

## COMPASSION IN THE QUR'AN: A STUDY OF QURAISH SHIHAB'S THOUGHT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Muhammad Nurfaizi Arya Rahardja<sup>1</sup>, Udin Supriadi<sup>2</sup>, Cucu Surahman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Correspondence Email; rahardja1808@upi.edu

Submitted: 27/01/2025

Revised: 25/03/2025

Accepted: 23/05/2025

Published: 25/07/2025

### Abstract

This study critically examines Quraish Shihab's thoughts on the concept of compassion in the Qur'an, focusing on the meanings of four key terms: *rahmah*, *rahmān*, *rahīm*, and *ra'ūf*. It employs a qualitative approach through a literature study that explores the theme of compassion in Quraish Shihab's interpretations and its implications for learning within Islamic education. The data in this study are categorized into two types: primary data, consisting of verses related to compassion as interpreted in Tafsir al-Mishbah, and secondary data, which include scholarly articles, academic journals, books on Islamic education, and other relevant documents that support the theoretical and conceptual analysis of this research. Data collection was conducted through documentation methods, involving gathering written materials from both primary and secondary sources. The data analysis in this research comprises three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings of this study reveal that, according to Quraish Shihab, compassion in the Qur'an is represented through four terms: *rahmah*, *rahmān*, *rahīm*, and *ra'ūf*. The implications of compassion from Quraish Shihab's perspective for learning in Islamic education encompass four aspects: (1) the formation of humane and educational communication, (2) the provision of all learners' needs, (3) perseverance in teaching that reflects *rahmāniyyah*, and (4) a firm yet non-authoritarian attitude.

### Keywords

Compassion, Learning, Islamic Education, Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Tarbawi.



© 2025 by the authors. This is an open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY NC) license ( <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> ).

## INTRODUCTION

In Islam, compassion is a fundamental value, which Allah (Swt.) and the Prophet Muhammad taught humankind (Armstrong, 2010; Hamim et al., 2021). In addition to being a cultural element, compassion is an essential foundation in forming human character and morality (Hamim et al., 2021; Romlah & Rusdi, 2023; Sholeh, 2016). As'ad (2021) states that compassion is the main factor in shaping a child's personality within the family environment.

According to Armstrong (2010), compassion is not merely a feeling of pity, but the ability to feel the suffering of others as if it were one's own, followed by a drive to help. Furthermore, Armstrong articulates the golden rule: "Know what hurts you, and do not do it to others." Paul Gilbert adds that compassion is a profound emotional response accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering of others (Gilbert, 2005, 2009, 2015).

However, long before the West developed this idea, Islam had already introduced the concept of *rahmah* through Allah's attribute of *rahmāniyyah*. Quraish Shihab states in Tafsir al-Mishbah that compassion is the fundamental principle by which Allah educates and sustains His creation. According to him, *al-Rahmān* represents the perfect form of compassion and is the source of all other divine attributes (Shihab, 2002a).

Quraish Shihab explains that the Qur'an portrays Allah's compassion through four terms: *rahmat*, *rahmān*, *rahīm*, and *ra'ūf* (Shihab, 2002d, 2002b, 2002a). Three of these terms are derived from the same root word (*rahm*), but each carries a distinct characteristic. *Rahmān* signifies a broad and temporary form of compassion, applicable only in this worldly life (Shihab, 2002a). *Rahīm* describes Allah's continuous compassion, directed exclusively toward the believers. *Rahmat* refers to a general outpouring of compassion (Shihab, 2002a). Meanwhile, *ra'ūf* refers to a special form of compassion granted to obedient servants who maintain a good relationship with Him. This type of compassion brings complete comfort to its recipient from beginning to end (Shihab, 2002c). It differs from *rahīm*, in which the compassion may initially feel burdensome but ultimately leads to goodness (Shihab, 2002c, 2002a).

Quraish Shihab's perspective highlights the vital importance of compassion in life, including in the context of Islamic education. Compassion is key to achieving educational objectives, particularly fostering communication between educators and learners (Abdussalam, 2017). Abdul Majid (2012) notes that effective communication is essential for establishing a harmonious relationship between teachers and students.

Beyond that, compassion-based education also shapes learners into individuals who are caring and empathetic (Ulfadhilah & Ulfah, 2022). Schools and educators play a crucial role in instilling this value. This aligns with the goals of Islamic education, which aim to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, intelligent, healthy, creative, and responsible citizens (Handayani et al., 2021; Nada et al., 2023; Ramli & Mawaddah, 2022).

Several scholars have examined the importance of compassion in education and learning. Afriansyah (2024) states that education must instill compassion, honesty, and patience from an early age. Wea and Wolomasi (2022) emphasize that education should be conducted on the foundation of compassion. Through compassionate interactions, children learn to love and express compassion toward others, thereby developing altruistic behavior.

Ulfadhilah and Ulfah (2022) add that compassion in education is essential for fulfilling a child's emotional needs, which they liken to a "love tank" that must be filled. Rifa'i et al. (2021) explain that compassion in educational activities can shape a child's character. This aligns with Fitriati et al. (2020), who state that an environment that prioritizes compassion will foster positive behavior and the ability to establish good social relationships in children.

