

## Feminist Exegesis in Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar

### *Penafsiran Feminis dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar Karya Hamka*

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### Abstract

This research aims to understand the typology of contemporary interpretation in Indonesia, especially concerning the issue of women based on the interpretation narrative in Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar. This interpretation arose in modern thought and was born from Indonesian society that the Dutch were colonizing. Therefore, this interpretation represents an idea with a modern background and colonial issues. One of the interesting issues in Al-Azhar's notion is the interpretation of verses related to women. This study uses a qualitative approach by collecting interpretations related to women in Tafsir Al-Azhar. This research used Hans-George Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic method. The study results prove that the context of the colonial era made Hamka choose to reinterpret the verses of the Qur'an related to women's creation. The purpose of the interpretation is to harmonize between religious values and social conditions. According to Hamka, he interpreted the female verse that said women created from Adam's ribs. Also, he explained controversially that the interpretation of women's creation from Adam's ribs is merely a metaphor. He explained that both men and women could build a fair social system. As well as the issue of women's education rights, Hamka tries to explain that men and women have the opportunity to obtain information and education in an equal position. The latter issue is women's social activities in public areas. In this context, it is not only men who can rule women; on the contrary, women can regulate men's domestic affairs. Therefore, it is the inevitability of the existing potential.

**Keywords:** Tafsir, Hamka, Women, Equal, Contextual Interpretation.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami tipologi tafsir kontemporer di Indonesia khususnya berkaitan dengan isu perempuan berdasarkan narasi tafsir pada Tafsir Al-Azhar karya Hamka. Tafsir ini muncul tidak hanya dalam konteks pemikiran modern tapi juga lahir dari kondisi masyarakat Indonesia yang sedang terjajah oleh Belanda. Oleh sebab itu, tafsir ini merepresentasikan sebuah gagasan dengan latar belakang modern dan isu penjajahan. Salah satu isu yang menarik dalam tafsir Al-Azhar adalah isu tentang penafsiran terhadap ayat-ayat yang berkaitan dengan perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan mengumpulkan penafsiran-penafsiran yang berkaitan dengan perempuan pada tafsir Al-Azhar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode hermeneutika filosofis Hans-George Gadamer. Hasil penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa konteks era penjajahan menjadikan Hamka memilih untuk melakukan reinterpretasi terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan perempuan. Tujuan dari penafsiran tersebut adalah untuk menyelaraskan antara nilai-nilai agama dan kondisi sosial masyarakat yang sedang terjadi. Diantara penafsiran Hamka terhadap ayat-ayat perempuan adalah terkait dengan penciptaan perempuan. Hamka menolak perempuan diciptakan



dari tulang rusuk Adam. Penafsiran semacam ini hanyalah sebuah metafora atau perumpamaan. Ia menjelaskan bahwa baik laki-laki dan perempuan dapat membangun sistem sosial yang berkeadilan. Begitu juga dengan isu tentang hak pendidikan perempuan, Hamka mencoba menjelaskan bahwa laki-laki dan perempuan memiliki kesempatan memperoleh informasi dan pendidikan dalam posisi yang setara. Isu yang terakhir adalah aktifitas sosial perempuan di wilayah publik. Dalam konteks ini, tidak hanya laki-laki yang bisa memerintah perempuan; sebaliknya, perempuan bisa mengatur laki-laki dalam urusan domestik, ini merupakan keniscayaan dari potensi yang ada.

**Kata Kunci:** Tafsir, Hamka, Perempuan, Seimbang, Kontekstual.

## Introduction

Al-Quran revealed a holy book that is sacred<sup>1</sup> for humans, serves as a guide for humans<sup>2</sup> and provides an explanation for everything<sup>3</sup>. Because the Al-Quran is the core source and inspiration for Muslims in their lives<sup>4</sup>. One of the objectives of the Al-Quran was to bring messages that emphasized the equality in various verses.<sup>5</sup> Which means that has been evident that women in the Al-Quran are raised, discussed, and honored with problems that exist in society. Furthermore, Islam posits women in two inseparable positions, namely *first* as servants of Allah, who has the same obligations as men in carrying out Allah's duties and commands, *secondly*, as *caliph*, along with men in maintaining the matters of the world, peace in life. All of that is because men and women are equipped with intelligence and knowledge that continues to develop for humans.

However, not all of these understandings can be accepted and understood well, probably the problem is the cultural and social factors that shape the system and the different "perspectives" between men and women. In addition, the factor of interpretation of the verses depends on the condition of the interpreter, the time/age and the capacity of his knowledge. That is normal, because the Al-Quran does sometimes explain universally/generally, and sometimes specifically, Therefore, it is evident that all this time that the Al-Quran has been studied with various methods and taught in various ways<sup>6</sup>, so that can produce textual and some are contextual interpretations.

Abdullah Saeed expressed the criteria of textualist or contextualist interpreter which used as a reference in assessing. According to him, what is meant by a *textual*

1 Al-Waqi'ah (56); 77-79.

2 Al-Baqarah (2); 185.

3 An-Nahl (16); 89.

4 Abdullah Saeed, Ed., *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2005), 1.

5 At-Taubah (9); 71, Al-Imran (3);195, An-Nisa (4); 24, 32, 124, An-Nahl (16); 97, al-Mujadalah (58);11.

6 Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani, *Nur al-Qur'an: An Enlightening Commentary Into The Ligh Of The Holy Qur'an* (Iran: Imam Ali Public Library, 1998), 16.

approach is a method that strictly refers to the Quranic text which principally focus on literal-oriented. In addition, textual understanding has the assumption that what is in the Al-Quran is universal, and can be applied permanently without admitting broader meanings of the revelation factors. Meanwhile, what is meant by a *contextual* approach is a method in understanding the text by referring to and emphasizing the socio-historical meaning of the Al-Quran and its subsequent understanding. This approach seeks to understand the Al-Quran from the political, social, historical, cultural, and economic context in which the text was derived, interpreted and applied.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of such understanding and methodology, the writer argues that he examines Hamka's thoughts and interpretations of women, especially in his work on Tafsir Al-Azhar. Because *first*, culturally, Indonesia is distant from the Middle East, especially from Mecca and Medina, the place where Islam rooted, allowing differences in culture, politics, and society to make various distinct interpretations. *Second*, in addition, it is interesting that Hamka experienced in two conditions, encompassed the colonial and the post-colonialism periods in Indonesia. The author believed which the interpretation appeared to have different characteristics at that time from the interpretations already existed in Indonesia. *Third*, in understanding the verses of the Al-Quran, to the extent of which Hamka refers to the linguistic aspects of interpreting the verses of the Al-Quran. Likewise, to what extent Hamka pays attention to the socio-historical context of the Qur'an revealed, as well as the context in contemporary era.

