

Textual Preferences for the Interpretation of Verses on Social Equality: Study of Wahbah al-Zuhaili's Interpretation in *Tafsir al-Munir*

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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penafsiran Wahbah al-Zuhaili terhadap ayat-ayat kesetaraan sosial. Hal ini dilatarbelakangi oleh suatu kenyataan bahwa al-Zuhaili yang hidup pada zaman kontemporer, yang seharusnya menafsirkan secara kontekstual, telah menganalisa ayat-ayat kesetaraan sosial secara tekstual. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan Analisa data secara deskriptif-analitis, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa penafsiran al-Zuhaili terhadap ayat-ayat yang berkaitan dengan kesetaraan sosial, ia cenderung menggunakan pendekatan tekstual ayat. Hal ini dapat dijumpai dari ketiga contoh penafsiran al-Zuhaili terkait ayat-ayat kesetaraan sosial, yaitu kesetaraan antara rakyat dengan pemimpin (merujuk pada QS. al-Maidah [5]: 42), kesetaraan antara si kaya dan miskin (merujuk pada QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135), dan kesetaraan antara laki-laki dan perempuan (merujuk pada QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13). Dalam menafsirkan ketiga tema pokok ini, al-Zuhaili mengulasnya secara tekstual ayat secara runtut dan tidak membahas luas pentingnya bersifat adil, setara, moderat dan tidak membanding-bandingkan antar sesama manusia dalam konteks kekinian. Penafsiran al-Zuhaili ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun ia hidup di zaman kontemporer, akan tetapi dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an ia tidak menyesuaikan dengan kondisi sosial yang mengitari kehidupannya

Kata Kunci: Ayat-ayat kesetaraan sosial, penafsiran tekstual, Wahbah al-Zuhaili

Abstract

This article aims to find out Wahbah al-Zuhaili's interpretation of the verses on social equality. This is motivated by the fact that al-Zuhaili, who lives in contemporary times, who should interpret contextually, has analyzed the verses on social equality textually. By using qualitative methods and descriptive-analytical data analysis, this article concludes that al-Zuhaili's interpretation of verses relating to social equality tends to use a textual approach to verses. This can be found in the three examples of al-Zuhaili's interpretation regarding the verses on social equality, namely equality between the people and leaders (referring to QS. al-Maidah [5]: 42), equality between the rich and poor (referring to QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135), and equality between men and women (referring to QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13). In interpreting these three main themes, al-Zuhaili reviews the verses textually in a coherent manner and does not discuss the importance of being fair, equal, moderate and not comparing people in the current context. Al-Zuhaili's interpretation shows that even though he lived in contemporary times, in interpreting the Qur'an he did not adapt it to the social conditions that surrounded his life.

Keywords: Social equality verses, textual interpretation, Wahbah al-Zuhaili

INTRODUCTION

Social equality is an issue that is always the subject of discussion on many occasions.¹ Equality between rich and poor individuals or groups, for example, is one of the most profound and challenging socioeconomic issues in many countries around the world. These economic inequalities reflect not only differences in income and wealth, but also access to education, health, economic opportunity, and social justice.² Inequality between communities is a complex and multidimensional issue, which requires a holistic and integrated approach to its resolution. Solutions to reduce this gap involve the government's role in redistribution policies, investment in education and training, infrastructure development, and inclusive and sustainable economic development. In addition, the active participation of civil society, the private sector and international organizations is also very important in efforts to promote economic and social equality throughout the world.

Islam as a divine religion was spread and taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in Arabia in the 7th century AD,³ is a belief system and life guide for more than two billion people throughout the world.⁴ In the midst of rapid developments, Islamic teachings remain the moral, ethical and legal basis for many individuals and communities. One of the many fundamental concepts in Islamic teachings is social equality.⁵ Social equality in Islam is not just empty rhetoric, but a principle that is firmly embedded in all its teachings. In the Islamic view, all humans are created equal before Allah, regardless of race, ethnicity, skin color, or social status.⁶

The concept of social equality in Islam is also reflected in the worship practices and social interactions of Muslims. For example, during the Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, millions of pilgrims from various ethnic backgrounds, cultures, and social statuses gather in simple ihram attire, eliminating all forms of differences and affirming the brotherhood of fellow human beings.⁷ However, although Islam emphasizes social equality, this does not mean that there are no different roles or responsibilities between individuals or groups. Islam recognizes the natural differences between humans and places each individual in the context

¹ Muhammad Barir, "Kesetaraan Dan Kelas Sosial Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 15, no. 1 (2014), h. 62.

² Rifqi Alya Nur Ainiyah, "Dampak Ketidaksetaraan Ekonomi Terhadap Patologi Sosial Di Masyarakat Modern", *Liberosis: Jurnal Psikologi dan Bimbingan Konseling* 1, no. 2 (2023).

