


# FAZLUR RAHMAN'S HERMENEUTIC ANALYSIS OF HAMKA'S TAFSİR AL-AZHAR



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## Abstract

Tafsir al – Azhar by HAMKA is a work of Malay tafsir that exists to answer social problems in the Indonesian context in the era when HAMKA lived. Therefore, contextualization is the dominant feature in HAMKA's interpretation; it is considered in line with Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutic principle. This research is a literature review analyzing Tafsir al – Azhar by HAMKA using Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutic perspective to find compatibility between the two. In general, this research finds that, in Tafsir al – Azhar, HAMKA applies Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutic method; especially when he attempts to get in and answer current issues by taking the main Qur'an principles through the intertextuality process and exploring the sociohistorical setting of a verse.

## Abstrak

*Tafsir al-Azhar karya HAMKA merupakan sebuah karya tafsir Melayu yang hadir sebagai upaya menjawab persoalan-persoalan sosial dalam konteks keindonesiaan di era ketika HAMKA hidup. Oleh karenanya, kontekstualisasi merupakan corak dominan yang terdapat dalam penafsiran HAMKA; dan itu dianggap sejalan dengan prinsip hermeneutika double movement Fazlur Rahman. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian pustaka dengan menganalisis Tafsir al-Azhar karya HAMKA menggunakan perspektif hermeneutika double movement Fazlur Rahman untuk menemukan kesesuaian antara keduanya. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa secara garis besar, di dalam Tafsir al-Azhar, HAMKA mengaplikasikan metode hermeneutika double movement-nya Fazlur Rahman; terutama ketika ia berupaya menyentuh dan menjawab persoalan kekinian dengan mengambil prinsip utama yang dimaksud oleh Al-Qur'an melalui proses intertekstualitas dan penggalian setting sosiohistoris suatu ayat.*

## INTRODUCTION

When the Islamic world was in a gloomy period in the 19th century, defeat, colonialism, and backwardness were reflected on the faces of the Muslims. Renewal finally came called for by one of the Islamic figures, Jamaluddin Al – Afgani, to raise the spirit of Muslims. His disciple, Muhammad Abduh, followed this call for revival by preaching reform in various principles and understandings of Islam. Muhammad Abduh connected religious teachings with modern life. With his renewal concept, he proved that Islam and the advancement of civilization are mutually supportive, not contradictory. From the principle that Islam should be able to move forward without leaving behind modernity or turast, efforts to contextualize Islamic teachings were born. It was a critical effort towards a literal and rigid understanding of medieval Islam, which is suspected as the main cause of the stagnation and decline of the Muslim community itself. This criticism is the beginning of the emergence of interpretations that seek to answer the problem of the community. One of them is *Tafsir al-Manar* by Rasyid Rida (Faiz, 2002, p. 61).



In Indonesia, the existence of *Tafsir al-Manar* has inspired HAMKA to write an interpretation with a similar style. The book *Tafsir al-Azhar*, written by HAMKA, begins with his dawn studies which contain a modern interpretation methodology. Some researchers, like Fakhruddin Faiz, cited in his book the contents of hermeneutic principles in HAMKA's *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Faiz, 2002, p. 100). A similar study was also conducted by Husnul Hidayati, who examined the contextualization methodology used by HAMKA in his *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Hidayati found that HAMKA had applied the principles of hermeneutics in his tafsir (Hidayati, 2018). In addition, the research examines the aspect of *adabul ijtima'i*, which is the pattern of HAMKA's interpretation in *Tafsir al-Azhar*. The research conducted by Mu'thiyah Shinfal Afroh examines *Tafsir al-Azhar* in terms of emphasizing contemporary issues society faces (Afroh, 2023).

Some of these previous studies have yet to be found to use a specific hermeneutic perspective on *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Therefore, in this study, I examine HAMKA's *Tafsir al-Azhar* using Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutical analysis. Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics is suitable for analyzing *Tafsir al-Azhar* because HAMKA's principles of intertextuality and contextualization align with Fazlur Rahman's principle of the double movement.

