
The Law of Interfaith Marriage in the Perspective of Quraish Shihab (Analysis of the Interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 221, Al-Mumtahanah Verse 10, and Al-Maidah Verse 5)

Iskandar

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kupang
iskandarmbojo97@gmail.com

Abstract

Interfaith marriage in Islam is a controversial issue addressed in the Qur'an, with several verses prohibiting marriage to polytheistic women while allowing exceptions for women from the People of the Book. Therefore, it is essential to understand M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation in this context. This study aims to analyze M. Quraish Shihab's views on the legality of interfaith marriage through the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, as well as to examine the relevance of his interpretations to this issue in contemporary Muslim society. The research method employed is library research with a thematic interpretation approach, analyzing three Qur'anic verses related to the legality of interfaith marriage through M. Quraish Shihab's tafsir. M. Quraish Shihab's perspective on the legality of interfaith marriage permits Muslim men to marry women from the People of the Book, provided they maintain their honor, while still prioritizing Muslim women and prohibiting marriage to polytheists. His interpretation is relevant in the context of contemporary Muslim society, offering guidance on appreciating differences while adhering to Islamic values and maintaining family harmony. Recommendations for future researchers relate to the exploration of the meaning of "mushrik" in the Qur'an, particularly concerning the prohibition of marrying those who are mushrik.

Keywords: Interfaith Marriage; Interpretation Marriage Law; Quraish Shihab.

Introduction

Interfaith marriage in Islam is a controversial issue and is widely discussed in various Islamic legal literatures. In the Qur'an, there are several verses that regulate this matter, one of which is Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221) which prohibits Muslims from marrying polytheist women (who associate partners with Allah) until they believe. This verse contains the message that marriage should be based on a common belief so as not to disrupt the religious and spiritual harmony of the couple. However, there is an exception regarding women of Ahl al-Kitab (Jews and Christians), whom Muslim men are allowed to marry, as stated in Surah Al-Maidah (5:5) and Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:10). However, marriage to polytheist or non-Muslim women who are not among the Ahl al-Kitab is still prohibited, as it is considered to threaten the stability of religious relationships within the family (Turnip, 2021). This issue reflects the view that marriage in Islam is not only a personal bond, but also a religious bond that has far-reaching implications for the social and spiritual lives of the couple and the children born from the marriage.

The issue of interfaith marriage in Islam is a very relevant issue, especially in the context of a modern society that is increasingly plural and multicultural. In the Islamic view, marriage is not only a bond between two individuals, but also a religious bond that has deep social and spiritual dimensions. In this context, marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims is often considered to affect the balance of religious beliefs in the household (Nasoha et al., 2024). This is important because Islam teaches that family life should be built on a strong foundation of faith, where religion plays a central role in the formation of moral values and the education of children. Therefore, the rules regarding interfaith marriages are carefully regulated in the Qur'an, taking into account the possible negative impact on religious and social harmony.

M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation in this case has an important role in understanding the problem of interfaith marriage, because he is known as an in-depth and contemporary mufasssir in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an. Quraish Shihab does not only rely on a textual approach, but also pays attention to the social, historical and cultural context in interpreting legal verses, including those related to marriage (Solahudin, 2016). In the case of interfaith marriage, he tends to emphasize the importance of the changing context of the times and society, while still adhering to the basic principles of Islamic teachings. With this approach, Quraish Shihab provides room for a broader understanding of how Islamic law can be applied in more complex and multicultural social situations. His interpretation provides relevant insights to look at interfaith marriage in

Islam with a more flexible and contextual perspective, without overriding the basic principles in the Qur'an.

