



## **The History and Development of Tafsir Thought in Indonesia: Reformist-Modernist Islamic Ideology in Exegesis**

**Muhamad Aidul Mubarak**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati

**Fikri Fillaili**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati

**R. Muhammad Farhal Azkiya**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati

**Yogi Muldani Hendrawan**

Politeknik Manufaktur, Bandung

### **Article History**

Received: November 23, 2023,

Accepted: November 11, 2024;

Published: November 11, 2024.

### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the development of Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia within the context of Islamic reform movements originating from the Middle East, particularly during the early 20th century reformist-modernist era. Through historical-philosophical analysis, this research traces the intellectual networks between Indonesia and Islamic scholarly centers in the Middle East, especially Haramayn and Egypt. The main focus is on the transmission of Muhammad Abdub's thought and its influence on Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia. This study reveals the dynamics of acceptance of reform ideas among Indonesian Muslims, as well as the contributions of local reformist-modernist figures in developing a more contextual and rational methodology of tafsir. The analysis also includes the evolution of tafsir thought from the classical era to modernity, considering the socio-historical factors that influenced this development. The research findings show significant transformations in the approach to Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, reflecting a synthesis between the classical Islamic intellectual tradition and the demands of modernity. This research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Islamic thought in Indonesia and its position in the global Islamic intellectual landscape.*

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic Exegesis, Islamic Renewal, Reformist-Modernist, Intellectual Transmission*

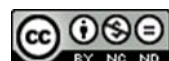
### **Introduction**

The reformist-modernist era in Indonesia refers to the period when Islamic thought underwent significant renewal, particularly in the early 20th century. This movement was influenced by modernist ideas from the Middle East and the West, and was marked by efforts to reform Islamic teachings to be more in line with the challenges of the modern age, such as in the fields of education, social affairs, politics, and law. Key figures in the reformist-modernist movement, such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan, H. Abdullah Ahmad, and A. Hassan, played important roles in building intellectual networks and institutions that supported these changes. One manifestation of this movement is the emergence of Islamic organizations like

Author correspondence email: [fikri123fillaili@gmail.com](mailto:fikri123fillaili@gmail.com)

Available online at: <https://tunasharapanummat.or.id/index.php/senarai>

Copyright (c) 2024 by **Senarai**: Journal of Islamic Heritage and Civilization



Muhammadiyah (founded by Ahmad Dahlan), which focused on modern education and religious teaching with a progressive approach. (Muhammad, 2021) (Andoni, 2023)

This movement was driven by several factors, including the decline of the Islamic world at that time, Western colonialism, and the need to adapt Islamic teachings to social and economic changes. Islamic modernism in Indonesia sought to reinterpret religious texts flexibly, emphasizing rationality and the relevance of Islamic teachings to contemporary society. (Ihsan & Syam, 2022)

In general, this reformist-modernist era laid the foundation for the transformation of Islam in Indonesia, where Islam became more open to new ideas and more contextual in addressing the needs of the times.

## Method

This study uses a historical-philosophical approach to examine the development of Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia within the context of the Islamic reform movement in the early 20th century. Data is collected through literature review, including works by mufassirin (commentators), writings of reformist-modernist figures, and other related documents. Analysis is conducted to trace the intellectual networks between Indonesia and scholarly centers in the Middle East, as well as to identify the influence of Muhammad Abduh's thought on Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia. This research also considers the socio-historical factors that influenced the evolution of tafsir thought from the classical era to modernity.

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Tafsir and the Influence of Middle Eastern Reformist Currents in Indonesia

The connectivity between the Middle East and Indonesia has existed since the 16th century, starting with Hamzah Fansuri's journey to the region (Riddell, 2001, p. 192). This relationship strengthened through the traditions of the Hajj pilgrimage and the migration of Arabs to the archipelago. Many Indonesian Muslim students settled in Haramayn (Mecca and Medina) to study with renowned Sheikh, leading to the emergence of major Indonesian scholars, particularly in the field of Qur'anic exegesis.

In addition to Haramayn, Egypt, especially Al-Azhar University in Cairo, became a primary destination for Indonesian students seeking to deepen their religious knowledge. A notable figure from this background is Mahmud Yunus, who later produced influential tafsir works in Indonesia.

Islamic renewal in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, gained significant momentum with the presence of Muhammad Abduh. Influenced by the thoughts of Jamaludin al-Afghani, Abduh initiated the idea of Islamic reform through the magazine Al-Manar, which later developed into a book of Tafsir. Abduh's thought is characterized by rationality and a focus on social issues, reflected in his interpretation of the Qur'an. For example, in interpreting QS. Al-Anfal [7]: 9 about Allah's help through a thousand angels, Abduh emphasized the spiritual and metaphysical aspects, not the material ones. He encouraged Muslims to think rationally, even if it contradicted the literal interpretation (Ridha, IX, 1947, p. 566 – 567). The reform ideas of Abduh reflected in Tafsir al-Manar include:

- Returning to the basic teachings of Islam (the Qur'an and Hadith)
- Transforming traditional thinking into rational thought
- Rejecting practices of shirk and worshiping others besides Allah

These thoughts of Abduh then spread to Indonesia through students studying at Al-Azhar. In fact, Tafsir Al-Manar began being taught in Padang Panjang in 1914 (Gusman, 2013, p. 20). However, it should be noted that not all Indonesian students at Al-Azhar

accepted Abduh's reform ideas. This indicates a dynamic reception of reform ideas among Indonesian Muslims.

