Interpretive Strategies of Legal Verses: A Comparative Study of Al-Qurṭubī and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Methods in the Formulation of Islamic Law

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Abstract

This study explores the art of interpreting Qur'anic legal verses by comparing Al-Qurṭubī's strategy and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approach in deriving Sharī'a rulings. It examines argumentative pathways, source hierarchies (verses, hadith, athar, qirā'āt), and the interplay between uṣūl al-fiqh tools and rational analysis. Using library research and comparative content analysis, relevant passages were selected, coded, and analyzed according to stages of istinbāṭ, forms of tarjīḥ, and patterns of intra-Qur'anic coherence. Findings indicate that Al-Qurṭubī foregrounds juristic debate, extensive hadith support, and madhhab-aware tarjīḥ, producing detailed and practice-oriented rulings. By contrast, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī stabilizes meaning through tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān, evaluates philosophical reasoning, and filters reports, so rulings emerge from coherent Qur'anic principles. The study offers a methodological map for reading legal verses critically while remaining responsive to contemporary issues. It also helps students distinguish legitimate interpretive differences from careless proof-texting in debates.

Keywords: Al-Qurtubi; Al-Tabataba'i; Fiqh; Islamic Law; Strategy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji seni menafsirkan ayat-ayat hukum Al-Qur'an dengan membandingkan strategi Al-Qurṭubī dan pendekatan Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī dalam menetapkan hukum Syariah. Penelitian ini menganalisis jalur argumen, hierarki sumber (ayat, hadis, athar, qirā'āt), serta interaksi antara alat-alat uṣūl al-fiqh dan analisis rasional. Dengan menggunakan penelitian perpustakaan dan analisis konten komparatif, ayat-ayat relevan dipilih, dikodekan, dan dianalisis berdasarkan tahap-tahap istinbāṭ, bentuk-bentuk tarjīḥ, dan pola-pola koherensi intra-Al-Qur'an. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qurṭubī menonjolkan debat yuridis, dukungan hadis yang luas, dan tarjīḥ yang sadar madzhab, menghasilkan fatwa yang rinci dan berorientasi pada praktik. Sebaliknya, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī menstabilkan makna melalui tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān, mengevaluasi penalaran filosofis, dan menyaring laporan, sehingga fatwa muncul dari prinsip-prinsip Al-Qur'an yang koheren. Studi ini menawarkan peta metodologis untuk membaca ayat-ayat hukum secara kritis sambil tetap responsif terhadap isu-isu kontemporer. Ia juga membantu mahasiswa membedakan perbedaan interpretasi yang sah dari penggunaan teks secara sembarangan dalam debat.

Kata Kunci: Al-Qurtubi; Al-Tabataba'i; Fiqh; Hukum Islam; Strategi

INTRODUCTION

Legal verses in the Qur'an (*āyāt al-aḥkām*) hold a vital place in Islamic scholarship, for it is through them that Muslims connect divine revelation with the operational framework of *sharī'ah*.[1] These verses define what is obligatory, forbidden, valid, or void, and outline the reasoning behind legal rulings. Yet, the same text does not always produce identical legal conclusions, since every interpretation passes through a methodological bridge: the choice of sources such as the Qur'an, ḥadīth, and *āthār*; linguistic analysis; principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*; and the assessment of scholarly authority. Thus, tafsir becomes an intellectual space where text and method interact to generate diverse expressions of Islamic law. One prominent example of a jurisprudentially oriented tafsir is al-Qurṭubī's *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān.* This work is widely recognized as a model of legal exegesis focused on deriving rulings directly from revelation.[2] Through the method of *istinbāṭ* and interschool dialogue, al-Qurṭubī demonstrates a systematic and argumentative strategy for establishing *sharī'ah*.[3] His approach extends beyond textual explanation, engaging the opinions of jurists and grounding conclusions in *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Consequently, from the outset, his tafsir reveals a clear orientation: to present the Qur'an not merely as moral guidance, but as a functional legal framework for Muslim life.

