

Hamka and the School of Modernists in Minangkabau

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Abstract

The study aims to provide a concise historical background of Islamic reform movement in West Sumatera with particular reference to the idea of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullahor better known for his pseudonym Hamka (1908-1981). The main issues explored is the socio-religious reform advocated by Hamka in the quest of modernity, including his enriching narrative of renewal and spiritually enlightening vision. To this end, this research aims to highlight his key works and reformist aspiration, examines the influence they generated to further his cause, and assesses his enduring legacy and monumental contribution to the history and tradition of reform in the Malay world. This study uses normative and qualitative approach through content analysis. The data was conceptually analysed using descriptive, comparative and integrative method. The study found that Hamka's modern idealism was instrumental in driving new consciousness of Islamic movement for reform (islah) and renewal (tajdid) in the Malay world contributing to unprecedented religious struggle that erupted in the late 20th century in Malay Archipelago. It reflected the force of modern ideas espoused by the leading Egyptian-mufti and polymath Shaykh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) that had brought decisive and greatest influence in the region. This study shows how Hamka's work present higher Islamic ideals and principles. It also highlights the dynamic

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aspirations of Kaum Muda (the young faction) in their socio-religious development.

Keywords: Hamka; Modernist; Maninjau; Minangkabau

Introduction

This paper explores the historical background of Islamic reformist movement in Minangkabau, especially the rise of Muhammadiyah¹ in its formative years, that largely stems from the considerable influence and exceptional work of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, or better known for his pseudonym Hamka (1908-1981) a famous Southeast Asian Islamic reformist scholar and Muslim polymath in the Malay world.² Hamka was born in Maninjau, West Sumatra, in a local Minangkabau matrilineal society that is traditionally known for its religious orthodoxy and adherence to the matrilineal system. It symbolized the authority of ninik mamak (tribal leaders) in protecting the welfare of their nephews, in strict adherence to traditional customs, which places women in a higher position to familial heritage, as indispensable norms and practices dominating their affairs.³ He received his early education in a local madrasah and later on moved to a reputed pesantren (religious boarding school) of Thawalib School (Sumatera Thawalib) in Padang Panjang, a mainstream modernist school formed in 1919 that pioneered a progressive-based

¹Sri Chalida, Gusnanda, Nandi Pinto, Ade Irwansyah, Afriadi. "Social and Cultural Dynamics in Hadith Writing in Minangkabau: Study of the Book of Hidayatu al-Thalibin." *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 22, no. 2 (2024): 483-516.

²Mohd. Kamal Hassan. "Hamka: the Famous Southeast Asian Islamic Reformist Scholar" IIIT Online Intellectual Discourse Series No. 21, 13 Nov, 2020.

³Rahmah Eka Saputri, Amril, Erma Gusti, Nurjannah. "Under the Shadow of Patriarchy: Women Position in Minangkabau Matrilineal System." *AJIS Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2024): 393-411.

educational framework of religious instruction, pedagogy, and curriculum.

Hamka had produced significant historical works that offer a universal and comprehensive perspective of Muslim history, such as *Sejarah Umat Islam* and *Dari Perbendaharaan Lama*. Meanwhile his established works in philosophical and anthropological fields⁴ includes *Falsafah Ideologi Islam* (1950), *Lembaga Hidup* (1940), *Falsafah Hidup* (The Philosophy of Life) (1940), *Tasauf Modern* (1939) (Modern mysticism – which was compiled initially in 1939 from a series of articles in *Pedoman Masyarakat*), *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (1960),⁵ *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup* (1979)⁶, *Kenang-Kenangan di Malaya* (1957),⁷ *Sayid Jamaludin al-Afghani* (1965),⁸ *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi* (1946), *Muhammadiyah Melalui Tiga Zaman* (1946), *Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau* (1975), *Islam dan Kebatinan* (1972), *Perkembangan Kebatinan di Indonesia* (1976),⁹ and *Peribadi* (1950)¹⁰ that value the independent individual will, and addresses the need for spiritual development and metaphysical consciousness. These works were written from a rationalistic perspective and a reformist Muslim view of

⁴Alexander Stark, Khairul Hisyam Baharuddin. “Hamka’s Contribution to the Field of Anthropology: Another Perspective on Hamka’s Work.” *Al-Itqan Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies* 8, no. 5 (2023): 83-97.