In the Indonesian context, scholars have differing views on the origins of Islamic renewal. Azyumardi Azra believes that Islamic renewal in the archipelago began in the 17th century through the transmission of scholars from the archipelago to Mecca and Medina, which he calls "neo-Sufism" (Azra, 2013, p. 125-126). Meanwhile, Harun Nasution states that the seeds of Islamic renewal thought in Indonesia were seen earlier, with conflicts between the Padri and the adat communities in Sumatra in the 19th century (Nasution, 1975, p. 203).

Reformist figures in Indonesia, such as Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid, developed reform ideas in line with the spirit of Islamic modernization. They emphasized the importance of returning to the Qur'an and Hadith, rational thinking, rejecting blind imitation, and adapting Islamic teachings to the changing times. A concrete example of the influence of Middle Eastern reform on tafsir in Indonesia is Mahmud Yunus's *Tafsir Qur'an Karim*. Yunus, who studied at Al-Azhar when Abduh's thoughts were rapidly developing, wrote his tafsir around 1922. This tafsir reflects the influence of the renewal ideas he acquired during his studies in Cairo (Darmawan, 2013, p. 13).

## **2. Network of Reformist-Modernist Mufassir in Indonesia**

The network of reformist-modernist mufassir in Indonesia developed alongside the Islamic reform movement that began in the early 20th century. Reformist-modernists in Indonesia focused on renewing Islamic thought through more contextual interpretations and approaches that strive to balance religious texts with modern realities.

Some key figures in this network include:

- 1) KH. Ahmad Dahlan (1864–1923), founder of Muhammadiyah, who promoted reforms in education and religion through institutions such as modern schools and progressive religious teaching.
- 2) H. Abdullah Ahmad (1878–1933), an important figure in West Sumatra, who founded Jamaah Adabiah and the magazine "Al Munir," and was influenced by reformist thoughts from the Middle East like Al-Manar.
- 3) Hassan (1887–1958), a mufassir and figure of Persatuan Islam (Persis), whose tafsir work, *Al-Furqan*, reflects an anti-syncretism approach and distanced itself from feudal culture.

In modern developments, reformist thought continues to evolve through the tafsir works of figures like Mahmud Yunus and Hasbi Ash-Shiddiqy. They emphasize more systematic and scientific tafsir methods, focusing on language that is easily understood. Additionally, HAMKA, through his *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, became one of the proponents of modern tafsir while maintaining a connection with traditional tafsir, despite contemporary challenges such as polygamy and usury issues. (Andoni, 2023) (Ihsan & Syam, 2022) (Muhammad, 2021) This reformist movement not only influenced the field of tafsir but also brought about institutional changes such as in education and Islamic law in Indonesia.

## **3. Biography of Ahmad Dahlan**

KH. Ahmad Dahlan (birth name: Muhammad Darwis) was a prominent Islamic scholar and reformer in Indonesia. He was born on August 1, 1868, in Yogyakarta and founded Muhammadiyah, a religious organization that has had a significant impact on the reform of Islamic education and social welfare in Indonesia.

- 1) Family Background and Education;

KH. Ahmad Dahlan came from a family of scholars. His father, KH. Abu Bakar, was a khatib at the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta. From this family, Ahmad Dahlan received religious education from an early age. At the age of 15, he went to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage and further his religious studies. There, he was exposed

to reformist Islamic thoughts pioneered by Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. These thoughts later formed the basis of his struggle in Indonesia.

2) Islamic Reform Movement;

Upon returning from Mecca, Ahmad Dahlan observed stagnation in Islamic practices in Indonesia, which were heavily influenced by syncretism and local customs. Inspired by reformist ideas, he began to teach a purer form of Islam in accordance with the Qur'an and Hadith. In 1912, he founded Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta. His goal was to renew the understanding of Islam in Indonesia by emphasizing education, health, and social services. One of his significant contributions was establishing modern schools that combined religious education with general knowledge. Muhammadiyah schools educated students in various disciplines, beyond traditional religious education.

3) Thought and Influence;

Ahmad Dahlan believed that Islam was not just a religion regulating worship rituals but also a faith that provided guidance for social, educational, and moral life. He opposed superstitious and innovative religious practices and advocated a return to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. In carrying out his mission, he encouraged the Muslim community to learn modern sciences and be open to the changing times.

4) Death and Legacy;

KH. Ahmad Dahlan passed away on February 23, 1923, but his legacy continues through Muhammadiyah. The organization has grown rapidly to become one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, with thousands of schools, universities, hospitals, and social institutions nationwide. Muhammadiyah and Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts have played a crucial role in the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia and strengthening social-religious institutions. To this day, Muhammadiyah remains at the forefront of Islamic education and social movements. (Muhammad, 2021) (Atabik, 2014) (Mustamam, 2013) (Saha, 2015)

5) Muhammadiyah Movement;

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, founded by KH. Ahmad Dahlan on November 18, 1912, in Yogyakarta. The organization operates in the fields of religion, education, social services, and health, with the aim of reforming Islam in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah promotes pure Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Hadith and rejects religious practices deemed to deviate from these teachings, such as superstitions, innovations, and myths.

