

## WOMEN AND MODERN FAMILIES: AN ANALYSIS OF QURAIISH SHIHAB'S PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract

In modern families, Islamic values are increasingly eroded due to the challenges posed by the advancement of information and communication technology. In contemporary Muslim families, wives often work outside the home but still serve as the primary educators within the family. This article aims to elucidate the concept of a harmonious family in the context of modern life, according to Quraish Shihab. The research employs a qualitative method with data collection techniques based on a literature review, examining Quraish Shihab's thoughts through his works from 1996 to 2022, encompassing ten books related to family issues. The findings reveal that Quraish Shihab places significant emphasis on the role of women and family. According to his works, including "Perempuan" and "Pengantin Al-Qur'an," a harmonious family involves prospective spouses getting to know each other before marriage, having a lawful marriage contract in Islam, and ensuring the presence of a guardian during the marriage ceremony. Couples should support each other, exchange roles, and maintain good communication. Shihab also highlights the importance of women's roles in working and education in modern families, advocates for balanced marriage ages, and outlines the conditions under which divorce is permissible in Islam. These principles are highly relevant to the realities faced by modern families today.

**Keywords:** Quraish Shihab, harmonious family, modern family, Islamic values

### Abstrak

Pada keluarga modern, nilai-nilai Islam yang diajarkan mulai tergerus ditambah tantangan kemajuan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi. Istri dalam keluarga muslim modern juga bekerja namun tetap menjadi tempat Madrasatul Ula dalam keluarga. Artikel ini bertujuan menguraikan konsep keluarga harmonis menurut Quraish Shihab dalam konteks kehidupan modern. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi kepustakaan, meneliti pemikiran Quraish Shihab melalui 10 karya-karyanya dari tahun 1996 sampai 2022 yang terkait isu keluarga. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa Quraish Shihab menekankan pentingnya calon pengantin saling mengenal sebelum menikah, pentingnya akad nikah yang halal dan disaksikan oleh wali, serta perlunya dukungan dan pertukaran peran antar pasangan. Komunikasi yang baik dan pendidikan dalam keluarga juga sangat ditekankan. Selain itu, Quraish Shihab menyoroti relevansi usia pernikahan yang seimbang dan syarat-syarat perceraian dalam Islam. Prinsip-prinsip ini relevan dan memberikan panduan praktis bagi keluarga dalam menghadapi dinamika dan tantangan kehidupan modern.

**Kata Kunci:** Quraish Shihab, keluarga harmonis, keluarga modern, nilai-nilai Islam

## **A. Introduction**

The family is a natural place that has the duty to nurture and care for the nation's growing successors in terms of physical, mental, and spiritual development. Love, affection, and solidarity are feelings obtained within the family. These successors of the nation can be shaped within the family, and with guidance and enlightenment, they can be revealed and participate in life (Suharto, 2011).

Women can be defined as Allah's creations originating from the rib of Prophet Adam. Women possess gentle characteristics and can provide comfort. Women can also manage household affairs and educate children (Nurhasanah, 2020). A family is an institution formed by the bond of marriage between a husband and wife, living together in harmony, sharing common goals, and striving to build a harmonious family under the protection and blessings of Allah SWT. The family is an informal educational institution, characterized by the natural blood relationship between the educator and the child. In addition to parents, there are children who are the responsibility of the parents. The family is the smallest social unit within a broader society. It is the best field for sowing religious values. Education and the inculcation of religious values must be given to children from an early age, primarily through the family as the first educational environment known to the child (Taubah, 2016).

The family is an inseparable part of life. It is the first place where an individual starts their life, forming a close relationship between father, mother, and child. This relationship occurs through interactions among family members. The family, as the smallest social institution, serves as the foundation and initial investment for building a better social and communal life. This is because the internalization of values and social norms is more effectively carried out within the family than through other institutions outside the family. The active role of parents in the development of children is crucial, especially during their early years. The family plays a significant role in instilling behavioral patterns for living in society by embedding good values within the child, inculcating values and norms according to behavior and age, and passing down cultural values. Additionally, the family provides love, affection, security, and attention among family members. The family can create a safe, comfortable, fair, and protected environment. It is a place where family members can confide their problems (Zahrok & Suarmini, 2018).