Therefore, this study uses the hermeneutical method. This means explaining the condition of Indonesian society when Hamka lived and made the tafsir. Then explain Hamka's interpretations, especially the verses relating to women's problems, including theological problems and social problems. Among them are female creating, education, and women careers in society or women's social activities. Thus, it is hoped that we can find general conclusions about thoughts, and Hamka's interpretations, especially regarding women's theme in various letters (*surah*) and verses in the al-Qur'an. It is mainly related to the condition of Muslims in Indonesia.

## Women in the History of Indonesia

In Indonesia's history, the attention and participation of the public domain of women in Indonesia have started from Aceh in the 14th century. It is recorded that Acehnese women such as Nahrasyiah Ra-Bakhsya Khadiyu, Safi Atuddin, Naqiatuddin, Zakiatuddin, and Kamalat, were recorded as Sultanah of the Aceh

<sup>7</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2006), . 3.

Sultanate.<sup>8</sup> Then this continued until the time of Indonesian independence. The Indonesian women's movement was part of an effort to achieve Indonesian independence from colonialism. This began when women were included in the form of political parties and organizations. It started in 1928 when the first Women's Congress realized in Yogyakarta. Because women are the first teachers for children, it has an essential role in realizing the nation's ideals.<sup>9</sup> There were seven forms of public participation carried out by Indonesian women, both individually and in movements, before and after independence, 1) Fighting for independence 2) Fighting for Education for Women 3) Criticizing and Opposing Arbitrary Polygamy 4) Marriage 5) Against Feminism and Criticizing the West 6) Fighting for the Economy 7) Combating Women Trafficking.

The style of the women's movement associations in the pre-independence era focused on improving women's position so that it developed to increase the right to education for women.<sup>10</sup> Many modern Islamic educational institutions have adopted the learning system from Europe and Egypt, including "Dinijah School Putri, Adabijah School, Sumatra Thawalib, Madras School, and Normal Islam School. Moreover, the first Islamic school for women in Indonesia is Diniyyah Puteri in West Sumatra-Indonesia, founded by Rahmah El-Yunusiyah on 1 November 1923. Such conditions of community in general likewise influenced Hamka's thinking. He understood this condition. Because in 1925, Hamka entered politics at the age of 17. This was proven in 1949 Hamka wrote a work about women, namely "Tjemburu (Ghirah)". Besides, he wrote a work on "Ajahku, Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Islam (*The Position of Women in Islam*), Dari Pembendaharaan Lama (*From the Old Treasury*), Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi (Minangkabau Traditions Facing the Revolution)", which touched on the problems of women with the initial conditions of independence in Indonesia.

### **Discourse of Women in the Al-Qur'an**

Islam talks about women in various verses that regulate all life aspects, including the rights and obligations and privileges of women figures in the history of religion or humanity. Al-Qur'an emphasizes equality in all human rights, religion and

8 Asma' Muhammad Ziyadah, *Peran Politik Wanita dalam Sejarah Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2000), . 71.

9 Kowani, *Sejarah Setengah Abad Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1978). 17.

10 Restu Diniyanti, "Potret Gerakan Perempuan Pada Abad Ke 20 Di Batavia: Poetri Mardika 1912", *Historia Journal*, 3, (2020), 136

civilization while considering human weakness, and masculine/feminine character.<sup>11</sup> However, it is essential to note that some contemporary commentators, such as Prof. Amina Wadud and Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, explained that the clear argument (*qat'i*), which states the equality and position between men and women, is evident in the al-Qur'an;

*"I did not create jinn and humans except to worship". (Adh-Dhariyat: 51/ 56). "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you". (Al-Hujurat: 49/ 13).*

Somewhile, particular characteristics are reserved for men,

*"...Although men have a degree 'of responsibility' above them (women)..."* (Al-Baqarah: 2/ 228),

be an effective witness;

*"...Call upon two of your men to witness. If two men cannot be found, then one man and two women of your choice will witness, so if one of the women forget the other may remind her. The witnesses must not refuse when they are summoned..."* (al-Baqarah: 2/ 282).

Men protector or caretakes of women;

*"Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially..."* (An-Nisa: 4/ 34),

get more inheritance;

*"Allah commands you regarding your children: the share of the male will be twice that of the female. If you leave only two 'or more' females, their share is two-thirds of the estate. But if there is only one female, her share will be one-half..."* (An-Nisa: 4/ 11)),

justify polygamy for those who meet the requirements (An-Nisa: 4/ 3).

However, in essence, these verses are not guaranteed to cause men to become the primary being. This privilege is accorded to men by their efforts as members of society.

Allah created man and woman "servants of Allah" (*'abd*) as well as caliph (*khalifa*) on earth;

*"He is the One Who has placed you as successors on earth and elevated some of you in rank over others, so He may test you with what He has given you..."* (Al-An'am: 6/ 165) and *"Remember when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive human authority on earth..."* (al-Baqarah: 2/ 30).

Men and women received the original covenant (primordial) with Allah.

11 Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *al-Kur'an al-Karim Al-Bunyatul Tasyri'iyah wa al-Hasa'sul Hadariyyah*, (Beirut: Dar Fikr Mu'asir, 1993), 140-148.

Every child who is born must accept the covenant with his God;

*“And ‘remember’ when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. ‘Allah asked, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They replied, ‘Yes, You are! We testify...’” (al-Araf: 7/ 172).*

And Allah glorifies all the descendants of Adam;

*“Indeed, We have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures.” (Al-Isra: 17/ 70).*

According to Islamic tradition, women are not considered inferior to men. However, adult women can make various agreements,<sup>12</sup> oaths, and vows, both among humans and God.