#### **4. Biography of H. Abdullah Ahmad**

H. Abdullah Ahmad was an influential Islamic scholar, educator, and reformist figure in Indonesia in the early 20th century. He was born on April 2, 1878, in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, and became one of the pioneers of the Islamic reform movement in the Minangkabau region. Abdullah Ahmad was deeply influenced by reformist ideas developing in the Middle East, especially from Egypt, where he was inspired by the thoughts of reformists like Muhammad Abduh and Jamaluddin Al-Afghani.

1) Education and Life Journey;

Abdullah Ahmad received religious education from local teachers in Padang Panjang before continuing his studies in Mecca, where he performed the pilgrimage and furthered his understanding of Islamic teachings. In Mecca, he interacted with various reformist thinkers who had a significant impact on his religious views. After returning to Indonesia, Abdullah Ahmad began actively preaching and spreading the idea of returning to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith while abandoning

## *The History and Development of Tafsir Thought in Indonesia: Reformist-Modernist Islamic Ideology in Exegesis*

- unsuitable religious practices. He also promoted the importance of modern education, not just religious education, but also general knowledge.
- 2) Reform Movement and Works;  
Abdullah Ahmad is known as the founder of Jamaah Adabiah in Padang in 1909, an organization that emphasized the importance of education and Islamic reform. He also published the magazine Al-Munir, which became an important medium for spreading Islamic reform ideas among the Minangkabau community and more broadly in Sumatra. Al Munir was one of the first Islamic magazines in Indonesia to promote modernist ideas and advocate for religious reform. Alongside his journalistic activities, Abdullah Ahmad also founded modern schools that combined religious education with general knowledge, similar to the efforts of KH. Ahmad Dahlan in Java. The schools he established made significant contributions to progressive Islamic education in West Sumatra.
  - 3) Thought and Influence;  
Abdullah Ahmad was a staunch advocate of modernist Islam, seeking to purify Islamic teachings from traditional practices that were not in line with the Qur'an and Hadith. He believed that Muslims should be open to modern sciences and secular education while maintaining fundamental Islamic values. Like other reformist figures, Abdullah Ahmad opposed syncretism and promoted education as the key to advancing the Muslim community.
  - 4) Death and Legacy;  
Abdullah Ahmad passed away on June 23, 1933, but his thoughts continued to have a significant impact among Islamic reformists in Indonesia, especially in West Sumatra. To this day, his name is remembered as one of the main figures who shaped the face of modern Islam in Indonesia, alongside other figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan and A. Hassan. The legacy of Abdullah Ahmad in the field of education and Islamic reform in West Sumatra continues through schools, organizations, and movements inspired by his thoughts and his writings, which remain relevant today. (Setiawan, 2023) (Saha, 2015) (Andoni, 2023) (Subandi, 2018).
  - 5) Jamaah Adabiah Movement;  
Jamaah Adabiah is an Islamic organization founded by H. Abdullah Ahmad in 1909 in Padang, West Sumatra. The organization focuses on the renewal of Islamic thought and education, aiming to purify Islamic teachings according to the Qur'an and Hadith and eliminate the influence of superstitions, innovations, and myths. Jamaah Adabiah adopts a modernist Islamic approach similar to the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Persis) movements, emphasizing the importance of education, modern science, and the purification of religious teachings from customs not in line with Islam.
  - 6) Vision and Mission;  
The primary vision of Jamaah Adabiah is to build an Islamic society based on pure monotheism and a return to the original sources of Islamic teachings. In its mission, the organization established schools and educational institutions that teach religious and general sciences concurrently. They aim to produce an educated and competitive young Muslim generation in the modern era while maintaining a strong Islamic identity.
  - 7) Works and Influence;  
Through publications like the magazine Al-Munir, Jamaah Adabiah spread Islamic reform ideas in West Sumatra. Al-Munir became one of the first Islamic magazines in Indonesia to promote reformist thinking and debate important issues in Muslim life at the time. Besides media, Jamaah Adabiah also established schools that combined religious and general education, a revolutionary step in its time.

#### 8) Current Key Data and Figures

Current data on Jamaah Adabiah may not be as extensive as larger organizations like Muhammadiyah or Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), but the organization still has a significant impact on Islamic education in West Sumatra. Today, Jamaah Adabiah still operates schools and educational institutions based in Padang, with thousands of students following the educational programs taught. These schools adopt the national curriculum with strong additional Islamic religious lessons.

Here are some important figures related to Jamaah Adabiah:

- Schools: Jamaah Adabiah manages several schools ranging from elementary to secondary levels spread across West Sumatra.
- Publications: Al-Munir is remembered as an influential medium in spreading modernist Islamic thought in the early 20th century, although its publication has ceased.

Although not as large as organizations like Muhammadiyah, Jamaah Adabiah's influence in shaping Islamic education and reformist thought in West Sumatra remains significant, particularly in introducing educational modernization and the purification of religious teachings among the local Muslim community. (Saha, 2015) (Andoni, 2023) (Setiawan, 2023).

#### 5. Biography of Ahmad Hassan

A. Hassan (Ahmad Hassan) was an Islamic scholar, thinker, and activist from India who became a central figure in the organization Persatuan Islam (Persis) in Indonesia. He was born in 1887 in Singapore and passed away on November 10, 1958, in Surabaya. A. Hassan was known as a mufassir (Qur'anic exegete), a fiqh expert, and a defender of Islamic teachings who emphasized the purification of teachings, returning to the Qur'an and Hadith, and rejecting superstitions, innovations, and myths (*TBC*).