In contrast, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* reflects a more philosophical and rational mode of interpretation.[4] His central principle, *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*—interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an—emphasizes internal coherence, allowing verses to elucidate one another. This approach privileges the textual network over juristic debates. Moreover, his grounding in the Shī'ī intellectual tradition adds distinctive nuances to his use of transmitted reports and to his formulation of legal meaning. As a result, *al-Mīzān* moves beyond normative rulings, uncovering deeper layers of meaning that connect text, context, and the moral purposes of divine law. Comparing these two exegetical traditions is academically relevant because contemporary studies of legal verses should go beyond cataloguing scholars' opinions to investigating the rationale behind their conclusions. Modern researchers now seek to understand the strategies of *istinbāṭ*: whether legal judgments emerge from linguistic reasoning, *uṣūl al-fiqh* analysis, prioritization of reports, or contextual readings aligned with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of law). Indonesian scholarship has increasingly engaged this methodological dimension, examining the interpretive tools and logical connections among evidences in legal exegesis. However, few studies have explicitly compared the methodological frameworks of classical and modern tafsirs that stem from different intellectual traditions.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to address several key questions. How do Al-Qurṭubī and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's methodological tools operate when interpreting legal verses? How do they prioritize sources—verses, ḥadīths, *āthār*, *qirā'āt*, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* principles—in their legal reasoning? What forms of argumentation do they employ when encountering divergent views? Finally, what implications do their differing strategies hold for understanding and applying *sharī'ah*

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1   Ahmad Yahya and Zidna Zuhdana Mushthoza, "The Conservative Turn in Qur'anic Legal Hermeneutics: Discourse and Authority in Tafsīr Āyāt Al-Aḥkām," *Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought* 3, no. 1 (June 10, 2025): 98–129, https://doi.org/10.15642/juit.2025.3.1.98-129.

2   Habib Abdillah and Muhammad Afifudin Dimyathi, "Repositioning Ibn 'Aṭiyyah in the Genealogy of 'Ilm Al-Munāsabah: An Analysis of Muqaddimah Al-Muḥarrar Al-Wajīz," *Fikri : Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 10, no. 2 SE-Articles (December 14, 2025): 828–46, https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v10i2.6871.

3   Muhammad Wardah and Jubair Situmorang, "The Concept of Maqasid Al-Syari'ah in the Interpretation of Legal Verses," *Golden Ratio of Mapping Idea and Literature Format* 5, no. 2 (June 30, 2025): 108–12, https://doi.org/10.52970/grmilf.v5i2.1673.

4   Izza Rohman, "Different Approaches to Sunni-Shi'I Exegetical Differences," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (June 10, 2023): 25–41, https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v8i1.555.

in contemporary contexts? This research therefore seeks to map the methodological character of these two major exegetes in the construction of legal Qur'anic interpretation.

Method

This study employs a library research method because its object of analysis consists of ideas, reasoning patterns, and argumentative structures found in exegetical works on legal verses (āyāt al-aḥkām).[5] Primary data were obtained from two major tafsīr works: Al-Qurṭubī's Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān and Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, focusing on sections containing normative discussions and indications of istinbāṭ (legal derivation). Secondary data were collected from Indonesian journal articles that discuss the methodology of tafsīr al-aḥkām, the exegetical approaches (manhaj) of Al-Qurṭubī and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, as well as studies on uṣūl al-fiqh and relevant contextual approaches.

Data collection was carried out through thematic tracing. First, the researcher determined operational keywords such as āyāt al-aḥkām, istinbāṭ, tarjīḥ, ikhtilāf al-madhāhib, tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān, and inter-verse coherence. Second, several units of analysis were selected in the form of exegetical fragments containing: (a) explanations of the meaning of words (lafẓ) and verse structures, (b) use of transmitted sources (riwāyāt), (c) comparison of scholarly opinions, and (d) legal conclusions. Third, each analytical unit was recorded in a data sheet and assigned specific codes for traceability, such as the source code (Qurṭubī–Ṭabāṭabā'ī), legal theme (worship, transactions, family), type of textual evidence (verse/ḥadīth/athar), and reasoning type (linguistic, uṣūlī, rational).