³ Samsuddin Nasution, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, (Pekan Baru: Yayasan Pustaka Riau, 2013), h. 33.

⁴ <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-7173581/populasi-muslim-dunia-capai-2-miliar-orang-ini-25-negara-terbesar>, diakses tanggal 20 April 2024.

⁵ Barir, "Kesetaraan Dan Kelas Sosial...", h. 62.

⁶ Muhammad Kudhori, "Memperkuat Kesetaraan Manusia dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Konsep dan Tindakan," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 9, no. 2 (2023), h. 100-118.

⁷ Athoillah Islamy, "Haji Mabruur dalam Paradigma Fikih Sosial Sufistik", *Al-Qalam*, 26, no. 1 (2020), h. 111.

of their unique roles and responsibilities in accordance with their capacity, abilities and justice as in the hadith of the Prophet that every individual is a leader and will be held accountable for what he leads.⁸

The concept of social equality offered by Islam is very ideal, but in practice there are still problems with social equality. For some scholars, this problem arises from individuals' ignorance of the concept of social equality in Islam. On the other hand, the current system does not support the idea of social equality. Starting from this problem, this research will further explore the concept of social equality in a book of interpretations which can be said to be in the contemporary category. This article discusses the issue of social equality from the perspective of Wahbah al-Zuhaili in his book, *Tafsir al-Munir*. The author chose al-Zuhaili and his interpretation departs from his style of interpretation (*Adabi al-Ijtima'i*) which in the author's understanding is close to social perceptions. In the initial investigation, when interpreting the verses on social equality, al-Zuhaili, who should have interpreted them contextually according to social patterns, actually interpreted them textually.

In this context, the author is not the first person to write about the thoughts/interpretation of Wahbah al-Zuhaili and *Tafsir al-Munir*. Previously there had been research discussing al-Zuhaili and his interpretation. The author uses the keywords al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir* and social equality in a Google Scholar/Google Scholar search to find similar themes and discussions. The author found that there is a lot of research related to the interpretation of al-Zuhaili, his interpretation method, legal istinbat methodology and various thematic interpretations. Aryadi, for example, wrote about Wahbah al-Zuhaili's Legal Istibat Methodology.⁹ Meanwhile, many articles attributed to al-Zuhaili in thematic interpretation studies are found, including Eko Zulfikar writing about gender,¹⁰ Riyan Erwin Hidayat regarding dowry,¹¹ Theguh Saumantri about the values of moderation,¹² M Ridho

⁸ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj an-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim*, terj. Oleh Ahmad ibn Rafi'at, (Turki: Dar at-Taba'ah al-Amirah, 1433), Juz 6, h. 1459. Lihat, Beko Hendro, et al., "Pemimpin Ideal Perspektif Hadis: Refleksi Menyongsong Pemilihan Umum Tahun 2024," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan al-Hadits* 17, no. 2 (2023), h. 269-270.

⁹ Ariyadi, "Metodologi Istibat Hukum Prof. Dr. Wahbah az Zuhaili", *Jurnal Hadratul Madaniyah* 4, no. 1 (2017).

¹⁰ Eko Zulfikar dan Ahmad Zainal Abidin, "Penafsiran Tekstual Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Gender: Telaah Penafsiran Wahbah az-Zuhaili Dalam Kitab *Tafsir al-Munir*", *Al-Quds: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran dan Hadis* 3, no. 2 (2019).

¹¹ Riyan Erwin Hidayat, et al., "Mahar Perspektif Ulama Kontemporer (Studi atas Pemikiran Muhammad Syahrur dan Wahbah az-Zuhaili)", *Maslahah: Jurnal Hukum Islam dan Perbankan Syariah* 13, no. 1 (2022).

¹² Theguh Saumantri, "Nilai-nilai Moderasi Islam Perspektif Wahbah Az-Zuhaili Dalam *Tafsir Al-Munir*", *Diya al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi al-Qur'an dan al-Hadis* 10, no. 1 (2022).

about zakat,¹³ Enghariano about waste,¹⁴ and many more. As far as the author has observed, we have not found a specific theme of social equality associated with Wahbah al-Zuhaili's interpretation in previous studies. Therefore, the author considers it important to discuss this theme.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article is the result of library research using qualitative methods. The data in this article is taken from primary data sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are data that is the main focus of the explanation in this article, which was obtained from the book of tafsir al-Munir by Wahbah al-Zuhaili. Meanwhile, secondary data functions as supporting data originating from various books, articles, journals and other references that are relevant to the discussion theme.¹⁵ In the data analysis process, the author uses analytical descriptive methods. The author applies this method by describing and explaining in detail the data found and then analyzing it critically to obtain al-Zuhaili's interpretation of social equality between rich and poor, people and leaders, men and women. The purpose of this analysis is to find the criteria and characteristics of leaders contained in relevant reference sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Wahbah al-Zuhaili and *Tafsir al-Munir*

