RATIO-LEGAL FAZLUR RAHMAN'S HERMENEUTICS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SISTERS-IN-ISLAM

Latifah A.M[1*] & Sharifah Nayan[2]
Research Centre for al-Quran and al-Sunnah, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
umilm@ukm.edu.my[1] , syarifahbtnayan@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

Scholars of exegesis (interpretation) are unanimous on the method of interpreting al-Quran and Sunnah. However, Fazlur Rahman proposed a modern method of interpretation by applying hermeneutics. He held that this method is to obtain the universal moral values. His assumption is based on the need for al-Quran to be interpreted in a socio-historical context in order to obtain the reasons and purpose of the revealed text and its moral objectives. Fazlur Rahman's method of interpretation and analysis has its influence on the Sisters-in-Islam (SIS) group. The objective of this article is to evaluate Fazlur Rahman's method of interpretation and analyse the influences of Fazlur Rahman's method determine on women's issues by the SIS group. This is a qualitative research which uses content analysis approach. Research results demonstrated that SIS have adopted Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics in expressing their ideas.

Keywords: *Fazlur Rahman, Sisters-in-Islam, Interpretation, Hermeneutics, Women's Issues*

Abstrak

Para sarjana tafsiran (pentafsiran) sebulat suara mengenai kaedah menafsirkan al-Quran dan Sunnah. Namun, Fazlur Rahman mencadangkan kaedah tafsiran moden dengan menerapkan hermeneutik. Beliau berpendapat bahawa kaedah ini adalah untuk mendapatkan nilai-nilai moral sejagat. Anggapannya berdasarkan kepada keperluan agar al-Quran ditafsirkan dalam konteks sosio-sejarah untuk mendapatkan alasan dan tujuan teks yang dinyatakan dan objektif moralnya. Kaedah pentafsiran dan analisis Fazlur Rahman mempunyai pengaruh terhadap kumpulan Sisters-in-Islam (SIS). Objektif artikel ini adalah untuk menilai kaedah tafsiran Fazlur Rahman dan menganalisis pengaruh kaedah ini dalam isu-isu wanita oleh kumpulan SIS. Ini adalah penyelidikan kualitatif yang menggunakan pendekatan analisis kandungan. Hasil penyelidikan mendapati bahawa SIS telah menggunakan hermeneutik oleh Fazlur Rahman dalam menyuarakan idea mereka.

Kata kunci: *Fazlur Rahman, Sisters-in-Islam, Penafsiran, Hermeneutic, Isu-Isu Wanita.*

A. Pendahuluan

Quranic exegesis significantly developed further with the birth of contemporary interpretation methods such as thematic literary, Arabic linguistic, and hermeneutics methods (Al-Jufri, 2014). Modern trends in methodology of Quranic exegesis is developing from textualist to contextualist, modernist to scientific, socio-political to feminist or thematic. Then, they address the societal evolution, cultural development and political realities of this modern era, which are based on various categories of Islamic worldview (Ali, 2018). The philosophy such as pragmatism, Marxism, existentialism, logical positivism, structuralism, deconstruction and contemporary hermeneutics also entered the Islamic world (Othman Elkhosht, 2019).

Criticism method appears based on the problems and difficulties of the text, editorial and narration, language and literature found in the Bible. In the Christians theology, to several authors, Bible is a "work", thus it can be considered as the work of men. There are differences among the authors that resulted Bible would never be considered as literal Word of God and they almost agreed that Bible is not the Word of God. Therefore, the Christian theology needs hermeneutics to read the Bible "between the lines" in order to understand the actual words of God.

The situation is different in the Muslim community because they can understand God's revelation of the Quran either the words are "on the line" or "between the lines". The Muslim community agreed that Quran is the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and literally it is from God. This agreement also applies to the aspect of reading the Quran for *harfiyah*, it is a worship and will be rewarded, reading the Quran in prayers are obligatory and understanding the Quran for harfiyah is also allowed, while harfiyah translation and interpretation are not regarded as the Quran itself. Ibn Abbas has said that the understanding of Quran is a kind of interpretation not everyone can understand . This kind of understanding refers to the literal understanding. Thus, the Muslim community is in contrast to Jews and Christians because they do not have a problem with the words in harfiyah in the Quran.

