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**Introduction To The Nusantara's Interpretation (Tafsir)
Explore The Nusantara Side of Buya Hamka's Tafsir from Al-
Azhar****Hani Fazlin***Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia**hani-fazlin@mhs.ptiq.ac.id***Lailatul Badi'ah***Lailabadiiah0912@gmail.com***Abstract**

The books of interpretation in the modern era have developed, no longer only using Arabic, but have been interpreted into various languages according to the needs of the people. As for one of the commentary books written in Indonesian, namely the masterpiece from Buya Hamka, the interpretation of al-Azhar. This phenomenal book of interpretation in Indonesia was written according to the needs of the Indonesian people who want to learn and understand the contents of the verses of the Koran more easily. So in this paper the author wants to explore how the archipelago side is offered by Buya Hamka in his interpretation, so as to make it different from other commentary books and easier for Indonesian people to understand. As for this research is a qualitative research with the type of library research (library research) and using a descriptive-analytical method. After conducting a search of the al-Azhar book, several findings were produced regarding the archipelago of the book. First, Buya Hamka mentions examples of plants in Indonesia in giving interpretations, as in Q.S. 'Abasa: 26-31 (seeds of staple crops; rice, wheat, peanuts, corn and fruits; pomegranates, grapes, apples, types of bananas, types of mango, papaya, pineapple, rambutan, durian, duku, langsung, and sapodilla fruit. Second, explaining with events that are close to the community, as in Q.S. al-Falaq: 04 (mentioning examples of shamanic activities). Thus, it appears very clearly that as an effort to understand Muslim society, especially those that exist in Indonesia, Buya Hamka packs his interpretations very nicely in simple explanations that are easily accepted by the general public, not only by the clergy.

Keywords: *Interpretation of the Archipelago, Hamka, al-Azhar*

Abstrak

Kitab-kitab tafsir di era modern telah berkembang, tidak lagi hanya menggunakan bahasa Arab saja, namun telah ditafsirkan ke dalam berbagai bahasa sesuai dengan kebutuhan masyarakatnya. Adapun salah satu kitab tafsir yang ditulis dengan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia yaitu mahakarya dari Buya Hamka, tafsir *al-Azhar*. Kitab tafsir yang fenomenal di Indonesia ini ditulis sesuai dengan kebutuhan masyarakat Indonesia yang ingin belajar dan memahami kandungan ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dengan lebih mudah. Maka dalam tulisan ini penulis ingin menggali bagaimana sisi ke-Nusantara-an yang ditawarkan oleh Buya Hamka dalam penafsirannya, sehingga membuatnya menjadi berbeda dengan kitab tafsir lainnya dan lebih mudah untuk dimengerti oleh masyarakat Indonesia. Adapun penelitian ini

merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) dan menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis. Setelah dilakukan penelusuran terhadap kitab al-Azhar ini, maka dihasilkan beberapa temuan terkait ke-Nusantara-an kitab tersebut. *Pertama*, Buya Hamka menyebutkan contoh tanaman-tanaman yang ada di Indonesia dalam memeberikan penafsiran, seperti dalam Q.S. 'Abasa: 26-31 (benih-benih tanaman pokok; padi, gandum, kacang, jagung dan buah-buahan; delima, anggur, apel, jenis-jenis pisang, jenis-jenis mangga, papaya, nanas, rambutan, durian, duku, langsung, dan buah sawo. *Kedua*, Menjelaskan dengan kejadian yang dekat dengan masyarakat, seperti dalam Q.S. al-Falaq: 04 (menyebutkan contoh kegiatan perdukunan). Dengan demikian, maka tampaklah dengan sangat jelas bahwa sebagai upaya memahamkan masyarakat muslim, khususnya yang ada di Indonesia, Buya Hamka mengemas penafsirannya dengan sangat *apik* dalam penjelasan yang sederhana dan mudah diterima oleh masyarakat umum, tidak hanya oleh para ulama saja.

Kata Kunci: *Tafsir Nusantara, Hamka, al-Azhar*

Introduction

Various kinds of interpretations of the verses of the Koran have been carried out by previous scholars and continue to increase in number to contemporary scholars. The demands of the times are changing along with the development of science and technology, so that the interpretation of the Koran must continue to be carried out so that the Koran is *ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wal makān*. As the main guideline for human life, the Qur'an must be presented in answering every problem that is being faced, especially in modern times. Thus emerged a modern and contextual interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an.

The books of interpretation in the modern era have developed, no longer only using Arabic, but have been interpreted into various languages according to the needs of the people. One of the commentary books written in Indonesian is a masterpiece by Buya Hamka. The interpretation is named Tafsir al-Azhar. This phenomenal book of interpretation in Indonesia was written according to the needs of the Indonesian people who want to learn and understand the contents of the verses of the Koran more easily. This paper will then discuss the Indonesian side of the book of interpretation, so that it can be said to be one of the books of Interpretation of the Archipelago which makes it easier for the Indonesian Muslim community to understand the Qur'an better.

