

## Gender Relations on Quranic Interpretation in Indonesia (Interpretation Analysis on Turjuman Al-Mustafid's tafsir, Al-Azhar's Tafsir, and Al-Misbah's Tafsir)

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**Abstract.** This paper attempts to picture the shift in discourse on gender relations in interpretive thinking in Indonesia by bringing together the interpretations of 'Abd al-Rauf Singkel, Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab. The selection of the three commentators was motivated by the difference in the period of writing the interpretations of the three. From this analysis, it is known that the interpretations of these three commentators on gender verses have points of similarities and differences. The interpretation of 'Abd al-Rauf Singkel in general follows the flow of traditional interpretations but his views are more moderate and tolerant, as seen in the issue of the origin of events and women's leadership. The shift in gender relations discourse is more visible in the interpretations of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab. It seems to have its own interpretation, which does not fully follow the currents of traditional or contemporary commentators' views. This research is explored by comparative interpretation using critical discourse analysis method. From this research, it is found that modern and contemporary interpretations in Indonesia are more assertive in carrying out the discourse on Gender Equality Relations.

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## Introduction

The term gender, although familiar, most people still misinterpret and use the term gender. Often, the word gender is interpreted as gender (sex). Yet there is a fundamental difference between the meaning of the word sex and gender. As explained by Valerie Oosterveld. According to him, sex is a biological identity (physical). While the meaning of gender is a term used to distinguish men and women, based on their role in the social structure of society which is a socially and culturally constructed meaning from time to time (cultural identity) (Valerie Oosterveld, 2021).

In the Women's Encyclopedia by Helen Tierney, gender is defined as "the basis for defining the different contributions that men and women make to culture and collective life as they are men and women". ) in terms of roles, behavior, mentality and also emotional characteristics between men and women who develop in society). (Helen Tierney, 1989).

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According to Anshori in his dissertation "The Interpretation of Gender Verses in Tafsir al-Misbah" defines gender as . "The position of men and women is seen from the socio-cultural, economic, political and political aspects of a country and is not a gender or religious belief. Gender and gender are certainly not the same thing, because sex is a sacred condition that cannot be changed because it is natural, determined by local community consensus, which can change at any time." Musdah Mulia similarly said: , the roles and responsibilities inherent in men and women in shaping the culture or community environment in which they grow and develop ( [Siti Musdah, 2004](#) )

From a gender perspective, considering that the personality or traits inherent in men and women are more common in the constructive perspective (upbringing) of society, this causes gender inequality in society. In this case, women are often the target of gender inequality, but men can be victims of gender inequality. Mansour Fakhri gave an example of the role of women in the natural reproductive process (conception, postpartum, breastfeeding, etc.). But defining women as sensitive, irrational, weak and many other negative stereotypes is a social construct. ( [Mansour Fakhri, 2008](#) )

The dynamics of gender discourse in Islam are also very diverse. In his writings, Nurrochman identifies three schools of Islamic paradigm in gender discourse. The first group is a group that openly rejects the penetration of gender equality discourse into the Islamic world. The second group fully embraces the discourse of gender equality in the Islamic world without revising, criticizing, or coordinating the concept of gender. The third group is a group that does not explicitly reject the discourse of gender equality like the fundamentalists, and does not accept it as it is in the second group and tries to see it more objectively. Equality Points in Gender Relations are divided into five categories: accessibility, opportunity, space, budget, and equal rights and opportunities between men and women. ( [Kecia Ali, 2003](#) )

The introduction needs to relate to the problems or issues being recognized and eventually leading the research questions ( [Thohir et al., 2021](#) ). The structuring of the introduction part may vary ( [Alyona et al., 2016](#) ). This section discusses the results and conclusions of previously published studies, to help explain why the current study is of scientific interest ( [Kurt et al., 2020](#); [Schenk & Hasbullah, 2022](#) ). (CENTURY GOTHIC, 11-point, 1.15 Spacing).

## **Method**

This research is a qualitative research using book research using Tafsir Al-Mustafid Turjuman, Tafsir Al-Azhar, and Tafsir Al-Misbah as research objects.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

#### 1. Genealogy of the movement for gender equality and gender relations in Indonesian interpretation

##### 1.1. Gender Equality Movement in Indonesia

According to Ahmad Baidowi, in his book *Tafsir Feminist (Study of Women in the Qur'an and Modern Mufasir) In Indonesia*, the Islamic Feminist movement (*haraka tahrir al-mar'ah*) emerged in several movements.