## FAZLUR RAHMAN'S DOUBLE MOVEMENT HERMENEUTIC

Fazlur Rahman is a prominent Islamic thinker born on September 21, 1919, in Hazara, Pakistan and died at 69 in Chicago, Illinois, on July 26, 1988. His family was devout adherents of the Hanafi school of thought. Fazlur Rahman acknowledged his family's typical obedience by saying that daily routine worship was a common sight in his family's daily life (Mosa, 2000, p. 1).

His father and mother are two important figures who underlie the formation of Fazlur Rahman's character and intellect. His father, Maulana Syahab al-Din, was a great scholar where they lived (Amiruddin, 2000, p. 9). It was from his father that Fazlur Rahman received traditional religious teachings. Even so, his father accepted modernity. Fazlur Rahman continued and completed his BA and MA programs at Punjab University. He finally completed his doctoral program at Oxford University in Islamic philosophy with a dissertation on Ibn Sina (Firmansyah, 2019).

In the study of Islamic thought, Fazlur Rahman contributes through his hermeneutic theory, called the double movements hermeneutic. His hermeneutic theory was born from his anxiety and criticism of the atomistic model of classical tafsir. Classical tafsir, for him, has its drawbacks because it attempts only to interpret the verses of the verses based on their order in the Qur'an. That is why interpretations in classical tafsir tend to be fragmentary and incomplete in meaning (Sumantri, 2013).

On the other hand, Fazlur Rahman also acknowledged his disappointment with the modernists, whom he considered failed to offer a better method of interpretation than the classical period. Modernists, Fazlur Rahman claims, have even brought up methods of interpretation that only express subjectivity and personal inclinations and elaborate them with various modern Western beliefs and practices (Sholeh, 2007, p. 2).

Amid his anxiety, Fazlur Rahman offers a new method of interpretation called the double movement theory. This method starts from the notion that understanding the Qur'an cannot be done atomistically like the classical scholars do, which causes interpreters to be trapped in a literal textual interpretation. Instead, according to him, the approach that should be taken to understand the Qur'an is an interpretive approach that can produce a clear *weltanschauung* of the Qur'an (Syamsuddin, 2010, p. 69). This is where the idea of a double movement emerged. Fazlur Rahman bases his hermeneutical

structure on the theoretical concept that what one wants to find and apply from the Qur'an is its worldview concept (*weltanschauung*), not its literal meaning. Double movement hermeneutics is a method of interpretation that contains two movements: the first movement departs from the present to the situation in which the Qur'an was revealed, while the second movement is vice versa, namely from the situation in which the Qur'an was revealed to the present. This second movement is a movement that presupposes the existence of progressive revelation (Ulya, 2011).

The first movement departs from the contemporary situation towards the era when the Qur'an was revealed. This movement demands an understanding of the statement meaning by examining the historical situation or problem in which the Qur'anic statement appears as an answer. In other words, the Qur'an is understood as a totality besides specific teachings that respond to particular situations. Then these specific responses are then generalized and stated as statements with general moral goals that can be "filtered" from specific verses related to the sociohistorical background and the often express legal ratios. During this process, attention must be paid to the direction of the teachings of the Qur'an as a totality so that every particular meaning understood, every law stated, and every goal or objective formulated is intertwined. In short, in this first movement, studies are initiated from specific matters in the Qur'an, then explored and systematized into general principles, values, and long – term goals (Sholeh, 2007, p. 132).

The second movement is from when the Qur'an was revealed (after discovering the general principles) to the present. It means that general teachings (doctrines) must be embodied in a concrete sociohistorical context today. For this reason, it is necessary to study the current situation carefully and analyze its elements so that the old values of the Qur'an can be assessed and changed according to today's new needs and priorities. This second movement will also function as a correction of the results of the understanding and interpretation carried out in the first movement. Because if the results of that understanding cannot be applied in the present, then it means that there has been a failure in assessing the current situation correctly or even a loss in understanding the Qur'an. Isn't it impossible that a specific order (Arab society) in the past, which was so complex, could not be realized in the present context? It is done by taking into account the "specific differences that exist in the current situation," both changing past rules so that they are in line with the current situation (as long as they do not violate general principles in the past) or changing the current situation as long as it is necessary so that it is following the existing general principles (Sholeh, 2007, p. 132).

