā</i> (pairs) and <i>furādā</i> (individually)	Support and invite to do something that has been mentioned earlier.
4	Arabs will not prioritise something unless referred to as a norm	<i>Al-Baqarah</i> [2]: 282	<i>al-'Adl</i> (justice) and <i>'Allamah</i> (knowledge that Allah has taught)	The prioritisation (<i>al-sabaq</i>).
5		<i>Al-A'Rāf</i> [7]: 71	<i>al-Rijs</i> (defilement) and <i>al-ghaḍab</i> (anger)	The consequence (<i>al-sababiyah</i>).
6		<i>Al-Nūr</i> [24]: 2	<i>al-Zāniyah</i> (the fornicator/female) and <i>al-zānī</i> (the fornicator/male)	A lot (<i>al-kathrah</i>).
7		<i>Al-Ma'Ārij</i> [70]: 11 to 14	<i>al-Arḍ</i> (earth) and <i>al-samā'</i> (sky)	A descending sequence (<i>al-tadallā</i>) from top to bottom.

The norms mentioned, as summarised in Table 1 have the following meanings:

i. The glorification (*al-ta'zīm*)

Shihab (2011, p. 566) opined that the term *ghāfir al-dhanb* (the forgiver of sin) in sura *Ghāfir* [40] verse 3 was prioritised over *qābil al-tawb* (acceptor of repentance) even though occasionally accepting *tawbah* comes first. The forgiveness of sin shows how much Allah is Merciful in His Forgiveness when His servants want to repent. Allah stated in a Hadith *Qudsī*, "If a human comes towards me even just an inch, I shall be near to him with an arms width. If they come towards me by strolling, I will go towards him running (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, authentic).

Based on Shihab's interpretation above, it is understood that the Hadith *Qudsī* was meant to show how Allah is all-forgiving, and He even forgives all His servant. Therefore, the term *ghāfir al-dhanb* is prioritised over *qābil al-tawb* to prove the glory of Allah in making everything in His Power and Will.

ii. The compatibility (*al-munāsabah*) is one of the terms prioritised in the context of the verse (*al-siyāq*)

In sura *al-'Ankabūt* [29] verse 21, Shihab (2010, p. 50) stated that the term *yu'adhhibu* (He punishes) is prioritised over *yarḥamu* (He blesses) as the Blessings of Allah should prioritise over His punishments, as asserted in a hadith *qudsī*. The context of the verse relates to warning and reminder to all what happens when they disobey Allah's orders. Hence, hadith *qudsī* emphasises that Allah's blessing should be prioritised over His torture.

iii. Support and invites to do something that has been mentioned earlier

Shihab (2010, p. 646) stated sura *Saba'* [34] verse 46 prioritised the term *mathnā* (pairs) instead of *furādā* (individually) because thinking of one issue together and creating a conclusion is far more precise than thinking alone. However, thinking and reflecting are sufficient to achieve the truth. Thus, *mathna* is prioritised over *furādā* because thinking together is better than thinking alone for a more precise solution. Nevertheless, the author believes sura *al-Nisā'* [4] verse 3, where the term *mathnā* was mentioned earlier than *thalāthah* (three) and *rubā'* (four), does not encourage the men to marry three or four women simultaneously. The term *mathna* was mentioned first because the verse showed the sequence (al-muqaddam bi al-taba') (al-Jawziyyah, 1996).

iv. The prioritisation (*al-sabaq*)

Shihab (2010, p. 733) opined that sura *Al-Baqarah* [2] verse 282 had prioritised the term *al-'adl* (justice) instead of *'allamah* (knowledge that Allah has taught). If somebody is just but not knowledgeable, his justice will drive him to learn, and his knowledge will be used to cover up his injustice. This will lead to deviation, and the perpetrator gets away with the crime.

v. The consequence (*al-sababiyah*)

In sura *Al-A'Rāf* [7] verse 71, Shihab (2010, p. 173) stated the term *rijs* (defilement) was mentioned first instead of *ghaḍab* (anger) to show that *rijs* means a lousy attitude and heart, which will earn them the wrath of Allah.

vi. Shows a lot (*al-kathrah*)

Shihab (2010, p. 473) stated that verse *al-zāniyah* (the fornicator/female) in sura *Al-Nūr* [24] verse 2 was prioritised instead of *al-zānī* (the fornicator/male) to show proof of fornication for the woman, which causes her to get pregnant and suffer adverse effects. The fault of the woman is usually

interpreted as twice or more. As we all know, fornication will not happen except in deserted places, and a woman should not be in that kind of place, which puts her in jeopardy. Girls are not allowed to go to quiet and deserted places except with their *maḥram* (a relative with whom sexual intercourse is considered incestuous), unlike men who can go anywhere alone. The second point of fault includes men and women who fornicate, both being punished for their crimes.