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis and comparative techniques. In the first stage, the researcher reconstructed each exegete's argumentative flow—how the meaning of a verse was constructed, which sources were prioritized, and at what point a legal conclusion was deemed final. In the second stage, these findings were compared using a comparative matrix containing methodological indicators such as evaluation of narrations, patterns for resolving conflicting evidence, and the basis for tarjīḥ (preference). In the third stage, the researcher interpreted the implications of these differing strategies for contemporary readings of legal verses, particularly regarding transparency of procedures and prudence in deriving legal norms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Foundation of Legal Verses and the Establishment of Sharī'ah

The study of legal verses (often referred to as āyāt al-aḥkām) begins with a simple yet decisive fact: not all Qur'anic verses "speak" equally to practical norms. Some verses explicitly contain regulations concerning worship ('ibādah), transactions (mu'āmalah), family, criminal law, and social relations, while others are more narrative, theological, or ethical in nature. It is at this juncture that the exegesis of legal verses occupies a strategic position—it serves as a bridge between the revealed text and the practical structuring of religious life. In scholarly work, āyāt al-aḥkām should not merely be viewed as verses containing "commands and prohibitions," but as a field of reasoning that requires methodological tools: how to assess linguistic indicators, relate one verse to another, examine the asbāb al-nuzūl (context of revelation), and consider the objectives of the

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5   Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

Sharī'ah (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah) when the legal implications appear indirect or intersect with new realities.[6]

From a disciplinary perspective, the foundation of legal-verse exegesis lies at the intersection of two major fields: Qur'anic exegesis ('ilm al-tafsīr) and Islamic legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh). The former provides the interpretive framework to grasp meanings, structures, and the interconnections of Qur'anic guidance, while the latter offers the instruments for transforming that guidance into normative principles (istinbāṭ). Consequently, the discussion of legal verses operates on two interrelated levels: the level of interpretation (what the verse means) and the level of legal determination (what its legal implications are). On the first level, exegetes structure their arguments through various interpretive methods—such as taḥlīlī (sequential analysis), mawḍū'ī (thematic), or approaches like tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān (interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an). On the second level, especially within the fiqhī (jurisprudential) school of exegesis, exegetes relate their interpretations to the logic of evidence (dalīl), linguistic rules, classifications of commands and prohibitions, and considerations of public interest (maṣlaḥah).[7]

In the practical process of establishing Sharī'ah rulings, legal verses rarely "stand alone." There are at least three reasons for this. First, the Qur'an often employs language that allows for semantic variation—for instance, whether a command implies obligation (wujūb) or recommendation (nadb), or whether a prohibition indicates prohibition (taḥrīm) or undesirability (karāhah). Second, some legal verses are general ('āmm) or concise (mujmal), thus requiring specification, elaboration, or reinforcement through other verses and the Sunnah. Third, social realities continuously evolve while the text remains fixed; therefore, legal determination necessitates a disciplined process of reinterpretation so that law does not devolve into a mere textual slogan but remains a functional and just guide for life.[8]

At the methodological level, uṣūl al-fiqh functions as a "measuring instrument" to ensure that the exegesis of legal verses does not descend into subjective opinion. Principles such as the reading of general and specific ('āmm–khāṣṣ), absolute and qualified (muṭlaq–muqayyad), literal and metaphorical (ḥaqīqah–majāz), as well as the determination of the meanings of commands (amr) and prohibitions (nahy), are foundational tools that guide the exegete toward controlled legal inference. Through these instruments, the exegete can assess whether a term denotes obligation, contains exceptions, is restricted by context, or possesses secondary indicators (qarīnah) that alter its legal status. Contemporary studies in Indonesia also emphasize that strengthening such methodological aspects is vital to prevent legal interpretation from falling into literalism that neglects linguistic structures and the logic of legal derivation.

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6   Alfian Dhany Misbakhuddin and Ahmad Wafi Nur Safaat, "Potret Metode Tafsir Ahkam Al-Qur'an Karya Abu Bakar Al-Jashshash," *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.19109/jsq.v2i1.11222.