Several previous researchers have tried to examine the theme of this interfaith marriage. However, all of them have a different focus from the research conducted by the author. Rahmi Padilah (2022) tries to compare the interpretations of Rasyid Ridha and M. Quraish Shihab regarding the law of interfaith marriage, especially on the concept of Ahli Kitab in QS. Al-Maidah (5:5), using the muqaran (comparative) interpretation method to identify differences in the views of the two figures regarding the scope of the People of the Book and its implications for marriage law. The research in the article compares the views of two figures (Rasyid Ridha and Quraish Shihab) with a single focus on QS. Al-Maidah (5:5) and focuses on the concept of People of the Book, while this paper focuses in depth only on the interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab with a broader scope, including the analysis of three Qur'anic verses (Al-Baqarah 2:221, Al-Mumtahanah 60:10, and Al-Maidah 5:5) in the context of the law of interfaith marriage as a whole.

Then there is also Dina Sakinah (2023) who tries to compare Quraish Shihab's thoughts with Nurcholis Madjid. Although reviewing Quraish Shihab's thoughts on interfaith marriage, the author does not analyze in depth the verses that discuss interfaith marriage in Quraish Shihab's view. Then, there is also Bambang Hermawan (2018) who reviews the concept of Ahl Al-Kitab and Nikah with different religions in the Indonesian context. This is certainly different from this paper, especially when viewed in terms of the generality of the concept of interfaith marriage from the perspective of Quraish Shihab which is the object of research. Mu'jizah Uyun Karomah (2023) who reviews the concept of Ahl Al-Kitab and Nikah with different religions in the Indonesian context. This is certainly different from this paper, especially when viewed in terms of the generality of the concept of interfaith marriage from the perspective of Quraish Shihab which is the object of research.

The problem examined in this paper is how M. Quraish Shihab views the law of interfaith marriage, especially in the context of the interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to the topic, namely Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221), Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:10), and Surah Al-Maidah (5:5). This article aims to analyze how Quraish Shihab interprets these verses, as well as to examine the relevance of his interpretation to the issue of interfaith marriage in contemporary Muslim society. The main purpose of this writing is to explore a deeper understanding of how Quraish Shihab's interpretation prioritizes the social context and the times in answering Islamic legal issues, especially in facing the challenges of religious plurality and social diversity in the modern world.

The framework of this research focuses on analyzing M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the law of interfaith marriage in the context of Qur'anic verses, especially Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221), Al-Mumtahanah (60:10), and Al-Maidah (5:5). This research seeks to explore a deeper understanding of how Quraish Shihab interprets these verses by considering the relevant social, historical and cultural contexts. Within this framework, the author argues that marriage in Islam is not only a personal bond, but also has significant social and spiritual dimensions, which can affect the harmony of the family and society. Using a thematic interpretation approach, this study aims to demonstrate the relevance of Quraish Shihab's interpretation in responding to the challenges of religious plurality and social diversity in the modern world, as well as contributing to a more contextual and flexible understanding of Islamic law. Through in-depth analysis of his tafsir, new insights are expected to be found that can enrich the discourse on interfaith marriage in contemporary Muslim society.

This research is very useful especially in its contribution in enriching the understanding of the law of interfaith marriage in Islam, especially through the perspective of M. Quraish Shihab's tafsir. By analyzing relevant Qur'anic verses, this research not only provides in-depth insight into Quraish Shihab's views, but also offers a more contextual and flexible approach to an issue that is increasingly relevant in today's multicultural society. The results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for academics, legal practitioners, and the general public in understanding the dynamics of interfaith marriage, as well as its implications for the social and spiritual lives of Muslim families. In addition, this research also has the potential to encourage further discussion regarding the application of Islamic principles in diverse contexts, so as to help create harmony and mutual understanding among various religious groups in a pluralistic society.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this paper is library research, which focuses on an in-depth analysis of M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the law of interfaith marriage. The approach used is a thematic interpretation approach (*maudhu'i*), by analyzing three main verses in the relevant Qur'an, namely QS. Al-Baqarah (2:221), QS. Al-Mumtahanah (60:10), and QS. Al-Maidah (5:5). This study aims to understand how Quraish Shihab interprets these verses in the context of Islamic law, by considering the historical background, social context, and relevance of the times. The primary data source is Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab, while secondary data includes books, journals, and related literature that support the discussion. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of

Quraish Shihab's perspective and his contribution to addressing the issue of interfaith marriage in contemporary society.