- Empowering women by establishing women's training centers at universities. The form of gender training and training is through workshops and consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as P3M (Association of Islamic Boarding Schools and Community Development), WCC (Women's Crisis Center), and Yasanti (Annisa Svasti Foundation). The agency also criticizes government policies that are considered detrimental to the existence of women.
- Through books on various topics such as the *Fiqh of Empowerment* by Masdar Farid Mas'udi in his book on *Women's Reproductive Rights*. • Conduct historical research on the equality of men and women in Islamic societies, which regard women as equal to men and achieve special achievements in areas such as politics, education, and religion. Examples include "The Forgotten Queen of Islam" by Fatima Mernisi and "Islamic Women and Politics" by Hibba Rauf Izzat. Where are examples of this type of feminist movement?
- Conduct a critical study of the religious texts of the Qur'an and Hadith which literally reveal the inequality between men and women. In this case, reinterpretation is carried out using an interpretive approach and shows that the position of men and women is equivalent to an analytical knife in the social sciences. This is done as an alternative to classical interpretations that seek to preserve the literal meaning of texts that seem patriarchal. An example of this type of feminist movement is the *Kiyai Hussein Muhammad movement*. (Munirul Abidin, 2011)

In addition to Ahmad Baidowi's opinion above, in the author's opinion, there are several forms of feminism movement in Indonesia, namely the Feminism Movement carried out by academics through their research. An early example is our Lecturer, Dr. Eni Zulaikha, M.Ag, Irma Riyani, Ph.D, and Prof. Musdah Mulia . And there are many other examples from academic feminists. In addition to feminism movements and figures, in this modern era there is also a feminism movement through social media platforms. An example is from Instagram account @thisisgender, it's also available on facebook and @mubdalalah.id instagram's account.

## 1.2. Map of Nusantara Interpretation Study on Gender Issues

According to Saifudin and Wardani in their book *Interpretation of the Archipelago*, there have not been many studies on interpretation of gender in the Archipelago and there has not even been a comprehensive study of gender interpretation. According to the authors of gender studies in Indonesia, there are more surveys and scientific studies in the realm of academics such as theses and dissertations.

In the first category, Tafsir studies that are developing in Indonesia are focused on looking for traces of Middle Eastern interpretation. This is very strongly found in the interpretation of *Al-Mustafid Turjuman*. So that there is a lot of debate about *Al-Mustafid's Turjuman* interpretation, such as the debate over whether this interpretation is more accurately said to be a copy of Baydhawi's book *Anwar at-tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil* or from the book of *Tafsir al-Jalalyn* by as-Sutuhi and al- Mahalli. An analysis like this is urgently needed considering that there are many processes of "internalization" and "indigenization" of Middle Eastern works in Indonesian Tafsir.

The second category focuses on research and analysis on the development of interpretations in Indonesia. Such as the study conducted by Howard M Federspiel, *Popular Literature of the Koran*, Islah Gusman's study, *Indonesian Interpretation Treasures: From Hermeneutics to Ideology*, Muhammad Amin Summa's study entitled *Translation and Interpretation of the Koran in Indonesia: History and Development*.

The third category is the study of the interpretation of gender relations, such as the work written by Hamka Hasan entitled *Mapping of Gender Interpretations in Indonesia* and Minal Abidin's article "Shifting the Paradigm of Women's Interpretation in the Contemporary Indonesian Context" which focuses on the issue of shifting the paradigm of interpretation of women to modernity and worldviews. and the factors causing the emergence of the paradigm of women's interpretation in Indonesia which he categorized into 4 development phases, namely: laying the foundation, translation, partial interpretation and refinement.

## 2. Background, style and method of interpretation of *Turjuman al-Mustafid*

The author of *Tafsir Turjuman al-Mustafid* is Abdur Rauf bin Ali al-Fansuri al-Jawi. He was born in Fansur in 1620 and died in Kuala Lumpur in 1693. He studied in Arab countries like Mecca, Medina, Jeddah, etc. Among his teachers were Sheikh Ahmad Kushashi and Sheikh Maulana Ibrahim (Khalifah Tariqat Shiattariya), who lived in Mecca until Abdur Rauf received the title of Tariqat Shiattariya. Later, when Abdur Rauf returned to Aceh, he began teaching and developing the Shyattariya teachings in Singkil. That's why he is known as Abdur Rauf Singkel. *Tafsir Turjuman al-Mustafid* in 1693 when Abd al-Rauf served as mufti in the kingdom of Aceh, then was ruled by four sultanates in turn. However, it can be said that his interpretation is not permeated with political implications.

*Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* is the oldest commentary circulating in the Indonesian Malay region. This commentary has been published in Singapore, Penang, Jakarta, Bombay, Istanbul, Mecca and several countries in the Middle East. The source of this interpretation is still controversial. This means that there is a point of view that explains that this Tafsir is a Malay translation of Baidawi's interpretation and Jalalain's interpretation. This was explained by Snoke Hurgronje and two other Dutch scientists named Rinkes and Voorhove.

Azumardi Azra said that Jalalain's interpretation was clearly the main reference, because Abdurrauf had an isnadishnad that connected him with Jalal ad-Din al-Suyuti through al-Qusyasi and al-Qurani. Also, according to John, quoted by Azumardi, Jalalain's Tafsir is often considered to have only contributed a little to the development of the tradition of Al-Qur'an exegesis, but is an excellent, clear and concise initial interpretation of the Al-Qur'an for the community. Those who are new to Muslim interpretation. Malay Indonesian. (Azyumardi Azra, 1994)

Although he is classified as the first Indonesian Interpretation of the Archipelago, Abdul Rauf Singkel is one of the Mufassir who views gender relations and roles in a balanced way. One example is when Abdul Rauf Singkel interpreted the verse about the creation of women. Abdul Rauf did not mention that women were created from Adam's ribs. However, women are the same as human creations, namely from the essence of the soil. In addition, his views on gender relations can be seen when he interprets the verse on polygamy. Abdul rauf in his interpretation emphasizes the concept of justice in the household. And Abdul Rauf emphasized that the condition for polygamy is to act fairly, while no human being can be fair (Q.S. An-Nisa: 129).

### 3. Background, pattern, and method of interpretation of Al-Azhar

Tafsir Al-Azhar is better known by the nickname Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah or Hamka, an abbreviation of his name. Born February 16, 1908 in Sungai Batang, Tanjung Rai, City of Agam Regen, West Sumatra. He is an Indonesian writer, scientist, philosopher, and politician. Hamka studied self-taught in various fields of knowledge (Islam and the West) such as philosophy, literature, history, sociology and politics. Proficiency in Arabic at a high level allowed him to study the works of great Middle Eastern scholars and poets such as Zaki Mubarak, Jurji Zaydan, Abbas Al Akkad, Mustafa Al Manfaluti and Hussein Khaikal.

Hamka has written 115 books in various fields. His greatest or most monumental work is the interpretation of Al-Azhar, which is discussed by the author. In general, his work can be seen as follows. "Lies in the World: An Islamic Study"; Islamic Religious Studies; Shiara Kitav Tawid; Remba please; Aklakul Karima; Life Laboratory; Islam and customs; 1001 Frequently Asked Questions about Islam; discussion on Islamic issues, the place of women in Islam; Prayers of the Apostles; Therawi Prayer Guide; Recommendations for Tahajjud prayers; Islamic ideological philosophy; Philosophy Pearls; divine philosophy; philosophy of life; Sufism evolution from century to century; modern Sufism

Initially, Hamka did not intend to use the interpretation that has been used by Muslims in Indonesia. However, this interpretation became the material for the morning lecture at the Al-Azahar Grand Mosque. Hamka has been a permanent lecturer at the mosque since 1959, and after Hamka gave his next lecture at the Al-Azhar Mosque in 1964, he was arrested by the Old Order government for opposing the government, many of his lectures related to this. has been criticized by the government. . Time. After the political turmoil subsided into a new era, Hamka was released and continued his work, the interpretation of Al-Azhar. As Hamka said when interpreting, Hamka actually maintains a relationship between heat and reason. Between diraya and rivaya, Hamka does not just quote or cite the opinions of previous people, but uses Hamka's commentary or the logic of the Qur'an. In his commentary, Hamka was greatly influenced by the basic interpretations of Sayyid Rashid Ridhi and

Sheikh Muhammad Abdu in the interpretation of Al-Manar. Interpretation of Hamka uses the Tahlili method with an adab ijtimai pattern.

### 3. Background, pattern, and method of interpretation of Al-Misbah

Tafsir al-Misbah was written by Quraish Shihab, who came from South Sulawesi on February 16, 1944. He came from the descendants of educated Arabic Qurais Bugis. He holds a Hadith Tafsir degree from Al-Azhar University and Lc (S1) from the Faculty of Usuluddin. He then continued his education at Strata 2 (S2) at the same faculty, and in 1969 he obtained a master's degree specializing in Al-Qur'an interpretation, defending his thesis entitled *al-jaz in Tasryri`i alQur`an alKarim* (The Miracles of Al -Qur'an). *al-karim* with legal aspects). He also completed level 3 education in Al-Qur'an science at the Ushuladdin Faculty of Al-Azhar University, Cairo and received the highest honorary degree with level 1 award (*Mumtaz ma`a berdatbat alsyaraf al`ula*). In 1969.