In other words, the term *al-muqaddam* carries the meaning of many (*al-kathrah*), as the term *al-zaniah* was prioritised over *al-zānī*. This is because proof of fornication by the woman can be seen in her pregnancy, and therefore, the woman's fault is far greater than the men's.

vii. A descending sequence (*al-tadallā*) from top to bottom

Shihab (2010) stated that sura *Al-Ma'Ārij* [70] verses 11 to 14 indicate the most beloved first, the son, then the next one he loved little more than the previous one. Eventually, the unbeloved one is even unidentified, the creatures on this earth. In addition, this paper found that prefix and suffix (*al-taqdīm wa al-ta'khīr*) elaborated by Shihab based on some Qur'anic verses to prove the existence of harmony, for example, the sound of the end word (*fāṣilah*) with the previous and after the verses. Al-Suyuti express similar opinion (1996)—for example, the interpretation of Shihab in sura *Ṭaha* [20] verse 4.

Shihab (2010, p. 551) opined that the above sura (*Al-Ma'Ārij* verses 11 until 14) advanced *al-arḍ* (earth) before *al-samā'* (sky) due to the inhabitants of the world, which was mainly directed at the Qur'anic demands. On the other hand, the word of the earth is not identifiable to something, such as the low. At the same time, the sky is characterised by height; it is not just to equate the sound of this verse with the verses before and after, but also to express how far, high and many levels it is not easy; it cannot even be reached by the inhabitants of the earth and others. Therefore, the purpose of prioritising the term *al-arḍ* instead of *al-samā'* in the sura *Ṭaha* verse 4 is to match the sound of *fāṣilah* of the verse with the verse before and after.

Figure 1. The Framework of Shihab's Applications of *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* in *Tafsīr Al-Mishbah*