The idea that the Quran is "a work inspired from the Divine" just like the Bible is clearly unacceptable to the Muslim community, because they do not consider the Quran as "work" that require hermeneutics in understanding the work. The thought was actually coming from those Orientalists who deceive Muslims to consider the Quran as the Prophet's work and Islam is a religion made by the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the interpretation of the Quran in Islam is different from the hermeneutics method applied by the Christians in the Bible. The contemporary Muslim scholar, al Attas (1999) clearly defines the

difference between exegesis and hermeneutics. The difference is due to the scientific nature of the Arabic language structure, thus the first field of which the Muslims are capable of is exegesis. This is not the same as Greek hermeneutics, not even like Christians hermeneutics, or even as "hermeneutics" of other existing scriptures in their culture and civilization.

Ugi Suharto (2003) stated the problem of hermeneutics has been prove by the hermeneutics philosopher. The *vicious circle* is known as hermeneutics circle has risen the problem of hermeneutics which is there is no definite answer or final decision. The reason is because when one of the elements in the hermeneutics only can be understood in term of meaning of others so that, all the meaning turn into presupposition. So, there is no original meaning. As Longxi (2018) described, when the hermeneutic circle goes on, and when it seems to have reached the contingency of a temporary solution, it only starts yet another circle that reaches farther and deeper ad infinitum. So as Feil & Olteanu (2018) finding in the interpretation of interpretation shown that, hermeneutics is insure the research is not bound to repeat itself *ad infinium* in the historical continuum of preconceived notions

However, in term of Quranic interpretation it is usually related to the liberal thinkers interpretation (Zainol et al. 2016). As Zainol (2018) explain that the use of this method of interpretation is threatening the *aqidah* Islam. Besides that, Fadhilah (2019) and Syarifah & Latifah (2018) shown that, hermeneutics is open towards anybody to make presupposition but in term of Islamic law anybody can make *ijtihad* and constantly changing the work of interpretation. So that, hermeneutics will make Quran as divine revelation and Hadith as the prophet word become a threatening.

The view of Fazlur Rahman on al-Quran, Sunnah, ijtihad and ijma' in the *Islamic Methodology in History* shown that the process of legal reasoning has been closed because the static and unchangeable interpretation of al-Quran. While, according Fazlur Rahman (1979) it is impossible the moral value and social condition of a society is unchangeable because the distinction between *illah* (cause) and *hikmah* (purpose) cannot be maintain. The reason is because the Quranic teaching usually gives pronouncement containing moral reason and legal judgement.

The Fazlur Rahman's method actually give a new view that the process of ratio-legal is open. Then, this method appears more relevant towards many Muslim intellectual thinkers. Another, intellectual thinkers who use hermeneutic method are Arkoun, Nasr Hamid (Marcotte, 2019), Khaled Abou El Fadl (Syarifah & Latifah, 2018) and Amin Abdullah (Othman & Boyman, 2018). The use of hermeneutics is debatable. Zainol et al. (2018) explain that the use of hermeneutics is downgrade the Quran as divine revelation and equally

to the literary work. But, Wadud (1999) developed the method from Fazlur Rahman as a new *ijtihad* on reinterpretation of Quran by gender base. According to Kamaruddin et al. (2018), Wadud was an ex-founder of Sisters in Islam.

After explaining the new methodology to be applied to al-Quran, Sunnah, Ijtihad, and Ijma' in his book, *Islamic Methodology in History* in the year 1966, Fazlur Rahman in his other work, *Islam and Modernity* proposed hermeneutics as a method to interpret al-Quran and Sunnah. So, what is the hermeneutic method applied to al-Quran and Sunnah? How is the method applied by SIS in interpreting women's issues? In order to answer these questions, this article researches on the method introduced by Fazlur Rahman and analyses its influence towards liberal interpretation on women's issues.