⁵Hamka. *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Batu Caves: PTS Publishing House, 2023).

⁶Hamka. *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1966).

⁷Hamka. *Kenang-Kenangan Ku Di-Malaya*. Singapura: Setia Darma, 1957.

⁸Hamka. *Said Djamaluddin Al-Afghany: Pelopor Kebangkitan Muslimin* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970).

⁹Hamka. *Perkembangan Kebatinan di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Bulan Bintang, 1971.

¹⁰Hamka. *Peribadi* (Batu Caves: PTS Publishing House, 2023).

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Muhammadiyah, which brought forth compelling arguments against the deviant teaching of kebatinan or religious indigenization and mysticism in Minangkabau.

His writings includes fictional and non-fictional books, literature, and motivation and significant theme of mystical and spiritual experience, which includes *Mengembalikan Tasauf ke Pangkalnya* (1942), *Doa-Doa Rasulullah SAW* (1974), *Akhlaqul Karimah* (1992), *Mutiara Filsafat* (1956), *Perkembangan Tasawuf dari Abad ke Abad* (1952) and *Renungan Tasauf* (1985) that refers to the spiritual-ethical teaching of al-Ghazali, al-Junayd, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah and Syah Waliyullah, reaffirming the essence of tasawuf as conceived by Junayd and its perennial value and truth that made relevance to present world society. It develops the tawhidic worldview of the Qur'an and sunnah and the Muslim outlook of life in conceptualizing the intellectual and religious aspects of its history and reaffirming its profound spirituality and uncompromising principle of monotheism (tawhid).

The last and final work of Hamka, which has a lasting impact on Muslim in the Malay-Indonesian world, is his monumental 13th volume Qur'anic exegesis, *Tafsir al-Azhar*. This is a great work which draw upon his knowledge of Arabic literature, poetry, Islamic theology, philosophy and civilization, Islamic history, Islamic jurisprudence, and western philosophy and thought, although this was maintained through Arabic translation. It features an enriching aspect of Malay-Indonesian culture and the sociology, art, language, history, politics, and contemporary development of scientific knowledge and technology.¹¹

Hamka's *tafsir* lesson was first featured in his fortnightly

¹¹Mohd. Kamal Hassan. "Hamka: the Famous Southeast Asian Islamic Reformist Scholar" IIIT Online Intellectual Discourse Series No. 21, 13 Nov, 2020.

magazine *Gema Islam*, which appeared in 1962 to replace Panji Masyarakat, which was banned by Sukarno in 1960. The 30th volume work was originated from his 1959 after *fajar* (dawn) lectures or kuliah tafsir (exegesis of the Qur'an) in Masjid Agung al-Azhar. It was published in the *Gema Islam* magazine only up to 1964, when he was arrested on trumped-up charges by Sukarno regime. The baseless accusation of complotting against the regime was obviously concocted to justify his arrest. The communist-leaning secular regime, in fact, wants to remove him from further influencing the Muslim community in Indonesia with his stirring religious sermons and popular writings.¹²

After he was released from detention it took him one year to improve and fine tune his writing of tafsir and able to publish the first juzuk (chapter) in 1967. Among his references were the 38 Arabic *tafsir*, six major hadith collection, and leading sirah work and biography such as *Lubab al-Ta'wil* by Khazin, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutb, *al-Mushaf al-Mufassar* by Farid Wajdi, *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* by al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir al-Kashshaf* by Abu al-Qasim Mahmud b. 'Umar al-Zamakhshari (467-538), *al-Tawassul wa'l-Wasilah* by Ibn Taimiyah, *Al-Arba'in fi Usul al-Din* and *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* by al-Ghazali, and *Futuh al-Makkiyah* by Ibn 'Arabi.