Results and Discussion

1. Interfaith Marriage in the Perspective of Islamic Law

Interfaith marriage is a complex issue in the context of Islamic law, as it involves various dimensions, including faith, social relations, and the fundamental purpose of marriage itself (Togatorop, 2023). From a Qur'anic perspective, there are a number of verses that serve as the legal basis for interfaith marriage. One of them is QS. Al-Baqarah (2:221), which explicitly prohibits a Muslim from marrying an individual who is a polytheist (Afifah & Dasuki, 2025). This prohibition is rooted in the belief that faith is the main foundation in building a harmonious and blessed home life. In contrast, QS. Al-Maidah (5:5) provides leeway for Muslim men to marry women of the People of the Book, namely Jews and Christians, on the condition that the woman must maintain her honor and avoid committing sins, such as adultery (Zulkifil, 2024). However, classical and contemporary scholars emphasize that this permission is not a recommendation, but an exception that needs to be carefully considered based on social conditions and its impact on domestic life (Amri, 2020).

In its implementation, interfaith marriage is not only a theological issue, but also includes social and legal aspects (Fuadi & Sy, 2020). In a number of countries with a majority Muslim population, Islamic law is used as a guideline in regulating interfaith marriages. For example, in Indonesia, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) explicitly prohibits marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, regardless of whether the non-Muslim is a member of the People of the Book or not. This prohibition is reinforced by a fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which considers that interfaith marriage is contrary to the principles of Islamic law (Putri et al., 2023). This provision aims to protect the faith of Muslims, given that marriage is not only related to personal relationships, but also has a significant impact on the education of children and the continuity of religious values in the family environment (Turnip, 2021).

In the legal realm of interfaith marriage, from both conventional and contemporary perspectives, there is consensus among scholars regarding the prohibition of marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men (Zaelani & Rinaldo, 2022). However, marriage between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman, whether from among the People of the Book or not, is still a matter of debate among the Shafi'i scholars. In the Shafi'i school of thought, there is an assertion that marriage between a Muslim man and a disbelieving woman who is not a member of the People of the Book - such as the Watsani, Majusi, sun or moon worshippers, and women who

apostatize or musyrikah-is invalid and forbidden. This assertion is based on the word of Allah in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 221, which clearly prohibits marriage with polytheist women before they believe (Cahaya, 2019). Ibn Rusyd (2004) in his work entitled *Bidayatul Mujtahid* asserts that marriage between a Muslim man and a woman who is not a People of the Book, including disbelievers such as idolaters and apostates, is haram. This assertion is based on relevant verses in the Qur'an. He states that the conditions for women who are allowed to marry are Muslim women or women of kitabiyyah Khalishah, i.e. disbelievers who still cling to the previous heavenly books and who remain intact and pure.

Ali Manshur also stipulated the inadmissibility of marriage between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman based on strong Shafi'iyah fiqhiyah arguments. He emphasized that it is not permissible to marry a polytheist woman in any form unless she converts to Islam (Ropei, 2021). The scholars have reached an agreement that it is forbidden for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman (Nurani et al., 2021). The majority of scholars forbid the marriage of a Muslim man to a polytheist woman, even if they acknowledge the existence of one God and believe in the Day of Judgment, such as Buddhists and Hindus. Ijma' of the scholars also forbids marriage between Muslim men and polytheistic women of animism, polytheism and atheism (Zulkifil, 2024). Regarding marriage with a woman of the Book, all the Imams have agreed on its permissibility. Ibnu Rusyd (2004, 3: 30) states that the scholars have agreed on the permissibility of Muslim men marrying free kitabiyya women. As-Syirazi (n.d.) in *al-Muhazzab* states that it is permissible for a Muslim man to marry a free woman of the People of the Book, namely Jews and Christians and those who converted to their religion before the *tabdil* or replacement.

