



The Relevance of Tarbawi Interpretation in Shaping Students' Character: A Study of Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab

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Abstract. A moral crisis occurs when a person loses the attitude, character, and behavior that are in accordance with goodness. Moral and ethical crises often occur among the younger generation in Indonesia due to various factors, such as the impact of globalization, the influence of social media, the lack of parental involvement, and the lack of character education in schools. This study aims to explore the relevance of character education values in M. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Mishbah to the problems faced by students in the contemporary era. The crisis of morality, bullying, and the threat of radicalism are the background to the urgency of internalizing contextual Qur'anic values. This research is qualitative in nature, using library research, a thematic approach, and content analysis. The results show that the concept of character education in Tafsir Al-Mishbah is rooted in the relationship between the meaning of Rabb and tarbiyah, which aims to shape Insan Kamil through intellectual and spiritual balance. Analysis of Q.S. Luqman: 12-13, Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 11-13, and Q.S. Al-Mujadilah: 11 reveals fundamental values such as monotheism, gratitude, tolerance, and manners in seeking knowledge. The relevance of the findings shows that Quraish Shihab's moderate (wasathiyah) thinking is very effective in protecting students from extreme ideas, building digital literacy ethics through the principle of tabayyun, and eliminating the culture of violence in schools through a humanistic approach. This study concludes that Tafsir Al-Mishbah offers a functional methodological framework for strengthening the character of 21st-century students.

Keywords: Character Education; Quraish Shihab; Students; Tafsir Al-Mishbah; Tafsir Tarbawi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern teenagers are experiencing moral decline; they pursue pleasure and forget their responsibilities as teenagers. Teenagers are no longer moral, social, and academic role models for society. When the younger generation is educated, they focus more on entertainment or hedonism. As a result, only a few young people pay attention to current developments in society. It is clear that the younger generation, especially teenagers living in major Indonesian cities, are experiencing a decline in morals. Currently, ethical and moral issues related to teenagers are among the topics that must be addressed immediately. In fact, in modern society, there are many instances of low morality, especially among teenagers. It is possible that the morality of today's teenagers is very important and needs to be improved immediately. Parents and educational institutions play an important role in overcoming the moral crisis among teenagers. This is evident in the increasing moral crises faced by teenagers, including fights between students, fights with parents and teachers, and bullying. It is like a ship without a captain in the middle of a vast ocean (Yunita et al., 2024).

Along with the decline in moral and ethical awareness among modern teenagers, this has caused concern among modern society. As a result, swift and responsive efforts are needed to raise awareness of morals and ethics. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine what needs to be considered and done to overcome and remedy the ethical and moral crisis. The

author hopes that by conducting this study, the ethical crisis and decline in morality can be addressed, and a moral country can be achieved (Hadi et al., 2019).

Education plays an important role in developing a person's personality, thinking, and social skills, as well as preparing them to face life experiences. It also gives individuals a special position in their own society and wherever they are (Waewa, 2016). The Qur'an and Hadith provide a perspective that refers to life in this world, so its principles must be the foundation for Islamic education. It is impossible for someone to discuss education without using the Quran and Hadith as reference sources, which is why Islam strongly emphasizes the importance of education. Through proper and quality education, civilized individuals can be formed, which will ultimately create a moral social life (Syakhrani, 2020). The Quran and Hadith emphasize that humans must learn. This is because no human is born into this world with complete knowledge and the ability to overcome all problems. However, on the other hand, humans are considered *khalifatullah fil ardl*, who have a great responsibility. Therefore, education for humans to become intelligent and able to face challenges is an indisputable necessity (Aji, 2020).

The Qur'an, as the book of Allah that is "Salih li kulli makan wa zaman" (suitable for all places and times), has always been the solution to all of humanity's problems. The Qur'an, as a guide and manual for human life, is not enough to simply be read, but must be understood, studied, contemplated, and practiced. There is a very strong correlation between understanding the Qur'an and practicing it. Efforts to understand the contents of the Qur'an, commonly known as tafsir, have begun to take root in the archipelago. The scope of tafsir is clearly broader than mere translation. Therefore, interpreting the Qur'an is not as easy as translating it; there are mandatory requirements that a mufassir must possess in order for his tafsir to be worthy of being read and consumed by the public. The emergence of scholars and mufassir has contributed greatly to the process of grounding the Qur'an in society.