The al-Qur’an narrated that Adam and Eve (Male and Female) were “both active” (cosmic drama) in the story they ate Khuldi fruit in heaven. So, they fell to earth. This is clearly stated in the Qur’an This is clearly stated in the Al-Quran; a). Allah created Adam and Eve in heaven, and they got the facilities and convenience of living in heaven;

*“We cautioned, ‘O Adam! Live with your wife in Paradise and eat as freely as you please, but do not approach this tree, or else you will be wrongdoers.’” (al-Baqarah: 2/ 35). b).*

Then Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan,

*“Then Satan tempted them in order to expose what was hidden of their nakedness. He said, ‘Your Lord has forbidden this tree to you only to prevent you from becoming angels or immortals.’” (al-Araf: 7/ 20). c).*

The Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the Khuldi and received the consequences of being down to earth,

*“So he brought about their fall through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness was exposed to them, prompting them to cover themselves with leaves from Paradise. Then their Lord called out to them, ‘Did I not forbid you from that tree and ‘did I not’ tell you that Satan is your sworn enemy?’” (al-Araf: 7/ 22) d).*

Adam and Eve both asked Allah for forgiveness, and Allah accepted the forgiveness of the sins they had both committed,

*“They replied, ‘Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be losers.’” (al-Araf: 7/ 23). e).*

12 For example, one time, a group of women came to the Prophet Muhammad to express political support (*bai’at* / agreement). This incident led to the revelation of the verse al-Qur’an surah Al-Mumtahanah (60); 12, “O Prophet! When the believing women come to you, pledging to you that they will neither associate anything with Allah in worship, nor steal, nor fornicate, nor kill their children, nor falsely attribute illegitimate children to their husbands, nor disobey you in what is right, then accept their pledge, and ask Allah to forgive them. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”

After being on earth, Adam-Eve developed and had offspring. So that they complement and need each other,

*“And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.”* (Ar-Rum: 30/21).

Men and women have the potential for achievement. Each of them has the ability and intellect to have an achievement,

*“But those who do good—whether male or female—and have faith will enter Paradise and will never be wronged [even as much as] the speck on a date stone.”* (An-Nisa: 4/ 124), (Al-Imran: 3/ 195), (An-Nahl: 16/ 97), and (Ghafir 40/ 40).<sup>13</sup>

Based on the above verses, even though women have the same rights and obligations as men, this does not mean that they can do anything beyond the ability or nature of women as “female.” Men and women have different abilities so that the job duties and capacities can also be different. So, there is a division of tasks between women and men, always supporting each other and complementing each other.<sup>14</sup>

## Overview of Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar

After Hamka received an honorary Doctorate from Egypt, Hamka was appointed as the Grand Imam of the Great Mosque of Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta. Then the name of this mosque became the Al-Azhar Kebayoran Baru mosque. The name of the Al-Azhar mosque itself is a gift from Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltut, the chancellor of Al-Azhar University who came to Indonesia in December 1960. Accordingly, Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltut wished there will be Al-Azhar in Indonesia similar to Al-Azhar in Cairo-Egypt. Besides, Hamka also taught *Tafsir* lesson after the Fajr prayer at the Al-Azhar Grand Mosque in Jakarta, which was heard throughout Indonesia via radio. Likewise, plentiful communities wish that the recitation should also be published in the “Gema Islam” magazine. On behalf of the magazine management's recommendation at that time, all the tafsir lesson resumes were also published in the magazine, and the compilation was named Tafsir Al-Azhar.<sup>15</sup> The name Tafsir al-Azhar derived from Hamka's gratitude toward Al-Azhar University which awarding him the Honoris Causa Doctor title. He named it after the well-known university in Islamic society in order to duplicate the contemporary spirit of Al-Azhar Cairo university, but does not mean as the voice of Al-Azhar

13 Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 247-268.

14 Hamka, *Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1996), 15.

15 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, I (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2015), 45-46.

University. Besides, Hamka hopes before he dies, he can leave a heritage that is valuable for future generations, specifically Indonesian Muslims.

During early Indonesian's independence, Indonesia's political conditions were instable, Hamka was persecuted and detained for three years (1954-1966) due to his criticism. While in prison, he continued to write *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.<sup>16</sup> Hamka specifically wrote this tafsir in the Indonesian (Melayu) language. Because Indonesian language was just formulated as the official national language at the "Indonesian Language Congress" in 1954, which resulted in an agreement between linguists and Indonesians that the Indonesian language originated and is based on the Malay language.<sup>17</sup> Historically, Malay is the language commonly used by Indonesians, even in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and the southern part of Thailand since the 7th century.

The purpose of Hamka in writing this commentary consisted of four factors; *First*. Translating and interpreting the al-Qur'an verses into Indonesian is a continuation of previous scholars' efforts, such as Sheikh Abdurrauf bin Ali Fansuri in 17th century Aceh. *Second*. Hamka aims to give enthusiasm and faith to the youth generation of Indonesian Muslims, especially those who cannot speak Arabic but want to understand and learn the al-Qur'an. It was made easier for Indonesian Muslims from various circles who want to study religion and know the miracles of the al-Qur'an. *Third*. Facilitate the understanding of preachers and scholars. *Fourth*. Hamka wants to leave a worthwhile legacy to the Indonesian nation and Muslims.

The first publication of *Tafsir Al-Azhar* was carried out by the *Pembimbing Masa* Publisher in 1966, administered by Haji Mahmud. The first printing by the *Pembimbing Masa* completed the publication of juz (chapter) 1 to juz 4 in 1968. Then juz 30 and juz 15 to juz 29 were also published by *Pustaka Islam Surabaya* in 1973. Eventually, juz 5 to juz 14 were published by *Nurul Islam Foundation* Jakarta in 1975<sup>18</sup> and finished the entire 30 juz publication at the first time when he was 73 years old. Finally, the *Tafsir al-Azhar* was collected to be more compact into nine volumes; Gema Insani published 30 chapters of *Tafsir Al-Azhar* in August 2015, Jakarta. The writing duration took about 16 years (starting from 1962-1978). Even though his *Tafsir* has been published, Hamka continuously made corrections and revisions until 1979.