This research is a qualitative research, which is one of the consequences of using library data sources (library research). The main source of this research is from the book Tafsir al-Azhar by Buya Hamka himself. Then the authors use other secondary sources as support, both from journal articles, books, and other reading materials related to this research. The research method used is descriptive-analytical method. Before entering the core of the discussion of this research, the author will first explain several other sub-chapters about Buya hamka and Tafsir al-Azhar as a deeper introduction to the book of Nusantara interpretation which is being studied.

Discussion

Buya Hamka's biography: Buya Hamka's biography and education

Buya Hamka is the pen name of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. Born in Maninjau, West Sumatra, on February 16, 1908 and died in Jakarta, July 24, 1981.¹ Married Siti Raham bint Endah Sutan in 1929 and was blessed with 11 children. He is known as a scholar, movement figure, journalist, and writer - author (poet) of Islam. He is the son of a prominent scholar of his time, namely Abdul Karim Amrullah who is known as Haji Rasul bin Sheikh Muhammad Amarullah bin Tuanku Abdullah Saleh who is also the author of the commentary of Al-Burhan.² While his mother was named Siti Shafiyah Tanjung bint Haji Zakaria (d. 1934). From this genealogy, it can be seen that he came from a devout religious ancestry and had a relationship with the generation of Islamic renewal in Minangkabau at the end of the XVIII century and the beginning of the XIX century.

Since childhood, Buya Hamka received knowledge of the basics of religion and learned to read the Koran directly from his father. When he was 6 years old, in 1914, he was brought by his father to Padang Panjang. At the age of 7, he was then sent to a village school where he attended for 3 years. Much religious knowledge he obtained by studying himself (self-taught). Not only religious knowledge, Buya Hamka is also self-taught in various fields of science such as philosophy, literature, history, sociology and politics, both Islamic and Western.³ When Buya Hamka was 10 years old, his father founded and developed Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang. It was there that Buya Hamka studied religion and studied Arabic.

Formally, Buya Hamka's education was not high. At the age of 8-15, he started studying religion at the Diniyyah School and Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang and Parabek. Among his teachers were Sheikh Ibrahim Musa Parabek, Engku Mudo Abdul Hamid, Sutan Marajo and Zainuddin Labay el-Yunusy. The implementation of education at that time was still traditional using the halaqah system. In 1916, a new classical system was introduced in Sumatra Thawalib Jembatan Besi. However, at that time the classical system that was introduced did not have benches, tables, chalk and blackboards. Educational material is still oriented towards reciting classical books, such as nahwu, sharaf, manthiq, bayan, fiqh, and the like, and the educational approach is carried out by emphasizing rote aspects..⁴

Diligent reading made Buya Hamka even less satisfied with the implementation of existing education. The intellectual anxiety he experienced had

¹ Ensiklopedia Indonesia, (Jakarta: PT Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, cet I, 1990), vol. II, hlm. 1217

² Audio Biography Buya HAMKA, *METRO_FILES*

³ Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), jilid I, h. 46

⁴ Samsul Nizar, *Memperbincangkan Dinamika Intelektual dan Pemikiran Hamka* Jakarta: Kencana, 2008) h. 47.

caused him to desire to go abroad in order to broaden his horizons. Therefore, at the age of 16, in 1924 to be exact, he had already left Minangkabau for Java; Yogyakarta. He lives with his father's younger brother, Ja'far Amrullah. This is where Buya Hamka studied with Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, R.M. Suryopranoto, H. Fachruddin, HOS. Tjokroaminoto, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, A. Hasan Bandung, Muhammad Natsir, and AR. St. Mansur. It was also in Yogyakarta that Buya Hamka began to get acquainted with the Islamic Union (SI). The ideas of this movement greatly influenced the formation of Buya Hamka's thoughts about Islam as something that is alive and dynamic. His scientific journey continued to Pekalongan, and he learned a lot about Islam and politics from his brother-in-law AR. St. Mansur is a Muhammadiyah figure, it was also here that Buya Hamka became acquainted with the reform ideas of Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rasyid Ridha who were trying to break the ummah's silence. It was not until 1925 that Buya Hamka returned to Maninjau with a new enthusiasm for Islam. He returned to West Sumatra with AR. St. Mansur. In that place, AR. St. Mansur became a preacher and propagator of Muhammadiyah, since then Hamka has been his companion in all Muhammadiyah activities..⁵

In 1927, Buya Hamka went to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. He also took advantage of the opportunity for the pilgrimage to expand his association and for six months he worked in the printing sector in Mecca. Upon returning from Mecca, he did not immediately return to Minangkabau, but stopped in Medan for some time. It was in Medan that Buya Hamka's role as an intellectual began to take shape. This can be known from the testimony of Rusydi Hamka, one of his sons; "For Buya, Medan is a city full of memories. From this city he began to set foot as an author who gave birth to a number of novels and books on religion, philosophy, tasawuf, and others. It was also here that he gained success as a journalist with the Community Guidelines. But here too, he experienced a very painful fall, so that the scars that made him leave this city became one of the fertilizers that grew his personality later on."⁶