He was born in the town of Deir Atiya on the outskirts of Damascus in 1932. His father was a memorizer of the Qur'an, a hard worker, a lover of the Prophet's Sunnah, as well as a farmer and trader. He is married and has five children who have completed their studies at university except for the last child who is currently studying. He studied elementary school in his homeland, then secondary school at the Sharia High School in Damascus for six years, where he ranked first among all sharia high school graduates in 1952. He also obtained a high school diploma in literature. He continued his scientific achievements at the Faculty of Sharia at Al-Azhar Al-Syarif, where he obtained a high degree and was ranked first in 1956. Dr.

¹³ Muhammad Ridho, *Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Zakat Saham Menurut Yusuf Al-Qardhawi Dan Wahbah Az-Zuhaili*, Tesis, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2018.

¹⁴ Desri Ari Enghariano, "Pembacaan Wahbah Az-Zuhaili Terhadap Term Mubazir Dalam Kitab al-Tafsir al-Munir", *Al FAWATIH: Jurnal Kajian Al Quran dan Hadis*, 3, no. 1 (2022).

¹⁵ Eko Zulfikar, et al., "Rabbani's Character in Social Media: A Study of the Relevance of Al-Qur'an Memes Instagram Mubadalah.id with Interpretation of Mufasir Nusantara", *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2023), h. 88.

Wahba Al-Zuhaili died on Saturday, August 8 2015 - 23 Shawwal 1436 AH - in Damascus, Syria, at the age of 83 years.¹⁶

He then obtained a teaching license from the Arabic Language Faculty at al-Azhar, which became his international title with a teaching license. During this time, he studied law and obtained a Bachelor of Laws degree from Ain Shams University with honors in 1957. He obtained a diploma from the Sharia Institute (Master) in 1959 from the Faculty of Law, Cairo University.¹⁷ He obtained a doctorate in law (Islamic law) in 1963 with the first best title with a recommendation to exchange theses with foreign universities. The subject of his thesis was "The impact of war in Islamic jurisprudence - a comparative study between eight schools of thought and international public law." He was appointed as a lecturer at Damascus University in 1963, then became an assistant professor in 1969, and became a professor in 1975. His job was teaching, writing, guiding, and giving public and private lectures, and he could work 16 hours per day. He specializes in Jurisprudence and the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence and teaches them together with Comparative Jurisprudence at the Faculty of Sharia and Jurisprudence courses at the Faculty of Law at Damascus University and postgraduate programs.¹⁸

Teachers and students; Sheikh Mahmoud Yassin in the Hadith of the Prophet, Sheikh Mahmoud al-Rankousi in Doctrine, Sheikh Hassan Al-Shati in Al-Faridat, Sheikh Hashim Al-Khatib in Syafi'i Fiqh, Sheikh Lotfi Al-Fayoumi in the Basics of Jurisprudence and Hadith Terminology, Syekh Ahmad Al-Samak in Tajwid, Syekh Hamdi Jawijati in the Science of Recitations, Syekh Abul Hassan Al-Kassab in Syntax and Morphology, Syekh Hassan Habankah and Syekh Sadiq Habankah Al-Madani in Tafsir, Syekh Saleh Al-Furfour in the sciences of Syekh Hassan al-Khatib, Ali Saad al-Din, Sheikh Subhi al-Khizran, Kamel al-Qassar in the field of Hadith and ethics, Professor Jawdat al-Mardini in the field of rhetoric, Professor Rashid al-Sati and Professor Hikmat al-Sati in the field of history and ethics, Nazim Mahmoud Nasimi and Maher Hamada in the field of legislation, others in the field of chemistry, physics, English and other modern sciences, and Professor Nassib Saad in the field of literature.¹⁹

Imam Mahmoud Shaltout, Imam Abdul Rahman Taj, and Sheikh Issa Menon in comparative jurisprudence of comparative fiqh. Sheikh Jad al-Rab Ramadan in Shafi'i jurisprudence, Sheikh Mahmoud Abdel Dayem in Shafi'i jurisprudence,

¹⁶ Saiful Amin Ghofur, *Mozaik Mufasir Alquran: Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: Kaukaba, 2013), h. 136-137.

¹⁷ Baihaki, "Studi Kitab Tafsir Al-Munir Karya Wahbah Az-Zuhaili dan Contoh Penafsiran Tentang Pernikahan Beda Agama", *Jurnal Analisis*, 16, no. 1 (2016), h. 128.