7   Irhas, "Penerapan Tafsir Al-Qur'an Bi Al-Qur'an (Studi Atas Kitab Tafsir Al-Mīzān Fī Tafsir Al-Qur'ān Karya Muhammad Husain Al-Thabathaba'i)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 24, no. 2 (2016): 150–61, https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v24i2.1682.

8   Muhammad Ardi Kusumawardana, "Metodologi Kontekstual Dalam Tafsir Ayat Hukum: Studi Literatur Atas Tafsir Klasik Dan Kontemporer," *TSAQOFAH* 4, no. 6 (2024): 3882–95, https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v4i6.3877.

However, methodological rigor does not equate to interpretive rigidity. Modern discussions have thus introduced contextual and maqāṣidī approaches as means to maintain alignment between the exegesis of legal verses and the overarching objectives of the Sharī'ah. The contextual approach does not subordinate the text but rather situates it within its web of contexts: the causes of revelation, the social problems addressed, and the moral pattern intended by divine guidance. In the literature on tafsīr al-aḥkām, contextual tendencies are often understood as efforts to balance two things—fidelity to the textual structure (to maintain rigor) and sensitivity to reality (to remain relevant). This approach usually requires cross-reading between classical and contemporary tafsīr works so that legal verses are understood not only as normative injunctions but also as ethical principles that can guide the resolution of new issues.

In relation to this, the maqāṣidī approach stresses that the establishment of Sharī'ah should not end with "what the law says" but extend to "why the law was established." Within tafsīr, maqāṣid often functions as a framework for weighing benefits (maṣlaḥah) and harms (mafsadah), especially when a verse can be interpreted into multiple legal outcomes. The maqāṣid perspective also helps readers understand why some exegetes emphasize the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property as the major objectives of Sharī'ah. Thus, legal determination is not merely the translation of text into rule, but the activation of revelation as a measurable moral and welfare-oriented orientation.

Within the framework of this research, this theoretical foundation serves as an entry point to examine the interpretive strategies of two prominent exegetes from different traditions. Al-Qurṭubī is widely recognized for his fiqhī exegesis, in which verses are analyzed with strong attention to scholarly opinions, ikhtilāf al-madhāhib (juristic differences), ḥadīth evidence, qirā'āt, and the detailed consequences of rulings[9]. Methodological studies of Al-Qurṭubī's tafsīr indicate that he draws upon the Qur'an, Sunnah, the views of Companions and Successors, asbāb al-nuzūl, and linguistic analysis as mutually reinforcing sources, which he synthesizes into argumentative legal conclusions. On the other hand, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, through Al-Mīzān, is often read as an exegete who excels in tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān, characterized by rational-philosophical reasoning and thematic inter-verse analysis. In Indonesian scholarship, this method is understood as an effort to treat the Qur'an as a self-interpreting semantic system, whereby legal determinations are not drawn from isolated verses but from a coherent network of textual indications.[10]

From the perspective of legal-theoretical formation, the difference in strategy between the two can be explained as a difference in emphasis. The fiqhī orientation of Al-Qurṭubī tends to treat legal verses as a direct field of istinbāṭ—closely connected with practical jurisprudence and juristic debate—while Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Qur'an-interprets-Qur'an approach emphasizes caution, ensuring that no verse is interpreted apart from others that clarify its principles, limits, or purposes. Both are methodologically rigorous, yet each follows a different "main route": one foregrounds

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9   Herliani, Romlah Widayati, and Ade Naelul Huda, "Metodologi Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Hukum K.H. Ahmad Sanusi (Studi Analisis Kitab Raudhatu Al-'Irfân Fî Ma'rifati Al-Qur'an)," *Darul Hikmah: Jurnal Penelitian Tafsir Dan Hadits* 8, no. 2 (2022): 159–72, https://doi.org/10.61086/jstiudh.v8i2.36.