His *Tafsir* begin with *juzu'* (chapter) 18, *Surah al-Mu'minin* as its initial starting point in the course of writing and accomplishing his tafsir. The complete work was originally published in 13th volume and later revised and expanded by him in several places. It was widely printed and distributed by local publishers such as Pustaka Panjimas (1982), Pustaka Nasional

¹²Mohd. Kamal Hassan. "Hamka: The Famous Southeast Asian Islamic Reformist Scholar" IIIT Online Intellectual Discourse Series No. 21, 13 Nov, 2020.

(1989)¹³ and the latest edition by Gema Insani (2015) in 9 volumes.

Hamka's *tafsir* was inspired by the rational spirit of *Tafsir al-Manar*, which was appealing to his heart, by resorting to different *qawl* and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and adapting to societal development, suitable to the time the *tafsir* was written. It adopted the Salafi mazhab orientation that directly referred to the Qur'an as its main sources instead clouded by classical commentaries. It also makes references to contemporary religious intellectual problem in Indonesia.

Based on was a significant lack of comprehensive works that discussed the seminal role and contribution of Hamka in advocating and espousing religious reform in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Only a few writings in the form of articles and theses that have briefly discussed aspects of modern reform and renewal that he projected, especially in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, which provided its structural and cultural context and the phenomenal and structural reform of dakwah activism and its basic orientation and approaches.¹⁴ However, several indispensable works by Hamka himself presented the religious idealism and aspiration for reform in Indonesia. Among his principal works, which focus on the crucial theme of reform, were *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* (2007), *Teguran Suci dan Jujur Terhadap Mufti Johor* (1958),¹⁵ and *Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia* (1961).¹⁶

¹³Hamka. *Tafsir al-Azhar*. 10 jil (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional, 1982).

¹⁴Haslina, Ibrahim. "Hamka's *Da'wah* Reform: Islamisation of Self, Education, and Institution." *Al-ITQAN* 6, no. 4 (2022): 24-46.

¹⁵Hamka. *Teguran Suci dan Jujur Terhadap Mufti Johor* (Bangi: Jejak Tarbiyah Books, 2021).

¹⁶Kevin W. Fogg. "Hamka's Doctoral Address at Al-Azhar: The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia." *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2015): 125-156.

Ayahku documented the historical struggle of Kaum Muda in West Sumatera¹⁷ led by Shaykh Abdul Karim Amrullah (1879-1945)¹⁸ to advocate modern aspiration of Islam based on Abduh's idealism and his rational and modern thought. His legacy was continued by Hamka through *Kulliyah al-Muballighin* of Sumatera and in the movement of Muhammadiyah that has significantly influenced the socio-religious course in Indonesia. *Teguran Suci dan Jujur Terhadap Mufti Johor* articulated the intense struggle of Kaum Muda (the young faction) to combat heresy and superstition in Indonesia and their dispute with Kaum Tua (the old guard) on trivial issues that have brought unrest in local disputes of religion and thought. It illustrated Hamka's attempt to reconcile the different factors of religious dispute and restore the fundamental unity of ummah as *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah* (people of the tradition and the consensus of the ummah)

Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia is a historic speech he delivered at the momentous event of the conferment of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa upon him in 1958 by the University of al-Azhar, Egypt. It described in detail "the influence of Al Ustadz Al Imam Syeikh Muhammad 'Abduh's teaching and thought in Indonesia" summarising his impact in the development of thought, culture and dakwah in the region. Besides that, many other writings in books, theses, and dissertations also provided concise expositions of the aspects of reform inspired by Hamka and his role in reinvigorating the spirit of reform and restoring the dynamism of the ummah in the Malay world. These, summarily,

¹⁷Merican, Ahmad Murad. "Early Ideas on Reform and Renewal through Journalism in the Malay Archipelago: Hamka's Accounts in *Ayahku* (1950)." *Al-Shajarah Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, December (2024): 249-62.

¹⁸Fauzan, Helfi, Fajrul Wadi, Dahyul Daipon. "Mystical Practices and Amulets: The Views of Abdul Karim Amrullah in Minangkabau Culture." *Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2024): 1-22.

were discussed by H. Rusydi,¹⁹ Wan Sabri Wan Yusof,²⁰ Milhan Yusuf,²¹ Mohammad Hafiz Ahmad²² and Khairudin Aljunied²³ that outlined his contributions in gearing significant change and transforming the ummah from his philosophical, and religious writings.