From various studies, it is clear that compassion is a crucial component in the learning process. However, the practical application of compassion in schools still faces challenges. The Indonesian education system is still largely shaped by Western ideas like humanism, positivism, and constructivism, which often separate the role of God from human life and the universe (Abdussalam, 2017; Syahidin, 2009). This perspective contrasts with Islamic values, which place God at the center of life. Udin Supriadi (2021) also notes that Islamic values such as compassion, tolerance, and *rahmatan lil'alamin* often conflict with Western ideologies, potentially leading to radical societal attitudes.

In addition, the Western educational paradigm, which emphasizes achievement and academic performance, often neglects character formation. In contrast, Islamic education aims to nurture learners' potential in alignment with the reinforcement of morality and faith. Syahidin (2009) states that the primary mission of Islamic education is to shape personal character and develop students' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful, ethical, and capable of applying their knowledge for the community's well-being.

Previous studies on compassion from the perspective of Quraish Shihab remain limited. The majority focus only on the term *rahmat*. For example, Hidayatullah (2019) interprets *rahmat* as

gentleness and affection that all creatures can feel, while Afrianto (2025) views it as a form of divine compassion encompassing both spiritual and material aspects. However, no study has specifically explored the relationship between compassion and education in Quraish Shihab's thought. Quraish Shihab in *al-Mishbah* emphasizes the importance of education founded on compassion. He understands the word *rabb* as an educator who nurtures all of His creation (*al-'ālamīn*) based on compassion (*al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*) as expressed in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 2–3.

Therefore, there is a research gap in this study. Previous research has only discussed *raḥmat* without linking it deeply to Islamic education. This constitutes the novelty of the present study, namely, analyzing more broadly and deeply the concept of compassion in the Qur'an according to Quraish Shihab, including the terms *raḥmān*, *raḥīm*, and *ra'ūf*, as well as how these concepts are implemented in Islamic educational learning. Thus, this study aims to comprehensively examine Quraish Shihab's view of compassion through the terms *raḥmat*, *raḥīm*, *raḥmān*, and *ra'ūf*, and its implications for the learning process in Islamic education.

## METHOD

This study is qualitative research using a literature review approach to explore the theme of compassion in Quraish Shihab's thoughts and its implications for Islamic education. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of the concept of compassion found in Qur'anic verses, primarily through pedagogical interpretation as presented by Quraish Shihab (Abdussalam & Surahman, 2022; Rahardja et al., 2024). The literature review analyzes relevant documents and written sources connected to the research theme.

The data sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include Qur'anic verses about compassion as interpreted in Quraish Shihab's Tafsir *al-Mishbah*. Secondary sources consist of academic articles, journals, books on Islamic education, and other relevant documents that support the research's theoretical framework.

Data collection was done using the documentation method, which involves gathering data from both primary and secondary written sources (Sugiyono, 2023). This includes thematic interpretations from Tafsir *al-Mishbah*, scholarly discussions on Quraish Shihab's contributions to Islamic education, and classical and modern tafsir works that offer a comparative perspective on Shihab's views.

The interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994) was applied for data analysis, consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and filtering relevant information about compassion values, focusing on the educational aspect. Data display organized and presented key information from Quraish Shihab's interpretations, revealing patterns and relationships between compassion and Islamic education.

The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, involved critically interpreting the meaning of compassion in Quraish Shihab's tafsir, using Islamic education theories, and comparing findings with similar studies. Verification was carried out continuously to ensure the findings' validity and maintain academic integrity when concluding the meaning and implications of compassion in Islamic education.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The following findings were revealed based on the study of Quraish Shihab's thoughts regarding compassion in Tafsir al-Mishbah. First, Quraish Shihab categorizes compassion into four distinct terms: *rahmat*, *rahīm*, *rahmān*, and *ra'ūf*. Second, he views compassion as the most essential aspect of education, particularly within the learning process. Third, there are four implications of Quraish Shihab's concept of compassion for learning in Islamic education: establishing educational communication, providing for all learners' needs, practicing patient and diligent teaching, and delivering firm yet compassionate instruction.

These findings were derived from documentation carried out by the author on the terms related to compassion in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. The following descriptive table presents a more detailed explanation of these research findings.

**Table 1.** Compassion in the Thought of Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Mishbah

Term	Compassion in the Thought of Quraish Shihab
Rahmat	Rahmat refers to Allah's compassion that is bestowed upon all of humanity.
Rahmān	Rahmān represents Allah's act of pouring out His compassion to all people, which is temporary.
Rahīm	Rahīm is the compassionate attribute of Allah that is inherent.
Ra'ūf	Ra'ūf refers to Allah's bestowing His compassion only upon those who have a good relationship with Him or believe in Him.

According to Quraish Shihab, compassion is the most fundamental aspect of Allah in creating, educating, and sustaining all of His creation. In Quraish Shihab's view, compassion is divided into four terms: *rahmat*, *rahīm*, *rahīmān*, and *ra'ūf*. He asserts that the four terms of compassion used in the Qur'an each have distinct meanings that express the compassion of Allah.

According to Quraish Shihab, *rahmat* is derived from the Arabic root letters *rā*, *hā'*, and *mīm*, which mean "gentleness, compassion, and tenderness." Terminologically, *rahmat* refers to all blessings that Allah bestows upon His creation, and it is neither an act nor an inherent attribute of Allah's essence (Shihab, 2002a). Quraish Shihab argues that *rahmat* cannot be considered an essential attribute (*ṣifat*) of Allah, because such essential attributes cannot be granted to human beings (Shihab, 2002a). Referring to its linguistic meaning, Quraish Shihab understands *rahmat* as the form of Allah's compassion poured out upon all of humanity, through which their various needs are fulfilled (Shihab, 2002a).