The Al-Mishbah interpretation has a strong literary and social character. Quraish Shihab strives to combine linguistic analysis with lively and relevant explanations of contemporary issues faced by Muslims in Indonesia, so that the message of the Qur'an feels more alive and solution-oriented" (Nurdin, 2019, p. 45). The strength of Al-Mishbah's interpretation lies in its ability to reveal the semantic meaning of the vocabulary of the Qur'an. Explanations regarding Allah SWT's choice of certain words often lead to moral and ethical messages that are highly relevant to the character building of students, such as the difference in meaning between the words *walid* and *ab* in the context of parent-child interactions" (Syamsuddin, 2021, p. 112). Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Mishbah consistently builds a rational and moderate paradigm of

thinking. In the context of character education, this tafsir not only produces individuals who are ritually pious, but also socially pious, tolerant, and capable of critical thinking. This is in line with the national education goal of forming intelligent individuals with noble character (Hidayat & Syafe'i, 2020, p. 28).

Based on the background regarding the urgency of internalizing Qur'anic values amid the current crisis of youth morality, this study focuses on two main issues. First, this study aims to explore in depth how M. Quraish Shihab's concept of character education is presented in Tafsir Al-Mishbah, particularly through an examination of the meaning of the term tarbiyah and the moral messages in the verses on education that he interprets. Second, this study also seeks to analyze the relevance of this interpretation to the character formation of students in the contemporary era, given that Quraish Shihab's moderate (wasathiyah) and rational interpretation is considered.

2. PROPOSED METHOD

This study applies a qualitative approach using a literature review method to explore in depth the relevance of Tarbawi interpretation in shaping the character of students: a study of Al-Mishbah interpretation by M. Quraish Shihab. This method was chosen based on the characteristics of the problem, which requires a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in the field, where the researcher plays a key role in collecting and interpreting data (Sugiyono, 2019). This research is a qualitative study based on library research, in which data is collected through in-depth text analysis (Zed, 2014). The primary data source in this study is the book Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an (Interpretation of Al-Mishbah: Messages, Impressions, and Harmony of the Qur'an) by M. Quraish Shihab, specifically verses that have educational content (tarbawi). The method used is descriptive-analytical with a maudhu'i (thematic) approach, which is to compile verses from the Qur'an related to character building, then analyze Quraish Shihab's interpretation to draw conclusions about the concept and its relevance (Shihab, 2013). The data analysis technique was carried out through interpretive content analysis, which revealed the meaning behind the interpretation text and then contextualized it with the problems faced by students in the contemporary era (Krippendorff, 2018). Through this procedure, the data was systematically processed to produce objective findings regarding the character education values offered by the interpreter.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Basic Concept of Tarbiyah in the Tafsir Al-Mishbah

In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, M. Quraish Shihab provides a very rich philological review of the word Rabb, which is commonly translated as “God.” He explains that the word Rabb (رب) is semantically closely related to the word Tarbiyah (تربية), which means education. According to Shihab, both words are derived from the word raba-yarbu, which means to grow and develop, or rabba-yarubbu, which means to improve, take care of, and lead (Shihab, 2002).

This analysis has significant philosophical implications in the world of character education, namely:

- a. Education as an Evolutionary Process: Shihab emphasizes that Allah as Rabb educates the universe gradually (tadriji). Therefore, character education for students should not be done instantly or coercively, but must go through a consistent and continuous process of nurturing in accordance with the child's developmental phase (Shihab, 2005).
- b. Educators as Murabbi: Considering that the word Rabb contains the meanings “owner” and “caretaker,” an educator must have a sense of responsibility and compassion (the aspect of rahmah) towards their students. Character cannot be formed through instruction alone, but through spiritual nurturing.
- c. The Goal of Potential Growth: The meaning of Tarbiyah in Shihab's view does not mean “molding” students into something foreign to themselves, but rather nurturing the innate potential (talents and positive tendencies) that already exist within students so that they can flourish optimally

Thus, Quraish Shihab positions education as a divine activity. An educator who is shaping the character of his students is essentially carrying out rabbaniyah tasks, namely repairing what is broken and nurturing what is good in the human soul (Shihab, 2013).