It illustrates the inspiring role of Hamka in shaping the cosmopolitan reform of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, and his impact on improving the modern lives of Muslims through his highly active socio-political engagement and theological writing to synthesize the process. The conceptual and methodological issues that was instrumental in shaping the polemics of *Kaum Tua* (Old Guard) vs *Kaum Muda* (Young Faction) and its deep chasm because of the stagnation of thinking was highlighted by Uswatun Hasanah, Vina Nur Afianah and Mohamad Salik²⁴; Fatmawati²⁵; Nurshuhadah Zuhaidi and Firuz-Akhtar Lubis²⁶; Muslim and

¹⁹H. Rusydi, Hamka. *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Hamka* (Jakarta Selatan: Penerbit Noura (PT Mizan Publika), 2016).

²⁰Wan Sabri, Wan Yusof. "Hamka's "Tafsir Al-Azhar": Qur'anic Exegesis As a Mirror of Social Change". (Unpublished PhD's diss., Temple University, 1997).

²¹Milhan Yusuf. "Hamka's Method of Interpreting the Legal Verses of the Qur'an: A Study of his Tafsir Al-Azhar" (M.A.'s Diss., Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1995).

²²Mohammad Hafiz Ahmad. "Karya Nusantara Hamka". *Kosmo*, 6 Mei (2014): 22-23.

²³Khairudin Aljunied. *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (University of Cornell Press, 2018)

²⁴Uswatun Hasanah, Vina Nur Afianah, Mohamad Salik. "KH. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Gagasannya dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam di Sumatera Barat". *Edureligia* 5, no. 2 (2021): 13-32.

²⁵Fatmawati. "The Contribution of Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah's Thoughts in Islamic Education and its Relevance to Current Issues". *Jurnal Ta'dib* 20, no. 1 (2018): 10-19.

²⁶Nurshuhadah Zuhaidi, Firuz-Akhtar Lubis. "Hamka: The Notable Malay Archipelago Scholar". *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporer* 22, no. 1 (2021): 74-82.

Ihsan²⁷; and Djamal Murni²⁸ in their articles that discussed the historical background and the exponential role of Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (HAKA) (1879-1945) as the leading exponent of modernist camp in Minangkabau. His religious sentiment and influence and significant impact in Muhammadiyah was continued and inherited by his biological son, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka) that further his philosophical and doctrinal struggle to improve the religious and intellectual cause of Muhammadiyah, backed by its advanced and sophisticated prospect of reform, embracing both the dynamic and inclusive educational and socio-ethical condition and its institutional practice and system in Minangkabau (West Sumatra).

The reform movement he inaugurated was carried out by Kaum Muda (the young faction) in the Malay Archipelago that disseminated his dynamic ideas and aspirations through journals and newspapers such as *Al-Imam*, *Al-Munir*, and *Saudara*. One of the leading figure and pioneer in the struggle of Kaum Muda was Haji Rasul (Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah) and Kiyai Ahmad Dahlan whose intellectual legacy was continued by Hamka that was hailed as the foremost advocate of Abduh's reformist ideas through his influential writing and activity.

Some of the main objectives underlying this research are:
(a) to investigate the outstanding contribution and role of Hamka in leading the modern struggle of Kaum Muda in Malay

²⁷Muslim, Ihsan. "The Role of Sheikh Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah in Developing Muhammadiyah in Maninjau, West Sumatera". *IJECA International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application* 1, no. 3 (2018): 5-14.

²⁸Djamal, M. "The Origin of the Islamic Reform Movement in Minangkabau: Life and Thought of Abdul Karim Amrullah." *Studia Islamika* 5, no. 3 (2014); Djamal, Murni. *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad ke-20* (Leiden: Indonesian Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies INIS, 2002).