Other scholars, such as Al-Malibari, state that her Muslim status and biblical knowledge are conditions that must be met by a woman who can be married to a Muslim man. Al-Jazairi adds that there is no requirement for the parents of a woman of the People of the Book to also be People of the Book in order for her to be married. This opinion differs from the view held by the as-Shafi'iyah and Hanbali schools, which require that both parents of the woman must be People of the Book (Mawardi, 2023). However, there is a difference of opinion from Abdullah ibn Umar RA who stated that it is not permissible to marry a woman of the Book. Some scholars interpret this opinion of Ibn Umar as *makruh*, not haram. The Shi'a Imamiyah group also agrees with Ibn Umar, based on the argument of the generality of Allah's word in Surah al-Baqarah verse 221 (Arifin, 2018).

While the majority of scholars who allow the marriage of Muslim men with kitabiyyah women base their opinion on verse 5 of Surah al-Maidah (Madsuri & Mukhlisin, 2020). According to the majority of scholars, Surah al-Baqarah verse 221 is a general verse that can be *takhsis-kan* with Surah

al-Maidah verse 5, or the word al-Musyrikah can include the people of the book at all according to the language of the Qur'an (Cahaya, 2019). Therefore, the marriage of a Muslim man to a woman of the Book is basically permissible, considering that they know and fear the sanctity of Allah SWT so that they can be appropriate in dealing with their husbands, in educating children, and in maintaining the integrity of the household. However, because sometimes such marriages can be detrimental to the husband's life and family, the scholars disagree on this issue.

2. Overview of Quraish Shihab and Tafsir Al-Misbah

Quraish Shihab is a scholar from South Sulawesi who is familiar to readers. His family was very religious and even his own father was a professor in the field of tafsir al-Qur'an at IAIN Alauddin Makassar. His first education he got from his own family, especially from his father. The education given by his father shaped him into a figure who was determined to devote himself to studying and developing the science of the Qur'an (Rohman et al., 2024).

Ujung pandang was the first place where Quraysh Shihab received his basic education. After that, he continued his education at junior high school in the same place. Then he entered the Darul Hadith Al-Fiqhiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Malang before flying to Egypt two years later. He earned his bachelor's degree (S1) in Cairo at Al-Azhar University at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Department of Tafsir Hadith, with the degree of Lc. He then continued his master's education (S2) at the same faculty and earned a Master's degree (MA) in 1969. His thesis was entitled *Al-I'jāz al-Tasyrī'iy li al-Qu'rān al-Karīm*, which discussed the miracles of the Qur'ān from a legal perspective (Iqbal, 2010).

Upon his return to his homeland in 1973, Quraish Shihab was entrusted with the responsibility of Vice Rector for Academic and Student Affairs at IAIN Alauddin Ujung Pandang, a position he held until 1980. In addition to these administrative duties, he was also active in educational development activities and character building, one of which was through his role as Coordinator of Kopertais Region VII covering Eastern Indonesia. He also assisted the East Indonesia Regional Police as an advisor in strengthening the spiritual and mental aspects of police officers. During his time of service, Shihab was known as a figure who emphasized the importance of moral integrity in the academic world. His dual role reflects his dedication to bridging the gap between formal education and the development of the nation's personality (Rohman et al., 2024).

Because he felt that his educational achievements were not fully satisfactory, in 1980 Quraysh Shihab decided to return to the university where he had previously studied to continue his education at the doctoral level. In just two years, he successfully completed the program and was

awarded a Doctorate degree with the highest predicate, namely Summa Cum Laude, or in Arabic terms called Mumtāz ma'a Martabat al-Syaraf al-Ūlā (First Level Award). This brilliant achievement is not only a personal milestone, but also records his name as the first individual from the Southeast Asian region to obtain such high academic recognition. After completing his doctoral studies, he returned to Indonesia and continued his service as a lecturer at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and the Postgraduate Program at IAIN (now UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. (Iqbal, 2010).