In Medan he received an offer from Haji Asbiran Ya'kub and Muhammad Rasami, the former secretary of the Muhammadiyah Bengkalis to lead the weekly magazine 'Pedomian Masyarakat'. Despite getting many obstacles and criticism, until 1938 the circulation of this magazine grew quite rapidly, even the circulation reached 4000 copies per publication. However, when the Japanese arrived, the situation and conditions were different, the People's Guide magazine was banned, community activities were monitored, and the red and white flag was prohibited

⁵ Rusydi, *Hamka Pribadi Dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), h. 2

⁶ Herry Mohammad, *Tokoh-Tokoh Islam yang Berpengaruh Abad 20*, (Jakarta: Gema Islami, 2006), h. 62

from being raised. This detrimental Japanese policy has not made its attention to educating the nation fade away, especially through the world of journalism. During the Japanese occupation, he still managed to publish the Islamic Spirit magazine. However, the existence of this magazine cannot replace the position of the Society Guidelines magazine which has been attached to the hearts of the people. In the midst of mass disappointment with Japanese policies, he obtained a special position from the Japanese government as a member of the Syu Sangi Kai or People's Representative Council in 1944. His compromise attitude and position as a "golden child" of Japan had caused Buya Hamka to be isolated, hated and viewed cynically by society. These unfavorable conditions made him leave Medan and return to Padang Panjang in 1945.⁷

Buya Hamka is a correspondent for many magazines and a very productive person in his work. This is in accordance with the assessment of Andries Teew, a Leiden University professor in his book entitled *Modern Indonesian Literature I*. According to him, as an author Buya Hamka is a writer who writes mostly Islamic-inspired literature in the form of literature. To appreciate his services in broadcasting Islam in the beautiful Indonesian language, at the beginning of 1959 the High Council of Al-Azhar University, Cairo awarded the title *Ustaziyah Fakhiriyah* (Doctor Honoris Causa) to Buya Hamka. Since then he bears the title "Dr" at the beginning of his name. Then on June 6, 1974, he again received the honorary degree from the National University of Malaysia in the field of literature, as well as the title of Professor from Prof. Dr. Moestopo. All of this was obtained thanks to his perseverance without knowing despair to always deepen knowledge.⁸

In 1975-1981 Buya Hamka was elected by acclamation as Chairman of the MUI. He was elected in a deliberation, both by scholars and officials. However, in the midst of his duties, he resigned from his position because he was in conflict with the existing government in principle. Two months after Hamka resigned as chairman of the MUI, he was hospitalized. After about one week of being treated at the Pertamina Central Hospital, on July 24, 1981, death picked him up to face His presence again at the age of 73 years..⁹ Buya Hamka is not only a poet, journalist, scholar, and humanist, but also an educational thinker whose thoughts are still relevant and usable today, all of which can be seen from the works left by him. Karya-Karya Buya Hamka

As a forward-thinking person, Hamka does not only reflect on independence through various pulpits in religious lectures, but he also expresses it in various kinds of written works. The orientation of his thoughts covers various disciplines, such as

⁷ Herry Mohammad, *Tokoh-Tokoh Islam yang Berpengaruh Abad 20*, (Jakarta: Gema Islami, 2006), h. 62

⁸ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1987), h. XIX

⁹ Rusydi Hamka, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), h.

theology, tasawuf, philosophy, Islamic education, Islamic history, fiqh, literature and interpretation. As a very prolific writer, Hamka wrote dozens of books, no less than 103 books. Some of his works are as follows:

- a. *Modern Sufism* (1983). Initially, this work was a collection of articles published in the *Society Guidelines* magazine between 1937-1937. Due to community demands, the collection of articles was then recorded in a book. In this monumental work, he describes the discussion in XII chapters. This book begins with an explanation of Sufism. Then sequentially he also explained the opinions of scientists about the meaning of happiness, happiness and religion, happiness and main, mental and physical health, wealth and happiness, the nature of qonaah, the happiness felt by the Prophet, the relationship of ridho with natural beauty, happy ladders, misfortune, and pray to Allah. Another work that talks about Sufism is *Sufism; Its Development and Purification*. This book is a combination of the two works he has written, namely the *Development of Sufism from Century to Century* and *Returning Sufism to Its Base*.
- b. *Lembaga Budi* (1983). This book was written in 1939 which consists of XI chapters. The talks include; noble mind, the reasons why the mind becomes damaged, mental illness, the mind of those who hold government, the noble mind that should be owned by a king (ruler), the businessman mind, the merchant mind, the worker mind, scientist mind, insight, and the spark of experience. Implicitly, this book also contains Hamka's thoughts on Islamic education.
- c. *Falsafah Hidup* (1950). This book consists of IX chapters. He started this book by exposing the meaning of life. Then in the next chapter, it is also explained about science and reason in various aspects and dimensions. Next he explores the laws of nature or sunnatullah. Then about courtesy, both vertically and horizontally. Furthermore, the meaning of simplicity and how to live a simple life according to Islam. He also commented on the 60 meanings of courage and its function for human life, then about justice and its various dimensions, the meaning of friendship, and how to seek and foster friendship. This book ends by discussing Islam as a form of life. This book is also one of the tools that Hamka uses to express his thoughts on Islamic education.
- d. *Lembaga Hidup* (1962). In this book, he develops his thoughts in XII chapters. This book contains various human obligations to Allah, social human obligations, rights to property, obligations in the view of a Muslim, obligations in the family, seeking knowledge, having a homeland, Islam and politics, the Koran for modern times, and this paper closes with describes

the figure of the prophet Muhammad. In addition to the institution of mind and philosophy of life, this book also contains implied education.