Archipelago (b) to analyse the theoretical foundation and method he inspired to realize the aspiration for reform and renewal, especially in the learning activity and organizational development to replace the old and obsolete method about religious text, curriculum and schooling, that characterized the Thawalib School in Padang Panjang (c) to illustrate his contributions in advocating change and reform and the integration of the ummah²⁹ through his extensive writings and activities and advocate of Masyumi and Majelis Ulama Indonesia (d) to study his significant influence and legacy in the modern history of Islam and reformist tradition in the Malay Archipelago.

While the significance important brought forth by this research are: (a) to implement the reform ideas advocated by Hamka in Muhammadiyah organisation and other socio-religious movement in the Malay Archipelago (b) to develop his ideal framework as module in the subject of Asian Civilization and Islam in Southeast Asia as indispensable syllabus for IPT (c) to apply his inspiring ideas of reform in transforming the contemporary ummah (d) to mobilize enlightening discourse on reform, *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) *'aql* (reason), *kalam* (Islamic theology) and *maqasid syariah* (the higher objective of Islamic law), and to break the friction between Kaum Tua (the old guard) and kaum Muda (the young faction).

Method

The method of study is based on an inductive and deductive approach. It analyses Hamka's views and principal works, presenting the major framework of reform and its intrinsic Islamic idealism as formulated in his notable works. This critical idea and

²⁹Ahmad Khoirul Fata, Pepen Irpan Fauzan. "From Integration of Islam-State to Integration of Ummah-State: The Biography of Buya Hamka". *Journal al-Tamaddun* 19, no. 2 (2024): 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol19no2.10>

exposition were derived from fundamental text and primary source he produced. It also based on secondary sources from previous works that critically analyse Hamka's modernist thought and perspective of Islamic modernism. This material and data were accessed mainly from archives and manuscripts in the Cornell University's Library's collection that keep the entire corpus of works and references and personal collection of Hamka. Exclusive interview with families and students of Hamka were also conducted to gather some unclassified data.

Some of the expected outcome/impact of this study are: (a) to establish Hamka's prominence and his extensive influence in the reform movement in Malay Archipelago (b) manifesting his inspiring work that projecting the reform ideas especially *Tafsir al-Azhar* (c) expounding his contributions in advocating dynamic and progressive Islam in Malay Archipelago (d) to reclaim his rightful position and legacy in the reform tradition in the Malay world.

Result and Discussion

Abduh's modernist ideas had a profoundly lasting impact in the Malay Archipelago, with their reformist ideas shaping the region's political and social landscape and being readily adopted by Hamka in his deeply influential tafsir, *Tafsir al-Azhar*. The reformative force initiated by Muhammad Abduh in Egypt had a phenomenal impact in Malay-Indonesian world. Many great scholars and reformists branded as Kaum Muda (the young faction) were deeply influenced by his ideas and aspirations. Notable among them were Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (Haji Rasul) (1879-1945), and Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah (1908-1981), who hailed from West Sumatra. In his inaugural address at University al-Azhar, trying to "explain Muhammad Abduh in his Country" and the influence of his teaching in Indonesia, Hamka reflected on the pioneering role of

Sheikh Taher Jalaluddin, Sheikh Muhammad al-Kalali, and Syed Syeikh al-Hadi to disseminate pan-Islamic ideas of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, by translating into Malay pages from *al-Manar* and the magazine *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* that subscribe to his school and work to correct misperception in religion that prevail in society.³⁰

Abduh's indelible legacy in the Malay-Indonesian world is evident in the scholarship he inspired among reform-oriented scholars in the form of tafsir, journals, press, magazines, schools, religious movements and institutions that flourished in the 19th and 20th century. The spread of Abduh's ideas began with the birth of the modernist reformist Pan-Islamism advocated by al-Afghani and 'Abduh, which attracted a large audience from young activists and students. The network established between the Middle East and the Malay Archipelago began at the center of Cairo metropolis, at the height of colonial times, and particularly in the 1920s, which provided a fertile ground for the Malay-Indonesian students. Cairo was the cornerstone of tradition and the epicentre of cultural and religious movements, in which it has been and will always be a citadel of faith and a center of Islamic activity for the general welfare of the people.