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16 Ibid, 50-53.

17 Ibid, 3.

18 Ibid, 45-46



## Social and Political Background of Hamka

Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah or better known by Hamka, which is an abbreviation of his name, was born in Sungai Batang, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia, February 16, 1908.<sup>19</sup> Hamka comes from a family of religious scholars (Ulama) who are well-known in Indonesia, especially the Islamic reform movement in Indonesia.<sup>20</sup> In 1920, at the age of 12, Hamka's family was not in good term. His mother and father divorced. This made him neglected the school.<sup>21</sup> However, his hobby of self-taught learning and reading made Hamka continue to learn various religious lessons, such as Arabic, Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh.<sup>22</sup> Besides, in 1924 he likewise studied under popular figures from the Islamic movement in Indonesia, HOS Cokroaminoto (Leader of Islamic Syarikat), Sutan Mansur, and Haji Fachruddin (Muhammadiyah figure) and studied tafsir, especially Tafsir Baidawi from Ki Bagus Hadikusumo. These teachers and figures from the Indonesian reform movement, influenced Hamka in distinctive life values, Islam and socialism, sociology.<sup>23</sup>

Subsequently in 1927, at the age of 19, he went to the holy land of Makkah to perform the pilgrimage, and meanwhile continue the study. He read many books, studied, and researched a lot of things. Hamka studied books on philosophy, literature, history of sociology, and politics. Thus, fluent in Arabic, Hamka studied Middle Eastern writers such as Zaki Mubarak, Abbas al-Aqqad, Husein Haikal, and Mustafa al-Manfaluti.<sup>24</sup> He often read and researched Western intellectuals such as Karl Marx, William James, Sigmund Freud, Satre, and Pierre Loti.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, from his studies and a combination of religious and social sciences, it is not surprising that he has social sensitivity, particularly within the Indonesian Muslim community. This

19 Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2015), hlm. 157. The "HAMKA" name is an acronym for his full name, namely Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah. Hamka, "Nama Saya: Hamka," in Nasir Tamara (ed.), *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan 1983), hlm. 51. West Sumatra is a province of Indonesia and Padang is its capital. The majority of people who live there are Minangkabau people. The majority of Minangkabau people are Muslims. In another side, Minangkabau people have a strong local wisdom in running their living system. Murni Djamil, Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah His Influence in the Islamic Reform Movement in Minangkabau in the Early Twentieth Century (Tesis McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1975), 5-6.

20 Mafri Amir, Lilik Ummi Kultsum, *Literatur Tafsir Indonesia* (Ciputat: Lembaga Penelitian UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2011), hlm. 156-157. and Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), 124.

21 This condition factor forms the pattern and way of thinking of Hamka in criticizing the relationship between adat and Islamic understanding. this writer explains in the analysis section.

22 Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar*, 3rd (Jakarta: Penamadani, 2004), 42.

23 Hamka, *Kenang*, 90.

24 Hamka translated the book written by al-Manfaluti into Indonesian with the title "Mati Mengandung Malu (Dead Contains Shame)" (1934).

25 Rusydi Hamka, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya* (Jakarta: Panjimas, 1981), 26.

can be seen in the social activities of Hamka in providing an understanding of Islam which is moderate and contextual.

In his social activities, Hamka led the magazine “Guidelines for the Society” published in the city of Medan, especially for the prominent Islamic organization which part of reform movement in Indonesia, namely “Muhammadiyah” in 1936. Hamka has also pursued his career as an employee of the Ministry of Religion during the time of KH Wahid Hasyim and was assigned to give lectures in several Islamic Universities, including; PTAIN Yogyakarta, Jakarta Islamic University, Faculty of Law and Philosophy at the Muhammadiyah University of Padang Panjang, the Indonesian Muslim University (UMI) in Makassar, and the Islamic University of North Sumatra (UISU) in Medan.<sup>26</sup>

In the political field, in 1955, Hamka became a constituent member of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> In 1958, Hamka appointed as the Indonesian delegation for the Islamic symposium in Lahore-Pakistan and then go to Egypt. On this occasion, he delivered a promotional speech to get an Honoris Causa Doctorate from Al-Azhar University in Cairo. His speech, entitled “The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia,” describes the rise of Islamic movements in Indonesia. Such as Sumatra Thawalib, Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad and Islamic Unity. He also obtained the Honoris Causa title from the National University of Malaysia in 1974. On that occasion, Tun Abdul Razak, the prime minister of Malaysia, said, “Hamka does not only belong to the Indonesian people but also the pride of the Southeast Asian nations.”<sup>28</sup>

Besides, Hamka is also an active figure in the field of mass media. He was a journalist in several medias such as “Pelita Andalas, Seruan Islam, Bintang Islam, and Seruan Muhammadiyah”. In 1928, Hamka was the editor of the “Kemajuan Masyarakat (Community Progress Magazine)”. Moreover, in 1932, he became editor and published “al-Mahdi Magazine” in Makassar city-Indonesia. He was also the editor of magazines such as “Pedoman Masyarakat, Panji Masyarakat, and Gema Islam.”<sup>29</sup>

Hamka was arrested as a political prisoner for two years (1964-1966) on charges of killing attempts to President Sukarno and several ministers. In the custody of the “Orde Lama (Old Order), he completed Tafsir Al-Azhar (30 chapters). He came out of custody after the Old Order collapsed. In 1975, when the Indonesian

26 Dewan Redaksi, *Ensiklopedi Islam*, Jilid II (Jakarta: PT Cipta Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 1994), 76.

27 Departemen Pendidikan RI, *Ensiklopedi Nasional Jilid I*, 2rd (Jakarta: PT. Cipta Adi Pustaka, 1990), 393.

28`Dewam Redaksi, *Ensiklopedi Islam*. . 77.

29 Badiatul Razikin (dkk.), *101 Jejak Tokoh Islam* (Yogyakarta: e-Nusantara, 2009), 189-190.

Ulema Council (MUI) was established, Hamka was elected as the first general chairman and was re-elected for the second term of office in 1980. Until July 24, 1981, Hamka passed away.