Thus, the first movement relates to historical work, while the second movement seeks ethical work. If done correctly, this double movement will result in a complete understanding of the Qur'an without being stuck in a literal interpretation. This hermeneutic method is an effort made so that the moral values contained in the Qur'an can still live and be applied even in the context of a different era. So that in this way, a text can be generalized as a principle and this principle as a new rule for a new situation as well (Firmansyah, 2019).

## OVERVIEW OF HAMKA AND THE TAFSĪR AL-AZHAR

Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah, better known as HAMKA, was born in Tanah Sirah, Sungai Batang village on the shores of Lake Maninjau (West Sumatra) on 16 February 1908 M or 14 Muharram 1326 H. He died on 24 July 1981 in Jakarta. Later he was given the title Buya, a nickname for the Minang people. Buya is an absorption from Arabic, *abi* or *abuya*, which means my father or someone who is respected (HAMKA, 1974, p. 7). HAMKA was born into a family that is influential in society. HAMKA's lineage

starts from the blood of Tuanku Pariaman. Tuanku Pariaman was a cleric who pioneered the Islamic religious movement during the Padri War (HAMKA, 1982, p. 48–49). Like his grandfather and great–grandfather, HAMKA's father was also a great scholar and social system builder. His father was Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Al–Minangkabawi's favorite student. The teacher and his other students formed cadres to attack the religious understanding that was developing at that time. His father's role in spreading the idea of new religious thought was enormous, which, according to HAMKA, had shaken the Islamic mind at that time (HAMKA, 1982, p. 75).

Formally, the education pursued by HAMKA is only up to the third grade of elementary school. The religious schools he attended in Padang Panjang and Parabek also lasted only three years. Although he had received education up to class VII, he did not have a diploma. Of the schools, he had attended, all of which still needed to be completed (Muhammad, 2006, p. 60). Even so, HAMKA is proficient in Arabic and English. In addition, he is also good at writing both in the mass media and publishing phenomenal books. In 1928, HAMKA was the editor of the *Kemajuan Masyarakat* magazine. In 1932, he became an editor and published *al-Mahdi* magazine in Makassar. In addition, he is also the editor of magazines such as *Pedoman Masyarakat*, *Panji Masyarakat*, dan *Gema Islam* (Razikin, et al., p. 189–190).

One of HAMKA's many phenomenal essays is the *Tafsir Al-Azhar* which he wrote while in detention for two years and six months in 1966. The writing of *Tafsir Al-Azhar* began when HAMKA lived in Jakarta in 1956. There at that time, stood a mosque named al–Azhar Mosque. In this mosque, HAMKA routinely expounds and teaches the interpretation of the Qur'an every day after the morning prayer. HAMKA's dawn studies were later published in *Gema Islam* magazine, which made HAMKA's Qur'anic interpretation studies spread throughout Indonesia. After completing the writing of his commentary, he admitted that the naming of *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, which was taken from the name of the mosque where he gave the study, was a form of gratitude to al–Azhar University and Shaykh Jami' al–Azhar Muhammad Shaltout (HAMKA, 1981).

*Tafsir Al-Azhar* in the *Gema Islam* magazine from 1958 to 1964 was only written in one and a half chapters, namely chapters 18 to 19. On January 27, 1964, coinciding with the 12th day of Ramadan, HAMKA was arrested by the Soekarno government for being accused of holding an illegal meeting to eliminate the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Syaifuddin Zuhry. Then until 1966, HAMKA was in prison and finished writing his tafsir book. Even though the incident of HAMKA's detention was painful, he was still grateful because it was precisely at that moment that he was able to complete the book *Tafsir al–Azhar* (Musyarif, 2019). Moh. Syauki Md Zahir, an Islamic scholar, said that *Tafsir Al–Azhar* was a complete book of Malay tafsir, considered the best produced by the Muslim Malay community at that time; likewise, Abu Syakirin, who is also an Islamic scholar, who said that HAMKA's *Tafsir Al–Azhar* shows a breadth of knowledge and covers almost all information (Alviyah, 2016).