- e. *Pelajaran Agama Islam* (1952). This book is divided into IX chapters. The discussion includes; humans and religion, from which angle to seek God, and the pillars of faith.
- f. *Tafsir Al-Azhar Juz 1-30*. Interpretation of Al-Azhar is his most monumental work. This book began to be written in 1962. Most of the contents of this interpretation were completed in prison, namely when he was a prisoner between 1964-1967.
- g. *Ayahku; Riwayat Hidup Dr. Haji Amarullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* (1958). This book contains the personality and actions of his father, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah or often called Haji Rosul. Hamka describes the struggle of the people in general and in particular the struggle of his father, who was exiled by the Dutch to Sukabumi and finally died in Jakarta on June 2, 1945.¹⁰
- h. *Kenang-kenangan Hidup Jilid I-IV* (1979). This book is Hamka's autobiography.
- i. *Islam dan Adat Minangkabau* (1984). This book is his criticism of the customs and mentality of the people which he considers incompatible with the times.
- j. *Sejarah umat Islam Jilid I-IV* (1975). This book is an attempt to describe in detail the history of Muslims, starting from early Islam, progress, and decline of Islam in the Middle Ages. He also explained about the history of entry and development of Islam in Indonesia.
- k. *Studi Islam* (1976), talk about political aspects and Islamic statehood. The talks include; Islamic law, Islamic studies, and a comparison between the UN declaration of human rights and Islam.
- l. *Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Islam* (1973). The book discusses women as God's creatures whose existence is glorified.¹¹
- m. *Si Sabariyah* (1926), his first romance book he wrote in Minangkabau language. *Romance; Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* (1979), *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah* (1936), *Merantau Ke Deli* (1977), *Terusir, Keadilan Illahi, Di Dalam Lembah Kehidupan, Salahnya Sendiri, Tuan Direktur, Angkatan baru, Cahaya Baru, Cermin Kehidupan*.
 - a. *Revolusi pikiran, Revolusi Agama, Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi, Negara Islam, Sesudah Naskah Renville, Muhammadiyah*

¹⁰ Mif Baihaqi, *Ensiklopedi Tokoh Pendidikan: Dari Abendanon Hingga Imam Zarkasyi* (Bandung: Nuansa, 2007), h. 62

¹¹ Samsul Nizar, *Memperbincangkan Dinamika Intelektual dan Pemikiran Hamka* Jakarta: Kencana, 2008) h. 47

Melalui Tiga Zaman, Dari Lembah Cita-Cita, Merdeka, Islam Dan Demokrasi, Dilamun Ombak Masyarakat, Menunggu Beduk Berbunyi.

- b. Di Tepi Sungai Nyl, Di Tepi Sungai Daljah, Mandi Cahaya Di Tanah Suci, Empat Bulan Di Amerika, Pandangan Hidup Muslim.¹²
- c. Artikel Lepas; Persatuan Islam, Bukti yang Tepat, Majalah Tentara, Majalah Al-Mahdi, Semangat Islam, Menara, Ortodox dan Modernisme, Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau, Lembaga Fatwa, Tajdid dan Mujadid, dan lain-lain.¹³

As an educator, Buya Hamka has been able to show convincing evidence of his success. Although not an educator in the sense of a professional teacher, he radiated an overall educational attitude throughout his life, either through direct teaching or through his writings. Motivasi Penulisan dan Alasan Penamaan Tafsir Al-Azhar

In this case we use the book of interpretations of al-Azhar printed by Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd Singapore Volume 1, lux edition in 1990. This book has 10 volumes. The factor that prompted Buya Hamka to produce this commentary was stated by Buya Hamka himself in the preamble of his commentary. Among them is his desire to instill the spirit and belief in Islam in the souls of the younger generation of Indonesia who are very interested in understanding the Koran but are hampered by their inability to master Arabic. His inclination towards writing these interpretations is also aimed at facilitating the understanding of preachers and preachers as well as enhancing the impression in the delivery of sermons taken from Arabic sources.

This interpretation was originally a series of studies delivered at dawn lectures by Buya Hamka at the al-Azhar mosque located in Kebayoran Baru since 1959. The name of the al-Azhar mosque was given directly by Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut, Chancellor of al-Azhar University during his visit to Indonesia in December 1960 with the hope that it would become a campus like the Egyptian al-Azhar campus. The naming of Buya Hamka's interpretation with the name Tafsir al-Azhar is closely related to the place where this interpretation was born, namely at the Great Mosque of al-Azhar, Kebayoran Baru. At the suggestion of the administration of the magazine at that time, namely Haji Yusuf Ahmad's brother. All the interpretation lessons at dawn were published in the magazine Gema Islam which was immediately named Tafsir Al-Azhar, because this interpretation appeared in the Al-Azhar Grand Mosque, for which the name was given by Shaykh