In the perspective of Tafsir Al-Mishbah, the ultimate goal of the educational process is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but rather a systematic effort to shape the Perfect Human Being (Insan Kamil). M. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the essence of humanity consists of material (physical) and immaterial (spirit/mind/heart) components. Therefore, ideal character education must be able to touch on both dimensions in a balanced manner so that there is no imbalance in personality (Shihab, 2002).

Shihab's analysis of this balance covers two main domains:

- 1) Intellectual Dimension (Reason): Through his interpretations, Shihab often emphasizes the importance of using sound reasoning. Education should encourage students to develop critical thinking, objectivity, and a love of knowledge. This intellectual character

is reflected in the Qur'an's command to perform nadzar (observation) and tafakkur (contemplation) of the verses of kauniyah (Shihab, 2005).

- 2) Spiritual Dimension (Heart/Qalb): On the other hand, intellectual intelligence without spiritual control will give rise to arrogant individuals. Shihab emphasizes that the heart is the center of ethics and morals. Character education in Tafsir Al-Mishbah aims to bring students closer to God (taqwa), which is then reflected in an attitude of humility, honesty, and social empathy.
- 3) M. Quraish Shihab argues that the relevance of forming Insan Kamil in the modern era is to produce a generation that is “Mecca-hearted and German-brained” (a metaphor he often uses to describe the combination of strong spirituality and high technological mastery). In his view, character education is an effort to ensure that the higher a person's knowledge, the more noble their character, because knowledge and faith come from the same source, namely Allah SWT (Shihab, 2013).

Character Education Values in the Interpretation of Al-Mishbah

Religious Character and Integrity (Tauhid):

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَوِيٌّ حَرِيْبٌ ٥٠

Dan sungguh, telah Kami berikan hikmah kepada Lukman, yaitu, "Bersyukurlah kepada Allah! Dan barangsiapa bersyukur (kepada Allah), maka sesungguhnya dia bersyukur untuk dirinya sendiri; dan barangsiapa tidak bersyukur (kufur), maka sesungguhnya Allah Mahakaya, Maha Terpuji."

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ٥١

Dan (ingatlah) ketika Lukman berkata kepada anaknya, ketika dia memberi pelajaran kepadanya, "Wahai anakku! Janganlah engkau mempersekutukan Allah, sesungguhnya mempersekutukan (Allah) adalah benar-benar kezaliman yang besar."

Analysis:

In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, M. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the order of Luqman's will to his son is not a coincidence, but rather a very systematic character education curriculum design. He underlines that the formation of students' personalities must begin with the instillation of gratitude and monotheism as the main pillars of religiosity

- a. Gratitude as Existential Awareness: Quraish Shihab interprets verse 12 as a command to be grateful to Allah before moving on to the instructions of tawhid. He explains that gratitude (syukr) literally means “to show.” In the context of character, being grateful means the ability of students to recognize their potential and blessings, then manifest them by utilizing those blessings in accordance with the purpose of their creation (Shihab,

2002). Religious character begins when a student realizes that their intelligence and body are a trust, so that they feel ashamed if they do not use them for good.

- b. Tawhid as the Anchor of Integrity: In verse 13, Shihab places extraordinary emphasis on the prohibition of shirk. He analyzes that shirk is not merely the worship of idols, but a form of “great injustice” (zhulmun 'azhim). Philosophically, injustice means putting something in the wrong place. Shihab's emphasis here is that without tauhid, the character of students will be “relative” and “fragile.” Without belief in God Almighty, a person's honesty or integrity will only rely on human supervision or social agreements that can change at any time (Shihab, 2013).

Social Character and Tolerance: Building Brotherhood

Q.S Al-Hujurat 11-13:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِاللِّقَابِ ۗ يَأْتِيَ الْإِسْمَ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

Wahai orang-orang yang beriman! Janganlah suatu kaum mengolok-olok kaum yang lain, (karena) boleh jadi mereka (yang diperolok-olokkan) lebih baik dari mereka (yang mengolok-olok), dan jangan pula perempuan-perempuan (mengolok-olokkan) perempuan lain, (karena) boleh jadi perempuan (yang diperolok-olokkan) lebih baik dari perempuan (yang mengolok-olok). Janganlah kamu saling mencela satu sama lain, dan janganlah saling memanggil dengan gelar-gelar yang buruk. Seburuk-buruk panggilan adalah (panggilan) yang buruk (fasik) setelah beriman. Dan barangsiapa tidak bertobat, maka mereka itulah orang-orang yang zalim.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِمَّا ظَنَّنَا بِإِنَّ يَعْصِي الْقَوْمَ إِيْمًا وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا ۚ فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