## THE METHOD, STYLE, AND SYSTEMATIC INTERPRETATION OF HAMKA'S *TAFSIR AL–AZHAR*

The method used by HAMKA when interpreting the Qur'an in the book of *Tafsir al-Azhar* is the *tahlili* method. *Tahlili* is a method of interpreting verses according to the sequence of letters from beginning to end, mentioning contents, exploring the asbabun nuzul, defining vocabularies, and explaining the relationship between the verses before

and after (munasabah) (Ahmad, 2016). This method can be seen from HAMKA's order in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, starting from Surah al – Fatihah and ending with Surah an – Naas.

Although using the tahlili method, HAMKA in *Tafsir al-Azhar* does not place much emphasis on explaining the meaning of vocabulary. HAMKA emphasizes understanding the verses of the Qur'an as a whole. After presenting the translation of the verse, Hamka usually immediately conveys the meaning and instructions contained in the verse being interpreted without expounding much on the vocabulary. Vocabulary explanations, if any, are rare (Yusuf, 2003, p. 23 – 24).

In explaining the interpretation, the systematics used by Hamka is precisely at the beginning of the Surah. Before elaborating on the interpretation, he first wrote an introduction that contained an explanation of the Surah, such as the meaning of the Surah name, the reasons behind the naming of the Surah, verses' asbabun nuzul, including the contradictions in the opinions of the scholars regarding this matter. After that, he interprets the verses by giving the title in accordance with the subject matter of the group of verses written earlier (HAMKA, 1981, p. 73).

Meanwhile, based on the style of interpretation, it can be seen that the book of *Tafsir al-Azhar* has an adab ijtimai style. The interpretation of HAMKA is classified into an *adab ijtimai* patterned interpretation along with several other interpreter figures, namely Shaykh Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Muahammad Rasyid Ridha with their book of *Tafsir al – Manar*. Likewise, the interpretation of adab ijtimai style is the interpretations by Ahmad Mustafa al – Maraghi, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and M. Quraish Shihab (Tanjung, 2014). According to his confession, HAMKA received the dominant influence from *Tafsir al-Manar*, so the style of HAMKA's interpretation is naturally similar to *Tafsir al-Manar* (Syafii, 2014).

The style of the *adab ijtimai* is a style of interpretation that explains the instructions of the Qur'anic verses that are directly related to society. The aim is to overcome people's ills or problems based on the guidance of verses in language that is easy to understand but still beautiful to hear (Shihab, 2007, p. 108). It can be said that the style of adab ijtimai interpretation focuses on its interpretation of the explanation of the verses content using an editorial that is close to the life of the community where the interpretation is issued. Therefore, the interpretation of adab ijtimai is also often referred to as a cultural and societal interpretation (Tanjung, 2014).

This socio – cultural pattern is dominantly found in HAMKA's *Tafsir al-Azhar*. HAMKA often relates his interpretation of the Qur'an to the social life at that time. He intended this to make the Qur'an a means to overcome people's problems and ailments and to encourage them towards a progressive and better life. This effort was seen when HAMKA used Qur'anic verses as a knife to peel away social issues that were taking place at that time. When interpreting Surat al – Furqon verse 63, for example, HAMKA states that those who have the right to be called ibadur rahman are people who walk on Allah's earth with an attitude of courtesy, gentleness, not arrogant, not arrogant, and calm demeanor (HAMKA, 1984, p. 42). HAMKA further explained in detail when describing the ibadur rahman as follows:

How will they raise their face with pride when nature around them bears witness that they must submit themselves. They are like rice that has been filled; therefore, they submit. They submit to God because they are aware of God's greatness. They are humble towards fellow human beings because they realize that they cannot live alone. When they confront and greet people who are stupid and shallow – minded so that much of their stupidity doesn't come out of an orderly way of thinking, they don't get angry quickly, but they welcome it and organize



it. Questions are answered satisfactorily; whoever is wrong is guided so that they return to the right path. Such a person is good at holding back the heart (HAMKA, 1984, p. 43).

