

Hamka's Interpretation of Qur'anic Rebuke ('Itāb) Verses: Cultural Reflections on Islam in West Sumatra

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Abstract. The interpretation of *the verses of 'itāb* (divine rebuke) in the Qur'an is not only normative-theological, but also has a cultural content that can reflect local values. This article aims to analyze Hamka's interpretation of *'itāb* verses (such as QS. Abbas/80: 1-4, QS. at-Tahrīm/66: 1-5, QS. al-Anfāl/8: 67–68, and QS. al-Ahzāb/33: 37) in Tafsir Al-Azhar, as well as how the interpretation reflects the Islamic philosophy and identity of the Minangkabau people. Using the literature study method and content analysis approach, this study explores how *the verses of 'itāb* are interpreted by Hamka in the context of local culture based on the philosophy of *Basandi Syarak Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* Customs. The results of the study show that Hamka not only interprets Allah's rebuke as a theological correction, but also as a social ethics in accordance with Minangkabau philosophy, such as *duduak samo randab-tagak samo tinggi, raso jo pareso, abstinence from the property of the position, bundo kanduang, and kato nan ampek*. The local philosophy emphasizes social equality, sensitivity and scrutiny, integrity and social responsibility, the important role of women, and language ethics. These findings show that culturally responsive local interpretations can extend the normative meaning of the Qur'an into society's moral praxis. This study recommends strengthening culturally based contextual interpretations in Islamic education and Qur'an studies.

Keywords: 'Itāb Verse, Tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka, Minangkabau Culture, Contextual Tafseer.

Introduction

The verses of the Qur'an contain various forms of divine communication such as commands, prohibitions, explanations, and rebukes (*'itāb*). The verse *itāb* revealed to the Prophet Muhammad served as a moral and spiritual correction, encouraging Muslims to engage in self-reflection and to improve personal and collective ethics. The rebuke became an important instrument in shaping a civilized and highly ethical Muslim civilization.¹ However, the meaning of ayatayat' *itāb* often stops at normative commands, without delving deeper into the philosophical and value content within the context of local culture. Many classical and modern interpretations still rely on textual approaches without considering the sociocultural context, so the content of these philosophies and values is not realized in people's lives.² This is where the importance of a contextual, interpretive approach becomes clear: it can respond to the challenges of the times while remaining rooted in the traditions of the local Muslim community.

In the Indonesian context, Hamka is an important figure who not only masters Islamic knowledge but also has broad sociocultural insights. The *Tafsir* he wrote at *Al-Azhar* is proof that *the interpretation of the Qur'an can be both local and universal*. Hamka not only conveys the normative message of the Qur'an, but also instills cultural values that develop, especially in the Minangkabau community.

¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), h. 18–22.

² Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), h. 75.

As a mufasir from West Sumatra, Hamka was greatly influenced by the Minangkabau philosophy of life, which is rooted in the main Islamic principle of *basandi syarak*: *syarak basandi Kitabullah*.³

The main philosophy above illustrates that, as an Islamic cultural entity, the Minangkabau has a distinctive character in which religion and customs reinforce each other. Customs should not conflict with religious teachings; rather, religion is the basis for observing them. The main philosophy of *the basandi syarak custom, the syarak basandi Kitabullah*, upholds and firmly roots philosophical values and principles in the social life of the Minangkabau people. Many local expressions show this, such as *duduak samo randah-tagak samo tinggi* (egalitarian), *raso jo pareso* (sensitivity of feelings and examination/scrutiny), *abstinence from the property of the position* (integrity, responsibility), *bundo kanduang* (the central role of women), and *kato nan ampek* (speaking ethics). In this context, it is natural that the verses of the Qur'an – especially the *ayatayat' itāb* – are interpreted by Hamka not only as spiritual messages but also as collective ethics that can strengthen the development of local Islamic identity.

Research on Hamka's *Tafsir Al-Azhar* has been conducted by many academics using various methodological approaches, ranging from linguistic to historical and ideological. Alfiyah,⁴ For example, highlights the linguistic aspects of Hamka's interpretive language, which are considered communicative and grounded in the context of modern Indonesia. Similarly, Munawan⁵ showed that Hamka uses an inclusive, straightforward, and easy-to-understand language style, as well as inserting values and social criticism in his delivery. Faizin et al.,⁶ Highlight the representation of *Minangkabau local wisdom* in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Ghazali and Auliya,⁷ Examine the social relations of the Minangkabau community from Hamka's perspective. Faisah et al.⁸ emphasizing the contextual interpretation method applied by Hamka, in which the text of the Qur'an is interpreted dialogically with the contemporary socio-political situation. Fazlin⁹ and Basri & Muhammad's research¹⁰ emphasizes the Islamic moderation aspect in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, in which Hamka presents local cultural values as a means of building an Islamic model appropriate to the Indonesian context.