In early 20th century, the wide circulation of "islah-oriented" journals, magazines and newspapers such as al-Imam (whose headquarters was in Singapore), al-Munir (West Sumatera), al-Ikhwan and Saudara and other influential works in Malaya contributed to extend Abduh's influence and sparked an unprecedented reform and revivalist movement in the Malay world. Tafsir al-Manar, dictated by Muhammad Abduh and later

³⁰Kevin W. Fogg. "Hamka's Doctoral Address at Al-Azhar: The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia.". *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2015): 125-156.

published by Muhammad Rashid Rida in his periodical *al-Manar*, was highly influential in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago and had an extensive impact on a range of tafsirs produced in the 20th century. It showcased an important methodology of Qur'anic exegesis that celebrated the power of reason, besides encouraging critical investigation and deep reflection and definitive *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). The volume featured commentaries based on systematic exposition of rational principles and scientific framework.

One of the most outstanding tafsir dedicated to the revival and reform of Islam in modern times was *Tafsir al-Azhar*, a major work by Shaykh Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah that played a crucial role in propagating the views of classical tafsir and contemporary religious ideal and realizing the aspiration for reform and renewal in Indonesia. It was compiled from Hamka's lecture on the commentary of the Qur'an delivered at Al-Azhar Mosque, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta in the *kulliyah* *subuh* (seasonal class after dawn). Since 1959, the commentary was published in *Gema Islam*, an influential periodical which profoundly reflected the idealism of *al-Manarist* school inspired by Muhammad Abduh, the "leading exponent of modern Islam in Egypt", as indicated in the style and approach of the tafsir.

The largest part of the tafsir from *Surah al-Mu'minun* (the Believers) to *al-Baqarah* (the Heifer) was accomplished in his solitary confinement (27 January 1964 - 21 January 1967) when Hamka was falsely charged and accused of plotting to topple Sukarno's regime during his guided democracy era. Dedicated to young Muslims with an inadequate knowledge of Arabic who were insufficiently furnished to understand the Qur'an, the Tafsir served as a *da'wah* material for leading *mubaligh* and a cadre of *Muhammadiyah*.

First released in 1961, the Tafsir clearly portrayed the

impact of Abduh's reformism in its exposition, whereby having been influenced by the Muslim reformist ideas championed by 'Abduh and his colleagues, Hamka attempted to disseminate the reformist ideas in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, through the available means at his disposal, that is by preaching and writing. The principal influence of Abduh's rational ideology and discursive philosophy of jurisprudence that impacted the tafsir was his *Risalah al-Tawhid* that influence Hamka's conception of the law, by way of his portraying the challenge and struggle towards the abolishment of taqlid (uncritical acceptance of the past legal opinions) and the implementation of ijtihad (personal judgment).

Muhammad Abduh's phenomenal influence is acknowledged in the introduction of *Tafsir Al-Azhar*: "A very interesting and captivating commentary to be an example for the commentator is *Tafsir al-Manar*, penned by Sayyid Rashid Redha, based on the teachings outlined by his teacher Imam Muhammad Abduh. His *Tafsir*, besides interpreting science pertaining to religion, comprising hadith, jurisprudence and history and others, also synchronize the verses with the current development of politics and social, corresponding to the time the *Tafsir* was conceived and crafted".³¹

Hamka had been exposed to the exhaustive tradition of reform brought from the Middle East since his early years, as evidenced in his immaculate keynote address on the occasion of receiving honorary doctorate from al-Azhar University: "I admit that I never learned, either in al-Azhar or at Cairo University, but my intimate relationship with Egypt had long been rooted, since I managed to read Arabic books, especially of Shaykh Muhammad

³¹Hamka. *Tafsir al-Azhar*. 10 jil (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional, 1982).