##### a. Background and Education

A. Hassan was born into a merchant family from Tamil Nadu, India. He received his early education in Singapore, where he studied religious sciences and the Arabic language. He deepened his understanding of Islam through self-study and was known to be highly knowledgeable in religious matters despite not having formal education in Islamic boarding schools. Hassan was also actively engaged in learning modern sciences and philosophy, which later shaped his thoughts on Islamic reform.

Ahmad Hassan was born in 1887 in Singapore. His father, Ahmad Sinna Vappu Maricar, hailed from India but had Egyptian scholarly ancestry and worked as a journalist, book publisher, and Tamil-language newspaper publisher. His mother, Muznah, originated from Palekat, Madras, India. Hassan's parents married in Surabaya and later settled in Singapore.

Ahmad Hassan's name was influenced by Singaporean culture, following the Malay cultural norms. His original name was Hassan bin Ahmad, which changed to Ahmad Hassan by placing the family or parent's name before the original name. In 1911, Ahmad Hassan married a woman of Malay-Tamil descent named Maryam in Singapore. From their marriage, they had seven children: Abdul Qadir, Jamilah, Abdul Hakim, Zulaikha, Ahmad, Muhammad Sa'id, and Manshur. Hassan's educational journey began at the age of 7, studying the Qur'an and basic Islamic knowledge, which he completed in two years due to his diligence and intelligence. He then attended Malay school to study four languages simultaneously: Arabic, Malay, Tamil, and English, for four years. Hassan never completed elementary school education because he started trading at 12 years old. While trading, he furthered his religious studies, including nahwu and sharraf, with Muhammad Thaib in Bukittiang. He enhanced his Arabic skills with Abdullah Masnawi for three years and also studied under various teachers like Abdul Lathif from Malacca, Sheikh Hassan from Malabar, and Sheikh Ibrahim from India. In 1921, Ahmad Hassan moved to Surabaya.

## *The History and Development of Tafsir Thought in Indonesia: Reformist-Modernist Islamic Ideology in Exegesis*

Initially, he solely worked as a trader. However, one day his uncle, Abdullah Hakim, asked A. Hassan to meet KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah (1888-1971), who later became famous as one of the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926. During their meeting, Kiyai Wahab questioned A. Hassan about the ruling on reciting 'ushalli' in prayer. Kiyai Wahab was testing Hassan by asking him to find evidence for the matter in the Qur'an and Hadith. The goal was to find the correct answer because there was a cold war between the old and young factions in Surabaya, and Hassan concluded that the young faction's view was correct. In 1926, Ahmad Hassan joined the organization Persatuan Islam (Persis), which was then only three years old, and was appointed as a teacher in the organization.

Persatuan Islam, abbreviated as Persis, is one of the reform movements that emerged after the rise of reform movements or known as *tajdid* – interpreted as renewal, modernization, reconstruction, and innovation – that preceded it, such as those in Sumatra and Java. Persis was established in Bandung, precisely in a small alley named Pakgede, where many traders, known as *Urang Pasar*, gathered. On September 12, 1923, Wednesday 1 Safar 1342 H, the establishment of Persatuan Islam (Persis) was declared, with the motto returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Persis's *tajdid* aimed to reform entrenched customs and practices to align them back with the Qur'an and Hadith.

In terms of religious understanding, Persis's *tajdid* aimed to cleanse Islam from all *bid'ah*, superstitions, and *shirk*. A. Hassan was not initially attracted to Persis's understanding but wanted to steer Persis into a reform movement (*islah*). He realized that his thoughts needed to be channeled into a movement for effective development. His views placed Persis among modern Muslims and opened a new chapter in Persis's history.

Hassan also successfully mentored Persis figures, including Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993) and his son Abdul Qadir Hassan. In the 1940s, Ahmad Hassan moved to Bangil, Pasuruan, East Java, where he established and ran the Persis Islamic Boarding School. He passed away on November 10, 1958, at Dr. Sutomo Hospital in Surabaya at the age of 71 and was buried in Segok Cemetery, Bangil. Ahmad Hassan left behind numerous scholarly works in the form of books, totaling 81 volumes, and various magazines. Some of his works include *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, *Tafsir al-Hidayah*, *Tafsir Surat Yasin*, *Kitab Tajwid*, *Muqaddimah Ilmu Hadis dan Ushul Fiqh*, *Risalah Kudung*, *Risalah Al-Fatihah*, *Risalah Taqlid*, *Ringkasan Islam*, *Al-Fara'id*, *Kesopanan Tinggi Secara Islam*, *Ketuhanan Yesus*, *Bibel Lawan Bibel*, *What is Islam?* *ABC Politik*, *Risalah Ahmadiyah*, *Hikmat dan Kilat*, *Al-'Aqaid*, *Al-Munazarah*, *Is Muhammad a True Prophet?*, *Sejarah Isra' Mi'raj*, *An-Nubuwwah*, *Pemikiran Islam*, *Islam dan Kebangsaan*, *Pemerintah Cara Islam*, *Adakah Tuhan?*, *Membudakkan Pengertian Islam*, *Al-Tauhid*, *Al-Iman*, *Kamus Persamaan*, *Syair*, *Al-Nahwu*, *Kitab Tashrif*, and others. The focus of this study is his monumental work titled *Tafsir Al-Furqan*.