Wahai orang-orang yang beriman! Jauhilah banyak dari prasangka, sesungguhnya sebagian prasangka itu dosa, dan janganlah kamu mencari-cari kesalahan orang lain, dan janganlah ada di antara kamu yang menggunjing sebagian yang lain. Apakah ada di antara kamu yang suka memakan daging saudaranya yang sudah mati? Tentu kamu merasa jijik. Dan bertakwalah kepada Allah, sungguh Allah Maha Penerima tobat, Maha Penyayang.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Wahai manusia! Sungguh, Kami telah menciptakan kamu dari seorang laki-laki dan seorang perempuan, kemudian Kami jadikan kamu berbangsa-bangsa dan bersuku-suku agar kamu saling mengenal. Sungguh, yang paling mulia di antara kamu di sisi Allah ialah orang yang paling bertakwa. Sungguh, Allah Maha Mengetahui, Mahateliti.

Analysis:

M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Mishbah explains that Q.S. Al-Hujurat verses 11-13 are the main foundation in building social ethics and inclusive character of students. His interpretation of this series of verses is not only theological but also sociological, emphasizing the preservation of human dignity as an absolute requirement for the creation of harmony (Shihab, 2002).

- 1) Prohibition of Character Destruction (Verse 11): Shihab emphasized the prohibition of sukhriyah (mocking), lamz (criticizing), and tanabuz (calling someone by a bad nickname). He explained that this behavior stems from a false sense of superiority. In the context of education, this interpretation is highly relevant to curbing the culture of bullying. For Shihab, insulting others is essentially insulting oneself because all believers are one body (ukhuwah)
- 2) Inner Ethics and Privacy (Verse 12): In the next verse, Shihab emphasizes the importance of inner honesty by avoiding prejudice (dzann), seeking out the faults of others (tajassus), and gossiping (ghibah). He describes ghibah as a very disgusting act (eating the flesh of one's own brother). The character that is sought to be developed here is moral integrity, where students are taught to respect the privacy and dignity of others, both in the real world and in the digital space.
- 3) The Principle of Multiculturalism and Lita'arafu (Verse 13): The culmination of social character in this interpretation is the recognition of diversity. Shihab explains that differences in gender, ethnicity, and nationality are God's will, which aims to enable humans to get to know one another (lita'arafu). According to him, the word lita'arafu does not simply mean knowing each other's names, but rather benefiting from one another and working together. The character emphasized is active tolerance; students are not only asked to allow differences, but must be proactive in establishing cooperation for the common good.
- 4) The indicator of glory is piety: Finally, Shihab emphasized that the measure of nobility is not race, wealth, or social status, but piety. This interpretation provides the basis for egalitarianism in schools, where every student has the same opportunity to excel regardless of their sociocultural background (Shihab, 2013).

Character of Manners and Ethics in Seeking Knowledge

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

yā ayyuhālladzīna āmanū idzā qīle lakum tafassahū fil-majālisī fafsahū yafsaḥillāhu lakum, wa idzā qilansyuzū fānsyuzū yarfa'llāhulladzīna āmanū mingkum walladzīna ūtul-'ilma darajāt, wallāhu bimā ta'malūna khābir

Wahai orang-orang yang beriman, apabila dikatakan kepadamu "Berilah kelapangan di dalam majelis-majelis," lapangkanlah, niscaya Allah akan memberi kelapangan untukmu. Apabila dikatakan, "Berdirilah," (kamu) berdirilah. Allah niscaya akan mengangkat orang-orang yang beriman di antaramu dan orang-orang yang diberi ilmu beberapa derajat. Allah Mahateletti terhadap apa yang kamu kerjakan.

Analysis:

In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, M. Quraish Shihab explains that Q.S. Al-Mujadilah verse 11 is not merely a verse about the importance of knowledge, but a comprehensive guide to ethics and manners in the learning process. He emphasizes that the noble status promised by Allah will only be achieved if a seeker of knowledge is able to combine intellectual intelligence, steadfast faith, and noble manners (Shihab, 2002).