Quraish Shihab has written 47 books, including the monumental Tafsir al-Misbah. Quraish Shihab is very active in promoting egalitarian sexual relations, as seen in his work entitled "Women" and his other work entitled "The State of Women in Islam". From 1992 to 1998, Quraish Shihab served as Minister of Religion and Indonesian Embassies in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The background for writing Tafsir Almisbach is to help people understand his holy book (Al-Qur'an) as a form of moral responsibility for Islamic scholars/scholars. This is written from what he conveyed in his interpretation of the muqaddim. "Scientists should familiarize themselves with the Koran and present its messages when necessary". (Quraish Shihab, 2002)

Tafsir al-Misbah uses the Adabi Ijtimai style, which emphasizes the form of *bi al-rai* over *bi al-Matsur*. The method used in the Quraysh match is not much different from Hamka's method. In other words, using the Thalili method (analysis), which is a form of exegesis that seeks to reveal the contents of the Qur'an in various aspects. Arranged according to the order of the verses in the Qur'an, this format provides an overview of the vocabulary, the general meaning of these verses, their interrelationships, *Ababun Nuzul*, and other things that are considered useful in understanding the Qur'an. (Nasarudin Baidan, 2005)

### 5. Opinion of Indonesian Mufassir regarding on Gender Relations

- Human Creation

in Surah An-Nisa verse 1 which reads:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا رَقِيبًا

Artinya: “wahai sekalian manusia, bertaqwalah kepada Tuhanmu yang telah menciptakan kamu dari diri yang satu, dan menciptakan darinya pasangannya.....”

The expressions *min nafs wahidah* (from one "I") and *wakholaqo minha zaujaha* (and where do they create a mate) describe the origin of women. Most commentators understand this to mean "Adam As", and Jalaluddin As Shuyuti, Ibn Katzir, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Biqai and Abu Al-Suud agree with this opinion. This opinion influences the next word "zaujaha", which means Eve, which means Adam's spouse or wife. The interpretation of `Abd al Rauf Singkel



is not much different from the traditional interpretation. Although his interpretation has not departed from the traditional interpretation, As-Singkili does not mention the origin of Eve from Adam's rib. Similar to when interpreting QS. alBaqarah verse 35, He does not mention the same thing at all. This is the number that distinguishes the interpretation of Abd al-Rauf from the above interpretation of al-Jalalain from the main reference Tarjuman al-Mustafid.

According to Quraish Shihab, the word nafs denotes human understanding in general, not one type of adam. The reason Quraish Shihab interprets the word nafs as adam is because it is based on Q.S Al-Hujurat verse 13. Quraish Shihab uses the munasabah part between verses or munasabah fil Ayah, namely the expression "wa batssa minhuma rijaalan katsiuro wan nisa" which explains the distribution of humans from offspring has a correlation with logic . If the word nafs wahidah is not adam, because its wide distribution certainly comes from the human lineage consisting of men and women.

According to Quraish Shihab, the meaning of the word "zaujah" is quoted from Rasyid Ridh's interpretation of the influence of the classical interpretation, namely that woman was created from Adam's rib with the contents of the Old Testament (Genesis II: 21-22). ) When Adam fell asleep, God took his rib and covered it with flesh. God created woman from a discarded rib. This argument, in turn, asserts that the interpretation was influenced by Israel. ([wardani dan saifudin, 2017](#))

Quraysh Shihab does not interpret the lafadz "khalaka minha zaujah" as a female creation from Adam. But he interprets this as the message of the Qur'an to unite husband and wife as one. In other words, it integrates emotions and thoughts into ideals and hopes, in movement and steps, even as you exhale. Husband and wife are both called jauzes or spouses. And marriage is called zawaz or marry. ( [wardani dan saifudin, 2017](#))

The meaning of the word "zaujaha" according to Quraish Shihab, he quoted from Rashid Ridha's opinion regarding the influence of the classical interpretation which stated that women were created from Adam's rib with the contents of the old testament (Book of Genesis II: 21-22) which stated that when Adam fell into a deep sleep, Allah took a piece of his rib, then covered the place with meat. From the rib that was removed, God created woman. This argument thus states that these interpretations are influenced by israiliyat. ([Hamka, 1984](#))

- **Leadership**

Q.S An-Nisa ayat 34:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنِينَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

exaggerate some of them (men) over others (women), and because they (men) have spent part of their wealth..."