B. The Overview of Fazlur Rahman's Thoughts

Fazlur Rahman (1919-1980) was a Muslim Pakistani-American thinker and scholar who boldly advocated reform in Islamic thought of the Neo-modernization movement in the 20th Century (A. Saeed, 2006). He applied the historical-critical method which forms part of hermeneutic theories. He initiated a new methodology to understand al-Quran using historical-criticism in his book, *Islamic Methodology in History* in the year 1966. In the year 1982, he introduced his hermeneutics as *Double Movement* in his work entitled *Islam and Modernity*. In order to apply hermeneutics, Fazlur Rahman stressed on the importance of viewing al-Quran as divine response through the Prophet's (pbuh) mind. In view of hermeneutics taking into account the situation of the author of the text, Fazlur Rahman (1982) emphasized the moral-social and historical context of the revelation during the Prophet's (pbuh) time as the place where the text was born and al-Quran as divine response through the Prophet (pbuh).

Syamruddin (2011) explained that through this approach, one part of a Quranic verse can explain another verse or "*al-Quran yufsiru ba'dhuhu ba'dhan*". He also differentiated Quranic evidence into two groups: general laws and temporal laws. However, A. Saeed (2006) stated that general laws and temporal laws are based on a moral theory of the ideal and contingent upon time and place. This matter is explained by Fazlur Rahman (1982) that hermeneutics is a search process to obtain universal moral messages in al-Quran. He also agreed with Sheikh Yamani's opinion that laws may be changed according to time and place. The latter's opinion holds that Quranic laws may vary according to time and place.

However, al-Quran itself states that specific laws in it are static, perfect, universal and immutable. Applying the holistic worldview (*weltanschauung*), that is, unified and comprehensive view as a characteristic of hermeneutics in order to obtain meaningful messages in al-Quran (Syamruddin, 2011). Abdul Mustaqim (2011) stated that universal values such as justice, liberty, equality and dedication are emphasized in hermeneutics. According to A. Saeed (2006) general principles such as justice, equality and liberty are in line Fazlur Rahman's intentions in developing a moral-social theory consisting of the ideal and contingent in order to understand the reason underlying the content of Quranic laws.

Thus, the historical situation at the time the text was revealed has to be understood and studied for a holistic understanding. Only then can the expressions of moral-social objectives be obtained. In this regard, Wadud (1999) as an ex-founder of SIS agreed that by this method the spirit and meaning of al-Quran can be discovered without bias gender. So, theoretically SIS also used this method to rereading the Quran and reinterpret based on women perspective. This is a qualitative research with content analysis of works by Fazlur Rahman and studies on his interpretations of al-Quran and Hadith such as *Towards Reformulating the Methodology of Islamic Law, Islam and Modernity, Major Themes of the Quran, Interpreting the Quran* and *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer.*

C. Hermeneutics as a System of Interpreting Textual Meaning

Richard E. Palmer (1969) explained that, epistemologically, hermeneutics originates from the Greek word *Hermeneuein* which is generally translated as "to interpret". It forms a stand-alone interpretation with a significant meaning. Three words which connote the meaning of "interpretation" are "*to say*" which illustrates the role of Hermes in reporting something from gods to humans, "to explain" a situation and "to translate". In addition, it also connotes the meaning "to interpret". *Hermeneuein* also refers to the name of the Greek deity, Hermes, messenger of gods and deity of boundaries. Thus, there are three elements of analogy found in the language of Hermes which are the focus of hermeneutics such as follows (Muhibudin 2013):

a) Signs, words or texts as sources to the intermediary who brings the commands (the deity Hermes)
b) Intermediary or interpreter, that is, Hermes.
c) Delivery of message by the intermediary, that is, interpretation in order that it can be understood by the reader.

According to Palmer (1969), Paul Ricoeur proposed hermeneutics as a system of interpretation to render the hidden meaning of the exegesis to the surface by recognizing the element of hermeneutical situation such as texts, symbols or signs. So that, the hidden message can be discover. Braaten (1966) defined hermeneutics as the knowledge used to illustrate an event in a past time and condition, the meaning of which can be existentially understood in the context of present circumstances. Moreover, hermeneutics is usually used to close the gap between the past and present (Young 1969). In the Quranic hermeneutic views, Fazlur Rahman (1982) held the opinion that hermeneutics is a process to search for universal moral messages in al-Quran by understanding the changing nature of Arab society as the place where the text was born and then relating it to the present context through the moral messages found.