- a. **The Etiquette of Open-Mindedness and Space:** Shihab highlights the command *tafassahu fil majalis* (be open-minded in assemblies) as a characteristic of social awareness in the pursuit of knowledge. Being generous here is not only interpreted physically as providing seating space for others, but also metaphorically as generosity of heart to accept different opinions, share information, and create a conducive learning environment. The character that is to be formed is an attitude of selflessness and inclusiveness in the academic environment
- b. **Compliance with the Education System:** Shihab interprets the command *funsyuzu* (stand up) as meaning discipline and obedience to the authority of educators or educational institution rules. He explains that the success of a student is largely determined by their willingness to follow the teacher's instructions, which bring benefits. This shapes the character of students who are obedient and have a high sense of respect (*ta'dzim*) for the source of knowledge.
- c. **Synergy of Faith and Knowledge:** A crucial point in Shihab's interpretation of this verse is that knowledge without faith can be misleading, while faith without knowledge causes a person to lose direction. The "high" degree in Al-Mishbah's view is when a student has knowledge that makes him more submissive to Allah and more beneficial to humanity. The intellectual character to be achieved is intellectual humility, not arrogance because of feeling more knowledgeable than others (Shihab, 2005).
- d. **Relevance of Academic Ethics:** In the contemporary era, this interpretation is highly relevant to correct the culture of pragmatism in which students often pursue academic grades without regard for manners toward teachers or peers. Shihab emphasizes that manners are the key to the blessings of knowledge; without manners, knowledge will only become a burden of information without character transformation

Character Formation Method According to Quraish Shihab

Teachers are professional educators whose main duties are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in early childhood education, formal education, basic education, and secondary education. Teachers are professionals whose scope of work is to

educate, teach, and train students in an educational setting or environment. Teachers are role models who must be respected and emulated, and they also serve as examples for their students' lives and personalities.

This means that teachers must be examples and role models, inspiring students to learn and continuously encouraging or motivating them. Teachers are not only instructors, trainers, or mentors, but also mirrors in which students can see themselves reflected. The personal function of a teacher is to provide guidance and set an example, while jointly developing creativity and inspiring students to learn and strive for progress. A teacher must have good self-control and inner control, because a teacher must be a role model in terms of discipline. A teacher cannot discipline a student if he or she does not apply discipline in his or her own life as a person who is respected and emulated.

M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* emphasizes that the success of value transformation greatly depends on the communication methodology used by educators. He places the *Mau'izhah Hasanah* method, or gentle communication, as the main instrument in touching the affective dimension of students. This interpretation is based on an in-depth analysis of Q.S. Ali Imran: 159, in which Shihab explains that gentleness (*layyin*) is a blessing from Allah that was a key factor in maintaining the sympathy of the companions towards the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He argues that character cannot be formed through harshness (*ghalizh al-qalb*) or harsh words, because a coercive approach will only give rise to psychological resistance or false obedience based on fear (Shihab, 2002).

The implementation of this method in the context of character education requires educators to prioritize empathy, forgiveness, and deliberation. Shihab emphasizes that an educator with character must be able to give “memorable advice,” which is factually correct but delivered in a way that touches the soul. This includes the willingness of educators to forgive (*fa'fu 'anhum*) the mistakes of students and involve them in dialogue or deliberation. For Shihab, involving students in discussions is not just a formality, but a conscious effort to respect human existence and dignity. With the implementation of this humanistic communication, character values are no longer considered an instructional burden, but rather a spiritual need that is internalized voluntarily through a harmonious emotional relationship between educators and students (Shihab, 2013).

M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* explains that character building is an evolutionary process, not an instant one. This is in line with the etymological meaning of *tarbiyah*, which means to nurture and develop gradually. He introduces the *tadriji* or gradual method as a fundamental principle in the internalization of values. Shihab argues that the

Qur'an itself was revealed gradually (munajjan) to make it easier for humans to understand, appreciate, and practice its teachings. In the context of education, this method requires educators to understand the psychological readiness and developmental level of students, so that the values imparted do not exceed their capacity, but are instilled little by little yet consistently (Shihab, 2002).

Furthermore, Shihab emphasized that these stages must culminate in a method of habituation so that the values learned become ingrained character traits (malakah). He explained that something that is done repeatedly will become ingrained in the soul, so that good behavior is no longer done with reluctance, but arises spontaneously as a reflection of one's true self. In the formation of religious character, for example, habituation begins with introduction, formal implementation, and finally reaches the stage of inner appreciation. For Shihab, the success of character education is not measured by how quickly a student changes, but rather by how firmly these values are instilled through a continuous process of habituation. This tadriji method provides space for students to undergo a human process, so that character transformation occurs naturally and has strong resistance to external influences (Shihab, 2013).