Many Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia say they are known as scholars, politicians, writers, and historians during the journey of life. Not surprisingly, scholars such as James Rush, Gerard Moussay, and Karel A. Stenbrink dubbed Hamka as a historian, anthropologist, writer, political scientist, journalist, and Islamologist.<sup>30</sup> According to Abdurahman Wahid, Hamka was an intellectual who blessed with knowledges, both religious and general knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Hamka is also a pioneer of Islamic modernization in Indonesia.<sup>32</sup> Hamka is a typology of a rational scholar, even though his study's object is on religious texts or doctrines. His extensive knowledge led him to understand religion based on social theories. This is proven by Hamka's concern for the condition of women in Indonesia. Because he realized that there was a mismatch between tradition and Islamic teachings against tafsir. This attention is expressed in Hamka's various interpretations in his book of commentaries, and also in several of his works explicitly discussing women's existence, namely "Agama dan Perempuan (Religion and Women) - 1939, Hak Azasi Manusia Dipandang dari Segi Islam (Human Rights in an Islamic Perspective) - 1968, Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam (Social Justice in Islam) - 1950, Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Islam (the Position of Women in Islam) - 1970, Buya Hamka Berbicara Tentang Perempuan (Buya Hamka Talks About Women) - 2014, (revised edition).

## Hamka's Interpretation on Certain Types of Women

### *The Creation of Women (An-Nisa: 3/1)*

Hamka explained the verse does not explain that Eve was created from the rib of Prophet Adam, but some interpreters explain the verse related to Eve's creation from the rib of Prophet Adam.<sup>33</sup> The tafsir of "ribs" in the interpretation of Surah An-Nisa; 3/1 is not correct. In accordance with verse explains the origin of human creation, which came from the *nafsin wāhidatin*, namely from "one soul". This means that humans have the same characteristics, have the similar mind, both (man and

30 The total number of his works is approximately 103 book titles, some have been published to date, and some are not. Most of his works are collected from lectures, articles in newspapers and magazines published in Indonesia and sometimes in Malaysia.

31 Abdurrahman Wahid, "Benarkah Buya Hamka Seorang Ulama Besar?", in Preface Nasir Tamara, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984), 30.

32 Fachry Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahuluan Riwayat dan Perjuangannya", in *Majalah Prisma*, Februari, 1983, 23.

33 Hamka, *Membahas Soal-Soal Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), 193.

women) want good things and conditions. Therefore, every time we see other people, we have to look at ourselves first. From oneself subsequently develops into men and women. Then from a partner/mate to continue the human generation. Hamka explains this because it is emphasized in the next verse An-Nisa: 3/1; "...and through both, He spread countless men and women...". In this continuation, the verse explains human reproduction in the world. Initially, humans are one in humanity, one in offspring. Then, humans developed into various types, races, and tribes in various countries.<sup>34</sup> More broadly, this verse further explains the basis of life in awakening a godly and humanitarian society; the first basis is to believe in Allah and have faith in Him. This verse also becomes the basis for implying the next verse, which explains about caring for orphans, polygamy, dowry, marriage, divorce, household, even to matters of war and peace, and all of this is based on the first verse, namely *taqwa* (devotion) to Allah and *the womb* of fellow human kind.

To complete this interpretation, Hamka explains the hadith relating to the creation of women. Hamka confirms that the hadith which says Eve was created from Adam's rib is true (*sahih*).<sup>35</sup> He explains further, the true meaning of the hadith is only figurative (metaphor/*mecaz*). It has a broader meaning as "a husband (man) must understand the nature, character, behaviour of women, and be able to guide, treat and teach his (woman) wife well. This means that Hamka indirectly refuses the meaning of the hadith "women were created from Adam's ribs." To strengthen this metaphorical interpretation, Hamka quoted two other hadith. The first is Bukhari and Muslim history from Abu Hurairah, "Narrated Abu Hurairah, Rasulullah said, "The woman is like a rib, if you try to straighten her, she will break. So, if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness". Moreover, the second narration is Muslim from Abu Hurairah.<sup>36</sup> There is no mention of Eve being created from Adam's rib in the hadith, but merely saying "from the rib." Even if there is a hadith which tells of, "When Adam woke up beside him there was a sitting woman who was created by Allah from her rib." According to Hamka, this narration is not from the Prophet but the explanation of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and Abdullah ibn

34 Al-Hujarat: (49); 13.

35 Al-Tabari narrated this hadith from Qatada, al-sadi, and Ibn Ishaq about the process of creating Eve from Adam, namely when Adam was sleeping, Allah took one of his ribs to be his wife. Al-Thabari, Jami' al-Bayan 'An Ta'wil Ayi Al-Qur'an, IV (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), hlm. 224-225. Zamakhsyari, al-Kasyaf, I (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1977), hlm. 492. Ibn Katsir, Tafsir Ibnu Katsir (Riyadh: Maktabah Maarif, 1989), 646. Ibn Hajar al Asqalani commented on the hadith:

... قِيلَ فِيهِ إِشَارَةٌ إِلَى أَنَّ حَوَاءَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلْعِ آدَمَ الْأَيْسَرِ وَقِيلَ مِنْ ضِلْعِهِ الْقَصِيرِ أَخْرَجَهُ بِنُ إِسْحَاقَ ...

"It is stated that the hadith is a sign that Allah created Eve from Adam's left rib, and some say that the rib is short, as noted by Ibn Ishaq". Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. Fathul Bari, VI (Beirut: Darul Ma'rifah), 368.

36 Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, III (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002), 375.

Abbas. Because the hadith comes from Jewish story in Medina,<sup>37</sup> Hamka added that those who believe about Eve originated from the Prophet Adam's ribs are the Hebrews in general and the Jews. Their basis is the book of Genesis, which they believe is one of the Torah's five books.<sup>38</sup>

From the above interpretation, Hamka does not firmly express his opinion about "women made from ribs." Because he realizes that there is controversy among the commentators in this matter, and he tries to put himself in a neutral position, neither accepting nor rejecting it. According to him, these traditions about the creation of Eve from Adam's rib cannot be interpreted textually but must be interpreted metaphorically (*mecaz*). The hadiths speak of a woman's soul, which is assumed as a bent rib. Men should be wise in dealing with women with different traits, characters, and tendencies from men.<sup>39</sup> If this is not considered, it could cause them to act rude and unusual towards women. Men will not be able to change the nature and behaviour of women forcefully. If he forced it, the consequences will be fatal for the relationship between man and woman.