Furthermore, Quraish Shihab distinguishes between the *rahmat* of Allah and that of human beings. Human *rahmat* is a feeling that arises from a sense of pain experienced by the individual upon witnessing the suffering of others, whereas Allah's *rahmat* is perfect; it does not originate from pain, is universal, and encompasses everything in the universe, whether deserving or not (Shihab, 2002a). Based on this, Quraish Shihab states that humans are essentially creatures full of compassion. Through this compassion, they are driven to extend their *rahmat* to others to alleviate their perceived pain (Shihab, 2002a).

According to Quraish Shihab, *rahīmān* shares the same root as *rahmat*, namely *rā*, *hā'*, and *mīm*, which conveys meanings such as "compassion, gentleness, and tenderness." The word *rahīmān*, as explained by Quraish Shihab, follows the pattern *fa'lān*, which generally indicates "perfection and temporariness" (Shihab, 2002a). Moreover, *rahīmān* is not a direct act of Allah toward human beings, but rather an act (*fi'il*) of Allah. Therefore, Quraish Shihab interprets *rahīmān* as the act of Allah pouring out His *rahmat* (compassion) upon all creation without exception, both believers and non-believers, and that this compassion is temporary (Shihab, 2002a). Furthermore, due to the perfection inherent in the term *rahīmān*, Quraish Shihab asserts that *rahīmān* can only be attributed to Allah and cannot be used for any other being. It also has no plural form.

Like *raḥmān*, *raḥīm*, according to Quraish Shihab, shares the same root, *rā*, *ḥā*, and *mīm*, but differs in its morphological pattern (*wazn*), which has a plural form, namely *ruḥamā'*. *Raḥīm* follows the pattern *fa'īl*, which generally indicates "stability and continuity" (Shihab, 2002a). Based on this pattern, Quraish Shihab asserts that *raḥīm* refers to Allah's *raḥmat* of an eschatological nature, granted only to His believing servants (Shihab, 2002a). In addition, *raḥīm* is a compassionate attribute of Allah that is inherent.

Unlike *raḥmān*, which is perfect and therefore can only be attributed to Allah, *raḥīm* can be attributed not only to Allah but also to human beings. This is illustrated in Qs. Al-Taubah/ 9: 128, where Allah uses the term *raḥīm* to describe the compassion of the Prophet Muhammad toward his people (Shihab, 2002a). However, although it can be attributed to humans, as in the case of a mother's love for her child or one person's compassion for another, Allah's compassion (*raḥīm*) is fundamentally different and cannot be equated with that of any creature (Shihab, 2002a).

As for *ra'ūf*, according to Quraish Shihab, the word *ra'ūf* originates from an Arabic root that conveys meanings related to "gentleness and compassion" (Shihab, 2002c). Terminologically, *ra'ūf* refers to Allah pouring out His compassion upon those who have a good relationship with Him, or in other words, upon those who believe in Him (Shihab, 2002c).

**Table 2.** The Differences Among Terms of Compassion in the Thought of Quraish Shihab

Term	Characteristics	Object	Form
<i>Raḥmat</i>	-	All creation	Act of Allah
<i>Raḥmān</i>	Its compassion is temporary Its compassion is perfect Its compassion is continuous	All creation	Attitudinal act of Allah
<i>Raḥīm</i>	Its compassion is firm It may not feel very easy at first, but it ends in goodness Deeper form of compassion	Only for the believers	Inherent attribute of Allah
<i>Ra'ūf</i>	The compassion given may be unpleasant at first and pleasant in the end.	Only for the believers	Attitudinal act of Allah

According to Quraish Shihab, compassion is not without distinction, as interpreted from four terms in the Qur'an. Each term possesses significant differences from the others. In terms of their characteristics, *raḥmān*, *raḥīm*, and *ra'ūf* differ substantially: *raḥmān* represents compassion that is temporary and perfect, *raḥīm* is a form of compassion that is steady and continuous and may feel unpleasant at first but becomes sweet in the end, while *ra'ūf* refers to compassion that is pleasing from beginning to end (Shihab, 2002a).

In terms of their objects, *rahmān* differs fundamentally from *rahīm* and *ra'ūf*. The object of Allah as *rahmān* encompasses all creation, both those who believe and those who do not, whereas the object of Allah as *rahīm* is limited to those who believe in and devote themselves to Him. In terms of type, *rahmān* and *rahīm* also differ like their compassion: *rahmān* represents Allah's worldly compassion, while *rahīm* refers to His otherworldly compassion (*ukhrawī*) (Shihab, 2002a).

In terms of its form of reception, compassion in the form of *rahīm* is different from that in the form of *ra'ūf*. Compassion in the form of *rahīm* may initially be unpleasant but becomes deeply comforting. In contrast, *ra'ūf* refers to compassion that is pleasing from the very beginning to the end (Shihab, 2002a, 2002c).