However, these studies have not specifically explored how Hamka understood and interpreted the message of divine rebuke in the socio-cultural context of Minangkabau and how he transformed the Islamic values in the *verses of 'itāb* into the local cultural values that shaped the Minangkabau Islamic identity. This is the scientific gap (research gap) that will be answered in this study. This research uses a qualitative approach and a library research method to analyze data from related literature, particularly *Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar* as a primary source. The focus of the research is directed to the *verses of 'itāb* interpreted by Hamka, especially on the four verses, i.e., QS. Abbas/80: 1-4, QS. At-Tahrīm/66: 1-5, QS. Al-Anfāl/8: 67–68, and QS. Al-Ahzāb/33: 37. Data analysis is carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner (conten analisis) through several stages, namely: (1) Identification of *'itāb* verses in

³ Deliar Noer, *The Modern Islamic Movement in Indonesia 1900–1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1984), p. 214.

⁴ Aviv Alfiyah, "Buya Hamka's interpretation method in *Tafsir AlAzhar*," *Scientific Journal of Ushuluddin*, 15, no. 1 (2017): 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v15i1.1063>.

⁵ M. Munawan. "A Critical Discourse Analysis in the Study of Qur'an Interpretation: Hamka's Study of Al-Azhar Tafsir", *Tajdid: Islamic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.36667/tajdid.v25i2.303>.

⁶ Faizin et al., "The Representation of Local Wisdom in the Tafsir of Al-Azhar," *Rauzyan Fiker: Journal of Ushuludin and Philosophy Studies* 18, no. 1 (2022): 73–90. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24239/rsy.v18i1.829>.

⁷ Hidayatul Azizah Gazali and Sefri Auliya, "Social Relations in Minangkabau Society from Hamka's Perspective in Tafsir AlAzhar," *Sophist: Journal of Socio-Political Islamic Studies and Tafsir* 6, no. 1 (2024): 20–50. <https://doi.org/10.20414/sophist.v6i1.114>.

⁸ Muhammad Faisal et al, "The Dimension of Indonesianness in Tafsir Al-Azhar: An Analysis of Social and Political Reflection in Surah Al-Balad," *Basha'ir: Journal of Qur'an Studies and Tafsir*, 4, no. 2 (2024): 121-133. <https://doi.org/10.47498/basha'ir.v4i2.2133>.

⁹ Hani Fazlin, "Getting to Know the Interpretation of the Archipelago: Digging the Side of the Archipelago of Tafsir AlAzhar" (*Proceedings ICQS*, 2021): 267-286.

¹⁰ Basri dan Muhammad, "Rethinking Religious Moderation through the Study of Indonesian Exegesis: A Study of Tafsir AlAzhar by Hamka," *Treasures* 21, no. 1 (2023): 41–58. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v21i1.8737>.

Tafsir Al-Azhar in volumes 4, 8, and 10; (2) Analysis of Hamka's narrative interpretation of the verses of *ʿitāb* to find ethical and moral themes in them; (3) Mapping of ethical values in Minangkabau philosophy such as *duduak samo randah-tagak samo tinggi* (egalitarian value), *raso jo pareso* (sensitivity of feelings and examination/thoroughness), *abstinence from the property of the position* (value of integrity, responsibility), *bundo kanduang* (value of the central role of women), and *kato nan ampek* (the value of speaking ethics); (4) Providing arguments to connect the ethical and moral themes of the Qur'an with Minangkabau cultural values.

To maintain objectivity and avoid confirmation bias, the mapping of cultural values is conducted after the ethical and moral themes of the Qur'an are identified in the tafsir. Thus, cultural values serve as an interpretive framework, not as an initial assumption. This step of the analysis allows researchers not only to understand the text's content but also to see how Qur'anic values shape the identity of local Islam, especially among the Minangkabau.

Discussion

Cultural Interpretation of ʿItāb Verses in Tafsir Al-Azhar

Linguistically, *the word* *ʿitāb* (عِتَاب) is the *masdar* form of the verb *ʿataba* (عَتَبَ), which means to rebuke out of love and attention gently.¹¹ In addition, in the Arabic context, *ʿitāb* can also mean a subtle rebuke, a mild reproach, or a form of criticism that is not intended to be demeaning.¹² In terminology, what is meant by *ʿitāb* verses' is the rebuke of Allah SWT against the Prophet Muhammad (saw) or Muslims, which is conveyed subtly and affectionately, aiming to educate, correct, and not to denounce or punish.¹³ Thus, these verses contain divine values and messages that can be used to reflect on oneself, correct deviant attitudes and behaviors, and form noble moral and ethical standards. In the book *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Hamka interprets the verses of *ʿitāb* as follows:

1) QS. Abbas 80:1-4¹⁴

Hamka interprets the above verses with the subtopic "*Itāb, which is Love*". The researcher considers that the inclusion of this subtopic indicates Hamka's understanding that the rebuke in verse Abasa is not solely aimed at the Prophet Muhammad (saw), but also serves as a normative warning against the tendency toward elitism in leadership practice. The elitism in question is the attitude that makes social status, power, and material wealth the benchmark for treating the parties led.¹⁵ Hamka implicitly captures this tendency toward leadership elitism in his interpretation of verses 1 and 2, in

¹¹ Ibn Faris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), h. 244. Ibn Manẓhur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, Volume 2, (Beirut: Dar al-Shadir, 1990), pp. 576-577.