Writing this *tafsir* was the first step in the history of translating the Qur'an into Indonesian between the 1920s and 1950s, when Qur'an translations were still in Malay and other regional languages. Interestingly, in the process of publishing and distributing his work, A. Hassan, who was also a businessman, printed his work himself at his own printing press and then distributed it, specifically to the members of Persatuan Islam, the Islamic organization he developed, and the Persis Islamic Boarding School in East Java, which he founded and led. This indicates that A. Hassan was fully involved in his work, from translation and exegesis to printing, publishing, and distribution.

The first part of *Tafsir Al-Furqan* was published in 1928, but this first edition did not fully meet the expected knowledge needs of Indonesian Muslims. To meet the demands of Persatuan Islam members, the second part of the *tafsir* was published in 1941, but only up to Surah Maryam. Then, in 1953, the writing of this *tafsir* resumed with the help of a businessman named Sa'ad Nabhan until the *tafsir* was completed in its entirety, 30 juz, and published in 1956 by the publisher "Persatuan" Bangil. In 2006, this *tafsir* was re-published

by Pustaka Mantiq in collaboration with Universitas al-Azhar Indonesia. The last edition held by the writer is the 2nd print, March 2010, published by Universitas al-Azhar Indonesia (UAI) in a single complete volume. Based on the publisher's preface and A. Hassan's introduction in his tafsir, it can be concluded that the writing of Tafsir Al-Furqan was driven by several factors, namely, to fulfill requests from various circles for a tafsir of the Qur'an by Ahmad Hassan, pressure from some Persis members to have a tafsir to understand the Qur'an, and to explain the meaning of each verse so that the general readers could understand the Qur'an easily.

However, A. Hassan urged readers to also refer to other tafsir readings if divergent meanings were found. In the writer's view, the systematics employed by A. Hassan in writing Tafsir Al-Furqan were comprehensive for its time (based on the 1956 edition of Tafsir Al-Furqan). The initial pages begin with a preface from the publisher, followed by an introduction on the next page by A. Hassan. After that, it continues with chapters explaining various discussions of the Qur'an in a total of 35 chapters. In the last chapter, there is a dictionary of several important terms. Next, there is a fahras or guide to facilitate finding pages according to specific themes in the Qur'an, a table of contents in Latin script, a table of contents in Arabic script, and a table of contents for each juz.

Ahmad Hassan wrote from the beginning of the surah to the end using tartib mushafi, which is the order of the surahs in the mushaf from Al-Fatihah to the end of Al-Nas. At the beginning of each surah, there is a translation, categorization of Makkiyah-Madaniyah, and the number of verses in one surah. From the analysis method, the method used by Ahmad Hassan in Tafsir Al-Furqan is the ijmalī (global) method. The ijmalī method is a method that interprets the verses of the Qur'an by presenting the meaning globally, where the interpreter discusses verse by verse according to the order in the mushaf, then reveals the global meaning placed within the sequence of verses according to the patterns recognized by the majority of scholars and easy for everyone to understand.

Not stopping there, specifically, the tafsir method used by A. Hassan is the harfiyah method, which is word-for-word translation, except for words that cannot be translated literally, in which he also used the maknawiyah method in the form of footnotes. A. Hassan did this to maintain the nuance of the original text in his translation. Thus, overall, it can be assessed that Ahmad Hassan used the literal or harfiah translation more than the tafsiriyah or maknawiyah translation. In this method, A. Hassan strived to explain the meanings of the Qur'an with brief explanations and easy-to-understand language for readers at all levels, from those with minimal knowledge to those with extensive knowledge.

b. Analysis of Ahmad Hassan's Translated Verses on Law Enforcement and Leadership The Obligation of the Believer to Observe the Laws of Allah and His Messenger. Hassan lived between the last years of Dutch colonial rule and the early period of Indonesian independence. This was an era when nationalism was promoted as an ideological concept. The issue of nationalism received a lot of attention and became a crucial topic among Indonesian Muslims. In the case of Indonesia, a number of nationalist leaders, such as the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno, promoted a secular ideology where nationalism was seen as the only means to solve the country's problems. In his role as a defender of Islam, Ahmad Hassan responded forcefully to nationalist propaganda by warning fellow Muslims about the dangers of nationalist ideology and promoting the importance of Islam as the basis of the new Indonesian state. Hassan's critique of the nationalist movement was heavily based on textual evidence found in the Qur'an and sunnah. The core of his concept of reform is found in Q.S. al-Maidah (5): 44, 45 and 47.

The three verses emphasize that someone who does not take the laws of Allah to be a law for humans in the world, then in the hereafter they are classified as disbelievers, wrongdoers and wicked. Here are the details of the situation: First, a disbeliever is one who



thinks that Allah's law is not good or thinks that there is a law that is better than Allah's law. Secondly, it is said to be unjust if it puts a law not in its place and does not come from Allah, such as the involvement of persecution. Third, it is said to be ungodly if he knows the law of Allah on a case, but for one reason or another, whether intentionally or unintentionally, he judges by a law that was not revealed by Allah.