**Table 3.** Compassion in the Thought of Quraish Shihab and Its Implications for Learning in Islamic Education

Compassion in the Thought of Quraish Shihab	Verse	Implications for Learning in Islamic Education
Allah is a compassionate educator	Qs. Al-Fatihah/ 1: 2-3	Building Educational Communication
Allah provides for all His creatures.	Qs. Al-Fatihah/ 1: 2	Providing for All Learners' Needs
Allah is a patient educator	Qs. Al-Fatihah/ 1: 2-3	Patient Learning
Allah is a firm yet compassionate educator	Qs. Al-Fatihah/ 2-4	Firm Learning Based on Compassion

To understand the implications of compassion in the thought of Quraish Shihab, it is essential first to consider how Allah introduces Himself in the Qur'an, particularly in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/1. In Qs. Al-Fātiḥah / 1: 2, instead of introducing Himself as Allah, He introduces Himself as *Rabb*. This choice is not without reason. Based on its meaning, *rabb* shares the same root as the word *tarbiyyah*, which means "to guide something step by step toward perfection, both in its occurrence and function" (Shihab, 2002a).

Furthermore, Quraish Shihab explains the relationship between *rabb* and *al-'ālamīn*, which means "the universe or everything other than Allah" or "the collective kinds of creatures created by Allah that are living." This is intended to show all of His creations throughout the universe that Allah did not merely create everything in the world and then abandon it. Instead, Allah, as *rabb*, provides everything needed for each creature to achieve its purpose. In simpler terms, Allah wants to demonstrate that He is not just the Creator, but also the Sustainer and Educator of the universe (Shihab, 2002a).

Additionally, according to Quraish Shihab, if this verse had chosen to use the name of Allah instead of *rabb*, it would automatically reflect all the attributes of Allah, both His *rubūbiyyah* (the



attributes of actions that can touch and impact human beings) and His *ulūhiyyah* (the attributes inherent in the essence of Allah) (Shihab, 2002a). However, if the word *rabb* is used in this verse, it would only encompass and reflect the attributes that can touch and influence human beings (*rubūbiyyah*) (Shihab, 2002a).

In the next verse, Allah explains the foundation upon which He provides sustenance and education when caring for and nurturing all the creatures in the universe. In Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 2: 3, Allah uses the words *al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm* to show the foundational principles He uses in educating and sustaining all of His creation (Shihab, 2002a). *Al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm*, which are derived from the root *raḥm*, carry meanings closely related to compassion. Any word that consists of the letters *rā*, *ḥā*, and *mīm* is associated with “gentleness and compassion” (Shihab, 2002a).

Furthermore, according to Quraish Shihab, the use of the attribute *al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* for Allah, alongside *rabb*, aims to remove the impression of "absolute power" that comes with the use of the word *rabb* (Shihab, 2002a). The reason why Allah uses the words *al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm* in this verse is to eliminate the perception of Allah's arbitrary power in sustaining, guarding, and educating humans (Shihab, 2002a). Additionally, the purpose of using *al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* in this verse is to emphasize to all of His creations that the education and care provided by Allah to all creatures are not based on arbitrary rule, but on compassion (Shihab, 2002a).

Maka berdasarkan pemahaman terkait *rabb* dan hubungannya dengan *al-raḥmān* dan *al-raḥīm* dalam al-Qur'an, Quraish Shihab berpendapat bahwa kasih sayang memiliki implikasi yang sangat penting dalam pendidikan. Oleh karena itu Quraish Shihab menyatakan bahwa kasih sayang berimplikasi dengan pendidikan, yaitu *mendidik dengan kasih sayang, menyediakan segala kebutuhan peserta didik, mendidik dengan penuh ketelatenan, dan tegas namun penuh dengan kasih sayang*.

## Discussion

Compassion is essential to life (Armstrong, 2010; Hamim et al., 2021; Rambe et al., 2024). Quraish Shihab states that compassion is Allah's primary act in creating, educating, and sustaining human beings (Shihab, 2002a). He describes compassion as the form of *raḥmat* of Allah in the Qur'an, which is the feeling of pain that arises when witnessing the suffering of others, prompting someone to help and alleviate that suffering.

Paul Gilbert (2015) defines compassion as a deep emotional response to the suffering of others, accompanied by a strong urge to help and alleviate that suffering. Armstrong (2010) adds that compassion arises when someone tries to feel the suffering of others as if it were their own, leading

to the desire to help. He also emphasizes that compassion motivates people to treat others as they would like to be treated. This idea aligns with the "golden rule" first articulated by Confucius (551–479 BCE), which is to recognize what hurts oneself and not inflict it upon others (Armstrong, 2010).

According to Arabic linguists, all words derived from the letters *rā*, *ḥā*, and *mīm* carry meanings of gentleness, compassion, and tenderness (Al-Ashfahani, 2020). In the Qur'an, the word *raḥmat* is often used to describe Allah's compassion toward humanity, appearing 114 times in various surahs and verses (Shihab, 2002a). This highlights the importance of compassion in the lives of humans and other creatures.

Quraish Shihab explains that *raḥmat* is every form of grace Allah bestows upon humanity (Shihab, 2002a). He emphasizes that *raḥmat* is an act of Allah, not an attribute of His essence, because the attributes of Allah's essence cannot be granted to humans. An example of this usage can be seen in Qs. Āli 'Imrān/ 3: 8 depicts *raḥmat* as a gift from Allah to humans (Shihab, 2002a).