10 Rangga Oshi Kurniawan and Aliviyah Rosi Khairunnisa, "Karakteristik Dan Metodologi Tafsir Al-Mizan Al-Thabathaba'i," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 1, no. 2 (2021): 146–50, https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v1i2.11694.

the ecosystem of fiqh and ikhtilāf, the other foregrounds the internal coherence of revelation as the basis of meaning and legal formulation.[11]

At this point, it is important to affirm that the theoretical foundation of āyāt al-aḥkām concerns not only definitions or lists of rules, but also an academic ethic of religiosity—that is, how legal determinations are made responsibly, without haste, and without forcing conclusions beyond the strength of their textual evidence. Indonesian studies on the methodology of tafsīr al-aḥkām signal a similar insight: robust legal conclusions emerge from a combination of methodological discipline, openness to interpretive diversity, and sensitivity to maqāṣid. When the exegesis of legal verses seeks only to "pronounce verdicts," it risks rigidity; but when it seeks "direction," it becomes a guiding science rather than a punitive one.

The Interpretive Strategy of Al-Qurṭubī in Legal Verses

Al-Qurṭubī's interpretive strategy for legal verses rests on a methodological assumption that Qur'anic verses are not only to be read for linguistic meaning but also to be derived into practical Sharī'ah rulings. Accordingly, *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* is not merely an "informative" tafsīr but one that systematically directs readers toward the legal implications of a verse—complete with its argumentative structure.[12] At the source level, Al-Qurṭubī operates within a multilayered reference model. His interpretation is not confined to the Qur'anic text alone but is integrated with the Sunnah, the opinions of the Companions and Successors, reports on *asbāb al-nuzūl*, variant *qirā'āt*, Arabic poetry, as well as juristic and exegetical literature from earlier scholars. Methodological studies further show that Al-Qurṭubī frequently cites *ḥadīth* collections—including the *kutub al-tis'ah*, *sunan*, *musnad*, and *maghāzī* literature—to reinforce or delimit the understanding of a verse when it is general or open to multiple interpretations.[13]

In terms of procedure, Al-Qurṭubī's method typically begins with rigorous linguistic analysis, as even minor variations in diction can significantly affect the status of legal obligation (*taklīf*). He then integrates transmitted reports and supporting evidence from the Sunnah and *athār*, before engaging the verse within the field of *fiqh*—examining juristic disagreements, evaluating the arguments presented, and identifying where one opinion may hold greater strength. This makes Al-Qurṭubī's process of legal formulation resemble an academic deliberation, where arguments are presented, tested, and concluded through *tarjīḥ* based on the strength of evidence and consistency of principles rather than mere adherence to school tradition.

Significantly, while Al-Qurṭubī is affiliated with the Mālikī school, he does not exhibit rigid sectarian bias in his conclusions. Studies on the application of *uṣūl al-fiqh* in Al-Qurṭubī's exegesis—such as in verses on commercial transactions—indicate that he often compares the opinions of other jurists before preferring the view he deems most balanced and argumentatively sound. This explains why *Al-Jāmi'* often appears "firm but not narrow": firm in methodological

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11 Abdul Rohman, Barikli Mubaroka, and Qoree Butlam, "Methodology of Tafseer Al-Qurtubi: Sources, Styles and Manhaj," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 180–202, https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i2.1451.

12 Kusumawardana, "Metodologi Kontekstual Dalam Tafsir Ayat Hukum: Studi Literatur Atas Tafsir Klasik Dan Kontemporer."

13 Irham Muhammad Azama and Havidz Cahya Pratama, "Pandangan Ushul Fikih Al-Qurthubi Dalam Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Jual Beli," *Alhamra: Jurnal Studi Islam* 4, no. 2 (2023): 125–42, https://doi.org/10.30595/ajsi.v4i2.18413.

discipline, yet accommodating of legitimate diversity in *ijtihād*.[14] Viewed from the objective of legal establishment, Al-Qurṭubī's strategy represents an effort to safeguard two elements simultaneously: ensuring that legal verses remain textually grounded and ensuring that legal conclusions do not float free from methodological *istinbāṭ*. For this reason, his discussions of legal verses are characteristically detailed—he intends for readers to grasp the "path" toward a ruling, not merely its result. Studies examining his *istinbāṭ* method in specific topics (such as the polygamy verse) confirm the same pattern: legal derivation is conducted by attending to linguistic indicators and textual structure, supported by a *fiqh* framework that renders the ruling intellectually accountable.[15]

Thus, Al-Qurṭubī's interpretive strategy in Sharī'ah formulation may be summarized as a jurisprudentially oriented model of argumentative exegesis—broad in sources, hierarchical in method, and conclusive through *ikhtilāf* and *tarjīḥ*. This model is crucial to your research because it provides a clear methodological contrast when compared with Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approach, which prioritizes internal Qur'anic coherence before moving toward normative consequences.

Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Interpretive Strategy in Establishing Sharī'ah Rulings

Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's strategy in formulating Sharī'ah rulings through *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* rests on the foundational idea that the Qur'an possesses an internal coherence, through which its verses can mutually elucidate one another. Consequently, the establishment of law does not begin with *fiqh* discussions that immediately delve into juristic disagreements (*ikhtilāf al-madhāhib*), but rather with the stabilization of meaning—refining the verse's sense through its network of related verses that share thematic, lexical, or structural affinities. Irhas's study on the application of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* underscores that this approach characterizes *Al-Mīzān*: a verse is interpreted within the Qur'an's own system of guidance, and the resulting interpretation is subsequently reinforced by external sources in a measured and disciplined manner.[16]

From a procedural standpoint, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī constructs his interpretation in a relatively consistent sequence. He begins with a meticulous reading of the verse—its language, structure, and intra-sentential relationships—then expands the semantic horizon by introducing "corresponding verses" (*al-āyāt al-mutaqāribah*) as clarifying counterparts. This process ensures that legal meaning is not treated as an isolated "command extract" but as an integral component of a broader Qur'anic principle. The studies of Kurniawan and Khairunnisa highlight the distinct methodological character of *Al-Mīzān*: it emphasizes internal textual coherence, incorporates rational considerations, and maintains thematic connectivity to prevent fragmentary interpretation.

Once the meaning of a verse is stabilized, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī introduces rational-philosophical argumentation. Here, reason is not positioned as a rival to revelation but as a tool of clarification—ensuring that the selected interpretation remains logically consistent and aligned with the overarching Qur'anic worldview. Accordingly, when dealing with legal issues, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī tends to identify the foundational principle of the verse before drawing normative consequences.

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14 Rohman, Mubaroka, and Butlam, "Methodology of Tafseer Al-Qurtubi: Sources, Styles and Manhaj."

15 Kurniawan and Khairunnisa, "Karakteristik Dan Metodologi Tafsir Al-Mizan Al-Thabathaba'i."

16 Fatimah Isyti Karimah and Iwan Caca Gunawan, "Manhaj Tafsir Al-Mizan Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Karya Muhammad Husain Thabathaba'i," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 2, no. 1 (2022): 41–48, https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i1.15813.

Karimah and Gunawan's research on the *manhaj* of *Al-Mīzān* confirms that this tafsīr does not rely solely on transmitted reports (*riwāyāt*), but also develops analytical reasoning, producing a synthesis of textual precision and systematic thought.

Regarding the use of transmitted reports, *Al-Mīzān* is known for its selectivity. Reports are not accepted uncritically as "discussion closures," but rather evaluated for their coherence with the meanings constructed through the inter-verse method. This stance is crucial in understanding why *Al-Mīzān* enjoys broad scholarly acceptance: it prioritizes Qur'anic coherence while still utilizing reports—though within the theological horizon of Shī'ī thought. In this sense, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's strategy in Sharī'ah determination can be described as "meaning-structure-based legal formulation": consolidating meaning through inter-verse correlation, affirming it with rational argumentation, and weighing transmitted evidence as supportive material that must never compromise the integrity of Qur'anic coherence.

The strength of this approach lies in its resilience against textual fragmentation. By rejecting atomistic reading and emphasizing the Qur'an's internal unity, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's methodology safeguards legal interpretation from being reduced to isolated verdicts detached from the scripture's moral and conceptual architecture. As such, his interpretive strategy situates law not as an outcome of mere literal derivation, but as a manifestation of an integrated Qur'anic reasoning process that harmonizes revelation, intellect, and ethical intent.