### ***Educational Rights Issues***

According to Hamka, the meaning of Islamic education is the formation of a person with morals (*ethics*) to achieve national advancement and morals.<sup>40</sup> Then, education and teaching are ways to achieve the nation's glory and progress, and both must be balanced. If the two does not work, subsequently the result will not be intellectuality and spirituality. It can even produce knowledgeable people but have flawed character and hurt society. Therefore, education aims to form productive morals of human, protect society's interests, and maintain the courtesy desired by living together because it is the basis for establishing a civilized society.<sup>41</sup>

With this premise and interpretation of Nisâ; 1 above, Hamka tries to explain that men and women have the opportunity to gain knowledge in an equal position. The problem of the creation of women in the al-Quran affects women's position in the social structure of society. One of the problems is getting an education. Islam equally respects women and men in education. Islam places great importance on knowledge and makes knowledge and learning very important.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, according to him,

37 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, I, 140.

38 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, II, 45.

39 Ibid, 46.

40 Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*, XI (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1997), . 257

41 Ibid, 258.

42 *Mujadalah* (58); 11. Mazharuddin Siddiki, *Islam Dunyasinda Modenist Dusunce*, trans. Murat Firat-

men and women are also awarded equal potential and responsibility in education. The verses of the al-Qur'an, which were first revealed (Al-'Alaq; 1-5), also remind men and women of biological origins' equality. According to Hamka, these verses describe the creation of humans, both male and female. Everything comes from a clot of blood from sperm but is then glorified by Allah with knowledge and knowledge through education. With Allah's glory, He taught various sciences to humans, and there is no difference between men and women.

In Islamic teachings, there is no educational discrimination between men and women. Both of them are obliged to study according to their principles (*fitrah*),<sup>43</sup> develop their potential. In his interpretation, Hamka mentioned human potential with the word impulse (*ghazirah*). In the context of education, human *fitrah* is defined as the basic potential or ability that encourages humans to carry out a series of activities as a tool that supports the implementation of the Caliphate's function on earth. These tools are the potential of the soul (*al-qalb*), body (*al-jism*), and reason (*al-aql*).<sup>44</sup> The three of them are one unit that is interrelated in order to support human existence. This potential is owned by every human being, both male and female, and must be cultivated and developed through the educational process. According to Hamka, the dominant factor affecting the growth of *fitrah* is the environment.<sup>45</sup> This shows that, in his view, education is the main factor that most influences the development of the human soul, both male and female.

Regarding the method of Islamic education, by referring to An-Nahl; 125,<sup>46</sup> Hamka stated three main educational methods that can be used as a reference and are always relevant throughout the ages. The three main methods of Islamic education are *al-hikmah* (wisdom), *almani'ah al-hasanah* (good education and teaching), and *mujâdalah bi allatî biya absan* (discussion). Then this method applies to both male and female science claimants.<sup>47</sup> Based on data and analysis of Hamka's educational thoughts, it is clear that in his view, there are no differences in rights and obligations

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Goksel Korkmaz (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1990), 219.

43 The word *fitrah* in QS. al Rûm (30): 30, Hamka interprets it as a *pure genuine taste* that resides in the soul of every human being that has not been influenced by other factors, namely the soul that acknowledges the existence of God who has the highest power in the universe, Almighty, and the Supreme in all things. Since reason grows as a human being, the recognition of the existence of the Creator is *fitrah*, it grows with reason, it can even be said that it is part of what grows the mind. Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, V, 78.

44 Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*, 40-47.

45 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, III, 97.

46 ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَعْوِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ  
 "Invite all to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is rightly guided."

47 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, V, 235-236.

and treatment between men and women in educational matters. All the things that are the rights and duties of men automatically become the rights and obligations of women likewise. Women can also do part of the work that men do. Besides that, what men achieve and aspire to, women can also get it. Men and women are both creatures made by Allah with reason and mind. What distinguishes a person from another is the level of *taqwa* and belief in one Allah. So, a person's "*Tawhid*" (oneness) and "*Taqwa*" (devotion) are the differentiators of a person's level with Allah because a person who is noble in the sight of Allah is one who has strong faith and piety.<sup>48</sup>

Hamka's views and concerns on women's position about education, among others, can also be seen from his concern regarding the condition of women's education in the early twentieth century. According to Hamka, the reform movement at the beginning of the twentieth century<sup>49</sup> paid considerable attention to women's education. Even so, the condition of women at that time was still inferior. Their position in education is still not adequately treated. According to him, this condition causes the souls of women to become depressed and suffer.<sup>50</sup> Because according to the author, this is normal. Due to Islamic reform in Indonesia at the beginning of the twentieth century, not all information, news, and access to education were obtained for all Indonesian people. Due to political factors (Dutch colonialism) and an unstable economy at that time. So that the classical understanding of religion still exists in society.

Regarding the ultimate goal of this education, Hamka put forward the words of Allah surah Adh-Dhariyat: 51/56 in interpreting the verse, "*I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me*". Hamka argued that this verse is very relevant to the purpose of Islamic education, which is the same as the goal of human creation itself, namely to serve and worship Allah. He said that worship is "acknowledging oneself as a slave or servant of Allah, submitting to his will, either voluntarily or compulsively."

### ***Women's Social Activities and Careers***

For Hamka, An-Nisa: 4/34 explain men's leadership over women, but essentially there are equal rights and obligations for men and women.<sup>51</sup> Hamka

48 Hamka, *Pelajaran Agama Islam*, VI (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1978), . 41.

49 The reforms in Indonesia in education began in 1907, such as the Adabiyah school in West Sumatra, by integrating general and religious curricula, and modern education. In terms of organization, the Muhammadiyah Islamic Organization was founded in 1912 by KH. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta-Indonesia, etc. Buhannuddin Daya. 1995. *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam (Kasus Sumatera Thawalib)* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1995), hlm. 82. And Samsul Munir Amin, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2009), 423.