¹² Hamka, *Tasauf Modern...*, h. 17

¹³ Rusydi Hamka, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat...*, h. 140

Jami' Al-Azhar and as a thank you Buya Hamka to Al-Azhar for the award given as the title of Ustaziyah Fakhriyah (Doctor Honoris Causa).¹⁴

While this commentary study was delivered at the al-Azhar mosque, and then it was published in the Panji Masyarakat magazine, this interpretation lecture continued until there was political turmoil where the mosque was accused of being a nest of "Neo Masyumi" and "Hamkaism". On 12 Rabi' al awwal 1383 H/27 January 1964, Buya Hamka was arrested by the old order rulers during President Soekarno because of Buya Hamka's many criticisms of the guided democratic government at that time and with accusations of betrayal to the state. And these two years of detention turned out to be a blessing for Buya Hamka because he was able to finish writing his commentary.

Writing Models

This book of al-Azhar by Buya Hamka consists of ten volumes arranged in the order of the Uṣmani Mushaf, starting from chapter one and ending with chapter thirty. Details of each volume can be seen as follows:

1. Jilid Satu : *al-Fātiḥah - al-Baqarah*
2. Jilid Dua : *Ali 'Imrān - al-Nisā'*
3. Jilid Tiga : *al-Mā'idah - al-An'ām*
4. Jilid Empat : *al-A'rāf - al-Taubah*
5. Jilid Lima : *Yūnus - al-Naḥl*
6. Jilid Enam : *al-Isrā' - al-Mu'minūn*
7. Jilid Tujuh : *al-Nūr - al-Sajdah*
8. Jilid Delapan : *al-aḥzāb - Fuṣṣilāt*
9. Jilid Sembilan : *al-Syūrā - al-Ṣāf*
10. Jilid Sepuluh : *al-Jumu'ah - al-Nās*

In the first volume of Tafsir al-Azhar, like books of commentary in general, we can read the author's preface and muqaddimah. Before entering into the interpretation, Buya Hamka explained in sufficient detail several themes related to the Qur'an, i'jaz al-Qur'an, contents of the Mu'jizat al-Qur'an, al-Qur'an Lafaz and Meaning, Interpreting the Qur'an, The Direction of Tafsir, Why It Is Called "Tafsir al-Azhar", and Divine Wisdom. These sub-themes are no less important to read first before reading further on the interpretation of the verses, because it is there that you will find the flow, style and guidelines for interpretation used by Buya Hamka in his book. Of course, this will greatly assist the reader in understanding the interpretation of al-Azhar better.

Entering the next section of Tafsir al-Azhar, Buya Hamka always starts his steps by writing the "Introduction" sub-chapter of each letter. This introduction

¹⁴ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, (Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd Singapura, 1990), Jilid I, h.50

contains a general introduction by Buya Hamka regarding the letter to be interpreted, starting from an explanation of the name of the letter, its relation to the previously interpreted letter, if any, the contents and general messages of the letter to be interpreted. This "Introduction" sub-chapter is usually written only one to two pages by Buya Hamka. With the exception of chapter 30, Buya Hamka only wrote one "Introduction" at the beginning of the chapter which included a general discussion of all the short letters contained therein.

The next step taken by Buya Hamka, after writing the "Introduction" sub-chapter, was to present the letter to be interpreted. He started by including the brief identity of the letter; the name of the letter and its translation, the number of the letter and the number of verses, and the place where the letter was sent down. After that, he wrote down the verse and its translation into Indonesian, then interpreted it. Each letter is divided into several themes according to the contents of the verse. For example, in the letter al-Jumu'ah, Buya Hamka divides it into 15 themes; verses 1-4 with the theme "Wisdom of the Ummi Apostle's Resurrection", verses 5-8 with the theme "For example Soybeans Carrying a Book", and so on until the last verse.

There may be more than one theme conveyed by Buya Hamka in each interpretation of the verse, depending on the explanation needed. As in interpreting verses 9-11 of surah al-Jumu'ah, there are several sub-themes; Friday Prayers, Preparation for Friday, from Azan Matters, What is Required to Do Friday, about When, How Many New People Stand Up Friday?, about Place, Friday Khutbah, as well as several other sub-themes related to Friday prayers and the Virtue of Friday.

Methodology and Style of Interpretation

Each interpreter has his own method and style of interpretation which is his trademark. This difference in interpretation can be caused by several factors, such as the educational background and personal life of the interpreter himself. Likewise with Buya Hamka regarding his Tafsir al-Azhar. As previously mentioned in this paper, Buya Hamka explains how he interprets the Koran in Tafsir al-Azhar in its sub-chapter entitled "The Direction of Tafsir". In general, the interpretation method used by Buya Hamka in this interpretation is the Tahlili (analytical) method.¹⁵ Regarding how to interpret it, Buya Hamka said:

“Penafsir memelihara sebaik-baiknya hubungan di antara naqal dengan akal. Di antara riwayat dengan dirayah. Penafsir tidak hanya semata-mata mengutip atau menukil pendapat orang yang terdahulu, tetapi mempergunakan juga tinjauan dan pengalaman sendiri. dan tidak pula