Actually, the concept of translation used by Ahmad Hassan is not much different from the translation done by Abdurrauf al-Singkili in his magnum opus entitled *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* on the editorial repeated three times in a row in Q.S. al-Maidah (5): 44, 45 and 47. The following is more or less the result of the translation, ... *and whoever does not judge by what Allah ta'ala has revealed then they are all those who disbelieve in Allah ta'ala* (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 44), ... *...and whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are the wrongdoers* (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 45), ... *and whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are the wrongdoers* (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 47).

However, if we examine the translation of Quraish Shihab in his *Tafsir al-Misbah*, of course the editorial translation of the three verses above has significant differences. Quraish Shihab in this context does not really use literal translation as has been done by Ahmad Hassan and Abdurrauf al-Singkili, ...Whoever does not decide (cases) according to what Allah has sent down, then they are the disbelievers (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 44), ...Whoever does not decide (cases) according to what Allah has sent down, then they are the disbelievers (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 44). ... Whoever does not decide according to what Allah has sent down, then they are the wrongdoers (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 45), ... Whoever does not decide according to what Allah has sent down, then they are the wrongdoers (Q.S. al-Maidah [5]: 47).

In the author's opinion, A. Hassan emphasized that mankind should not prioritize the Qur'an in referring to all laws that have become God's decree. If so, then it is included in the group of people who disbelieve, *zhalim*, or *fasik*. The implementation for Ahmad Hassan's reformist movement is that it is obligatory for every society to carry out the laws of Allah and His Messenger in the Indonesian state, which means obliging the movement led by Ahmad Hassan (Persis) towards the establishment of laws based on the Qur'an and *sunnah*.

People Who Should Be Made Leaders Leadership in Islam is a concept that is listed in the Qur'an and *sunnah*. Based on Islamic concepts, leadership is described by interaction, relations, authority processes, influencing, directing and coordinating activities both horizontally and vertically. So it can be asserted that Islamic leadership is a process or a person's ability to direct the behavior of others, and there is an element of cooperation in accordance with the Qur'an and *hadith* to achieve benefits. The next verse study is found in Q.S al-Nisa (4): 59, Q.S. alMaidah (5): 56 and Q.S. al-Maidah (5): 55

The element of reformism in Ahmad Hassan's translation is in the phrase *ulil amri* as 'those in power'. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab directly translates the word *ulil amri* into the same Latin form of 'ulil amri'. Unlike Hassan, Shihab does not directly categorize the meaning of *ulil amri* in his translation, because he does discuss it at length in the text of his interpretation. Etymologically, *uli* is the plural of *waliy*, which means owner or one who takes care of and controls. While *amr* means order or business. Thus, *ulil amri* is a person who is authorized to manage the affairs of the Muslims. Abdurrauf al-Singkili translates it as 'the one in charge of work'. Although the translation of Q.S. al-Nisa' (4): 59 is reviewed as a whole, it seems that al-Singkili does not direct his translation at all to a concept of leadership, statehood and power.

The wording 'those in power' chosen by A. Hassan appears to be a *tafsiriyyah* translation because it has gone through the processing of language transfer from the basic meaning of *waliy* and *amri*. Moreover, Hassan also provides specific additional information in his footnotes that after obeying Allah and His Messenger, believers are also required to

obey the leaders who have the Islamic religion, plus notes in the form of Islamic leaders referred to when carrying out orders and mandates that do not conflict with Islamic teachings.

Through this verse, Ahmad Hassan seems to only want to make Muslims the leaders of the Indonesian state in order to run the government in accordance with the Qur'an and sunnah. Whereas there is a counter reality that the Indonesian nation is inhabited by a heterogeneous society including ethnicity, race, culture and religion, although indeed the Muslim population in Indonesia occupies the first largest level.

In addition, analyzing the method of interpretation of the Qur'an in Ahmad Hassan's translation of the Qur'an, *Tafsir Al-Furqan* can be classified in the flow of modernism interpretation. In general, modernism interpretation views the previous interpretation as an encyclopaedia of debate that confuses the people, in the socio-political context of modernist interpretation appears as a response to the clash between Eastern culture (Islam) and Western culture. In contrast to previous scholars in interpreting the Qur'an focusing on grammar, rhetoric, ethics and theology, modern interpretation focuses on social, cultural and community issues.

The modernist tafsir movement genealogically originated in Egypt which was directed by Muhammad Abduh and directed more strongly by Muhammad Rasyid Ridha. Muhammad Abduh's writings in the magazine *al-Urwah al-Wuthqo* and *Tafsir al-Manar* were read and studied and became their main reference, such as the reforms carried out by Ahmad Hassan with his *Persis*, Shaikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, Haji Abdullah Ahmad and K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah.

c. Activism in Indonesia and the Islamic Union (*Persis*)

In the 1920s, A. Hassan moved to Bandung, Indonesia, where he became actively involved in the Islamic renewal movement through the organization *Persatuan Islam* (*Persis*), which was founded in 1923. *Persis* was an organization that promoted puritanical Islamic teachings and rejected elements of local traditions that were considered contrary to the pure teachings of Islam. Within *Persis*, A. Hassan became a leading figure and thinker who emphasized the importance of returning to the authentic sources of Islam.