¹² Abu Abdillah Badruddin az-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an*, juz 1, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1971), h. 218. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'an*, ed. Ṣafwān 'Adnān Dāwūdī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2007), h. 568.

¹³ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'an*, juz 5, (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003), h. 2817. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001), h. 42.

¹⁴ According to Narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, these verses were revealed to the Prophet PBUH regarding the presence of a blind man (Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum) to the Prophet PBUH to ask to be taught some verses of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, he was with the infidel leaders of the Quraish to convey the teachings of Islam and invite them to believe. Perhaps because he was disturbed, the Prophet Saw's face looked sour when he heard the request of the Umrni Maktum, so that it seemed as if he did not pay attention and continued the invitation to believe to the leaders of the Quraish. So Allah SWT rebuked his attitude through these verses. Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Volume 9 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2007), pp. 6125–6128.

¹⁵Muhammad Soim, "Miniature Civil Society (Perspective of Islamic Society Development)", *Journal Da'wah Leaflet* 26, no. 1 (2015): 23-32. DOI : [10.24014/jdr.v26i1.1211](https://doi.org/10.24014/jdr.v26i1.1211).

which greater attention is paid to the Quraysh elite than to the weak individual (Abdullah ibn Ummi Maktum) who is actually spiritually sincere. Hamka submits:

*Was the Prophet's sour deed a great mistake or a sin? No! This is an ijtihad, and according to his ijtihad, the important Quraysh leaders should be earnestly called to Islam. If people like 'Utbah bin Rabi'ah, Abu Jabal bin Hisham, and Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib convert to Islam, there will be dozens behind them who will follow. It's okay to struggle a little to face them. When Ibnu Ummi Maktum entered the ceremony, he felt a bit disturbed, as he was busy with da'wah. Meanwhile, Ibn Ummi Maktum is also a Muslim.*¹⁶

Through this reflective narrative, Hamka describes the tendency among some leaders to prioritize attention to individuals with high social status, power, or material wealth over weak groups. Although this attitude is driven by the desire to achieve broader benefits, Hamka considers such different treatment inappropriate for a leader. Moreover, if it is associated with the vision of the progress and sustainability of Islamic da'wah, the da'wah approach that ignores marginalized groups has the potential to weaken the da'wah base itself. Within this framework, Hamka uses the rebuke of Allah SWT in Surah Abasa as an instrument of Qur'anic ethics, directing da'wah to remain rooted in the principles of equality and justice. In his interpretation of verses 3 and 4, Hamka asserts:

*In these two verses, Allah reminded the Prophet PBUH that Ibn Ummi Maktum had greater hope that he would again develop into a holy person with a pure heart, even though he was blind. For even if the eyes are blind, if the soul is clean, blindness will not hinder the progress of one's faith.*¹⁷

From the phrase "...even though the eyes are blind, if the soul is clean, blindness will not hinder the progress of one's faith", it can be seen that Hamka is very concerned about the value of egalitarianism.¹⁸ This is reflected in the emphasis that Ibn Ummi Maktum's physical limitations do not diminish his glory, his potential for purity, or his worthiness of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attention. Hamka's conception of egalitarianism aligns with the ethical values of Minangkabau culture, namely the high level of samo, which requires equal access and social treatment for all levels of society. Munir and Pandin,¹⁹ revealed that this philosophy requires that the view of oneself and others must be the same, even though the functions and roles carried out are different. In social relations, this philosophy encourages the Minangkabau people to uphold the principles of cooperation, shared responsibility, deliberation to reach consensus, and respect for others in daily life.

In the context of leadership, egalitarianism is an ethical principle that guides a leader in formulating attitudes, actions, and policies oriented toward the benefit of all members of the society he leads, without discrimination based on social status, power, or physical condition. The researcher understands the phrase "*With these two verses, the Prophet PBUH was reminded by Allah that Ibn Ummi Maktum was more hopeful that he would develop again into a holy person, a pure heart, even though he was blind*", as Hamka's affirmation of the importance of moral sensitivity in leadership. The Qur'anic rebuke does not function solely as a personal correction but as ethical education for a leader to read the potential, hopes, and needs of the people he leads, including those in vulnerable social positions.