A harmonious family is a legitimate marriage, signified by the contract (*ijab qabul*) between a man and a woman. This relationship encompasses all human aspects, including spiritual and material, not just biological relations. The perfect intimacy between spouses and children demonstrates their mutual need, love, affection, and devotion to one another. They spend quality time together, develop values of mutual help, and fulfill the needs of a healthy household (Yusuf & Maslow, 2011).

Family harmony is a state where happiness is achieved within a family and conflicts are minimized, creating a peaceful and harmonious family. A harmonious family is one that is united, happy, full of affection, and rarely experiences conflict. Family harmony will be achieved when both husband and wife adhere to religious practices, perform their duties and responsibilities, respect, love, and maintain communication with each other. Moreover, success in raising children also becomes a hope for every couple to create harmony within the family (Musthofa & Lutfiah, 2024).

Family harmony is when all family members experience happiness, marked by reduced tension and disappointment with all circumstances and their existence (self-actualization), encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. However, recently, we have often encountered many instances where a family can fall apart for various reasons. One of them is the persistent patriarchal mindset within a family. This mindset is still prevalent, and not a few cases resulting from it lead to children becoming victims or even fostering radicalism within the family, such as enforced changes and violence by the family leader, among others (Hypatia et al., n.d.).

A family lacking love and mutual respect will lead to disharmony. This can be seen in daily life, where children suffer not from lack of care, food, clothing, snacks, or shelter but from witnessing disharmony in the family due to conflicts and misunderstandings between their parents. A harmonious family has a very important impact on the individual's mental health and happiness (Zhan & Wang, 2021). Stress greatly influences family harmony (Windarwati et al., 2020).

Family disharmony can occur in various places, both urban and rural, caused by internal and external factors (Gunawan, 2022). The formation of a family starts with marriage. A harmonious marriage will also form a harmonious family. A harmonious family leads to a harmonious nation; a broken family threatens national stability (Risnawaty Widayani, 2021). A good family is a harmonious family. The relationship

between husband and wife creates a harmonious family (Hidayatullah, 2018). Currently, the phenomenon of disharmonious families is widespread in Indonesian society. Family harmony is living happily in a bond of love between husband and wife, based on willingness and harmony in living together (Nikmah & Sa'adah, 2021).

Modern life presents challenges to the family. Modernity is a shift in habits with everything new. For modern families, it provides an opportunity to express their desires (Kansil et al., 2017). Disharmony in family life can occur in all regions due to both physical and spiritual factors (Gunawan, 2022). The divorce rate in Jambi, based on the Central Bureau of Statistics of Jambi, reached 5,000 in 2021 and increased to 5,465 in 2022. The divorce rate increases year by year (Timur, 2023). The phenomenon of disharmonious families continues to rise every year. The divorce rate in Indonesia increases annually. Thus, research on family harmony must continue to be developed (Fauziah et al., 2023).

Quraish Shihab's views on family harmony are highly relevant to Indonesian society, where family values are continually upheld. His thoughts on family harmony can offer practical solutions for building happy and prosperous families. Quraish Shihab's perspective on family harmony offers a moderate and contextual Islamic viewpoint amid various family issues emerging in the modern era. This article can help the community understand and apply Qur'anic values to building harmonious families in the modern era. Quraish Shihab's views on family harmony have not been extensively studied, so this thesis can contribute new insights to the fields of Qur'anic studies and family. The problem addressed in this article is Quraish Shihab's view on family harmony and its relevance to modern families.

## **B. Method**

This study used a library research method. The primary data sources for this research are derived from available literature on the internet, including books, journals, articles, theses, dissertations, tafsir, and other scholarly works relevant to the main research topic. The main data, consisting of books, scriptures, and written works, are directly related to the research subject and were obtained firsthand by the researcher. The primary data sources for this research include books on family harmony and works by Quraish Shihab that are relevant to the theme of family harmony. The data collection

techniques used in this research involve gathering key theoretical concepts related to the research problem. Data were collected through books, articles, and other scholarly works related to family harmony. The data analysis applied in this research is content analysis, a qualitative data analysis process aimed at describing, seeking, and interpreting data to obtain various pieces of information.

## C. Result and Discussion

### 1. Quraish Shihab's View on Harmonious Families

The first concept of a harmonious family, according to Quraish Shihab, is having the same faith or religion. At this point, it is emphasized that interfaith marriages are prohibited to achieve a harmonious family. In Quraish Shihab's book "Menjawab 1001 Soal Keislaman yang Patut Anda Ketahui," it is mentioned that marrying someone of a different religion should be avoided to prevent immorality in either men or women (Shihab, 2022a). According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family is formed when the prospective bride and groom get to know each other well before committing to marriage. It is important to form a harmonious family where both partners accept each other with all their strengths and weaknesses. In Surah An-Nisa, verse 1, Allah explains that He created from a single soul its mate. The verse states: (Shihab, 2019)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا  
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾ (النساء/4: 1)

"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever over you, an observer."