Moreover, Esack (1997) stated the process of interpretation proposed by Fazlur Rahman involves interpretation from the present to the time al-Quran was revealed and then back again to the present. Similarly to A. Saeed (2006) explanation on the Fazlur Rahman's framework for interpreting the ethico-legal contents. In order to relate the text to the community, the close-relationship between present-day Muslims with the past Muslim community (the time of revelation) should be takes into account.

So, the methodology proposed by Fazlur Rahman was said to be more systematically done even though there are differences in the interpretation. There will be differences in the interpretation but are unlikely much different like the different between a *madhab* (school of classical Islamic law). It is an alternative to the view based solely on the present context. In addition, the differences in political and socio-cultural environment also always be there throughout the times (F. Rahman, 1979). Through his view on understanding the text of al-Quran is based on reason. Meanwhile, the moral values need to be prioritized more than specific values found in al-Quran. The purpose is to avoid manipulation of interpretation and certain interests such as social, political and economics (Norfazila et al. 2014).

Hence, Fazlur Rahman proposed this hermeneutics double movement as a system to obtain meaning or guidance from al-Quran by comparing context through the dynamic gradual revelation process. Esack (1997) explained that the process of the first movement involves understanding al-Quran as a whole considering the socio-historical background. Moral ethics is also considered to understand

the value rationale underlying the rules or laws. In this way, the meaning of the revelation may be understood appropriate to the context of the time.

In the revelation which allows limited polygamy, if justice cannot be achieved in polygamy, then monogamy is better, as Allah SWT says in chapter an-Nisa verse 3:

> *"And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear you cannot do justice (to so many), then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess. Thus, it is more likely that ye will not do injustice."*

In the first part, Fazlur Rahman explained that al-Quran intends to promote maximum happiness with polygamy, however, it ends with monogamy as the ideal. This matter is explained by A. Saeed (2006) that according to Fazlur Rahman, the ideal is the goal targeted by believers even though the goal may not be achievable at the time the text was revealed. And contingency is what is possible to be done at the time the text was revealed. Thus, the moral value underlying the verse is justice. However, as the verse was revealed in the 7th Century AD at a time when polygamy was prevalent in Arab society, polygamy was difficult to eradicate (F. Rahman, 1964). Thus, what was done was based on suitability for that time, that is, the ideal and achievable of that time.

With regard to change in time and place, Fazlur Rahman (1979) agreed with Ibn Qayyim's statement given meaning by Sheikh Yamani that laws need to be changed according to variation in time and place. And the next process of movement is from the past context to the present. The general objective or guidance obtained from the historical context of the first movement is applied to the second movement so that the new Quranic value may be implemented. However, reform of rules or laws requires an in-depth study of the present situation or circumstances in order that its relevance or importance may be determined (Esack, 1997). But, free riba' does not mean free from exploitation and injustice (Farooq, 2019). In the Prophet's (pbuh) time, *riba'* (Usury) was haram or forbidden because the *jahiliyyah* Arab society practiced usury which was many times over the debt owed and this oppressed the weak in society. Thus, Surah al-Imran verse 130 was revealed to prohibit riba' (usury):

Meaning:

> *"O ye who believe! Devour not usury, doubling and quadrupling (the sum lent). Observe your duty to Allah, that ye may be successful."*

However, Fazlur Rahman (1964) held the opinion that in the issue of usury, the modern interest is not suitable to be eradicated because of economic needs and rate of interest is allowed as long as it is not multiplied many times over as stated in the verse (أَضْعَافاً مُضَاعَفَةً). He thus interpreted the prohibition of

usury to mean excessive interest and not usury or interest itself. In contrast, scholars are unanimous that usury is forbidden and the interest rate imposed now is more oppressive than during the *jahiliyyah* times (Zainol, 2015) (because of its far-reaching implications for human welfare and the economy).