¹⁶ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, H. 6125–6128.

¹⁷ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

¹⁸ Egalitarianism is an ethical principle that affirms the equality of human dignity, that every individual – regardless of physical condition, social status, or position – has equal rights and equal opportunities to develop spiritually and socially. This principle is rooted in the Qur'anic view that human glory is not determined by external factors, but by the quality of piety and obedience to divine values. Haqim, F.N.M., Atiq, D.S.B., Al Huda, M.I.W., & Nur Aini, F.N. "The Concept of Piekeeping as the Basis of Egalitarianism in Islam: A Thematic-Comparative Study of the Tafsir of QS Al-Hujurat [49]: 13 Perspectives of al-Baydawī and as-Sa'di", *Canon Religion* 3, no. 1 (2025): 109–124. <https://doi.org/10.30762/cr.v3i1.3171>.

¹⁹ Misnal Munir, Moses Glorino Rumambo Pandin, "The Local Genius Values of Minangkabau Society", *Atlantis Press; Proceedings of the International Conference of Communication Science Research (ICCSR 2018)*, Vol. 165: 302-306. [10.2991/iccsr-18.2018.67](https://doi.org/10.2991/iccsr-18.2018.67).

The leadership principles emphasized by Hamka above have a strong connection with the Minangkabau *philosophy of raso jo pareso*,²⁰ namely the ability to manage sensitivity of feelings (*raso*) and the precision of rational considerations (*pareso*) in a balanced manner. In the context of social leadership, *raso jo pareso* requires a leader to rely not only on strategic calculations but also on empathy, prudence, and moral awareness, including shame when ignoring societal expectations or committing inappropriate actions. Therefore, *raso jo pareso* functions as an ethical mechanism that guides leadership behavior and as a social moral regulator that maintains harmony among individuals, customs, and legal norms in society.²¹

Furthermore, Hamka also touched on communication etiquette. When interpreting verses 1 and 2, Hamka explained that, in rebuking the Prophet Muhammad (saw), Allah SWT did not use a prohibitive tone (don't) or use the second person (you), but rather used a subtle sentence and referred to His Messenger in the third person (him). Likewise, it does not directly mention the name of the person who led to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) being reprimanded (namely, Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum). According to him, this shows respect, especially to the person who was reprimanded (the Prophet Muhammad Saw), and it was not a deliberate or eye-catching mistake.²² This communication ethics is in line with the Minangkabau cultural heritage, especially the principle of *kato nan ampek*. Four types of communication reflect the ethics of speaking in society: *kato mandaki* (language to older people), *kato manurun* (to younger people), *kato malereng* (to respected people), and *kato mandata* (to peers).²³ Hamka's emphasis on verbal politeness and respect in communication is an ideal illustration of *kato nan ampek*, which holds that every communication must be tailored to the situation, purpose, and the person being addressed. This kind of Hamka interpretation fosters social awareness, especially within the Minangkabau community, encouraging the maintenance of ethical standards in social interactions and the treatment of everyone with respect and fairness.²⁴ The correlation between revelation and local values in Al-Azhar's interpretation demonstrates Hamka's ability to bridge the universal values of the Qur'an with the local wisdom of the Minangkabau.²⁵

2) QS. At-Tahrīm/66: 1-5

Hamka, when interpreting verses 1-5 of Surah at-Tahrīm, reviews several narrations that reveal two events that are the cause of the descent of this verse. The narration of Bukhari explains the incident of the Prophet Saw drinking honey at the house of Zainab bint Jahsyi. In contrast, the narration of an-Nasai and ad-Daruquthni mentions the incident of the Prophet Saw mingling with Mariah al-Qibthiyah at the house of Hafshah. These two events sparked jealousy in his other two wives, Aisha and Hafshah. They arranged a strategy and urged the Prophet (peace be upon him) to

²⁰ Value *writes his pareso* literally means taste and check/thorough. This value requires a person to use sensitivity, empathy, and shame when interacting with others, so that he does not do things that harm others. In addition, he is also required to conduct a thorough examination or careful consideration before acting or speaking. Adil Patrianto, et al., "The Concept of Raso Jo Pareso in Minangkabau Culture A Psychological Review", *Journal of Psychological Research*. 7, no. 2 (2018): 73-89.

²¹ Hamka, Faizal Amrul Muttaqin and Wahyu Saputra, "The Culture of Shame Law as a Vital Value for the Realization of Community Legal Awareness" *Al-Syakhsyiyah Journal of Law & Family Studies* 1, no. 2 (2019):187-207. DOI: [10.21154/syakhsyiyah.v1i2.2026](https://doi.org/10.21154/syakhsyiyah.v1i2.2026).

²² Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

²³ Srisaparmi and Azmi Fitriasia, "The Value of Kato Nan Ampek Philosophy in Minangkabau Community Communication", *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 2 (2024); 1817–1822. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i2.995>.