50 Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*, 175.

51 An-Nisa (4); 34.

explained that male leadership over women had become a tradition in Islam. And do not appoint women as leaders (kings). If the situation requires a woman to be appointed king, and the woman can carry out her role as a leader, then that is permissible. Hamka views male leadership over women as a necessity. However, on the other hand, he criticizes the unfair male leadership of women. He is limiting the space for movement, social work, and women's political participation in society. Therefore, it can be said, Hamka's views that male leadership over women is not a factor that causes injustice towards women. The leadership of men in the household must always be within the limits of women's rights.

Hamka then explained that the verses that discuss women do not automatically state that women are in second place. Women have the choice and potential to be active socially, just like men. Hamka stated that Islam places men and women in an equal position. Not only do men have to lead women, but women can also lead men in some issues, such as household matters.<sup>52</sup> This is based on several arguments from the al-Qur'an.<sup>53</sup> Therefore men and women both have the potential to increase their deeds of worship to Allah and their social life.

Furthermore, the never-ending discussion about women is the norm of a woman becoming a leader in society. There are many opinions on this issue. Some said that it was not a problem if the woman had the ability (skills and leadership) to become a leader, on the condition that she obeyed Islamic Sharia law as stated in the Al-Quran, in sura Al-Tawbah / 9: 71.<sup>54</sup>

In Al-Sya'rawi's interpretation, the word "*auliya*" means that: In society, believers must help each other and advise one another so that Muslims' faith can be good and perfect. For example, in cooperation, assistance, and control. Meanwhile, to do good (*ma'ruf*) and prevent bad (*munkar*)," means, when a Muslim does bad deeds, other Muslims prevent him. And when a Muslim does not commit virtue, other Muslims remind him. Finally, every Muslim commanded and ordered to commit virtue and forbid to conduct mischief. So, it means that fellow believers, both men, and women, must remind each other which there is a possibility of them being the ruling or being the ruled.<sup>55</sup>

Hamka assumes this verse "If we look at this verse from all its aspects, it will undoubtedly be seen that the position of women is highly guaranteed and holy. They

52 Hamka, *Kedudukan Perempuan*, 8.

53 An-Nisa 4/ 124, 19.

54 "And the believing men and the believing women, they are friends of each other. They enjoin Al-Ma'ruf and forbid from Al-Munkar and keep up the prayer and give alms (the Zakat) and obey Allah and His Messenger. These, Allah will show mercy to them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."

55 Mutawali asy-Sya'rawi, *Tafsir Al-Sha'rawi*, IX (Cairo: n.p, 2017), 287-289.



have the same duties as men. Men and women both share the obligations and get the same rights; the duty of religion is equally given. Also, men and women are to believe have the same duties preach for the good and forbids the bad. In terms of worship, zakat, or hajj is the same for men and women. To the extent of women importance in Islam that Hamka mentioned women are the pillars of the state. Adage Indonesia says, "If a woman has a good character, then the country is also good. If the woman is bad moral, the country will be damaged." Because they are leaders among (men and women) themselves (ضُّعْبُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْمَرْءُ الْمُرْتَدُّ: *both men and women, are guardians of one another, at-Taubah 9/71*), some of them cover, defend and encourage each other so that it is not only male believers who can raise the dignity of their souls in faith, but the female can do the same so that they are both equal in their respective fields.<sup>56</sup>

Hamka said that a safe and peaceful household is a combination of firm attitude, strong men and subtle women. Men as seeker necessities of life, and women as arranger. It is also stated that the household is like a ship which is sailing on the ocean; the waves keep crashing at the stern, the ropes stretch, the sails are shaking left and right. For this reason, one of the men or women in household must drive upright, and the other one must stand on the bow. If both of them are smart, both of them are safe until the destination. Yet if both are not wise and cannot control the ship, the ship will sink and not reach its destination. This shows that men and women must commit to each tasks and work together.<sup>57</sup>

Many verses of the al-Qur'an support the equality of the male and female elements of creation. as Allah says in Al-Imran: 3/ 195, "So their Lord responded to them: "I will never deny any of you—male or female—the reward of your deeds. Both are equal in reward." The word "Both are equal in reward" in the sense that some of you (male and female) come from a mixture of female eggs (ovum) and male sperm, and there is no difference or advantages between them regarding the origin of their human creation. According to Hamka, the content of this verse is a significant decision for women. This paragraph stipulates that women have rights and obligations, just as men have rights and obligations. This means that men and women get assignments (*taklif*) from Allah SWT in faith and good deeds, worship, courtesy (*muamalah*), and education.<sup>58</sup> In a society or the family, women have the right to be respected, have rights to their property as they are entitled to themselves. Prioritizing the mention of their rights over their obligations is an affirmation of these rights and shows how important the right be considered.

56 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, VI, 15-16.

57 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*,

58 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, II, 209.

### Accommodating Feminist Exegesis in the Tafsir Al-Azhar

Women in Islam have a noble place and recognize women's rights in general.<sup>59</sup> They are started from the process of creating the same man and woman. This basis have shown equality and balance from Allah, which was taught to humans before social society made different life rules,<sup>60</sup> and also, the rules regarding the rights and obligations of women in family life. The advantages that exist in men, such as reason, physical strength, must be able to innovate and cooperate so that men (husbands) must provide a livelihood for women, look after and lead them.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, women's rights are also included in outside/public. Because women are also members of society, as citizens who have the right to economy and politics, Allah created both men and women to carry out their work activities which are part of good deeds. From each of these pious deeds (including work), an equal reward will be given because Allah guarantees that he will not waste all the good deeds of his creatures from men and women.