Therefore, Fazlur Rahman held the opinion that the existing methodology of *usul fiqh* (sources of jurisprudence) is not based on systematic moral-social theory. His reason is that interpretation by the jurists is rigid and rejects historical context of revelation and causes Muslims to be unable to overcome present day issues (A. Saeed, 2006). Thus, he brought out the purpose and principles in al-Quran in forming the moral-social theory which is unifying and holistic based on al-Quran and Sunnah (F. Rahman, 1979).

A. Saeed (2006) held that according to Fazlur Rahman, understanding al-Quran from the "moral" perspective is the first priority in the concept of piety (*taqwa*). Thus, Muslims should not consider al-Quran as a manual of legal documents which explains what is permissible and what is prohibited. Instead, it should be viewed as a text containing ethico-moral issues and then technically translated into legal text. Husein (1997) stated that Fazlur Rahman interpreted ethics as a moral theory which acts as guidance on what is right or wrong, as intended by al-Quran.

Fazlur Rahman (1979) agreed with the terms *illah* (cause) and *hikmah* (purpose) stated by Sheikh Yamani in the social field, but disagreed with the terms secular and commercial. F. Nur Azizah (2013) stated that Fazlur Rahman's formula in the moral purpose obtained through al-Quran's response or reply to a question or problem is limited by cause and purpose (*hikmah*). The reply or response from al-Quran was also given based on certain general laws made known from time to time. There are three ways to obtain the moral-social principles in Fazlur Rahman's interpretation as follows (B. Rahman, 2017):

1. *Illah* (cause) and *hikmah* (purpose) stated clearly in al-Quran. Understanding of the verse which is already clear or literally or textually.

2. Generalize a number of related specific expressions. The thematic and intertextual method which arises from the assumption that Quranic verses interpret each other as used by scholars, as in *Al-Quran yufassiru ba'dhuhu ba'dhan* (A. Mustaqim 2011).

3. The socio-historical context may function to strengthen the implied *illah* (cause) and *hikmah* (purpose) in order to determine the direction of meaning and purpose. Understanding the meaning of a verse by the socio-historical context of its revelation, that is, by *asbab an-Nuzul al-Quran* (Reasons for Revelation).

From this moral-social theory, interpretation of Quranic text by *Double Movement* hermeneutics proposed by Fazlur Rahman shows the Quranic moral

purposes as the basis in social teachings. As he explained, in the first part of the Double Movement, one has to understand the Quranic principles. The Quranic socio-historical context is taken into account when exploring the specific expressions concerning a case in order to obtain principles such as justice, fairness and equality. The reason is to understand the purpose in the verse (F. Rahman, 1979). Next, the second part is general to specific. General principles found in the first part are used as the basis to formulate laws appropriate for the modern times (F. Rahman, 1982).

The relationship between al-Quran and the historical background of the verse is studied to identify the Quranic moral principles in order to apply to modern society. The moral-social theory may be understood through the Double Movement hermeneutic process as illustrated in the following diagram:
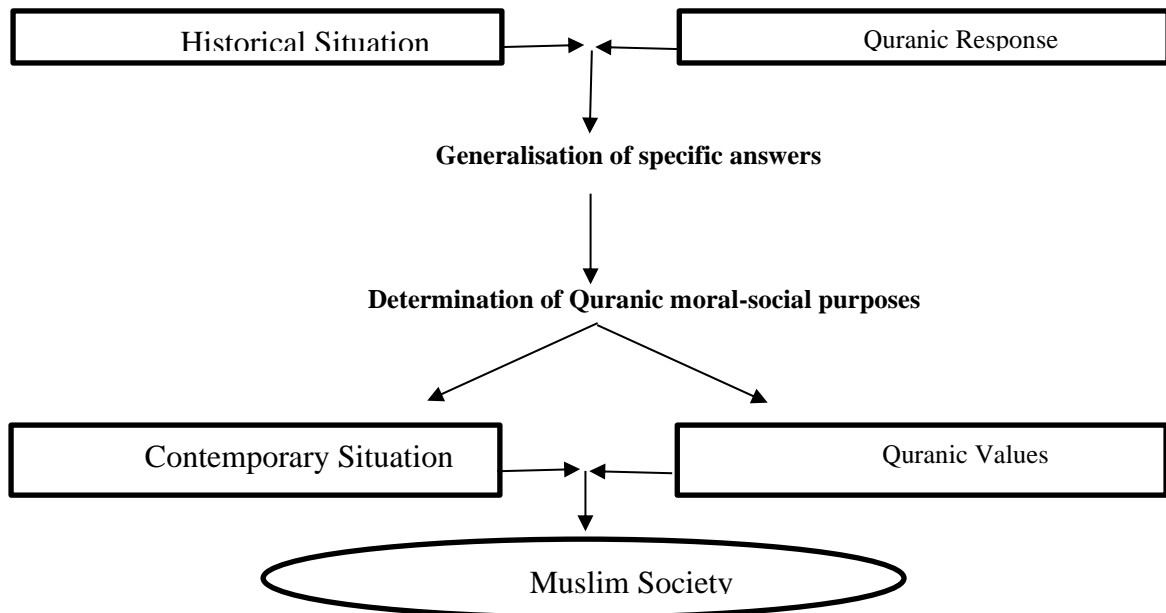