Abduh and Sayyid Rashid Ridha”.³²

The approach of Tafsir al-Azhar was primarily based on the critical framework of tahlili (exhaustive commentary) and rational interpretation outlined by Muhammad Abduh in Tafsir al-Manar, which defended the supremacy of reason and upheld the principle of ijtihad based on maslahah (general welfare), reverberating Abduh’s principles in asserting a claim to “renewed interpretation” (ijtihad) of Islamic law based on the requirements of “social justice” (maslahah) of his own era. According to Abduh, where there seems to be a contradiction between “texts” (nas) and “social justice” (maslahah), then social justice must be given precedence. Abduh supports the principle based on the notion that Islamic law was revealed to serve, inter alia, human welfare. Hence, all matters which preserve the well-being of the society are in-line with the objectives of the sharia and, therefore, should be pursued and legally recognized. Abduh believed that independent thinking (ijtihad) would enlarge the scope of knowledge because most of the aspects of human welfare (mu’amalat) can be further elaborated with the use of reason (‘aql).

Tafsir al-Azhar radically challenged the status quo and emphasized the need to transform the worldview and reclaim the authentic values of religion as promulgated by the “salafi”. Hamka, himself a reformer, argued in his interpretation of Qur’anic verses, in the context of his reform ideas in which bid’a (innovations in the realm of religion), and superstition were the main targets. This clearly resonates Abduh’s aspiration and struggle to advocate Islamic modernity and its rational ideology, by outlining an

³²Hamka. *Pengaruh Ajaran Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia*. (Pidato Doktor Honoris Causa dari Universiti al-Azhar, Kaheerah, Mesir pada tgl. 21 Djanuari 1958, Jakarta: Tintamas, 1961).

approach to “return” to a pure understanding of Islam by interpreting the Qur’an and the sunna through the use of independent and rational investigation (ijtihad) above the allegedly blind reliance (taqlid) upon the opinions of the medieval jurists.

The Tafsir also developed a scientific methodology of exegesis which emphasized the central role of ‘aql (reason) and its high place in textual exegesis, in which a visible concern in his tafsir was the issue of ‘aql (reason), rationality and reason. This concern is definitely related to his support of the reformist movement and the neglect of Muslims over the use of reason and their dependence over taqlid, arguing that it is ‘aql that enables man to distinguish between good and evil and to appreciate God’s creation around him. The use of ‘aql is essential in examining ambiguity and the meaning of the Qur’an.

The Tafsir also portrayed the political and social life in Indonesia acting as a mirror of social change. In analyzing the significance of the tafsir as a reflection of the socio-political experience of Indonesia, we can conclude that Tafsir al-Azhar was a mirror of social change: pre-independence and post-independence Indonesia. All such issues were galvanized to contextualize the meanings of verses of the Qur’an in order to be understood and related better to the Malay-Indonesian people.

The cosmopolitan nature of Hamka’s works had presented a multipronged civilizational appeal of his influence and idealism and renewed interest in the fundamental aspect of reform in the early 20th-century Minangkabau heartland. It conveys his critical hermeneutics and epistemological ground in embracing the pan-Islamic ideals and its rational spirit that was instrumental in driving

the historical rise of Muhammadiyah³³ and the revival of its traditional role in modern context. The principal influence was developed in the context of modernizing Islam, and the fusion of Islamic tradition³⁴ with contemporary universal context of socio-cultural reality of post-truth era.

His ideas have significant relevance in the context of social reform and dakwah carried out by Muhammadiyah, reflecting his universal concern to apply Islam in modern life, as “a key factor in modernist reformism”.³⁵ It emphasizes on the communal aspect and values of moderation and tolerance³⁶ and the force of cosmopolitan outlook that “Hamka’s writing brings forth the legacy of cosmopolitanism embedded in the varying Malay traditions”.³⁷

His classic approaches had set forth a vibrant and cosmopolitan outlook of Islam and its fundamental socio-cultural force, aiming “to reform the self-identity of Malay-Muslims into a feeling of belonging to a millennium-old civilization”³⁸. His

³³Muhammad Nurrosyid Huda Setiawan, Kholid Karomi. “Hamka on His Concept of Healthy Soul in Muhammadiyah Organization: A Study towards the Book of ‘Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah.’” *Al-Itqan Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies* 8, no. 5 (2023): 99-109.