Hamka also emphasized the privilege of women. Allah mentions women in the Al-Qur'an by the name of a letter, namely An-Nisa. According to Hamka, the initial verse in Surah An-Nisa has two significant meanings: first, Allah is the creator of Nature and humans. Second, the relationship of love (*arham*) between Allah's creatures, because humans cannot deliver themselves into this world, must be a marriage between a man and a woman. Although the partners are of different origins, tribes and nations are essentially descendants of Adam and Eve. This verse's meaning shows the side of sincerity, compassion, which is taught to men and women. Differently, this letter's features are also contained in it explaining the rights in the fields of courtesy (*muamalah*), politics, marriage, inheritance, education, and social society related to the relationship between men and women. Distinctively, the Al-Quran also glorifies women from the stories raised in the Al-Quran about women, such as Maryam, the mother of the prophet Isa (surah Maryam), the wife of Pharaoh Aisyiyah (At-Tahrim), Ratu Balqis (An-Naml), women of faith (Al-Mujadilah and Al-Mumtahanah), the attitudes or politeness of women (Al-Ahzab), etc.<sup>62</sup>

59 Al-Baqarah: (2); 228, An-Nisa (4); 124

60 Saira Bano Orakzai, "The Rights Of Women In Islam: The Question Of 'Public' And 'Private' Spheres For Women's Rights And Empowerment In Muslim Societies," *Journal of Human Rights in the Commonwealth • Volume 2 Issue 1 (Spring 2014)*, University of London, 46.

61 Rashid Redha, *Tafsir Al-MANâr*, 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d), 330.

62 Hamka, *Buya Hamka Berbincang Tentang Perempuan* (Depok; Gema Insani, 2014), 4-7.

Hamka's thoughts during his life (1908-1981) in Indonesia were a reflection of Indonesian society's condition at that time. Mainly where Hamka lived as a child (West Sumatera). Within the scope of his family, his father had more than one wife. Therefore, made Hamka's psychological condition as a child was resisting and rebellious. Then Hamka saw that unjust polygamy was against Islam (An-Nisa: 3/4). On the other hand, the public's views and treatment of women were generally negative and underestimating. Many household problems were detrimental and marginal to women, such as violence towards wives, divorce etc. Women were only required to be obedient to their husbands. Meanwhile, women were not allowed to ask or demand a lot from their husbands. Hamka criticized this point of view and conditions in many of his literatures and in Tafsir Al-Azhar, especially about women.

Besides, where Indonesia had just declared independence from the Dutch colonialists. The problems of women in Indonesia at that time were also closely related to the Islamic reform movement that took place in the early 20th century. In Indonesia's education field, 1911 Rohana Kudus established a school for "Kerajinan Perempuan (Women's Crafts)," which teaches Arabic reading and writing, the Al-Quran, and other skills. In 1912 the women's newspaper "Soenting Melayu" was published. In 1923 a particular school for girls was also established, "Diniyyah Puteri," and has a library, and when Hamka was a child, he often spent time reading books and studying there. Many women's organizations were also founded from 1912-1926. Therefore, a large Indonesian women's congress was held in 1928, and it continues today.<sup>63</sup>

There has a principal reason why Hamka has different and advanced interpretive thoughts at that time. First, two factors can be seen as the factor of religion, namely the arguments from the Al-Quran, hadith, and other scholars' opinions in the field of the Quran. These are the main bases for Hamka to build, create and criticize new meanings, understandings, and interpretations of women. *Second*, because of the intellectual-social factors of society. As explained above, the conditions around Hamka began to have a lot of thoughts and women's movements. It all influenced and shaped Hamka's way of thinking and understanding of Islam, especially the Al-Quran. Besides, likewise because of family factors. Namely, the phenomenon of marriage-divorce, polygamy from family, many of his relatives, so that Hamka saw that women were not given enough psychological attention and were underestimated in the social system.

These two factors convinced the research that Hamka interpret the verses about women somewhat differently from the Indonesian interpreters in his age. Apparently,

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63 I Wayan Badrika, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia dan Umum* (Jakarta, Erlangga, 2002), 39.

it was a significant contribution for the following interpreters to develop and continue Hamka's interpretations of women with the concept of fairness, fabulous, and useful. Because Muslim scholars in the field of al-Qur'an tafsir nowadays are required to make interpretations following the times<sup>64</sup> and social scientists, then, in the end, it shows different forms of interpretation that are various and colourful.

## Conclusion

Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka was written in Indonesia when it had just gained independence from the Dutch. Social and religious conditions can sometimes coming along or sometimes conflicting. From the political side, Indonesia has begun to form a stable government system, especially for women, and from a literature aspect also influences Hamka's interpretation. Because Hamka was born in a religious and cultural family that is strong in holding Islamic traditions, especially in women, at that time, women's rights were not adequately considered, and there were female subordination and marginalization. Therefore, Tafsir al-Azhar has a "*tablili*" approach and social interpretation method by explaining the conditions' interpretation.

Several examples of cases that author found, including the creation of women from men which mentioned in the hadith from the ribs, Hamka explained that initially men and women were created of the same type, and the hadith for men from ribs means metaphor. This means that husbands (men) must understand the nature, character, and behavior of women and guide, treat and teach their wives (women) well. With this basic understanding, the interpretation of the verses on this problem will provide small solutions to family problems, which may have an impact on society's stability.

Regarding the right to education and social/career activities for Hamka, women have the intellect, ability, potential, and obligation to acquire knowledge, both general and religious science. Because one part of maintaining household harmony starts with the education that the mother (woman) have in raising children, husband-wife relationships, and managing the household. The role of women in the social community is very influential, and male partners/ couples maintain peace, social welfare, and the country. Therefore, Hamka suggests for men to not go against women, because they both have their advantages and disadvantages. They must help each other, and if a man has the privilege of a woman, it means that he is superior in certain parts to a woman, and vice versa. Women have privileges that men do not have. Hamka's tafsir of women's rights at that time within Indonesian condition

64 Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 209.

was one step ahead and progressive. Subsequently, it provides opportunities for the mufassir afterward to develop the tafsir with the current conditions of Indonesian society.

### **Supplementary Materials**

The data presented in this study are available in [insert article or supplementary material here] (Usually the datasets were analyzed from library research can be found in the whole data references ).

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### **Authors' contributions**

Zulfikri Zulkarnain is the sole author of this research article

### **Data availability**

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### **Conflict of interests**

None of the authors of this study has a financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

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