*Raḥmat* is not exclusively owned by Allah, as a particular form of *raḥmat* is also possessed by humans. However, there is a significant difference between the two. Human *raḥmat* originates from the gentleness of the heart that arises from seeing the suffering of others, which then motivates one to do good to alleviate that pain (Shihab, 2002a). This indicates that humans inherently have the potential for compassion, although human *raḥmat* is considered imperfect.

In contrast, Allah's *raḥmat* is perfect, not originating from any pain, encompassing the entire universe, and applying to all creatures without exception, and it is priceless (Shihab, 2002a). Thus, Allah's *raḥmat* is comprehensive and absolute, while human *raḥmat* is limited, stemming from empathy, and directed toward alleviating suffering.

There are several opinions regarding the linguistic meaning of the word *raḥmān*. First, *raḥmān* is believed to originate from the root word *rahm* in Arabic (Al-Ashfahani, 2020). Scholars argue that the form *raḥmān* follows the pattern *fa'lān*, which in Arabic usually indicates the meaning of perfection or temporariness (Shihab, 2002a).

The second opinion states that *raḥmān* has no root in Arabic and was therefore unknown to the polytheists, as reflected in Qs. Al-Furqān/ 25: 60 (Shihab, 2002a). The third opinion suggests that *raḥmān* comes from Hebrew, specifically *rakhman*, marked by a dot above the *ḥā* letter. Therefore, in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 1 and 3, the word *raḥmān* is always paired with *raḥīm* to clarify its meaning (Shihab, 2002a). Fourth, according to Ibn Ashur, *raḥmān* could still originate from Arabic, as Arabic is believed to be older than Hebrew (Shihab, 2002a).

Despite the various views, most scholars agree that *rahmān* comes from Arabic, derived from *rahm*, and follows the pattern *fa'lān*, which denotes perfection and temporariness (Al-Ashfahani, 2020; Shihab, 2002a). Therefore, this study follows the majority view. Because it signifies perfection, the word *rahmān* has no plural form and cannot be attributed to any being other than Allah (Shihab, 2002a). Meanwhile, the meaning of temporariness indicates that Allah's *rahmat* is temporary in this world and is given to all creatures, regardless of their faith (Shihab, 2002a).

Muhammad Abduh adds that *rahmān* is an attribute of Allah's actions (*fi'il*), representing Allah's act of bestowing His *rahmat* upon all creatures (Shihab, 2002a). Thus, *rahmān* describes Allah's action of granting temporary *rahmat* in this world to all creatures without exception, whether they believe or not.

Like *rahmān*, the word *rahīm* also originates from Arabic with the root word *rahm* (Shihab, 2002a). According to al-Ashfahani, phrases derived from the letters *rā*, *hā*, and *mīm* carry meanings of gentleness, compassion, and tenderness (Al-Ashfahani, 2020). Regarding *wazn*, *rahīm* follows the pattern *fa'il*, which indicates a steady and continuous characteristic. Unlike *rahmān*, which has no plural form and is only attributed to Allah, the word *rahīm* has the plural form *ruḥamā'* and can be used for other creatures, as seen in Qs. Al-Taubah/ 9: 128, which describes the compassion of the Prophet Muhammad using the term *rahīm* (Shihab, 2002a). The *rahmat* expressed by *rahīm* is continuous, and according to scholars, *rahīm* reflects the *rahmat* of the afterlife, which is Allah's eternal compassion granted only to the believers. Unlike *rahmān*, which describes an action, *rahīm* represents an attribute inherent in the essence of Allah (Shihab, 2002a).

The term *rahīm* is familiar in society. Many people immediately think of a mother's compassion for her child when this term is heard. This is understandable, as *rahīm* can also be attributed to humans (Shihab, 2002a). However, human compassion cannot be equated with Allah's *rahmat*, which is perfect and unparalleled. From this explanation, it can be concluded that *rahīm* is a form of Allah's compassion inherent in His essence, steady, continuous, and granted explicitly to His believing servants. While it can also be attributed to humans, *rahīm* in the divine context still holds a much higher and more perfect status.

The word *ra'ūf* originates from Arabic and carries the meanings of gentleness and compassion (Shihab, 2002c). According to Al-Zajjaj, *ra'ūf* is used to describe the possessor of *rahmat*, but only when that *rahmat* has reached its highest level (Al-Zajjāj, 1988). Al-Harrali adds that the attribute *ra'ūf* reflects compassion granted to those with a good relationship with the giver (Shihab, 2002c).

Thus, *ra'ūf* reflects Allah bestowing His *rahmat* upon the believers who maintain a good relationship with Him. This differs from *al-Rahmān*, which signifies Allah's compassion toward all of creation, regardless of their faith.

However, this difference appears similar to the meaning of *al-Rahīm*, which also refers to Allah's compassion for the believers. Quraish Shihab explains that the main difference between *al-Ra'ūf* and *al-Rahīm* lies in their focus: *al-Ra'ūf* emphasizes the giver of compassion (Allah), while *al-Rahīm* focuses on the recipient of compassion (Shihab, 2002c).

Shihab also asserts that the word *al-Ra'ūf* is only used when the *rahmat* granted is pleasing from beginning to end. Although *rahmat* may initially seem unpleasant, if it eventually leads to goodness and pleasure, it may be called *ra'ūf* (Shihab, 2002c). Therefore, *al-Ra'ūf* depicts Allah as the giver of pure compassion, leaving no suffering for the recipient.