²⁴ M. Reihan, et al., "Kato Nan Ampek Ethics in Minangkabau Culture as a Guideline in Communication", *Jurnal Ilmiah Language and Word* 7, no. 1 (2023): 64–69. <https://doi.org/10.36057/jilp.v7i1.619>. Tomi Hendra, "Kato Nan Ampek as a Representative Form of Da'wah Communication Based on Local Cultural Wisdom from the Minangkabau Cultural Perspective" 18, no. 2 (2024): DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24952/hik.v18i2.12916>.

²⁵ Syafwan Rozi et al., "The Reception of Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar within Social Religious Issues in the Malay World," *Journal of the Study of the Sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith* 25, no. 2 (2024): 247–272. <https://doi.org/10.14421/gh.v25i2.5406>.

abandon (forbid) drinking honey and associate with Mariah al-Qibthiyah.²⁶ Then a series of verses above came down, rebuking the Prophet Saw for forbidding something lawful in Allah's sight for the sake of pleasing his wives.

After presenting several narrations that are the cause of the descent of these verses, Hamka stated:

*God knows for sure that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) forbade drinking honey or interfering with his dayang; it is not forbidden for the public, but it is forbidden for him, strengthened by oath. While he forbids it for himself, he is not forbidding bee honey for the public anymore; he receives a rebuke from God, especially if he enforces the prohibition as a violation of Allah's provisions.*²⁷

From what Hamka expressed above, the researcher understands that Hamka does not consider the Prophet's Saw's actions a violation of sharia law because he is merely setting a personal taboo, not a prohibition, against doing something halal. Therefore, God's rebuke, according to Hamka, is a correction of personal compromise that risks becoming an ethical precedent for the people. Although the actions of the Prophet Saw were motivated by good intentions, namely pleasing the wife's heart, Allah SWT considers them to violate the consistency of revelation and leadership ethics. As a messenger of Allah, the Prophet PBUH was subject to the provision that the authority of the law lies in the power of Allah, where only He has the right to determine the halal and haram of something. Meanwhile, as a leader of the ummah, the Prophet Saw's actions can have social effects, and if not corrected by revelation, they will set a bad precedent for the *ummah*.

Hamka's understanding above is in line with the traditional philosophy of *basandi syarak-syarak basandi Kitabullah*. In the context of decision-making, applying this philosophy requires Minangkabau leaders to always prioritize the principles of justice, morality, and religious values, rather than the interests of family or relatives. A leader, no matter how close to the people (in this case, a wife), must not mix meekness with indecisiveness of principle.²⁸ This aligns with prophetic leadership ethics, where honesty, consistency of values, steadfastness, and commitment to the truth are basic principles that must be upheld, even in personal and household relationships.²⁹

Furthermore, Hamka brings the interpretation of these verses' *itāb* into the context of husband-wife relations and communication in the household. Hamka states:

*For the Prophet as a husband who takes care of himself and honors, it is very offensive to him if his two wives accuse his mouth of smelling. There is even a narration in this hadith sequence that Aisha persuaded the Prophet's eldest wife, Saudah, to say that the Prophet's mouth smelled of maghaafir. This name has hurt his heart. Whereas, from an ordinary wife to an ordinary husband, it is in an impolite attitude, let alone from the wives of the Prophet to him.*³⁰

The researcher understands that in interpreting the verses of *itāb* related to the Prophet's domestic relations, Hamka does not position the Prophet's wives as the subject of error, but rather focuses on the manners and ethics of communication in domestic life. This emphasis shows that the main issue criticized is not the power relationship between husband and wife, but the interaction that ideally rests on the principles of honesty, politeness, and mutual care. From Hamka's perspective,

²⁶ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, h. 9351–9354.

²⁷ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

²⁸ Salmadani dan Duski Samad, *Basandi Syarak Norms and Their Application*, (Jakarta: TMF Press, 2002), h. 79.

²⁹ L. Faishol, "Prophetic Leadership in Islamic Education". *Eduprof: Islamic Education Journal* 2, no. 1 (2020): 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.47453/eduprof.v2i1.30>. M. Mubasyaroh. "The Leadership Pattern of the Prophet: A Reflection of the Islamic Political System", *Politea: Journal of Islamic Political Thought* 1, no. 2 (2018): 95–106. <https://doi.org/10.21043/politea.v1i2.4488>.

³⁰ Hamka.

husband-and-wife communication should reflect affection, mutual respect, and an orientation toward harmony, not emotional pressure or unilateral domination.