¹⁵ Siti Nafsiyatul Ummah, “Makna Hijrah Perspektif Hamka dalam Tafsir *al-Azhar* dan Kontekstualisasinya dalam Kehidupan Sosial di Indonesia”, Skripsi Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Filsafat, Jurusan al-Qur'an dan Tafsir, Universitas Islam Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019, hal. 47.

semata-mata menuruti pertimbangan akal sendiri, seraya melalaikan apa yang dinukil dari orang yang terdahulu.¹⁶

Also in his interpretation, Buya Hamka has at least two previous commentary books which are used as guidelines and examples in writing this essay. These two influential books are the commentary book of al-Manar written by Sayid Rasyid Rida (whose thoughts were also heavily influenced by the teacher, Muhammad Abduh) and the book of *Fī Żilāl al-Qur'ān* commentary by Sayid Qutb. His admiration for the two books is also conveyed in his Interpretation Course. One of the reasons for his interest is because the interpretation carried out by Sayid Rasyid Ridha does not only raise religious themes, such as hadith and fiqh, but also relates them to political developments and social issues circulating at that time.¹⁷ Likewise with the book of commentaries written by Sayid Qutb which is no less extraordinary. So do not be surprised if later when reading this interpretation of al-Azhar, we will find Buya Hamka quoting the interpretation of one of these figures in explaining certain verses before expressing his own opinion.

As for the sources of interpretation used by Buya Hamka, they come from three main sources, namely the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, the opinions of his companions, and the opinions of the *tabi'in*. Buya Hamka stated in his *muqaddimah* interpretation, that for verses related to law, interpretations other than the three sources above may not be added. The goal is not to cause *bid'ah* in religion.¹⁸ Then for verses that tell about nature, an interpreter is supposed to interpret these verses in accordance with scientific developments. It cannot be denied that science about nature in ancient times was not as developed as it is today and there is not much explanation about it from the hadiths of the Prophet SAW. So the task of the interpreter is to provide an explanation that is in accordance with the science of his time. This is of course because the purpose of the verses of nature is to strengthen faith and monotheism. One scholar who is an example in this regard is Shaykh Thanthawi Jauhari.¹⁹ Thus, the sources of interpretation used by Buya Hamka can be categorized into *bi al-ma'sur* and *bi al-ra'yi*.

Apart from discussing the methods and sources of interpretation used by Buya Hamka, there is one more important element to discuss, namely the style or characteristics of *Tafsir al-Azhar*. *Adāb al-ijtimā'i* (community literary style) is the style used in this interpretation, is a style of interpretation that focuses more on explaining the contents of the verses of the Qur'an for life and relating them to natural law (*sunnatullah*) that applies in society at that time. As mentioned in his *Tafsir Course*, the faces of the congregation, whose backgrounds and styles are

¹⁶ Abdul Malik Abdul Karim Amrullah (Hamka), *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 1990. Jilid 1, hal. 40.

¹⁷ Lihat penjelasan lengkapnya dalam Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, hlm. 41.

¹⁸ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, hlm. 34.

¹⁹ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, hlm. 28.

diverse, who become the congregation in prayer with Buya Hamka are the faces imagined when composing this interpretation. Starting from the great merchants to the servants and ordinary craftsmen. Therefore, Buya Hamka strives for this interpretation so that it can be read and understood by various groups of people, not only by the clergy. So this interpretation is made in simple language, not too high and deep, but not too low.²⁰

Based on Buya Hamka's explanation above, this interpretation is not like the interpretation of previous scholars, who put forward aspects of *balagah*, *nahwu*, *şaraf*, and disputes from several schools of thought regarding the interpretation of a verse of law. But more to the understanding of the contents of the verses alone. For Buya Hamka's own school of thought, he admits that he adheres to the Salaf school, which is in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which were followed by his friends and previous scholars..²¹ As for the interpretation, Buya Hamka said in his Interpretation as follows:

“Oleh karena Tafsir al-Azhar ini ditulis dalam suasana baru, di negara yang penduduk muslimnya lebih besar jumlahnya dari penduduk yang lain, sedang mereka haus akan bimbingan agama, haus hendak mengentahui rahasia al-Qur'an, maka pertikaian-pertikaian mazhab tidaklah dibawakan dalam tafsir ini, dan tidaklah penulis ta'aşşub kepada suatu paham, melainkan mencoba sedaya-upaya mendekati maksud ayat, menguraikan makna dari lafaz bahasa Arab ke dalam bahasa Indonesia dan memberi kesempatan orang buat berfikir.”²²

Isrā'iliyāt in the View of Buya Hamka

Buya Hamka pays very great and serious attention to *isrā'iliyāt* which we can find in the *muqaddimah* of his work. *Isrā'iliyāt* are stories that are often brought up by Jews and Christians who convert to Islam. This era began at the time of the *khulafā' al-rasyidīn*, a group of groups emerged who could be called "storytellers" (*al-qaşşas*). They used to tell stories in the Koran by adding to or exaggerating the story so that it was pleasing to the ears of the people who were in the *halaqahs* at the mosques at that time. So when Sayyidina Ali became caliph, he strictly forbade conveying the messages of the verses of the Qur'an by way of exaggerating stories, for fear of mixing the verses of the Koran with *isrā'iliyāt* stories such that they would be considered as a fairy tale. Except for Imam Hasan al-Bishri who was allowed by Sayyidina Ali because only Imam Hasan conveyed the verses of the Koran by telling stories, but not exaggerating them.²³

²⁰ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, Jilid 1, hlm. 41-42.