This verse implies that the husband and wife should unite until they become one entity, sharing thoughts and aspirations in every step of their journey, thus also united in breath. In the Qur'an, marriage is called 'zawaj,' meaning pairing, and also 'nikah,' which means unification, where both physical and spiritual union occur. According to Imam Shafi'i, a marriage is not valid without the use of the terms 'zawaj' and 'nikah' during the marriage contract (ijab qabul). The term 'ijab qabul' means contract. 'Aqad' means bond, and 'ijab' is related to the term wajib (obligatory). Therefore, the marriage contract means the acceptance of obligations, and 'qabul' means acceptance of these obligations. Through the guardian (wali), the wife's obligations to Allah and the future wife are

transferred to the future husband. For the marriage to be valid, the future husband must clearly and explicitly accept these obligations without doubt, fully aware, and with joy. The future wife accepts the obligations as a consequence of the marriage bond, balancing rights and responsibilities (Shihab, 2019).

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family must be based on a lawful bond in Islam, that is, through a marriage contract (nikah). Men and women must work together and live harmoniously. Marriage is a form of cooperation in a harmonious life. Humans, and indeed all creatures, have partners. Marriage is required because there is something within each creature that plays a significant role (Shihab, 2022b).

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ (الذَّٰرِيَّتْ/51:49)

“And of all things, we created two mates; perhaps you will remember.” (Az-Zariyat/51:49)

According to Quraish Shihab, during the marriage, each party must have a guardian to be witnessed by many people. The importance of a guardian is to ensure clear lineage, so there are no questions about the commitment to create a harmonious family (Shihab, 2022b). The guardian plays a crucial role in the marriage of his daughters or women under his guardianship. Scholars debate this role, with varying opinions. Some believe it is very strict, requiring the guardian’s approval for his daughter’s choice of husband. In some cases, the guardian can annul the marriage if it occurs without his permission. This perspective suggests that such demands cannot be justified unless specific conditions are met. Remember that the purpose of Islamic marriage is to make the families of the bride and groom and the couple themselves harmonious. Family agreement in marriage is crucial, especially between both parents (Shihab, 2022a).

To achieve longevity and harmony in marriage, agreement is needed between the prospective bride and groom and their guardians. For a harmonious family, men are expected to obtain parental approval to create and establish marital goals among all family members, both husbands’s and wives’s families. Furthermore, men can marry without their parents’ permission as long as the guardian of the bride gives consent. However, religion does not favor this, as one of the goals of marriage is to build harmonious relationships between all family members (Shihab, 2022a).

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family means having sufficient needs met (Shihab, 2022a). In Islam, the husband must provide for his wife and children

according to his ability. If the husband is materially capable but does not provide enough to meet his wife and children's reasonable needs, the wife is not sinful if she takes her husband's money without his knowledge. The Prophet's fatwa to Hindun, Abu Sufyan's wife, who complained about her wealthy husband's stinginess, was "Take what is sufficient for you and your child, in a reasonable manner."

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family must understand the differences between partners (Shihab, 2015). Allah created humans, male and female, based on His power and knowledge. He assigned each of their duties and functions and provided guidance and limitations so humans could achieve happiness in fulfilling these duties. Understanding and recognizing the differences and similarities between a man and a woman creates a harmonious family and prosperous society, leading humans to serve as Allah's caliph on earth. To achieve a harmonious family, partners should choose those who share similar views and lifestyles. As stated in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nur, verse 26: (Shihab, 1999)

الْحَبِيثَاتُ لِلْحَبِيثِينَ وَالْحَبِيثُونَ لِلْحَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ  
مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ (النور/24: 26)

"Corrupt women are for corrupt men, and corrupt men are for corrupt women; and good women are for good men, and good men are for good women. Those [good people] are declared innocent of what the slanderers say. For them is forgiveness and noble provision."