Hamka's interpretation above is in line with Minangkabau values that place women in a respectable position through the concept of *bundo kanduang* (biological mother), which is the figure of the mother who plays the role of the moral protector of the family, the giver of the role model, and the guardian of the continuity of customs and traditions.³¹ In this framework, women are understood not as subordinates, but as strategic partners in building a religious and civilized household. Thus, Hamka implicitly affirms women's role as active moral subjects in family life. Hamka's view above aligns with Amina Wadud's principle of gender justice, which holds that family relations in Islam should ideally be built on equal roles, mutual responsibility, and fairness.³² This view is also consistent with the findings of Valentina and Safitri that women's involvement in moral safeguarding not only strengthens family harmony but also helps preserve customs and ethical values in social life.³³ Thus, Hamka's interpretation shows the integration between Qur'anic ethics, gender justice, and local cultural wisdom in building fair, equal, and harmonious domestic relations.

3) QS. AlAnfāl/8: 67-68

In Tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka explains that this verse concerns the decision of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of his companions to accept the ransom for the prisoners of the Battle of Badr, before the enemy's forces were destroyed. The decision was taken based on deliberation; Abu Bakr suggested that the captives be allowed to live and be redeemed, while Umar bin Khattab suggested that they be put to death for fighting Islam. The Prophet PBUH chose Abu Bakr's opinion. Then came this verse, which Hamka understood as a warning that worldly interests (such as ransom) should not take precedence over the main mission of jihad: to destroy the enemy's power and uphold the religion of Allah. Regarding this, Hamka stated:

*If you meet the enemy, kill immediately, without any prisoners, before the entire strength of the enemy is broken, before the Muslims reach a strong position. This means that the victory at the Battle of Badr is not significant, because Islam's position is not yet strong. If the captives are allowed to redeem themselves, they will return to their place of origin. So whoever has been captured should be killed immediately. If Islam is strong, then it is permissible to talk about captives who want to redeem themselves. Moreover, although Abu Bakr's proposal was accepted, for the sake of preserving blood and kinship relations, the largest group that supported it did not ask for ransom because they remembered the family relationship, but because they remembered the large amount of ransom itself, so that they became rich.*³⁴

Referring to the above, Hamka implicitly considered that the essence of this rebuke was not a direct criticism of the Prophet Saw's actions, but rather a warning to da'wah actors to always maintain values and principles in the struggle for Islam and not to pollute it with worldly interests. He emphasized that jihad is not a tool for political gain or an economic source, but a spiritual struggle that demands integrity, commitment, and holy intentions.³⁵ This understanding shows Hamka's sensitivity to the importance of intention and morality as the main foundations for upholding the truth

³¹ Mimi Herman, "Theoretical Study of Bundo Kanduang Symbol of Gender Equality Based on Islam and Minangkabau", *Marwah: Journal of Women, Religion, and Gender* 21, no. 2 (2022): 93-105. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/marwah.v21i2.14039>. Gisha Dilova et al., "The Role Of Minangkabau Women In Family And Community In Gender Fair Development", *JCH (Journal of Legal Scholars)* 8, no. 1 (2022): 60-70. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33760/jch.v8i1.569>.

³² Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), p. 82–95.

³³ Tengku Rika Valentina and Cici Safitri. "Minang Women in The Patriarchy Cultural Maelstrom: Viewed from The View of Religion and Culture." In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Gender, Culture and Society*, ICGCS 2021, 30-31 August 2021, Padang, Indonesia. EAI, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.30-8-2021.2316280>.

³⁴ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, H. 6020–6024.

³⁵ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

and the religion of Allah. This is a criticism of the social phenomenon, as Afsarudin mentioned, that often jihad or da'wah is tainted by pragmatic agendas – both political and economic – and forgets the ethical values that underlie jihad.³⁶

From this, it can be seen that Hamka used QS. Al-Anfāl is a medium for awakening Muslims' moral and ethical awareness. The sharpness of Hamka's interpretation becomes more concrete when it is associated with the Minangkabau philosophy: *abstinence from the treasures of the position*, which describes the principle of upholding *dignity* (honor) above worldly tendencies. In today's social reality, where many people prioritize social and material status, Hamka's interpretation serves as a reminder, especially for the Minangkabau people, to maintain morality and integrity in social life and to resist being easily tempted by material temptations.³⁷

4) QS. Al-Ahzāb/33: 37

According to Hamka, the verse rebukes the Prophet for hesitating to convey the revelation about his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsy, the wife of his former adopted son, Zayd bin Ḥārītsah. He was afraid he would be considered a violation of the adoption norms prevailing in society at the time. Hamka wrote:

So, verse 37 now explains that the main point of the verses at the base of the letter is again. It was moved in the Prophet's heart that Zainab was his soul mate, not Zaid's soul mate. If Zaid divorces Zainab, he is not wrong if he marries Zainab. That is based on the verses at the beginning of the letter, that the adopted son is not his own child. The Prophet Muhammad was afraid that humans would do that. Because people will accuse him of marrying the widow of an adopted son, or marrying an ex-son-in-law. What is the use of fear of man, even though in verse 2 it has been explained that it is the commandment of Allah that will take precedence, not the desires of the disbelievers and hypocrites, as explained in verse 1? ³⁸