From the various definitions that have been explained, the concept of *rahmat* according to Quraish Shihab aligns with the meaning of compassion, which is the feeling of empathy that motivates a person to feel the suffering of others as if it were their own, leading to the desire to help and alleviate that suffering. *Rahmat* depicts the form of Allah's compassion toward His creatures. *Rahmān* shows Allah as the giver of perfect compassion; *rahīm* is an attribute inherent in His essence and granted to the believers, while *ra'ūf* reflects Allah's compassion that is pleasing from the beginning to the end. Therefore, compassion becomes an essential aspect that significantly impacts Islamic education, particularly in the learning process.

### **The Implications of Compassion and Islamic Education from the Perspective of Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Mishbah***

Compassion plays a crucial role in Islamic education, particularly in learning (Armstrong, 2010; Rambe et al., 2024; Shihab, 2002a). Learning that is based on compassion is more effective in achieving its objectives, as it helps foster the learners' self-confidence. This sense of confidence makes them more open, sincere, and trusting of what the educator conveys (Abdussalam, 2017).

Based on the author's analysis of Quraish Shihab's thought in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, there are four main implications of compassion in Islamic education learning. In the learning process, educational communication is essential for achieving learning goals. Educational communication occurs when the educator's actions are understood and appreciated by the learners (Abdussalam, 2017). To achieve this, effective communication is necessary. According to Abdul Majid, communication is considered adequate when there is a two-way flow of information between the educator and the

learner, and the message conveyed is received as expected by both parties (Majid, 2012). Santoso, as cited in Pratikno, adds that effective communication means that both the communicator and the recipient have a shared understanding of the message being conveyed, often referred to as “the communication is in tune” (Pratikno, 2017).

Majid also emphasizes the importance of effective communication in education, as it builds a harmonious relationship between educators and learners (Majid, 2012). This relationship is called educational communication, where the learners understand and value the educator’s teaching actions (Abdussalam, 2017).

In the Qur'an, educational communication is reflected through Allah’s educational actions based on compassion, as seen in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 2–3. Allah is portrayed as Rabb, who educates and sustains all His creations with compassion, through the attributes al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm. The choice of the word *rabb al-‘ālamīn* represents a gentle and compassionate educational approach, distinguishing it from the use of Allah’s name, which implies absolute power and could appear arbitrary.

Learning based on compassion has a positive impact on learners. They feel valued, fostering trust in the educator. This is known as interpersonal communication, which forms the foundation of effective communication, harmonious relations, and mutual trust between the educator and learners (Majid, 2012). Once effective communication is established, educational communication is created. Educational communication ensures that the learners receive the learning material well, which in turn allows the learning objectives to be achieved.

As developing individuals, learners require guidance to meet their physical and psychological needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs identifies five essential needs for learners: physiological needs, safety, social needs, esteem, and self-actualization (Devianti & Sari, 2020; Marhamah & Zikriati, 2024; Maslow, 1984; Santrock, 2000).

Educators are responsible for guiding and creating a supportive learning environment (Devianti & Sari, 2020). This environment can only be effective if educators understand the learners' characteristics and needs (Devianti & Sari, 2020; Marhamah & Zikriati, 2024). Maslow also emphasizes that understanding learners' needs is central to learning (Maslow, 1984).

This concept aligns with the idea of compassion as described in the Qur'an. In Surah Al-Fātiḥah/1:2, Allah is described as *rabb al-‘ālamīn*, meaning He not only creates but also meets the needs of His creatures. This serves as a guide for educators to ensure they provide for the needs of

their learners to foster a productive learning environment.

Similarly, in Surah Al-Taubah/9:43, Allah gently reprimanded Prophet Muhammad after the Battle of Tabuk for allowing some companions to abstain from the battle. The reprimand began with "afallāhu 'anka" (Allah has forgiven you), showing His care for the Prophet's emotional state. This demonstrates how Allah prioritized the Prophet's psychological well-being before addressing the issue.

In Surah Al-Raḥmān/ 55: 1-3, Allah is referred to as al-Raḥmān, and the verse mentions that He taught the Qur'an before describing the creation of humans. This emphasizes that knowledge is a fundamental human need, even more critical than existence itself. Allah, as the ultimate educator, demonstrates His compassion by providing knowledge as the essential provision for life (Abdussalam, 2017).

In conclusion, meeting learners' needs is vital for effective learning. Educators must understand and address these needs, as shown by Allah's example in the Qur'an, to create an optimal learning environment. Perseverance is a key element in the learning process, and an educator's commitment is crucial to achieving educational goals, according to Umi Habibah et al. (2021), when parents lack perseverance in guiding their children's learning, it results in an ineffective learning environment and leads children to prioritize play over studying. In education, Abdussalam (2017) describes perseverance as teaching with compassion, sincerity, and dedication. Armstrong (2010) likens it to a mother's selfless compassion in nurturing, guiding, and protecting her child.

Thus, perseverance reflects compassion and patience in teaching without expecting rewards. Educators must be patient to build trust and help students be receptive to learning (Abdussalam, 2017). In Islam, perseverance mirrors Allah's raḥmāniyyah, His complete compassion, sincerity, and earnestness in guiding His creation. This is evident in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 2-3, where Allah sustains all of creation with His compassion, embodied in al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm.

Quraish Shihab (2002a) compares perseverance to a mother's unwavering love—staying up at night to care for her child and controlling her emotions for the child's well-being. Similarly, a devoted educator teaches compassionately, patiently guiding students through challenges and treating them with care, just as a mother does her child (Armstrong, 2010; Shihab, 2002a).