Comparative Analysis of Al-Qurṭubī's and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Strategies in Establishing Sharī'ah Rulings

A comparison between Al-Qurṭubī's and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approaches to legal verses reveals a fundamental divergence in how they perceive the relationship between text and law. Al-Qurṭubī reads legal verses with the aim of deriving practical rulings that can be directly applied, whereas Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī seeks to understand the Qur'an's message as an interconnected system of meanings. Neither invalidates the other's approach; rather, they stem from differing scholarly priorities—one emphasizes legal certainty, the other semantic unity. This distinction highlights that the establishment of Sharī'ah is not merely about extracting textual evidence, but about interpreting verses so that the resulting rulings remain logical, holistic, and grounded in the divine intent of revelation.

The sources of exegesis provide the first point of contrast in their methodologies. Al-Qurṭubī explores multiple layers of reference—*ḥadīth*, *athār*, and juristic opinions—to reinforce the meaning of a verse, positioning transmitted reports as authoritative supports that guide legal formulation.[17] Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, by contrast, centers his exegesis on the interconnectedness among verses within the Qur'an itself.[18] He holds that the Qur'an can elucidate its own meaning when its verses are read as a coherent whole. In this respect, Al-Qurṭubī's approach moves outward toward external textual authorities, while Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's method moves inward, probing the semantic depth that arises from the text's own internal relationships.

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17 Bayram Demircigil, "The Conceptualization of Jurisprudential Exegesis as the Intersection of Tafsir and Fiqh: A Critical Approach," *Religions* 16, no. 2 (February 18, 2025): 254, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16020254.

18 Mohammad Pakdin Asl, "The Relation between Intellect, Intuition and Revelation from the Viewpoint of 'Allāma SMH Ṭabāṭabā'Ī" (University of Glasgow, 2021).

This divergence becomes particularly evident in their interpretation of legal verses such as Qur'an 4:3 (on polygamy). Al-Qurṭubī interprets this verse by emphasizing its legal permissibility, presenting juristic opinions concerning the limits of justice and the number of wives, and concluding that *justice* constitutes the condition for lawful polygamy.[19] Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, reads the same verse as a social correction to pre-Islamic practices, framing justice not as a technical boundary but as a moral principle.[20] Thus, while both exegetes engage the same text, their interpretive emphases diverge—one oriented toward operational law, the other toward essential ethical value.

Their argumentative structures also reflect distinct intellectual orientations. Al-Qurṭubī presents a discursive, dialogical style, displaying various opinions and weighing them using legal-theoretical principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).[21] He assesses the strength of evidence through consideration of transmission chains (*isnād*), linguistic precision, and legal context. Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in contrast, constructs layered explanations—beginning with sentence structure, followed by inter-verse relations, and culminating in principle-based conclusions.[22] He refrains from hastily issuing rulings, maintaining that law must emerge from stable and coherent meaning. This results in a more contemplative tafsīr—one that asks not only "what is the ruling," but also "why does this ruling exist" within the framework of the Qur'an's justice-oriented revelation.

In their treatment of reason ('aql), the two exegetes exhibit different degrees of engagement. Al-Qurṭubī employs reason as a clarifying instrument but upholds the text as the supreme source of authority; his rationality serves to reinforce, not determine, revelation. Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, however, grants greater scope to rational reflection, using logic to ensure that interpretation aligns with the Qur'an's general principles. Yet, in his view, reason never replaces revelation—it functions as a means of affirming coherence, not of legislating anew. Thus, Al-Qurṭubī safeguards legal validity, while Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī safeguards semantic integrity—two complementary facets of Qur'anic rationality.

Their differing attitudes toward transmitted reports (*riwāyāt*) further illustrate their methodological contrast. Al-Qurṭubī adopts an accommodative approach, presenting multiple reports—even divergent ones—and then selecting among them based on the strength of transmission and contextual suitability.[23] He treats the diversity of *riwāyāt* as an intellectual richness that expands the horizon of legal understanding. Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in contrast, is selective and critical, rejecting reports that conflict with the Qur'anic meanings he has established through the inter-

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19 A'Abdillāh M Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi'li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-Miṣriyyah, 1964).