When compiling *Tafsir al-Azhar*, HAMKA uses a separate systematic, which will be explained as follows:

1. HAMKA always gives an introduction at the beginning of the Surah and provides a summary at the end of the Surah, which he interprets by including various advice so that it becomes a lesson for the reader;
2. Write down the identity of each Surah before it is interpreted;
3. Presenting writing into short parts consisting of several verses (one to five) with Arabic text followed by Indonesian translation. This is followed by a lengthy explanation of one to fifteen pages (Federspiel, 1996, p. 142 – 143);
4. Mention the hadiths and their qualities as support in explaining the verse being interpreted;
5. HAMKA adds certain themes in each Surah and groups them into several discussion verses. In the explanation process, he sometimes adds a poem;
6. In *Tafsir al-Azhar*, the author's Minang nuance is very strong (Alviyah, 2016, p. 25 – 35);
7. Explaining the correlation (munasabah) between one verse and another, between one Surah and another;
8. Explaining the asbab al-nuzul (history of the revelation of verses), if any. In explaining the asbab al-nuzul, he often provides various kinds of history regarding the provisions of the verse's revelation, although sometimes without any attempt at clarification from HAMKA itself;
9. Associating the meaning and understanding of the verse with the social problems of contemporary society (Hidayati, 2018).

## FORMS OF FAZLUR RAHMAN'S DOUBLE MOVEMENT HERMENEUTICS IN TĀFSIR AL-AZHAR

Fazlur Rahman introduces two movements and their interpretation processes in his double movement theory. The first movement consists of two stages. First, an interpreter must understand Qur'anic statements by studying the historical situation or problems surrounding the text, both specific and general (in Rahman's language is a macro situation: religion, social, custom, institution, and behavior). Second, generalizing the Qur'an's answers to specific situations into general moral-social statements (justice, equality, freedom). These moral-social statements are filtered from specific texts by fully considering the socio-historical background of the text (Rahman, 2009, p. 150).

According to Fazlur Rahman, understanding the background of the verse to be interpreted is an effort that will lead an interpreter to a complete understanding of the Qur'an. This is because the reality surrounding the revelation when it was revealed is the reason underlying the existence of the revelation. So often, the Qur'an was revealed as a response to certain situations at the time of revelation. Most of the verses revealed contain religious and social moral statements to respond to specific problems that are being faced. Therefore, we need to examine the background of a verse to find reasons and general laws that God wants to convey through that verse (Rahman, 2005, p. 7).

Fazlur Rahman generally explained the historical situation and problems behind the revelation. Among these are the polytheism of Arab society, exploitation of people experiencing poverty, trade malpractice, gender inequality, and neglect of humanity. The Qur'an then introduces a unique deity system (monotheistic theology), the One God; to

Him, all human beings must be accountable for all deeds. The Qur'an is also here to eliminate grassroots economic inequality. The theological system of the Qur'an, moral aspects, and law then have to come into contact with political elements, namely the Meccan elite's rejection of the prophetic message, controversy, the protracted conflict against this rejection, to the conflict between Jewish and Christian groups in the Medina era. Everything frames the historical situation as the background of the text (Rahman, 2005, p. 6). Although understanding the background of the verse is necessary, according to Fazlur Rahman, what is no less important is understanding the Qur'an with the general principles of the Qur'an itself. Only then will a complete and non-automatic understanding be found (Rahman, 2005, p. 8).

The second movement is from the revelation situation to the contemporary situation. Fazlur Rahman stated that this second movement must start from a general idea of the principle of the Qur'an to a specific idea that must be formulated and realized in the present. General universal principles (justice and equality) excavated from specific texts must be adapted to the socio-historical context of contemporary Muslim society. In this context, knowledge of "the past" alone is insufficient, but an in-depth study of the contemporary situation and an analysis of all the elements involved are needed. With this model, priority scales can be set, and Qur'anic values can be implemented freshly. If the theory of interpretation of the double movement can be applied successfully, stressed Fazlur Rahman, then all the commands and instructions of the Qur'an can come back to life and be effective (Rahman, 2005, p. 8).

Meanwhile, to get the general and complete meaning that becomes the law of the verse being interpreted, in Tafsir al-Azhar, HAMKA uses the intertextuality method between verses and studies the *asbabun nuzul*. According to Fakhruddin Faiz, HAMKA's effort in exploring and tracing the general meaning of a text is by using a method in hermeneutics to examine the relationships between texts and obtain the universal dimension of the Qur'an. Like a photograph of one place at a time, we will get a complete picture of that place. Other photos of the same place and time will help to understand the image as a whole (Faiz, 2002, p. 99). This principle was in line with the efforts made by Fazlur Rahman when he stated that the background of a text alone is not enough to understand the integrity of the text, but also the connection with other texts which produces a portrait of the moral principles that the Qur'an wants to convey. So that it will be found that the teachings of the Koran do not contain internal contradictions but are coherent as a whole (Rahman, 2005, p. 7).