A persevering educator is impartial, treating all students fairly and compassion, regardless of their backgrounds. Quraish Shihab (2002a) asserts that those who recognize Allah as al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm will radiate compassion in their actions. Al-Ghazali compares a compassionate person to

the sun, offering light and warmth without discrimination; those who do not feel it are at fault, not the sun (Shihab, 2002a).

Therefore, Islam stresses the importance of perseverance in teaching. A persevering educator instills trust and a passion for learning in students, guiding them fairly, regardless of their status, ethnicity, or religion, with compassion at the heart of their approach.

Firmness creates a productive and disciplined learning environment (Anggraeni et al., 2020; Munfiatik & Mubarak, 2023). Educators must maintain firmness to ensure discipline in the learning process, especially when addressing students who delay assignments, arrive late, or disrupt classes (Anggraeni et al., 2020; Munfiatik & Mubarak, 2023). While firmness is necessary for teaching and disciplining students, it should be exercised thoughtfully and only when needed (Aisyah et al., 2024). Discipline should always be approached positively, aiming to foster students' abilities and moral values.

In Islam, educators are encouraged to be firm against inappropriate behavior, but always with compassion. This is reflected in Qs. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 4, where Allah's authority (mālik yaum al-dīn) follows His attributes of mercy (al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm), emphasizing that firmness should stem from compassion, not anger. This order also reminds humans not to take Allah's mercy for granted, as He still rewards good and bad deeds. Thus, the balance between compassion and firmness is essential in education. In conclusion, educators must combine compassion with firmness when addressing mistakes. Firmness should be constructive and educational, just as Allah demonstrates in the Qur'an, firm, yet always compassionate.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, Quraish Shihab divides Allah's compassion in the Qur'an into four terms: *rahmat* as the outpouring of Allah's compassion toward humanity, *rahīm* as an attribute of Allah inherent in His essence, *rahmān* as an act of Allah in bestowing His compassion upon all creatures without exception, and *ra'ūf* as Allah's compassion that is pleasing from beginning to end. Quraish Shihab also emphasizes the importance of compassion in Islamic education. He interprets the phrase *rabb al-'ālamīn*, described with *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*, as depicting Allah who educates all His creations with the principle of compassion. From this perspective, there are four implications of compassion in learning according to Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*: (1) building educational communication, (2) fulfilling the needs of the learners, (3) teaching with perseverance, and (4) being

firm based on compassion. By making compassion the foundational principle of learning, learners' full potential can develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This aligns with the goals of Islamic education: to shape learners who are faithful, of noble character, and capable of applying their knowledge in life.

## REFERENCES

- Abdussalam, A. (2017). *Pembelajaran dalam Islam: Konsep Ta'lim dalam al-Qur'an*. Maghza.
- Abdussalam, A., & Surahman, C. (2022). *Metodologi Tafsir Tarbawi*. UPI Press.
- Afriansyah, W. (2024). Pengembangan Karakter Keislaman dalam Pendidikan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Educandum*, 3(2), 22–30. <https://doi.org/10.55656/jpe.v3i2.289>
- Afrianto, R. (2025). *Rahmat Perspektif Quraish Shihab*. UIN STS JAMBI.
- Aisyah, S. N., Ainurrohmah, S., Khoirunnisa, T. A., Umami, U., Pratiwi, V. T., & Malika, N. (2024). Persepsi Guru Terhadap Peran Wali Murid yang Responsif dalam Mendukung Keamanan Guru Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 74 Tahun 2008. *Muaddib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 251–260.
- Al-Ashfahani, A.-R. (2020). *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*. Pustaka Khazanah Fawa'id.
- Al-Zajjāj, A. I. (1988). *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa-i'rābuhu*. Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub.
- Anggraeni, C. S., Hidayati, N., Farisia, H., & Khoirulliaty, K. (2020). Trend Pola Asuh Orang Tua dalam Pendampingan Model Pembelajaran Blended Learning pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Journal of Early Childhood Education and Development*, 2(2), 97–108.
- Armstrong, K. (2010). *Compassion: 12 Langkah Menuju Hidup Berbelas Kasih*. Mizan.
- As'ad, A. (2021). Etika Pergaulan Keluarga Muslim Sebagai Pembentukan Karakter Anak. *Jurnal RAUDHAH*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.30829/raudhah.v9i2.1282>
- Devianti, R., & Sari, S. L. (2020). Urgensi Analisis Kebutuhan Peserta Didik terhadap Proses Pembelajaran. *Al-Aulia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 6(1), 21–36.
- Dozan, W., & Fitriani, L. (2020). Membangun Karakter Anak Usia Dini Melalui Nilai-Nilai Islam dalam Tradisi Perang Timbung. *Murhum: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 1(1), 1–15.
- Gilbert, P. (2005). *Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach*. Routledge.
- Gilbert, P. (2009). *Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to The Challenge of Life*. Constable & Robinson.
- Gilbert, P. (2015). The Evolution and Social Dynamics of Compassion. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 9(6), 239–254. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12176>
- Habibah, U., Santika, R., Setiono, P., Yuliantini, N., & Wurdjinem. (2021). Analisis Kesulitan Belajar Siswa SD dalam Pembelajaran Matematika Secara Daring. *Jurnal Ilmiah Matematika Realistik (JI-MR)*, 2(2), 1–6.
- Hamim, A. H., Rindiani, A., Hasanah, A., & Arifin, B. S. (2021). Core Ethical Values Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Islam. *Al-Hasanah : Islamic Religious Education Journal*, 6(1), 97–105. <https://doi.org/10.51729/6129>
- Handayani, S., Sukarno, S., & Sriyanto, M. I. (2021). Nilai Karakter pada Motif Batik Sejarah Khas Ngawi sebagai Muatan Pendidikan Seni Rupa di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 5(2), 619–626. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i2.774>
- Hidayatullah, A. H. (2019). Term Rahmah dalam al Quran (Studi Interpretasi Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah). *QOF*, 3, 135–146.
- Majid, A. (2012). *Belajar dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Marhamah, M., & Zikriati, Z. (2024). Mengenal Kebutuhan Peserta Didik di Era Kurikulum