²¹ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, Jilid 1, hlm.

²² Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, hlm. 40-41.

²³ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, Jilid 1, hlm. 32-33.

As time went on, until the time of the tabi'ins arrived, the stories circulating about the stories in the Koran became increasingly absurd and far from the message the verse itself wanted to convey. According to Buya Hamka, *isrā'iliyāt* is divided into three types ::²⁴

1. *Isrā'iliyāt* that is in accordance with the truth, that is in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an itself because there are valid hadiths that explain it. So that is not rejected.
2. *Isrā'iliyāt* which is clearly a lie, that is, which is contrary to the intent of the verses of the Koran, valid narrations, or based on Islamic teachings. This type of *isrā'iliyāt* must obviously be abandoned.
3. *Isrā'iliyāt* which does not bring new problems, which do not contradict the verses of the Qur'an nor justify it, does not bring benefits and harm to religion. So it was said by Buya Hamka, that according to Ibn Taimiyah, this type is neither justified nor blamed.

So in composing a book of exegesis in this modern era, according to Buya Hamka, if *isrā'iliyāt* stories are mixed up with verses of the Qur'an, it can certainly damage the contents of the contents and will become a barrier to the truth of verse al-Qur'an. -The Koran is for those who want to learn it. Based on this explanation, the author concludes that Buya Hamka is very careful about interpretation by *isrā'iliyāt* and prefers to just avoid it. If later there is an *isrā'iliyāt* story that is presented in this interpretation, Buya Hamka said that this was nothing but a warning.²⁵

The Indonesian Side of Tafsir al-Azhar

Tasir al-Azhar is a phenomenal masterpiece written by Indonesian scholars using the Indonesian language as well. The interpretations written with the aim of providing understanding to Muslims, especially Indonesian Muslims, are of course also wrapped in explanations that are appropriate to the context in Indonesia. To make it more understandable, in the following the author presents some examples of interpretations from Buya Hamka with its strong Indonesian side: *Menyebutkan tanaman-tanaman yang ada di Indonesia*

In interpreting several verses related to nature, such as plants, Buya Hamka often explained them in accordance with those in Indonesia. One example is when interpreting Q.S. 'Abasa: 26-31:

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ۚ — ٢٦ — ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ۚ — ٢٦ — وَعَيْنًا وَقَضْبًا ۚ — ٢٨
 وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ۚ — ٢٩ — وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا ۚ — ٣٠ — وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا ۚ — ٣١

Kemudian kami lunakkan bumi seluluk-luluknya (26) Maka kami tumbuhkan padanya benih-benih makanan (27) Dan anggur dan sayur-

²⁴ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, Jilid 1, hlm. 33-34.

²⁵ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar...*, Jilid 1, hal. 34.

²⁶ <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/>

sayuran (28) Dan buah zaitun dan korma (29) Dan kebun-kebun yang subur (30) Dan buah-buahan dan rumput-rumputan (31).²⁷

Buya Hamka explained in his commentary on verse 27 that this verse will be quickly understood by countries whose staple food is rice. As is usually done by the community when planting rice, the first thing to do is to soften the soil of the paddy fields (in line with the verse 26), only then can they plant seeds, such as seeds of rice, wheat, beans, and corn. Then proceed with examples of other plants as set forth in paragraphs 28 and 30. Furthermore, for paragraphs 31-32, Buya Hamka mentions various kinds of fruits that can grow in cold climates to hot climates, such as pomegranates, grapes, apples, types of bananas, types of mangoes, papaya, pineapple, rambutan, durian, duku, langsung, and sapodilla fruit.

It can be seen very clearly, that in interpreting the verse above, Buya Hamka's Indonesianness in his interpretation is very strong, starting from the habits practiced by Indonesian people in farming (rice fields), staple foods, to mentioning only fruits that grow in Indonesia, not those that grow in Arabia. Likewise in Q.S. al-Wāqī'ah: 29, Buya Hamka mentions various types of bananas that grow in Indonesia, such as plantains, lemongrass bananas, mas bananas, horn bananas, stick bananas, Ambon bananas, Siamese bananas, and several other types.