Regarding the intertextuality between verses that HAMKA did, it can be seen, for example, when he interpreted Surah al-Zukhruf 36, he connected it with Surah al-Anam 61 and Surah Fushshilat 30-31.

And whoever turns a blind eye to the Reminder of the Most Compassionate, We place at the disposal of each a devilish one as their close associate (Surah al-Zukhruf 36). He reigns supreme over all of His creation, and sends recording-angels, watching over you. When death comes to any of you, Our angels take their soul, never neglecting this duty (Surah al-An'am 61). Surely those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," and then remain steadfast, the angels descend upon them, saying, "Do not fear, nor grieve. Rather, rejoice in the good news of Paradise, which you have been promised. We are your supporters in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. There you will have whatever your souls desire, and there you will have whatever you ask for (Surah Fusshilat 30-31) (HAMKA, 1984, p. 67).

The same model can also be seen when HAMKA interprets Surah Azzukhruf with Surah al-Qashsh 76–83, al-Dukhan verse 9 connected with verse 10, al-Jasiyah verse 3 with verse 4, al-Jasiyah 19 with al-Maidah 116, and many other verses, including those linked to the same verse as when interpreting Surah ash-Shura 44.

And whoever Allah leaves to stray will have no guide after Him (beginning of verse 44 of Surah ash-Shuraa). Therefore, may Allah keep us away from misguidance. Because if you have lost your step, what you did went awry. The guiding light is no longer on. Groping in the dark, then injustice and persecution arose. Be kind to others, especially to yourself... Until the Day of Judgment, You will see the wrongdoers, when they face the torment, pleading, "Is there any way back to the world? (end of verse 44 of Surah ash-Shuraa) (HAMKA, 1984, p. 42).

Through the intertextuality carried out by HAMKA, he is trying so that the general principles of the Qur'an can be conveyed as a whole and not in bits and pieces. Even though it is realized that HAMKA also attempts textual or literal interpretation, from a hermeneutic perspective, translation is natural for reviewers of texts that are not their own language. According to Gadamer, even translation is a form of media for understanding (Palmer, 2003, p. 231). What HAMKA has done through translation and the intertextuality of its interpretations shows the operationalization of modern hermeneutics, which in this case, is in line with Fazlur Rahman's first movement project in his double movement.

Furthermore, in exploring the meaning of the text, HAMKA does not only carry out *munasabah* or intertextuality but also explores the historical background and setting behind the text. The effort to understand a text's historical setting is to gain an understanding that is not partial and also to avoid a reduction in the true meaning of the text being studied. Therefore, the historical setting of the Qur'an in the form of *asbabun nuzul* verse is often found in HAMKA's *Tafsir al-Azhar*.

For example, in Surat al-Fath, in which almost all of the verses are written, HAMKA describes the historical background of the verse, namely the conquest of Mecca and the Hudaibiyah agreement. The same thing can also be seen in the revelation of Surat az-Zukhruf 57–60, which begins with the statement of a polytheistic Quraysh leader named Abdullah bin al-Za'bari who states that the worship of God's followers will be fuel for the hell of Jahannam. Hence, Jesus, Maryam, and Uzair, whom his followers worship, will also go to hell.

This *asbabun nuzul* can also be seen when HAMKA interprets Surat al-Baqarah 256. In *Tafsir al-Azhar*, HAMKA states that *asbabun nuzul*, this verse is a condition in which some residents of Medina, before embracing Islam handed over their children to the Bani Nadhir Jews to be cared for and educated. After the people of Medina embraced Islam, and the expulsion of the Jews occurred, they wanted their children who had become Jews to be recalled to Islam, if necessary, by force. The Prophet disapproved of this method. According to the Prophet, the children must be free to choose whether to continue with their Jewish caregivers and leave Medina, or return to their parents, embrace Islam, and live in Medina (HAMKA, 1984, p. 346).