- Merdeka. Wathan: *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 1(1), 89–106.
- Maslow, A. (1984). *Motivation and Personality*. Gramedia.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Sage.
- Munfiatik, S., & Mubarak, R. (2023). Implementasi Manajemen Waktu dalam Inovasi Pembelajaran Online pada Mata Pelajaran PAI. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan & Sosial (Sinova)*, 1(3), 123–134.
- Nada, A. R., Tugiah, & Trisoni, R. (2023). Perubahan Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Dari Dulu Hingga Kini Serta Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam. *Papatung: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Publik, Pemerintahan dan Politik*, 5(3), 46–58. <https://doi.org/10.54783/japp.v5i3.650>
- Pratikno, A. S. (2017). Implementasi Artificial Intelligence dalam Memetakan Karakteristik, Kompetensi, dan Perkembangan Psikologi Siswa Sekolah Dasar Melalui Platform Offline. *21st Century Trends and Innovations in Education Endeavor: Integrating 21st Century Skills Into Practice*.
- Rahardja, M. N. A., Fahrudin, Rambe, A. A., & Dwietama, R. A. (2024). Pendidikan Akhlak Memuliakan Tamu dalam Qs. al-Zāriyāt/51: 24-31: Urgensi dan Metode Pendidikan Akhlak Anak Usia Dini. *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/kiddo.v5i1.11474>
- Rambe, A. A., Supriadi, U., Firmansyah, M. I., Dwietama, R. A., Putri, A. N. C., Rahardja, M. N. A., & Marbun, J. (2024). Pendekatan Kasih Sayang dalam Pembentukan Karakter pada Anak Usia Dini Perspektif Hadits Nabi Muhammad SAW. *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 438–452.
- Ramli, M., & Mawaddah, S. N. (2022). Tanggung Jawab Lembaga Pendidikan Islam dalam Memperbaiki Moral Bangsa (Studi Analisis Tujuan Pendidikan dalam UU Nomor 20 Tahun 2003). *Tadribuna: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2(1), 46–56. <https://doi.org/10.61456/tjiec.v2i1.45>
- Rifa'i, M., Al Zahra, F., Abdurrahman, A., & Saad, M. (2021). Manajemen Pengembangan Kurikulum Berorientasi pada Pembentukan Karakter. *Trilogi: Jurnal Ilmu Teknologi, Kesehatan, dan Humaniora*, 2(2), 126–136. <https://doi.org/10.33650/trilogi.v2i2.2708>
- Romlah, S., & Rusdi, R. (2023). Pendidikan Agama Islam Sebagai Pilar Pembentukan Moral dan Etika. *Al-Ibrah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keilmuan Islam*, 8(1), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.61815/alibrah.v8i1.249>
- Santrock, J. W. (2000). *Psikologi Pendidikan*. Kencana.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2002a). *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāh 1* (Vol. 1). Lentera Hati.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2002b). *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāh 7* (Vol. 7). Lentera Hati.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2002c). *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāh 8* (Vol. 8). Lentera Hati.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2002d). *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāh 9* (Vol. 9). Lentera Hati.
- Sholeh, S. (2016). Konsep Pendidikan Islam yang Ideal: Upaya Pembentukan Keperibadian Muslim. *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama dan Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 13(1), 52–70. [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2016.vol13\(1\).1511](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2016.vol13(1).1511)
- Sugiyono, D. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D, dan Penelitian Tindakan*. Alfabeta.
- Supriadi, U., Romli, U., Islamy, M. R. F., Parhan, M., & Budiyaniti, N. (2021). The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Preventing Radicalism at Madrasa Aliyah. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 74–90.
- Syahidin. (2009). *Menelusuri Metode Pendidikan dalam al-Qur'an*. Alfabeta.
- Ulfadhilah, K., & Ulfah, M. (2022). Peran Orang Tua dalam Pentingnya Mengisi Tangki Cinta Anak Usia Dini di Era New Normal. *(JAPRA) Jurnal Pendidikan Raudhatul Athfal (JAPRA)*, 5(1), 10–31. <https://doi.org/10.15575/japra.v5i1.12683>
- Wea, D., & Wolomasi, A. K. (2022). Model Pendidikan Iman Anak dalam Keluarga Berbasis Anjuran

Apostolik Familiaris Consortio dalam Menumbuhkan Perilaku Altruistik. *Jurnal Masalah Pastoral*, 10(1), 46–74. <https://doi.org/10.60011/jumpa.v10i1.82>