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family requires cooperation between partners (Shihab, 2015). The agreement and cooperation between a husband and wife differ from those in other fields like business, politics, or team sports, where cooperation can exist despite disharmony. However, in marriage, two different individuals coexist in one place. Decisions must be made together, considering each other's needs and desires, which often differ. The fundamental principle in building harmonious relationships and cooperation is self-confidence. To succeed in harmony and cooperation, couples should have a positive attitude and use polite language to avoid harsh criticism. If criticism is necessary, choose the right time. If one cannot praise, avoid blaming; if one cannot give, do not take others' rights. If criticism is necessary, choose an appropriate and timely moment. Avoid criticizing the spouse's appearance after they have dressed up for a party,

as it will worsen their appearance. True beauty comes from within, which is self-confidence.

Quraish Shihab provides two notes to remember. First, not all tasks can be performed by either the husband or wife, leading them to alternate roles. Acceptance of societal developments and their impacts should not require sociologists because there is little proof. According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family must strike a balance between husband and wife (Shihab, 2015). According to Quraish Shihab, various values can be summarized in one word: balance. Allah says in Surah Ar-Rahman, also called ‘Arus al-Qur’an’ or ‘the Bride of the Qur’an’:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَظَعُوا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ (الرحمن/55:7-9)

“And the heavens He raised and imposed the balance. That you do not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice, and do not deplete the balance.” (Ar-Rahman/55:7-9)

Allah created humans with physical and spiritual balance. He asks humans to maintain and preserve the balance of the universe. Balance between physical and spiritual interests, material and spiritual needs, and individual and societal needs, and balance between reason, soul, emotions, and body, determine human happiness. Balanced relationships are crucial for maintaining environmental balance in all aspects of life. Balance in family life, as mentioned in the Qur’an, includes balance between the rights and obligations of husband and wife.

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيُعَوِّلْنَهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ﴿٢٢٨﴾ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٩﴾ (البقرة/2: 228)

“Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this period if they want reconciliation. And due to them [the wives], it is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (Al-Baqarah/2: 228).

This verse is important and emphasized as a guide to rights that must be considered. In married life, the verse indicates that the wife and husband have rights and



obligations towards each other. Thus, husband and wife are in a balanced state. This guidance demands good and fair cooperation in the division of labor to establish harmonious cooperation within the family. Balance must be deeply understood and applied, as there is often a misconception that Islam favors husband and undermines women.

Quraish Shihab explains that balance in household life involves balancing the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, balancing receiving and giving, balancing self-love and love for others, balancing income and expenditure, balancing capabilities and desires, balancing means and ends, and balancing the desire for tranquility. According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family should exchange roles between husband and wife (Quraish Shihab, 2015). Harmonious household life is based on understanding and cooperation. Religion assigns functions and tasks, but not rigidly. In marriage, if one partner has shortcomings, the other should help overcome them materially or psychologically. This should be realized.

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family must always consult each other (Shihab, 2022b). Successful couples can be marked by disputes between husband and wife. A marriage that brings about *mawaddah* (affection) and *rahmah* (mercy) is one where the couple can discuss all issues they face and are flexible in accepting each other's opinions. Take and give is a quality both partners possess. In marriage, there is a union of different thoughts and, of course, physical bodies. However, by uniting differences, husband and wife complete each other. Thus, the marriage produces continuous and harmonious cooperation.

According to Quraish Shihab, a harmonious family must always maintain *silaturrahim* (Shihab, 2008). The term '*silaturrahim*' is a compound word consisting of '*shilah*,' meaning connection, and '*rahim*,' meaning compassion, womb, and kinship. Both represent a very close relationship. The child is in the mother's womb, and the child is the most beloved by the mother. Narrowly, according to Quraish Shihab, it means maintaining harmonious relationships within the family. If harmonious relationships can be established within the family, they will extend to other families, creating harmonious relationships within the community, which religion favors. *Silaturrahim* requires showing compassion to all creatures (Shihab, 2011).

The above discussion mentions Quraish Shihab's concept of a harmonious family, starting with choosing a partner of the same religion, involving a guardian in marriage, balancing within the family, exchanging roles between husband and wife, and maintaining *silaturrahim* to create a harmonious family.

## 2. The Relevance of Quraish Shihab's Views to Modern Families

Quraish Shihab's view is that the role of a working wife can lead to family disharmony. When a mother chooses to work outside the home, the lack of adjustment and mutual understanding among family members can make marital happiness difficult to achieve (Herawati et al., 2018). According to Quraish Shihab, women are allowed to work to help the family if the work requires it (Shihab, 2022b). However, it should be remembered that the husband is responsible for providing for the family. Even if the wife earns a significant income, she is not obligated to meet household needs. During the Prophet's time, wives helped with family needs. Quraish Shihab states that the relationship between husband and wife is not a business relationship. Hence, the husband's primary duty is to earn a living, but this does not mean the wife cannot work if the husband's income is insufficient (Shihab, 2022b).