Diagram 1: Double Movement Model (Esack, 1997)

D. Relationship of Sisters-In-Islam and Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutics Revolution of Polygamy Practice

The best instrument to understand the ideal and contingent in the al-Quran is by the historical-critical method which is exploring the socio-historical context so that rational guidance may differentiate between the ideal and contingent (F. Rahman, 1964). Thus, according to SIS (2010), the historical background or socio-historical context of a revealed verse *(asbab al-nuzul)* must be studied. It cannot be refuted that al-Quran raised women's dignity in the aspects of their rights and status compared to pre-Islamic times. One of them is that a man may not marry more than one woman if he cannot be fair. Al-Quran

also allows men to marry more than one by limiting to four women. So how can the two verses be understood and reconciled? (SIS, 2010).

In interpreting verse 3 of Surah al-Nisa', SIS textually understand that if a man fears he cannot do justice, then he may only marry one. Then relating this verse to another verse in al-Quran or Hadith concerning polygamy and justice. For example, chapter an-Nisa' verse 3 clearly suggests polygamy. Upon search, it was found that this verse was revealed in the 5th year of Hijrah after the Battle of Uhud which sacrificed the lives of many Muslim men. Thus, the *asbab al-nuzul* of this surah relates to a Hadith which told of girl orphans under the care of their guardians. Up to a point, the guardians became attracted to the beauty and wealth of the orphans. Then, they planned to marry them without doing justice. In addition, the verse 129 of an-Nisa also explains that justice in polygamy is practically impossible.

Next, understanding a verse contextually means to understand the social-historical context of the verse as the *illah* (cause) and *hikmah* (purpose) so that the Quranic values underlying the verse such as justice and morals may be expressed. As found in history, the practice of unlimited and unconditional polygamy was prevalent in Arab society before the advent of Islam and the *asbab al- nuzul* of this verse told about the girl orphans who married without getting justice. Thus, this surah imposes limits and conditions on polygamy so that polygamy in Arab society became restricted and justice could be upheld.

In terms of the morals relevant to this Quranic verse and Hadith, SIS (2009) specified that this verse established accountability and restrictions to protect and ensure justice for orphans. Nik Badlishah (2010) therefore explained that if placed in the present context , polygamy is not encouraged based on this verse. Thus, this verse was revealed to limit and restrict polygamy prevalent in Arab society at the time. So, polygamy according to SIS is not encouraged and based on current revolution it should be abolished. According to Fazlur Rahman, the reason that polygamy could not be abolished is that it was too ingrained in Arab society at that time. Thus, the practice could only be restricted as the ideal for that time (A. Saeed, 2006).

As discussed by Fazlur Rahman (1989) the same phenomenon occurred in the rules or law for slavery. Al-Quran accepted the practice of slavery then but also very much encouraged emancipation of slaves as stated in chapters; al-Balad verse 13, al-Ma'idah verse 89, and al-Mujadalah verse 3, which is interpreted as an encouragement, not as a command. Nik Badlishah (2010) agreed that al-Quran and Sunnah did not eliminate the practice of slavery during the Prophet's (pbuh) time, but it was later eliminated through *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) of the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them). SIS (2010) however, agreed with Fazlur Rahman (1989) that polygamy must

presently be restricted and marriage is to only one person similar to the abolition of slavery which was also a prevalent practice of Arab society then.