The Relevance of Tafsir Al-Mishbah to the Context of Today's Students

The relevance of Al-Mishbah's interpretation in shaping the character of students in the contemporary era lies in its moderate, rational, and humanistic approach, which is able to respond to the challenges of information disruption and the digital morality crisis. Amidst the rapid spread of hoaxes that often trigger social conflict, Quraish Shihab's emphasis on the concept of tabayyun (verification) in the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 6 becomes a crucial critical literacy tool for students. Today's students are encouraged not to be passive consumers of information, but rather to be individuals with intellectual integrity who validate data before acting. This shapes an honest and responsible character that is highly relevant in maintaining communication ethics in cyberspace.

Furthermore, the consistent interpretation of wasathiyah (moderation) promoted by Quraish Shihab has become an effective defense against radicalism in the educational environment. Through the internalization of the concept of ummatan wasathan, students are taught to be inclusive and to respect plurality as a divine necessity (sunnatullah). This relevance is evident in the ability of this interpretation to reconcile static religious texts with dynamic social realities, so that students are not trapped in a rigid and extreme understanding of religion. The character of tolerance built in Tafsir Al-Mishbah goes beyond mere recognition of existence to active collaboration in diversity, which is in line with the profile of Pancasila students in Indonesia (Shihab, 2013).

The relevance of character values in Tafsir Al-Mishbah becomes increasingly crucial when linked to the dynamics of social interaction and academic ethics among students in the modern era. An analysis of Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 11-13 shows that Quraish Shihab strongly emphasizes the preservation of human dignity through the prohibition of lamz (criticizing) and tanabuz (calling someone by a bad nickname). In the current context, this interpretation has direct relevance as a preventive instrument against bullying and cyberbullying, which are rampant in school environments. Shihab asserts that the ideal social character is one that is able to view diversity as a means for *lita'arafu* (getting to know each other and collaborating), not as a reason to feel superior as a group. This equips students with inclusive character and social intelligence in facing a multicultural global society (Shihab, 2002).

On the other hand, the relevance of academic character can be found in the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Mujadilah: 11. Amidst a culture of instant gratification and competition that often disregards ethics, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that a person's nobility is not only determined by their mastery of knowledge, but also by their faith and manners. The interpretation of “openness in the assembly” is relevant as a character of intellectual humility and respect for the rights of others in the learning space. Students are taught that the ethics of seeking knowledge—such as discipline, respecting teachers, and openness to accepting differences of opinion—are absolute prerequisites for the knowledge gained to bring blessings. This character is very relevant to counterbalance the current trend of pragmatism in education, where academic values are often pursued without being accompanied by maturity in manners (Shihab, 2005).

Integratively, the two references in Tafsir Al-Mishbah form a profile of students who have balanced characters: polite in social interactions as guided by Q.S. Al-Hujurat, while also possessing high intellectual integrity in accordance with the spirit of Q.S. Al-Mujadilah. This relevance proves that Quraish Shihab's thinking is able to bridge the eternal moral messages of the Qur'an with the practical needs of character building for students in the 21st century. Thus, the desired *tarbiyah* process is not merely to produce graduates who are cognitively competent, but individuals who are pious individually and socially beneficial within the framework of *wasathiyah* (Shihab, 2013).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of M. Quraish Shihab's thoughts in Tafsir Al-Mishbah, it can be concluded that character education is a *tarbiyah* process that is integrative, evolutionary, and humanistic. Conceptually, character in Shihab's perspective is rooted in the semantic rela-

tionship between the meaning of Rabb and tarbiyah, which positions education as an effort to develop the natural potential of students towards the degree of *Insan Kamil*. The success of character education is marked by a balance (*tawazun*) between intellectual intelligence and spiritual independence, where fundamental values such as *tauhid*, gratitude, tolerance, and *adab* in seeking knowledge become the main pillars that unite the dimensions of faith and knowledge. Through references to Q.S. Luqman, Q.S. Al-Hujurat, and Q.S. Al-Mujadilah, this study reveals that a strong religious character must be accompanied by inclusive social ethics to create harmony in diversity.

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