In modern times, communication is essential for maintaining and creating a harmonious family. One of the factors causing family disharmony is poor communication. In the book "Pengantin Al-Qur'an" by Quraish Shihab, he states that communication is not easy. When communicating, it is important to understand one's needs and have the skill to convey them well. A weakness in expressing needs can lead to misunderstandings, causing rejection. Each party must listen effectively and not judge the conveyed thoughts immediately. Together, they should find the best solution based on understanding, not demands, and should accept and compromise (Shihab, 2015).

Another factor causing family disharmony is polygamy. In Islam, polygamy is permitted, as stated in the Qur'an:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَّةَ وَرُبْعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾ (النساء/4:3)

"And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable, so you may not be inclined to injustice." (An-Nisa'/4:3)

However, this verse neither recommends nor obliges polygamy. It is only for those who need it under specific conditions. Islam desires a happy family where partners do not love anyone other than their respective spouses. “Love cannot be bought with wealth. Love can only be achieved with Allah’s help through noble character,” is a saying from religious literature. Polygamy, in the Qur’anic view, is seen from various possible conditions as the best alternative (Shihab, 2022b).

According to Quraish Shihab, justice in polygamy involves many aspects, as verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa’ is related to the previous verse. Verse 2 reminds guardians who manage orphans’ property that they commit a grave sin if they unlawfully consume or exchange the orphans’ good property for inferior property. Verse 3 reminds guardians of female orphans who wish to marry them to be just and fair, giving the orphan girl her dowry and other rights. They must not marry her with the intention of exploiting her wealth or preventing her from marrying someone else. If the guardian fears he cannot be just, he should not marry the orphan girl but should marry another woman he likes, up to four, provided he can be just to all his wives. If he fears he cannot be just to all his wives, he should marry only one, and he must not wrong her. If he still fears he might wrong her, he should suffice with his slave woman.

Education within the family is very important. Both husband, wife, and children should receive the same education (Shihab, 2022b). Many in society prioritize boys’ education over girls’ (Shihab, 2022b). In the family, parents play a crucial role in children’s education. The Prophet Muhammad said, “Every child is born in a state of fitrah (innate disposition); it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian” (HR. Bukhari through Abu Hurairah). This fitrah must be reinforced by parents so it can manifest in daily life (Shihab, 2022b). Through education, children can face future challenges. “Teach your children because they were created for a time different from yours” is a quote from Quraish Shihab’s book “Perempuan” (Shihab, 2022b). It is important to note that character and education formation come from the mother, who teaches, and the father, who exemplifies. The roles of both parents are crucial. There is a saying, “Not only children are the product of their mother’s education, but also husbands are the product of their wife’s education” (Shihab, 2022b). Education is essential because it shapes a child’s character and their environment (Shihab, 2022b). Children have the

right to receive education according to their interests and talents; parents cannot impose their will on the child (Quraish Shihab, 2015).

Regarding the age of marriage, ideally, the husband should be older or at least the same age as the wife. The recommended marriage age for women is 20 and above, and for men, 22 and above (Shihab, 2015). This is expected to create a harmonious family and avoid disharmony in modern times. Age differences were not much considered in the past. Marrying young was common historically, as seen during the time of Prophet Muhammad and in medieval Europe. However, in modern times, age differences in marriage should be considered. The marriage of Prophet Muhammad to Aisha cannot be a reason to emulate since conditions have changed. In the book “Shihab and Shihab,” it is explained that following the Prophet in marrying at a young age should be done wisely. Not everything the Prophet said can be followed without considering the context (Shihab & Shihab, 2019). Many verses indicate that humans are equal before Allah, regardless of race, gender, or skin color; what matters is piety. The Qur’an says in Surah At-Taubah, verse 71:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ (التوبة/9: 71)

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those—Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (At-Taubah/9:71)

Men and women are described as working together, having strengths and weaknesses that require cooperation. In Surah An-Nisa, verse 32, Allah forbids envy:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ ۗ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾ (النساء/4: 32)

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men, it is a share of what they have earned, and for women, it is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah for His bounty. Indeed, Allah is ever, of all things, knowing.” (An-Nisa’/4:32)