E. Relationship of Sisters-In-Islam and Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutics of Dress Code Practice

A. Mustaqim (2011) stated in this context that the Prophet (pbuh) requested Allah to command to his wives and the believers to cover their whole body when they left home so as to appear righteous and thus avoid being disturbed, as in Allah's command in chapter al-Ahzab verse 59:

> *"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad); that is most convenient, that they be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."*

According to Woodlock (2011) SIS specified that this verse is generally aimed at Muslim women to dress modestly and decently so as not to be harassed. The reason from the context of the verse was that, at the time women on the roads were assumed to be slaves and thus could be harassed (Woodlock, 2011). In the matter of *hijab* (veiling), SIS held that *khimar* in chapter an-Nur verse 31 is not covering for the head or hair. Instead, in the verse, the words "over their persons" with *khimar* refer to a dress, shawl, cloth and so on to cover their *bosoms* (SIS 2010). Similar to this, Ziauddin Sardar also explained the verses related to the women's dress was referred to the circumstances at the time of revelation. The reason was because the dress worn by the women at that time had a deep cleavage which exposed their breasts. So, what al-Quran suggest is to dress modestly but not as a specific dress code (T. Rahman, 2018).

Besides that, according to Shah Rizul Izyan, Mohd Muhiden and Mohad Zahir (2016) SIS stated that piety is more important than wrapping a body because behaviour and action is nothing to do with clothing. That is why SIS stated piety (the fear of Allah or *taqwa*) is the best clothes. This mean according to SIS morality is the first priority which is the main function of understanding the whole *Double Movement* methodology by understanding the privilege principles are over than particular.

Then, the Hadith on *aurah* is also rejected by SIS. They described that Hadith al-Bukhari as narrated by Asma Abu Bakar on the perception of veiling the woman's *aurah* which covers the whole body except the face and hands, has been contested by Muslim scholars such as Tariq Iwadullah and Sheikh Nasiruddin al-Albani who stated that the line of narrators of that Hadith is renowned for being dishonest. Thus, SIS holds the opinion that hair is not part of *aurah*. Further, al-Quran never stated that woman's hair is part of *aurah*. If it

did, there would be a punishment for not conforming to the Muslim dress code as in punishments for fornication, murder and so on (Boo Su-Lyn, 2015).

SIS interpretations of al-Ahzab verses 59, instruct women to dress in modest and decent clothes to avoid harassment. This is based on the context of the verse which advised decent dressing because women on the roads were assumed to be slaves and they could be molested. Thus, these two opinions are agreed that the ideal moral in al-Quran is covering of the woman's body with modest, simple and decent clothing so as not to be harassed.

So in terms of morality, SIS similar to the Fazlur Rahman's thought about morality is the first priority. Their views that, the verses should be understand in term of morality of the social condition at the time revelation. Moreover, as mention before A. Saeed (2006) explained that Fazlur Rahman views al-Quran used to be an ethico-moral then its revolute as a legal text. So, rather than a manual legal document al-Quran should be consider as manual ethico-moral.

F. Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, Fazlur Rahman's method uses hermeneutic theories, that is, historical- criticism, holistic world view (*weltanschauung*) and the social circumstances of the early Islamic society at the time of revelation and applying the underlying rationale to the current social environment. Quranic exegesis based on past and present context renders laws in *fiqh* to be changeable according to time, in line with evolution of morals with era. In conclusion, analysis of the interpretation of SIS demonstrated that they have taken ideas based on Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics. Since the modern methodology in Quranic interpretation by the Muslim modern thinkers is constantly evolving with these modern worldviews and has been recognize by the Muslim society, it is significant for *mufassir* Muslim to rectify the methodology which is misleading the truth of divine revelation. Studies on modern Muslim thinkers and their work is an important study to determine the influence of their thoughts. Therefore, studies on the application of modern methods of interpretation of the Quran should be done to prevent the emergence of new relative interpretations which focus only to the current context and pose negative implications to the general public.

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