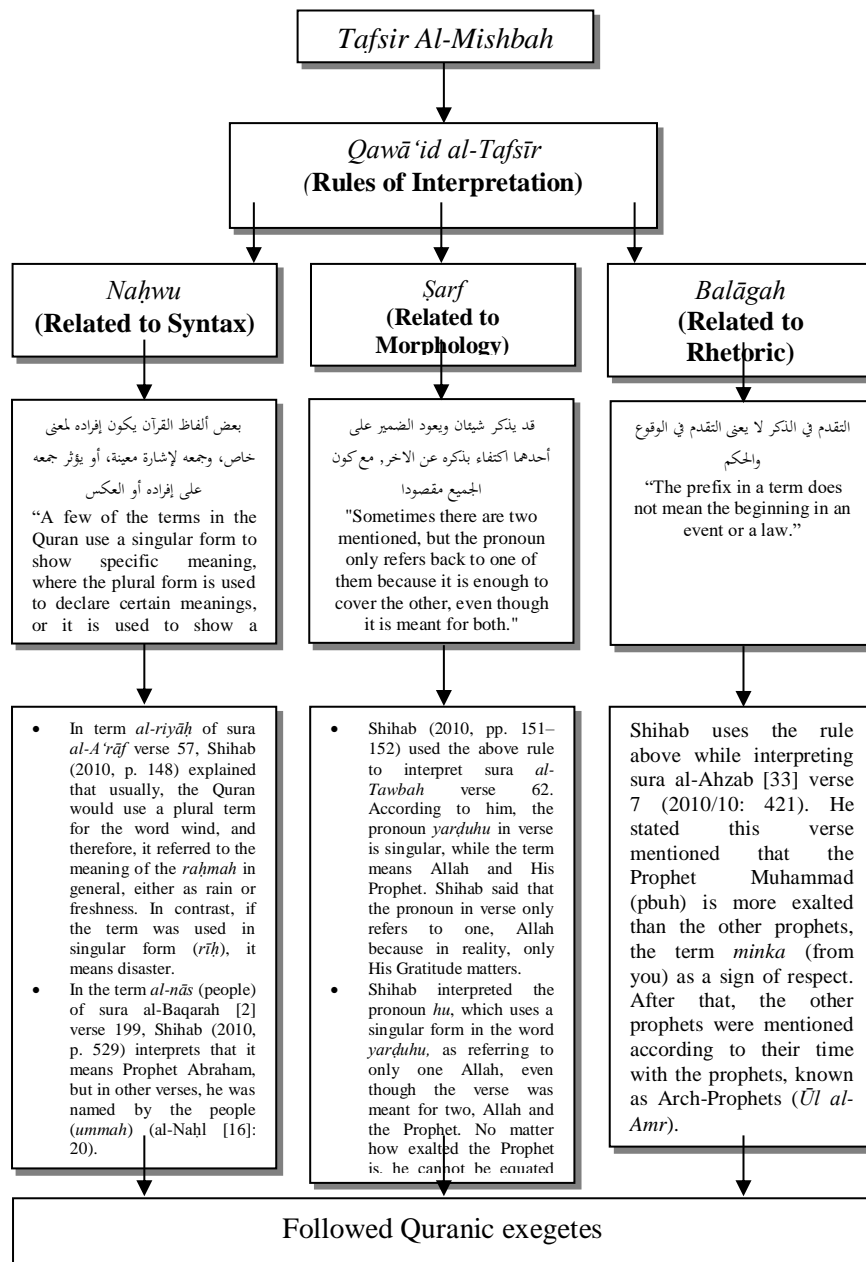


Figure 1 depicts the structure of how *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* is applied in *Tafsīr al-Mishbah*. The Arabic language study encompasses three primary fields of science: *al-Nahw*, *al-Ṣarf*, and *al-Balāghah*. An illustration of the process of interpretation can be found in the analysis of Shihab's exegetical work, which is derived from three distinct disciplines. The meaning of each rule described has been elucidated, with additional support from the perspective of Qur'anic experts.

3. *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* Discourse among the Qur'anic Exegetes

Scholars have expanded the rules of interpretation since the early development of Qur'anic sciences. The birth of diverse religious pupils has also been motivated by the desire to understand the

verses of the Qur'an (Campanini, 2005). Several renowned scholars, such as al-Zarkashī and al-Suyūṭī, extensively discussed the rules of interpretation. al-Zarkashī authored *al-Burhān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, while al-Suyūṭī is known for his work *al-Itqān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, making him one of the most prolific Arab writers of the Middle Ages. However, the works on this issue were recognised long before the two scholars were. The rule of interpretation, as defined above, refers to a universal set of guidelines utilised by exegetes to study the meanings of the Qur'an and understand the techniques for extracting its wisdom (Abdul Kadir et al., 2020).

Shihab (2011) credits Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327) as the originator of this field, having authored the work titled "Muqaddimah Uṣul al-Tafsīr." Next, Muḥammad al-Kāfiyājī (d. 879/1474) authored *al-Taisīr fi Qawā'id 'Ilm al-Tafsīr*. Since then, the field of writing has expanded with the introduction of various works. These include: "al-Qawā'id al-Ḥisān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān" by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa'dī (d. 1376/1956), "Uṣūl al-Tafsīr wa Qawā'iduhu" by Khālīd 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Āk, "Qawā'id al-Tarjīh 'Inda al-Mufasssīrīn" by Ḥusayn al-Ḥarabī in 1996, "Qawā'id al-Tafsīr: Jam'an wa Dirāsah" by Khālīd 'Uṭhmān al-Sabt in 2001, "Mabāḥiṭh fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān" by Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān, and the introduction of "Maḥāsīn al-Ta'wīl" by Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī.

Nevertheless, the laws expounded by the researchers were kept from being analogous. Al-Sa'dī (1999), a renowned commentator of *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān fi Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān*, was inclined to broaden the rule in a broad sense, incorporating religious perspectives such as Islamic law and theology. Furthermore, al-Suyūṭī (1996), al-Qaṭṭān (1992), and al-Sabt (2001) provided additional details on this matter. In addition, the attitudes and perspectives of specific experts about the laws of interpretation vary to some extent. Some assert that the rule is obligatory and should be adhered to by other exegetes. Some individuals hold a contrasting perspective on this matter, arguing that it does not solely function as a guiding principle for any exegete. Another perspective in this case is that exegesis is a continuously evolving endeavour in line with social, knowledge, and language growth. Thus, the rules of interpretation can be seen as guidelines for conducting work.

Regarding this matter, the rule does not compel other exegetes to adhere to the same rules. Nevertheless, all exegetes must employ a distinct guideline based on the designated methodological framework (Mohamad et al., 2015). Put simply, the rules of interpretation play a crucial role as a framework for exegetes, ensuring that their exegeses are objective, scholarly, and subject to scrutiny.

4. Conclusion

Shihab is one of the exegetes in the Malay Archipelago who has used *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* aligned and compatible with the Qur'anic rules of interpretation summarised by previous scholars. Mastering *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* will help exegetes interpret verses quickly because specific rules in particular interpretation can be applied to other verses containing the same messages and meanings. This paper has shown that Shihab has followed the rules compatible with the other *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr* that scholars have summarised. The rule used in his interpretation can be classified into three groups: Syntax, Morphology, and Rhetoric.

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