HAMKA provides more than sufficient text interpretation and stops at verse *asbabun nuzul*. For him, to understand the context as a whole, just using *asbabun nuzul* will trap the interpreter into an uncritical interpretation. HAMKA further expands the socio-historical scope of a text beyond the specific reasons underlying the revelation of a text. In this case, he does not solely rely on the background of the revelation of the verse but also uses other scholars, such as sociology, anthropology, and historical studies, which cover the text, so that a complete understanding of the text is obtained. This principle is in line with the principles of hermeneutics when studying a text's historical and social



setting, not only using hermeneutics but also using other more comprehensive tools (Faiz, 2002, p. 112).

Interpretation based on the socio–historical context that HAMKA applied can be seen from Tafsir al–Azhar when interpreting Surah Muhammad 4, in which the asbabun nuzul is an incident of treatment of prisoners. It turned out that the Prophet, who was known for his compassion, also gave punishments to his captives, including executing no less than 800 Bani Quraiza. HAMKA stated that it must be understood that this Surah was revealed in Medina, where Islam already had power at that time. The Prophet himself was then the head of his government. So, what the Prophet did must be seen within firmness and law enforcement (HAMKA, 1984, p. 4).

Likewise, when HAMKA interprets Surat al–Baqarah 120, this verse seems assertive. In order to understand it, the verse must be related to the socio–religious context of Arab society since before the arrival of Islam; there were three deeply rooted religions, namely Christianity, Judaism, and traditional Arabic religion (Paganism). At that time, the view emerged among the Jews and Christians that they were the chosen people, while the Arabs were stupid and ummi. According to HAMKA, this perspective is that even in this world, there will continue to be competition for influence and the inculcation of religious power (HAMKA, 1981, p. 293–295).

Tracking the historical context conducted by HAMKA on Tafsir al–Azhar is a prominent feature. It is in line with the principle of exploring the macro situation in the form of community boundaries, religion, customs, institutions, and even the life of all Arabis at the time of the presence of Islam. This context is explained by Fazlur Rahman when explaining the first movement in his double movement.

Likewise, the second contextual principle in Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory which appears in many interpretations of HAMKA. An example is when HAMKA interprets Surat al–Shura 51–55. He related his comments to the issue of family planning (KB). HAMKA said that it was right or wrong and whether or not family planning was permissible depended on what reason was used and what harm happened. At the end of the discussion, HAMKA stated that what was clearly prohibited was preventing human development by violence and not based on freedom (HAMKA, 1984c, p. 44).

Meanwhile, when reviewing Surah Muhammad 26–28, which discusses stupid people who talk too much and are hypocrites so that they spread their secrets to their enemies, HAMKA relates them to characters that were also common in Indonesia at that time. Also, when discussing sunnatullah in Surat al–Fath 23, HAMKA connects it with determination and a strong spirit and analyzes it with the problem of communism. At the end of his interpretation, HAMKA considered that the defeat of communism in Indonesia at that time was a form of sunnatullah that was a determination and a strong spirit that would win (HAMKA, 1984d, p. 160–161).

## CONCLUSION

Generally, it can be concluded that Tafsir al–Azhar does not only present a contextual interpretation. In the process, HAMKA tries to apply hermeneutic principles in its interpretation. In many verses, he seeks to dismantle a text based on not only its nuzul asbabun but also the macro conditions of the socio–historical setting surrounding the presence of the text. HAMKA's efforts in digging up both micro and macro socio–historical information can be compared to Fazlur Rahman's efforts to find the meaning or moral principles of the Qur'an through a full understanding of the conditions surrounding the birth of the text. The intertextual efforts undertaken by HAMKA appear very similar to Fazlur Rahman's efforts to find the main principles that the Qur'an wants to convey by

linking one piece of information from one text with other information contained in another text.

Likewise, HAMKA's contextualization efforts in interpreting the verses drawn from its interpretation for today's conditions so that HAMKA's interpretation is not only based on past laws but also on the relevance and application of that law to the present context. Thus, it can be said that HAMKA, through Tafsir al-Azhar, has applied the double movement theory, which Fazlur Rahman later introduced as his hermeneutical method..

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