Abd al-Rauf Singkel interprets this verse as follows: all their property.

In this case, Abd al-Rauf's interpretation also follows that of al-Jalalain. The word "qawwamun" is "Abd ar-Rauf Singkel" which means "their power".

This is in line with the words of al-Jalalayn, 'ruler', and al-Baydawi, 'leader'. Abd ar-Rauf Singkel did not mention this hadith when interpreting the verse above. This is probably because the interpretation is so brief. However, it is possible that he deliberately did not mention Tarjuman al-Mustafid's hadith to avoid legal controversy that women are heads of state. For a long time this question remained unresolved among the Achekhs. He himself did not seem to have a clear answer. At Mirat at-Tullyab, he did not address the issue directly. When discussing the requirements to become a judge, he seems to have deliberately omitted the Malay translation of dzakar (male) or did not mention gender differences as a requirement for the legality of a judge or qadi.

According to Quraish Shihab, this verse does not only talk about leadership, but also talks about the context of the relationship between husband and wife, where men and women involve each other. The word 'ar-Rijal is the plural form of ar-Rojuul. As evidenced by Nasaruddin Umar in his dissertation, ar-Rojuul does have many relational meanings according to the context of the sentence, such as: in the sense of male gender, community leaders, and slaves. Besides that, many scholars understand this word in the sense of "husbands".

Quraish Shihab agrees with this opinion in his book Understanding the Qur'an. As the continuation of the verse, the commandment in the verse is important because they or the husband spend some of their wealth on the wife. If the word "man" usually means a man, of course not. What's more, the following passage speaks clearly about the life of a wife and family. Interpretation

al-Azhar explains that there is no direct instruction in this verse to say, "O man or husband, you must be a leader or oh you must be a woman." Because what has been explained before is true. There is no order, but in fact men lead women. Hamka is very proud to interpret the word arRijal as "husband". She even said in her comments that it is the man or the husband who leads the wife. So, for example, if a woman is ordered to lead her husband, that order cannot be carried out.

## Discussion

The beginnings of thinking about gender issues and feminism in Indonesia emerged after Indonesia's independence and after the development of Islamic education and literature in Indonesia. During the Old Order era, educational facilities and Islamic literature began to be institutionalized, such as the emergence of PTAIN and Ull. In addition, during the Old Order, ICMI (Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association) was formed. Where at this time a lot of Islamic literature from East and West was adopted in Indonesia and read a lot by Academics and Santri at Pondok Modern.

In the late 60's, Hamka (1962) while imprisoned by the Soekarno government began to write a monumental interpretation, namely Tafsir Al-Azhar. Besides that, Hasbi As-Shidiqy also compiled a Tafsir entitled Tafsir Al-Quran Al Majied in several volumes and then collected them into Tafsir An-Nur. And refined into an interpretation of Al-Bayan. In both Tafsir, women's verses have been interpreted with a few comments and footnotes. As for Hamka, he has been a little more advanced



because he has tried to provide a broad explanation in interpreting women's verses. Meanwhile, other mufassir are still very careful in giving interpretations. So that the commentary books they wrote were limited to giving meaning or translating the verses of the Al-Quran.

In Indonesia, this literacy movement on the issue of gender equality began to spread around the 90s, with the emergence of several writings by Quraish-Syihab, which were later followed by several theses, theses and dissertations among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, which discussed Islamic concepts. -Quran. Among the books on women's commentary that have been published at this stage are Tafsir Bi al-Ra'yi: Efforts to explore the concept of women in the Koran by Nashruddin Baidan, Arguments for Gender Equality in the Perspective of the Koran by Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, Hate Interpretation: Gender Bias Studies in the Interpretation of the Qur'an by Oliveah Subhan and several other Indonesian Muslim feminist writings.

Writing interpretations at this stage is usually carried out using a thematic approach, in which the discussion focuses on certain themes which are analyzed using various methodologies. However, some of the writings at this stage, especially the works of feminists and rationalists, are still effective; namely the analysis used is a modern-critical analysis such as feminism, but it is not accompanied by a comprehensive analysis of the verses in question. Thus, even though the spirit that is carried is liberation, it does not show its relationship with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, namely the Qur'an. (Munirul Abidin, 2011)

In the late 90s, the development of literacy regarding issues of gender equality in Indonesia has progressed rapidly. Muslim intellectuals who come from campuses, especially IAIN and other universities, both state and private, have made great efforts to reveal the concepts of the Al-Quran with a multidisciplinary methodology. This kind of situation, in the study of women's interpretation will provide extraordinary added value in the development of Al-Quran Interpretation in Indonesia in the future.

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