A. Hassan was known for his firmness and rigor in carrying out the principle of defending tawhid, the oneness of God, and rejecting all forms of worship other than God. He was also involved in various thought polemics with other scholars in Indonesia affiliated with organizations such as *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), who were more supportive of traditional teachings. Hassan often wrote books and pamphlets debating teachings that he considered deviated from pure Islam.

d. Works and Thoughts

One of A. Hassan's greatest contributions was in the fields of tafsir and fiqh. He wrote a number of books and treatises that reaffirmed the importance of purifying Islamic teachings and rejecting syncretism. His most famous work is *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, which is a tafsir of the Qur'an published in Malay and very popular among Muslims in Indonesia. In addition, he wrote many books on fiqh, tawhid, and various contemporary religious issues that serve as guides for Muslims who want to understand Islam rationally and purely.

Some of A. Hassan's important works include:

- *Tafsir Al-Furqan* - a tafsir of the Qur'an that emphasizes literal and rational understanding.
- *Questions and Answers on Various Religious Problems* - a book containing various fatwas and discussions on religious issues.
- *Al-Tawhid* - a work that emphasizes the importance of purifying tawhid and defending the oneness of God.

e. Role in Education and Media

A. Hassan also played a role in education and media through the establishment of schools and the publication of *Al-Lisaan Magazine*, which was used as a platform to spread his thoughts. He also frequently organized public debates and open discussions to counter what he considered to be false teachings, both from traditionalists and from outside Islam.

#### **6. Criticism of Modernist Mufassir Towards Traditionalist Mufassir in Indonesia**

The emergence of the reform movement in Indonesia was influenced by external factors, particularly the Islamic purification movements led by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab in the Arabian Peninsula, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh in Egypt. Their understanding developed more rapidly in urban areas than in rural areas, as urban communities interacted more frequently with new ideas. Consequently, the Islamic reform movement gained momentum in the early 19th century and positioned itself as the Islamic modernist group.

The influence of purification by the modernist Islamic group was significant at the time, leading to the emergence of various groups identifying themselves as Islamic purifiers, such as *Al-Irsyad*, *Jami'atul Khair*, *Muhammadiyah* (in Indonesia), and *Serikat Dagang Indonesia (SDI)*. The modernist Islamic group had strong characteristics that distinguished them from traditionalist groups, namely:

- The door of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) is widely opened, and the practice of *taqlid* (blind following) should be abolished. The reason is that Islam must be able to compete with the advancement of the times and technological developments and address existing challenges.
- Conformity with the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and the elimination of *bid'ah* (innovations) and *khurafat* (superstitions).
- Renewal in every aspect of life, such as education, social, and political fields.
- The reform ideas emphasize increasing faith, eradicating all forms of *bid'ah* and *khurafat*, and strongly condemning women who expose their *aurat* (modesty).
- The *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* are their sources of teaching.
- Islamic reformists disseminate their ideas not only orally but also using print media.
- Using a rationalistic approach in eliminating *bid'ah* and *khurafat*.
- Tending to adhere to *Qadariyah* understanding.

Before the modernist mufassir era, Indonesian Muslims had a traditional mindset, holding firmly to customs and obeying the guidance of scholars at that time without knowing the textual evidence (*taqlid*) (Wibisono et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the criticism from reformist-modernist mufassir towards traditionalist mufassir encompasses various aspects, especially related to approaches considered irrelevant to the socio-cultural context of Indonesia's plural and dynamic society. Modernist perspectives saw that Indonesian Muslims were trapped in stagnation and mysticism. Therefore, reformist-modernist figures critiqued Muslims who were too traditionalist in interpreting the *Qur'an*. Here are some main criticisms raised by modernist-reformist mufassir in Indonesia:

- a. **Textual Approach Lacking Contextuality;** Traditionalist mufassir in Indonesia often use a textual approach, interpreting the *Qur'an* literally. For example, interpretations of certain verses related to law and social rules are applied without considering the local socio-cultural context. Nurcholish Madjid criticized this approach, stating that the *Qur'an* should be interpreted by considering the context of the times and local culture to be relevant to Indonesia's plural society (Madjid, 1992, p. 52).
- b. **Excessive Emphasis on Classical Scholars' Opinions;** Traditionalist mufassir in Indonesia often rely on classical tafsir without opening up to new thought reforms. Criticism comes from Abdul Mustaqim, who believes that the traditional approach tends to close off space for new tafsir relevant to modern social-political developments, including in Indonesia (Mustaqim, 2014, p. 105).

- c. Lack of Use of Reason and Rational Approach; Reformist-modernist mufassir, like Harun Nasution, emphasized the importance of using reason in interpreting the Qur'an. Nasution argued that traditional tafsir in Indonesia is too rigid and does not allow room for a rational approach. He suggested that a more rational and scientific approach is needed for Islam in Indonesia to adapt to the advancement of science and technology (Nasution, 1986, p. 34).
  - d. Inability to Address Contemporary Challenges; Modernist mufassir in Indonesia criticized traditional views deemed incapable of addressing modern challenges, such as democracy, pluralism, and human rights. Azyumardi Azra argued that traditional tafsir often neglects contemporary issues important for Indonesia's societal development, such as gender equality, social justice, and pluralism (Azra, 2002, p. 110).
- Gender Issues in Tafsir; Significant criticism also arose regarding interpretations of women. Nasaruddin Umar, in his work on gender tafsir, criticized the traditional approach that tends to be gender-biased. Umar argued that many traditional tafsir do not align with the equality spirit present in the Qur'an (Umar, 1999, p. 57).