³⁴Febriyani, Eman Suherman, Iqbal Hidayatshah Noor, Dewi Fatimah Putri A.S. “Tradition in Modern Islamic Education and the Hermeneutics of Education in the Perspective of Buya Hamka.” *Al-Misbah Jurnal Islamic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2024): 62-82.

³⁵Riddell, Peter G. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

³⁶Ery Charmelita Raska, Wahyu Tri Lestari, Haikal Akbar, Ibrahim Muhammad Isa, Astika Nurul Hidayah. “Analisis Peran Muhammadiyah dalam Dinamika Perkembangan Islam Moderat.” *Jurnal Kajian dan Pengembangan Umat* 6, no. 2 (2023): 164-170.

³⁷Khairudin Aljunied. *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (University of Cornell Press, 2018).

³⁸Khairudin Aljunied. *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (University of Cornell Press, 2018).

creative writing was instrumental to the strengthening of the Islamic life and the reform of the Muslim community, particularly in the Malay world, which brought forth enriching ideas of religion and its scientific elements and moral³⁹ foundation. The contextual approaches he developed to the Quran has provided the essential elements and method to reinterpret the classical text and its epistemological significance by highlighting the essence of religion and its integral socio-religious context and framework⁴⁰ and projecting its dynamic impact on religious thought⁴¹ and vision.

Wahhabi ideology, as a Saudi Arabian ideology in religion, restrains Saudi women with its conservative regulations through gender separation, which is a central part of the Saudi Wahhabi moral vision. This creates a gap and makes Saudi women unable to channel their hobbies and talents. Prince Muhammad bin Salman seeks to diversify the economy and develop several sectors to eliminate Saudi Arabia's economic dependence on oil and gas, as outlined in Saudi Vision 2030. Football, considered the world's most popular sport, is one of the focuses of the prince's economic diversification in the sports entertainment sector. Saudi Arabia's football reform allows Saudi women to participate actively in football as spectators, players, coaches, and match officials.

³⁹Nugroho, Ahmad Ardi & Fathony, Bimba Valid. "Akhlakul Karimah dalam Perspektif Buya Hamka." *Al-Ittihad Jurnal Pemikiran dan Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2024): 13-25.

⁴⁰Syarifah Zahrah Syed Khalid & Mohd Noh Abdul Jalil. (2024). "Hamka's Interpretation on Interfaith Marriage: Its Relevance in Malaysia." *Journal of Islam in Asia* 21, no. 3 (2024): 207-228.

⁴¹Hafiz Asyraf Amir Yusdi, Siti Nursyakirah Yuslan, Mohd Noh Abdul Jalil, Ismail Mamat. "A Comparative Study Between Risale-i Nur and Tafsir al-Azhar's Methodology in Quranic Exegesis and its Relation to the Da'wah Strategy in Turkey and the Malay-Indonesian World." *Journal of Islam in Asia* 17, no. 4 (2020): 329-349.

Changes in regulations regarding women in football have introduced Saudi Arabia as a country that is moving towards a more secular society and promoting a more moderate and tolerant Islam internationally. Although this drew criticism from several conservative Saudi clerics, it did not dampen Prince Muhammad's desire to change the social order in Saudi society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hamka has played an instrumental role in driving the new consciousness and unprecedented reform in the Malay Archipelago in light of his enlightening ethico-legal approaches and socio-political activism and struggle in Muhammadiyah that brought forth the dynamic force and structural nuances of its organizational framework. His political ideal was particularly centered on reforming Muslim society and their religious practice by embracing both its traditional and reformist spirit. It brings an enriching cosmopolitan outlook of Islamic spirituality and ideological postulate in the context of its rational argument and viewpoint, manifesting his unprecedented intellectual and social insight that influences the modern cause and direction of religious reform in his capacity as religious figure, ulama, and litterateur, and helps to transform the Malay-Indonesian world into a dynamic and progressive nation. The production of his Qur'anic exegesis was instrumental in keeping the pace of reform in modern context espousing its social and religious ideal, democratic and rational spirit which has left profound legacy and impact contributing immensely to national integration and renewed ethical and moral consciousness.

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