Along with that, various important positions were given to him. He served as Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) since 1984, became a member of the Lajnah Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an of the Ministry of Religious Affairs since 1989, and joined the National Education Advisory Board in the same year. Not only that, Shihab was also active in various organizations, including the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (ICMI), the Association of Shari'ah Sciences, and the Consortium of Religious Sciences of the Ministry of National Education. In the world of education, he was then trusted to serve as Rector of IAIN Jakarta in two periods, namely from 1992 to 1996 and then again from 1997 to 1998. In early 1998, he was also given the mandate as Minister of Religious Affairs in the Development IV cabinet under the leadership of President Soeharto, although his tenure lasted only about two months. In 1999, Shihab was appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Arab Republic of Egypt with a seat in Cairo, continuing his important international role (Iqbal, 2010; Rohman et al., 2024).

During his tenure as ambassador, Quraish Shihab created a monumental work, Tafsir al-Mishbah, consisting of 30 juz and published in 15 volumes. This work became the first comprehensive tafsir written by an Indonesian intellectual after more than three decades of vacuum in tafsir writing. The completion of Tafsir al-Mishbah further confirmed Quraish Shihab's position as one of the most prominent commentators, both in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia. In writing this tafsir, Quraish uses the tahlilī method, in which each verse of the Qur'an is interpreted in depth and analyzed from various perspectives, according to its order in the Mushaf. The first volume of this tafsir was published in 2000, while the last volume (volume 15) was published in 2003. The process of writing this tafsir, according to Quraish, lasted for four years, starting on Friday, 4 Rabi'ul Awwal 1420 H/18 June 1999 in Egypt and finished on Friday, September 5, 2003 in Jakarta. Each day, Quraish spent about seven hours to complete this work (Rohman et al., 2024; Shihab, 2006).

3. Interfaith Marriage in the Perspective Tafsir Quraish Shihab

As mentioned earlier, the Qur'anic verses whose substance is related to interfaith marriage are QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:221, QS. Al-Mumtahanah [60]:10, and QS. Al-Maidah [5]:5, then the description in this discussion will only focus on the interpretation of Quraish Shihab on these three verses. M. Quraish Shihab in the interpretation of Al-Misbah when interpreting QS. Al-Maidah [5]:5 states that marriage between different religions is allowed, especially for men who want to marry women from among the People of the Book. He emphasizes that the man should choose women who have honor, or women who are free. However, top priority is given to Muslim women, even if it is possible to marry a slave or bonded servant. This shows that Muslim women have a higher position than the women of the People of the Book, even if they are slaves (Shihab, 2021, 3: 32).

M. Quraish Shihab argues that marrying a woman from among the People of the Book can be considered as a form of jihad in spreading the message of Islam. A husband is expected to show a good and noble attitude towards his wife, so that he can motivate his wife to embrace Islam. Thus, it is not impossible for a wife to convert to Islam and is expected to have sympathy for its teachings. However, there is a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether a man is allowed to marry a woman of the People of the Book. M. Quraish Shihab argues that although there are groups that prohibit such marriages, it does not mean ignoring the teachings of the Qur'an. The opinion that rejects this marriage focuses more on the need to maintain the honor of women and prevent instability in the family, which is one of the purposes of marriage itself (Shihab, 2021, 3: 31-32).

Quraish Shihab emphasizes the importance of considering the compatibility of life views between husband and wife in the context of marriage. Differences in religion, culture, and level of education can potentially lead to misunderstandings and challenges in the marriage relationship. In addition, this relates to the principle of avoiding risks that may arise if the marriage is carried out. He also underlined that Allah SWT allows marriage between individuals of different religions, especially for Muslim men who wish to marry women from among the People of the Book. However, such marriages cannot be performed without fulfilling certain conditions. The women of the People of the Book who are allowed to marry are those who have the trait of muhsanat, that is, women who maintain their honor, whether they are Muslims or People of the Book (Shihab, 2021, 2: 40, 3: 32, 7:30).