For Hamka, the rebuke in this verse is an important moment in social reform and Islamic law, removing social taboos and clarifying the status of adopted children in terms of blood relations (*nasab*). Hamka said: *And it has also been explained that another person's child who is adopted as a child, he is not really his own child. He is still someone else's child, because what flows in him is not the blood of the one who raised him, but the blood of his biological father, who interfered with his mother. And if he calls a man to his father, not to another who adopts a child. ³⁹*

So, Hamka understood that this verse served as a profound moral rebuke of the Prophet's lack of courage in conveying divine commands, despite social pressure. He emphasized that a spiritual leader must prioritize truth and justice, even if it goes against societal norms.⁴⁰ Hamka's interpretation is in line with Shittu's statement that the descent of this verse is an important instrument for transforming Islamic family law and opens up space for rebuilding social constructs that hinder the principles of justice and individual rights.⁴¹

When considered in the context of Minangkabau culture, which upholds the concept of *family dignity*, this verse is also a challenge and an important lesson. Social norms that accommodate family

³⁶ Asma Afsaruddin, 'Jihad and the Qur'an: Classical and Modern Interpretations', in Mustafa Shah, and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, Oxford Handbooks (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 8 June 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.32>, accessed 4 July 2025.

³⁷ Nursyirwan Effendi, "Ethics of Honor and Islamic Reform in Minangkabau," *AlTamaddun Journal* 12, no. 2 (2018): 121–139.

³⁸ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, H. 8311–8316.

³⁹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

⁴⁰ Hamka.

⁴¹ Abdulwahab Danladi Shittu, "A Review of the Criticisms Against Prophet Muhammad's Marriage with Zaynab bint Jahsh," *Ognaa Journal of Religion and Human Values* 5, no. 2 (2019): 38–58. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47963/ojorhv.v5i2.1165>.

status, lineage, and customary taboos often hinder efforts to reform values. However, the traditional philosophy of *basandi syarak-syarak-basandi Kitabullah* allows for the reinterpretation of customary values when they conflict with the Qur'an. On the other hand, customs will gain legitimacy from the Qur'an if they conform to its principles and practices. Thus, it seems that Hamka is trying to bridge the gap between the community's customs and the teachings of the Qur'an. In the context of social change, he seems to insist that honesty and commitment to truth must be the main references, even if it means challenging convention as Arslan has also stated, despite the strong reaction of the people against him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) still married Zaynab bint Jahsy to show that this tradition was not in accordance with Islam. Therefore, it is concluded that the Prophet (saw) performed this marriage to change the public's view of marriage.⁴²

The Transformation of Minangkabau Cultural Values in Hamka's Interpretation

Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar is one of the achievements of Qur'anic interpretation, having successfully balanced the normative text of the Qur'an with the complexity of local cultural realities. Hamka not only interprets the Qur'an as a religious text, but also as a source of value that must be contextualized in a pluralistic Muslim society.⁴³ The elaborated local wisdom serves as inspiration for interpreting the Qur'an and shows respect for the customs of diverse communities. The truth built through the interpretation of the Qur'an is not conveyed rigidly or coercively to a society that has developed its own beliefs and customs.⁴⁴

In Minangkabau society, the relationship between religion and customs is not oppositional but interactive and dialogical. The principles of *the traditional basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*, are not only normative slogans, but also an interpretive framework that lives in the collective consciousness of the Minang people.⁴⁵ Hamka, as an intellectual born into the Minangkabau culture, placed tafsir as a space for dialogue between revelation and customs. The verses of rebuke in the Qur'an, as in QS. Abbas, QS. at-Tahrim, QS. al-Anfāl, and QS. al-Ahzāb is interpreted not solely as a normative warning about the mistakes of the Prophet PBUH or the ummah, but also as a moral lesson that can be internalized within the Minangkabau social structure, which upholds the values of equality, integrity, responsibility, self-esteem (*marmah*), and respect for others.⁴⁶

QS. 'Abasa/80:1-4, for example, is interpreted by Hamka as a rebuke to the tendency to exclusivity and elitism in leadership that pays more attention to the elite than to the small people. This interpretation is highly relevant to the value of *sitting samo randah-tagak samo high* in Minangkabau culture, which rejects hierarchy and social status as the basis for viewing and treating others. In QS. al-Anfāl [8]:67-68, Hamka shows how the rebuke of the pragmatic actions of some of the Prophet's companions, after the battle of Badr, served as an important reflection on rejecting compromise on principles and ethics in upholding the truth and the struggle of Islam. He connected it with the adage of *abstinence from the infidelity of office*, as an affirmation that political or economic interests should not pollute motivation and sacred intentions in moral struggle.