20 Muḥammad Ḥusayn Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān Fi Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān* (Mu'assasat al-A'lamī, 1991).

21 Camilla Adang, "Abū Muḥammad b. Al-Qurṭubī versus Abū ʿAlī Al-Rundī: An Andalusī Polemic on the Modes of Transmission of the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19, no. 3 (October 2017): 134–43, https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2017.0305.

22 Mohammad Jafar Elmi, "The Views of Ṭabāṭabā'ī on Traditions (Aḥādith) and Occasions of Revelation (Asbāb Al-Nuzūl) in Interpreting the Qur'an," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 15, no. 1–2 (January 2022): 45–66, https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2022.a925782.

23 Halil Hüseyin, "Reconciling the Qurʾān and the Bible: A New Approach to Scriptural Dialogue," *HTS : Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (December 22, 2025): 10763, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v81i1.10763.

verse method.[24] Consequently, Al-Qurṭubī's tafsīr appears dense with textual references, while Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's tafsīr appears more focused on maintaining the Qur'an's unity of message as a coherent semantic system.

The outcomes of their methods reveal two distinct faces of legal exegesis. Al-Qurṭubī produces a tafsīr that is practical, applicative, and jurisprudentially usable, demonstrating how law can be systematically derived from robust textual evidence.[25] Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, on the other hand, highlights the philosophical and ethical dimensions of legal verses, striving to ensure that every ruling remains rooted in the Qur'an's spirit of justice, compassion, and equilibrium. If Al-Qurṭubī fortifies the structure of law, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī reinforces the meaning that sustains that structure. They traverse different paths, yet ultimately pursue the same goal.

Through a broader interpretive lens, the two approaches can, in fact, be synthesized. Al-Qurṭubī's method preserves methodological rigor and discipline in legal derivation, while Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's ensures that law never loses its moral vitality. A synthesis of both could yield a contemporary model of Qur'anic legal exegesis that is textually meticulous yet ethically attuned. In modern tafsīr studies, such integration enables readers to perceive that interpreting legal verses is not merely a quest for definitive rules, but a pursuit of balance between the precision of evidence and the justice of meaning—the dual essence of the Sharī'ah's ultimate purpose.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the key difference between Al-Qurṭubī and Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī lies in their distinct argumentative orientations in formulating Sharī'ah rulings. Al-Qurṭubī employs a jurisprudential approach rooted in *fiqh*, linking legal verses to the Sunnah, *athār*, and *ikhtilāf* among scholars to produce detailed and applicable rulings. In contrast, Al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī begins with the Qur'an's internal coherence through *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*, strengthening interpretation with rational analysis and critical selection of *riwāyāt*. Both approaches demonstrate that establishing Sharī'ah is not merely textual citation but a disciplined methodological process requiring consistency, intellectual rigor, and transparency in reasoning, as emphasized in Indonesian studies on *tafsīr al-aḥkām*.

Despite its contributions, this research remains conceptual and literature-based, lacking extensive case analysis across diverse legal themes such as criminal, economic, or family law. The comparative framework also requires deeper textual examination of specific verses and more explicit analysis of *uṣūl al-fiqh* principles applied by each exegete. Future studies should expand textual samples and employ measurable comparative matrices to strengthen analytical precision. Incorporating focused case studies—such as those on trade, inheritance, or polygamy—would allow clearer assessment of methodological consistency and practical implications for contemporary Qur'anic legal interpretation.

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24 Davood Saemi, "A Comparative Study of the Views of Mullā Ṣadrā and 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī Regarding Ambiguous Verses in the Qur'an," *Kheradname-Ye Sadra* 108, no. 4 (2022): 41.

25 Ahmad Farid Fanani, Teguh Iswahyudi, Fiko Savero, Rifat Syauqi Efendi, and Akmal Dzakwan, trans. 2025. "Dialectics of Islamic Jurisprudence on Music: A Systematic Literature Review: Dialektika Fikih Islam Tentang Musik: Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis". *Theosinesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 1 (2): 1-16. https://doi.org/10.20625/theosyn.v1i2.017.

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