There is also the interpretation that believing women indicate that they are the preferred choice. This is important because similarities in religion and outlook on life can be very helpful in creating peace in the household, as well as determining harmony in family life. The interpretation of Quraish Shihab is more inclined to caution or in fiqh terms

called *ikhtiyath* and also applies the *sadd al-Dzari'ah* rule. Furthermore, regarding marriage between a Muslim and a polytheist, M. Quraish Shihab in his interpretation prohibits the relationship. He also associates polytheists with hypocrites, as well as with Jews and Christians. Quraish Shihab distinguishes between polytheists from among the Arabs and polytheists from non-Arabs. In fact, he categorizes the People of the Book as part of the group of polytheists who are forbidden to marry a Muslim (Shihab, 2021, 1: 172-173).

The description above indicates that M. Quraish Shihab provides a comprehensive interpretation of interfaith marriage in the context of Islamic teachings, especially through analysis of Qur'anic verses, such as QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:221, QS. Al-Mumtahanah [60]:10, and QS. Al-Maidah [5]:5. In his tafsir, he asserts that marriage between a Muslim man and a woman of the Book is permissible, provided that the woman has honor and maintains her dignity. However, he emphasizes that priority should be given to Muslim women in the context of marriage. Shihab also reminds the importance of compatibility of life views between the couple to avoid potential conflicts, as well as emphasizing that marriage with polytheists is prohibited. This interpretation reflects a cautious approach in understanding marriage in religious and social contexts, and emphasizes the need to maintain honor and stability in the family.

4. The Interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab's Interfaith Marriage and the Conditions of Contemporary Muslim Society

In the context of contemporary Muslim society, M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of interfaith marriage becomes increasingly relevant. In the midst of globalization and increasingly intense intercultural interaction, many Muslim individuals are in relationships with partners from different religious backgrounds (Al-Banan et al., 2024). This calls for a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings on marriage, and the social and cultural implications that come with it. Quraish Shihab emphasizes the importance of choosing a partner who has honor and maintains dignity, which is the cornerstone of marriage. In a pluralistic society, where religious and cultural differences are common, this principle can help individual Muslims to adhere to Islamic values while respecting the differences that exist.

In addition, the emphasis on compatibility of life views between husband and wife is key to creating harmony in the household, especially when facing challenges that may arise due to differences in beliefs. On the other hand, the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies cannot be ignored. Many couples are caught in a dilemma between following religious traditions and norms or adjusting to existing social realities (Usman, 2024). In this case, Quraish Shihab's tafsir can serve as a guide to

navigate this complexity, while still prioritizing Islamic values and prudence in making decisions.

Moreover, it is important to understand that interfaith marriages not only affect the couple themselves, but also their families and surrounding communities. Therefore, open dialog and education about marriage in the context of religion and culture are needed to reduce stigma and increase understanding among the community (Abdidin, 2008). Thus, M. Quraish Shihab's tafsir can be a source of inspiration and guidance for contemporary Muslim communities in dealing with the dynamics of interfaith marriage, while still adhering to the principles of noble Islamic teachings.

Conclusion

This research focuses on analyzing Quraish Shihab's thoughts on the law of interfaith marriage in the Qur'an. As in the conclusion, that the Qur'an prohibits a Muslim from marrying a polytheist and is allowed to marry a woman ahl al-Kitab who can still protect herself. In this case, the discussion of polytheists who are forbidden to marry still needs further research. Whether what is meant by polytheists here is limited only to those who worship statues as it existed at the time of the prophet SAW, or includes people who glorify wealth and luxury to the limit of deification. So, the recommendation for future researchers is to examine the meaning and scope of the term polytheist in the Qur'an, especially with regard to polytheists who are forbidden to marry.

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