## Conclusion

The critique of modernist mufassir toward traditionalist mufassir in Indonesia emphasizes the need for more contextual and rational interpretations of the Qur'an to address contemporary challenges. Modernist figures argue for the reopening of *ijtihad* and the removal of *taqlid* to allow Islamic teachings to compete with the advancements of the modern era. They advocate for interpretations aligned with the Qur'an and Sunnah while eliminating *bid'ah* and *khurafat*. The reform movement, influenced by figures like Muhammad Abduh and Jamaluddin al-Afghani, has led to significant educational and social reforms in Indonesia, as seen in the work of organizations like Muhammadiyah and figures like Ahmad Hassan.

The criticisms focus on the literal and often context-ignorant approach of traditionalist interpretations, the over-reliance on classical scholars without embracing new relevant thoughts, the lack of rational approaches in tafsir, the inability to address modern issues such as democracy and human rights, and gender-biased interpretations. Reformist-modernist mufassir aim to create a dynamic and adaptable Islamic thought that can meet the needs of Indonesia's plural society.

## Daftar Pustaka

- Alfian. (1989). Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior Of A Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Andoni, Y. (2023, September 6). Gerakan Pembaruan Islam Di Indonesia: Dari Revivalisme Ke Modernisme. Retrieved From Jurnal Post: <https://jurnalpost.com/gerakan-pembaruan-islam-di-indonesia-dari-revivalisme-ke-modernisme/58587/>
- Atabik, A. (2014). PERKEMBANGAN TAFSIR MODERN . Hermeunetik, Vol. 8, No. 2, 305-324.
- Azra, A. (2002). Pergolakan Politik Islam: Dari Fundamentalisme, Modernisme Hingga Post-modernisme. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Azra, A. (2013). Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Nusantara Abad ke XVII dan XVIII. Jakarta: Kencana Media Grup.

***The History and Development of Tafsir Thought in Indonesia: Reformist-  
Modernist Islamic Ideology in Exegesis***

- Darmawan, D. (2013). *Pembaharuan Terhadap Perkembangan Tafsir di Indonesia*. Bandung: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (LP2M) UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung.
- Falahuddin. (2017). GERAKAN REFORMASI PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI INDONESIA AWAL ABAD KE-20: STUDI KASUS MUHAMMADIYAH. *Schemata* Volume 6, Nomor 1, 93-115.
- Gusmian, I. (2013). *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: LkiS.
- Ihsan, M., & Syam, I. K. (2022). Ideologi Islam Reformis Dalam Tafsir. *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* Vol. 2 No. 1, 61-68.
- Madjid, N. (1992). *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan, dan Kemodernan*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Madjid, N. (2008). *Islam Kemodernan dan KeIndonesian*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Muhammad, W. I. (2021, September 29). Uraian Singkat Beberapa Mufasir Indonesia Modern Dari A. Hassan Hingga Quraish Shihab. Retrieved From Tafsir Alquran.Id: <https://Tafsiralquran.Id/Uraian-Singkat-Beberapa-Mufasir-Indonesia-Modern/>
- Mustamam, H. (2013). KONTRIBUSI DAN KRITIK TAFSIR KONTEMPORER. *AL-FIKR* Volume 17 Nomor, 152-166.
- Mustaqim, A. (2014). *Dinamika Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Lesfi.
- Nashir, H. (2015). *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan: Fikih, Ideologi, Dan Politik*. Jakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.
- Nasution, H. (1986). *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran*. Jakarta: Mizan.
- Nasution, H. (1975). *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam: Sejarah, Pemikiran dan Gerakan*. Bandung: Bulan Bintang.
- Nawawi, R. S. (2002). *Rasionalitas tafsir Muhamad Abduh*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Nurmansyah, I. (2019). Kajian Intertekstualitas Tafsir Ayat Ash-Shiyam Karya Muhammad Basiuni Imran Dan Tafsir Al-Manar Karya Muhammad Rasyid Ridha. *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, Vol. 4, no. 1.
- Rahnema, A. (1998). *Pioneer of Islamic Revival*. Diterjemahkan oleh Ilyas Hasan, *Para Perintis Zaman Baru Islam*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Riddell, P. G. (2001). *Islam and The Malay-Indonesia World: Transmission and Responses*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Ridha, M. R. (1947). *Tafsir Al-Manar*. Kairo: Daar al-Manar.
- Riyani, I. (2001). *Reinterpretasi Asbab Al-Nuzul bagi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an: Penggunaan Asbab al-Nuzul dalam Tafsir Ibn Katsir dan Al-Manar*. Tesis Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.
- Saha, S. (2015). Perkembangan Penulisan Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia Era Reformasi. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 59-84.
- Setiawan, A. B. (2023). Tafsir Dan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia Era Kemerdekaan (Studi Analisis Kitab Tafsir Al-Furqan Karya Ahmad Hassan). *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* Vol. 5 No. 2, 131-150.
- Subandi, Y. (2018). Gerakan Pembaharuan Keagamaan Reformis-Modernis: Studi Terhadap Muhammadiyah Dan Nahdlatul Ulama. *Resolusi* Vol. 1 No. 1, 54-66.

- Syamsul, A. (2002). Peran Muhammadiyah Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Di Indonesia. Yogyakarta: UII Press.
- Umar, N. (1999). Argumen Kesetaraan Gender dalam Islam. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Yunus, M. (2015). Tafsir Qur'an Karim. Ciputat: Mahmud Yunus Wa Dzurriyyah