Another example in Q.S. Yāsīn: 34 (“and We made him gardens of date palms and various grapes”). This verse mentions one of God's blessings, namely that humans are given the ability to garden, such as palm and vineyards. According to Buya Hamka, the two examples of these plants were because the verses of the Koran were revealed in the Arab world, where the main foods were dates and grapes. To provide a clearer understanding of this verse, Buya Hamka also mentions the staple food found in Indonesia in particular, Southeast Asia in general (Burma, Malaysia, Siam, the Philippines and Japan), namely rice, so that people will farm.²⁸

Explain with events that are close to the community

Because Buya Hamka comes from and lives in the midst of the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, naturally his interpretations are somewhat colored by things that are close to the community. One example of such an interpretation is when Buya Hamka interprets Q.S al-Falaq verse 4:

وَمِنْ سَرِّ التَّقَاتِ فِي الْعَقَدِ — 29

“Dan dari kejahatan wanita-wanita peniup pada buhul-buhul”.³⁰

Buya Hamka explained that what is meant by the verse above is the various kinds of spells used for evil, one example of the shamanic spell that he mentioned

²⁷ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 10, hal. 7895. Terjemahan mengikut kepada terjemahan Buya Hamka dalam Tafsir *al-Azhar*, karena memang terdapat sedikit perbedaan pemilihan kata dengan terjemahan yang terdapat dalam al-Quran Kemenag saat ini.

²⁸ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 8, halm. 5993.

²⁹ <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/>

³⁰ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 10, halm. 8154.

is "Tuju". Tuju literally means looking or "the destination on the way". However, in Minangkabau terms, tuju is part of a shamanic magic or spell that is sent/aimed at someone, even though the distance is far away, with bad intentions. Then the intended person will feel the impact of the spell sent to it.³¹ An explanation regarding this objective was discussed at length by Buya Hamka in interpreting verse 4 of this surah al-Falaq. Through this explanation, Buya Hamka would like to convey that such a thing is indeed real and is acknowledged in the Qur'an.

Another example of Buya Hamka's interpretation by mentioning events that are close to modern Indonesian society in general is verse 3 of al-Falaq. Here's the explanation:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ - ٣³²

"Dan dari kejahatan malam apabila dia telah kelam".³³

In an effort to provide an interpretation of this verse, Buya Hamka explained how terrible the atmosphere was when night fell. Starting from the eerie quiet atmosphere, the actions of thieves in people's homes, and even more terrible night conditions in big cities with more modern life. Buya Hamka mentioned several examples of nightlife in big cities, people going out to commit immorality; spending possessions on gambling tables and women's arms, husbands who betray their wives, teenage girls whose virginity has been damaged and their future destroyed by irresponsible people. So because of that, Buya Hamka said at the end of the interpretation of the verse that we always ask Allah for protection at all times, when night comes, in every era.³⁴

Other examples are also found in Q.S. al-Shura: 28:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

"Dan Dialah yang menurunkan hujan sesudah mereka putus harapan, ditebarkannya rahmat-Nya. Dan Dia adalah Pelindung Yang Maha Terpuji."

This verse was interpreted by Buya Hamka quite broadly. Not only talking about the despair of people because of the rain that didn't come down after making all kinds of efforts, then suddenly Allah sent down grace in the form of rain that radiated everywhere. Buya Hamka also explained another incident as an example in the interpretation of this verse. He mentioned that the Indonesian nation that was free from colonialism and could be independent was also a form of God's grace. Overall, this verse emphasizes that it is not permissible to give up in any case, because God's grace will always come in His own unexpected way..³⁵

³¹ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 10, hal. 8154.

³³ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 10, hal. 8153.

³⁴ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 10, hal. 8153-8154.

³⁵ Hamka, Tafsir *al-Azhar*..., Jilid 9, hal. 6513.

Based on the several examples that the author has explained above, it is very clear that as an effort to understand Muslim society, especially those in Indonesia, Buya Hamka packaged it very nicely in explanations that were simple and easily accepted by the general public, not only by the clergy. . So the Indonesian side of Tafsir al-Azhar can be inferred from how Buya Hamka interprets the verses of the Quran.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Al-Azhar Interpretation

After doing a further reading of Buya Hamka's Tafsir al-Azhar, of course, as readers, we will find some of its shortcomings and many advantages. The only drawback that the writer was able to find was the absence of a reference/footnote when Buya Hamka took the opinion of previous scholars. He only mentions the biblical sources used at the end in volume 10 (the last volume) of his work, which is written like a bibliography. This is certainly a difficulty for academics who want to read directly the source book that Buya Hamka refers to in his commentary. However, for ordinary readers, because the purpose of writing this commentary is for the general public, this is not so important other than understanding the explanations of the verses of the Qur'an.

Apart from this one shortcoming, it cannot be denied that as Indonesian Muslims, we must be proud of the birth of this masterpiece of interpretation using Indonesian and written by one of the nation's best sons. There are many advantages that can be found in this book. Submission of a simple but deep, is an important point. Eliminating the complicated aspects of previous commentary books, such as discussing nahwu, şaraf, balagah, and sect disputes, makes this interpretation easier to understand by various groups of people. What's more, this interpretation is packed with conditions that are appropriate as they are in Indonesia, both from the natural conditions to the people themselves, so it would not be wrong to say that this book is a book of modern-contextual interpretation.

Conclusion

This book of Interpretation by Buya Hamka is one of several books on Indonesian interpretation which are thick with Indonesianness. Buya Hamka provides an explanation of the verses of the Koran with a simple understanding and is close to Indonesian society, so that it can be learned not only by the clergy but also the general public as Buya Hamka's initial target.

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