In Surah An-Nisa’, verse 21, regarding marital life, the Qur’an says:

وَكَيفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُم إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٢١﴾ (النساء/4: 21)

“And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?” (An-Nisa’/4:21)

This indicates that neither the husband nor the wife is fully perfect alone; perfection comes when they are united. Allah describes the mutual need between husband and wife in many aspects, like clothing (Shihab, 2022a). Quraish Shihab recognizes the equality of women and men. Differences in character do not mean women are inferior. He agrees with Muhammad al-Ghazali, a contemporary Egyptian scholar, who stated that women enjoyed more material and social privileges a thousand years ago than they do now, except in dressing and social interaction. Quraish Shihab attributes the decline in women's status to shallow religious knowledge. Unfortunately, religion is often blamed for this decline (Nafsi, 2016).

In modern times, Quraish Shihab, as an expert in tafsir, becomes a mediator, arguing that women can be leaders under certain conditions. The term '*qawwamun*' in Surah An-Nisa', verse 34, is the plural form of '*qawwam*,' derived from '*qama*,' which is related to the command to pray (sholat), implying performing tasks perfectly and continuously. The verse uses the plural form to align with '*al-rijal*,' meaning many men. This term is often translated as 'leader,' but Quraish Shihab believes this translation does not fully capture its meaning. Leadership includes fulfilling needs, attention, maintenance, defense, and guidance. Quraish Shihab does not agree that '*al-rijal*' refers to men in general; it specifically means husbands, applicable only in household contexts and not in the public domain (Nafsi, 2016).

Divorce is permissible in Islam, but conditions must be met. In marriage, disputes are inevitable. Islam provides guidelines and conditions to protect marriage and minimize divorce. If signs of marital discord are detected, the husband's and wife's families should help resolve it. If unsuccessful, other conditions must be met before divorce is sanctioned. The intention to divorce must be declared by the husband or a designated representative, clearly and explicitly, orally or in writing. Divorce declared by someone insane, extremely angry, or misspeaking does not count. Husbands are reminded not to divorce their wives during menstruation, as it is forbidden. According to the Qur'an, Surah At-Talaq, verse 1:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ  
مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ  
لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهُ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾ (الطلاق/65: 1)

“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands’] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave during that period unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter.” (At-Talaq/65:1)

Quraish Shihab refutes the notion that women were created from a man’s left rib, are temptresses, or are intellectually inferior, thus not needing education or consultation. These views are not supported by the Qur’an. The Qur’an corrects the misconception that women (Eve) were created from their partner’s (Adam’s) rib and were the cause of Adam’s expulsion from paradise. The hadith suggesting women’s intellectual inferiority and exclusion from education is weak and not in line with the Qur’an, reason, or the reality of the Prophet’s time. This view is gender-biased and misogynistic. Quraish Shihab’s response is gender-responsive and rational, criticizing biased views with Qur’anic references, understanding hadith metaphorically, contextualizing the Qur’an, and evaluating hadith quality based on the Qur’an, reason, and reality (Mukhtar, 2013).

The discussion above on the relevance of Quraish Shihab’s views on harmonious families in modern life indicates that his views are significantly relevant to marital life in the modern world. Thus, Quraish Shihab’s views on harmonious families remain relevant and can provide practical guidance for couples in facing the dynamics and challenges of marital life in the modern world. His views are not only relevant but also crucial in addressing the various challenges and dynamics of modern life. His views on harmonious families provide significant relevance in guiding couples to build healthy, happy, and harmonious marriages in the modern world. His views are not only relevant but also inspirational and practical for couples facing marital challenges in this modern era.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Quraish Shihab’s perspectives on family harmony offer relevant and practical insights for modern families. Emphasizing shared faith, lawful marriage, mutual cooperation, balance in rights and obligations, and continuous communication, his teachings align with Qur’anic values and underscore the importance of mutual respect and collaboration between spouses. Shihab highlights the critical role of education for children and parents, advocating for balanced roles and responsibilities within the family.

He addresses modern challenges such as working mothers, communication barriers, and polygamy with a moderate Islamic viewpoint that promotes justice and empathy. His progressive stance on gender equality and the necessity for continuous dialogue between spouses encourages couples to navigate modern complexities with spiritual and moral responsibility. Shihab's teachings provide timeless principles for building strong, resilient, and harmonious families, promoting stability and mutual fulfillment.

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