⁴² Ihsan Arslan, "An Analysis on The Marriage Prophet Muhammad With Zaynab Bint Jahsh," *The Journal of International Social Research* 12, no. 64 (2019): 938–945. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2019.3411>.

⁴³ Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Modernization of the Interpretation of the Qur'an in the Tafsir of Al-Azhar by Buya Hamka," *Ulunnuha Journal* 10, no. 1 (2021): 65–77. DOI:10.15548/ju.v10i1.2745.

⁴⁴ Anwar Mujahidin and Hyung-Jun Kim, "The Implication of Local Wisdom in Tafsir Al-Azhar on Moderate Islamic Thought by Hamka," *el Harakab: Journal of Islamic Culture* 23, no. 2 (2021): 239-255. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18860/eh.v23i2.13414>.

⁴⁵ Mela Mariana et al., "Integration of Islam in the Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah in Minangkabau Society," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic History and Culture* 5, no. 2 (2024): 111-124. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ijihc.v5i2.5163>.

⁴⁶ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, H. 9001–9005.

One of the strengths of Hamka's contextual interpretation is his ability to present local values as a social ethics that is very Qur'anic. In this case, he shows that morality is not only an individual problem, but also a collective one in his interpretation of QS. 'Abasa/80:1, a rebuke for the attitude of the Prophet (peace be upon him) towards people with disabilities (Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum), was used by Hamka as a lesson on social manners and dignified communication, which is parallel to the principle of *kato nan ampek* in Minangkabau customs, namely the rules of speaking based on social situations and relations.

Hamka's interpretive work is closely aligned with the ideas of Amina Wadud and Abdullah Saeed about the importance of contextual reading in establishing the Qur'an's relevance in modern society. In *contextual hermeneutics*, understanding the Qur'an must take into account the reader's social location and the lived local values, provided they do not conflict with the main principles of Islam.⁴⁷ Hamka's interpretation can be understood as an operational form of this principle, in which universal values such as the equality of human dignity, social sensitivity, integrity, moral responsibility, and justice are conveyed through Minangkabau cultural idioms. This process gives rise to a synthesis between the universal teachings of the Qur'an and local wisdom, grounded in the community's social reality.

Contemporary international studies have also begun to recognize the importance of a local approach in interpretation. Johanna Pink, for example, argues that the presence of local cultural expressions of the Qur'an in a society reflects Muslims' efforts to engage with the Qur'an's teachings and their identity and culture.⁴⁸ In that context, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* is not only a representation of Indonesian interpretation but also part of the global movement of vernacularization of the Qur'an, an effort to make the Qur'an alive and rooted in the social life of each Muslim community.

Thus, Hamka's approach to interpreting *the verses of 'itāb* shows that the Divine rebuke has not only a spiritual and pedagogical function, but also a socio-political and cultural function. Interpretations framed in the community's local values do not obscure the message of revelation; rather, they serve as a medium to strengthen the vitality of the Qur'an in the social life of the Muslim people of the archipelago. This is an important legacy in the development of thematic-contextual interpretations that bridge the gap between universal ethics and local wisdom without being trapped in fundamentalism or relativism.

Conclusion

The interpretation of *the 'itāb* verses in Hamka's *Tafsir Al-Azhar* shows an approach to interpretation that is not only oriented to normative-theological aspects, but also cultural and contextual. Through four main examples -QS. Abbas, QS. at-Taḥrīm, QS. Al-Anfal, and QS. Al-Ahzab: It can be seen that Hamka made divine rebukes a moral lesson applicable to social and family life, as well as to the leadership of the ummah. Hamka's interpretation reflects the cultural philosophy of Minangkabau *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*, which is reflected in principles and values such as *duduak samo randah-tagak samo tinggi* (social equality), *raso jo pareso* (sensitivity of taste and examination/meticulousness), *abstinence from the property of the position* (integrity and social responsibility), *bundo kanduang* (the role of women in the family), and *kato nan ampek* (language ethics).

⁴⁷ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*, p. 78–103.

⁴⁸ Johanna Pink, "What Is a Qur'an Translation? On the Hermeneutics of Translating the Holy," *Religion* 47, no. 1 (2017): 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2016.1146920>.

These findings suggest that a cultural approach to interpretation not only enriches the meaning of the verses but also allows dialogue between the text of revelation and local traditions. Hamka's interpretation can serve as a contextual model that adheres to Islamic principles while accommodating the socio-cultural dynamics of the ummah. The implications for the study of Islam in the archipelago: Hamka's tafsir opens space for the development of local interpretations rooted in the nation's culture but not separate from the universal values of Islam. To strengthen local Islamic identity, this interpretation can enrich understanding of Islam, which is not exclusive but open and in dialogue with socio-cultural values.

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