¹⁸ Mohammad Mufid, *Belajar dari Tiga Ulama Syam, Mustafa az-Zarqa, Muhammad Said Ramadhan Al-Buthi, Wahbah az-Zuhaili*, (Jakarta: PT. Elex Media Komputindo, 2015) h. 91.

¹⁹ Mufid, *Belajar dari Tiga Ulama Syam...*, h. 91.

Sheikh Mustafa Abdel Khaliq and his brother, Sheikh Abdel Ghani Abdel Khaliq in Usul al-Fiqh, Sheikh Othman al-Marazki, Sheikh Hassan Wahdan in Usul al-Fiqh, and Sheikh Zawahiri al-Syafi'i in Usul al-Fiqh, Sheikh Mustafa Mujahid in Syafi'i jurisprudence, as well as Sheikh Muhammad Ali al-Zoubi in Fiqh al-Ibadat, Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahra, Sheikh Ali al-Khafif, Sheikh Muhammad al-Banna, Sheikh Muhammad al-Zafzaf, Muhammad Salam Madkour, and Sheikh Faraj Al-Sanhouri were graduate students in the field of comparative law and the foundations of jurisprudence and one of the mujtahid imams. His professors at the Faculty of Law at Ain Shams University include; Sheikh Issawi Ahmed Issawi, Sheikh Zakiuddin Shaaban, Abdel Moneim al-Badrawi, Osman Khalil, Suleiman al-Tamawi, Ali Rashid, Helmy Murad, Yahya al-Jamal, Ali Younis, Mohamed Ali Imam, Aktham al-Khouli, and others.²⁰

His students; Muhammad al-Zuhaili, his brothers, Muhammad Farouk Hamada, Muhammad Naim Yassin, Abdul Sattar Abu Ghadda, Abdul Latif Farfour, Muhammad Abu Lail, Abdul Salam Abadi, Muhammad al-Sherbaji, Majid Abu Rakhiya, Badie al-Sayyid al-Lahham, Hamza Hamza, and other professors at the Sharia Faculty, as well as hundreds of religious education teachers at the Ministry of Education. More than 40 generations have passed from his hands in Syria, some in Libya and Sudan, some in the Arab Emirates, and thousands of people in the East, Morocco, America, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Indonesia, who learned from his books on jurisprudence, ushul fiqh, and interpretation.

His works include; *Atsar al-Harb fi Fiqh al-Islami*, *Takhrij wa Tahqiqi Ahadis fi Tuhfah al-Fuqaha li as-Samarqandi*, *al-Wast fi Ushul al-Fiqh al-Islami*, *Ushul al-Fiqh al-Islami*, *al-Fiqh al-Islami fi Uslubih al-Jadid*, *Nazariyah ad-Durarati as-Syar'iyah Dirasah Muqaranah*, *al-Fiqh al-Islami ala al-Mazhab al-Maliki*, *al-Wajiz fi Ushul al-Fiqh*, *al-Alaqaq ad-Dauliyah fi al-Islam*, *Huquq al-Insan fi -Islam*, *Islam Din al-Jihad la al-Udwan*, *Haq al-Huriyah fi al-Alam*, *Hiwar Hawala Tajdid al-Fiqh al-Islami*, *Al-Ushrah al-Muslimah fi al-Alam al-Mu'asir dan berbagai karyanya yang lain*.

Al-Zuhaili explains in the introduction to *Tafsir al-Munir* that the style of writing this tafsir is so easy that even a beginner in Sharia sciences can read the tafsir and the thematic structure is very good and coherent. Al-Zuhaili said that no book has ever received as much attention as the Qur'an, about which hundreds of books have been written and which will continue to be a source for scholars. Therefore, according to al-Zuhaili, this book of tafsir is a book in which he has written knowledge, knowledge and culture taken from an inexhaustible source, namely the Qur'an, which is relevant to the needs of the times and educational needs. , with a

²⁰ Hutagalung Septiana, "Etika Melakukan al-Najwa menurut Wahbah Az-Zuhaili (Analisis terhadap Penafsiran Surah Al-Mujadalah Ayat 8-10 dalam Tafsir al-Munir, Skripsi, UIN Sumatera Utara Medan, 2023, h. 45.

clear and simple style, comprehensive scientific analysis, and a focus on the goals and objectives of the great Qur'anic revelation.²¹

Al-Zuhaili said that *Tafsir al-Munir* was written in a clear and simple language style, used comprehensive scientific analysis, focused on the goals and objectives of the revelation of the Qur'an, and presented an easy and concise approach that could be understood even by the younger generation. understand a little Arabic. For him, this book is presented with excellence in terms of clarity, depth of structure, and understanding of its contents.²² According to him, everything he wrote was not influenced by certain sects, doctrines or religious heritage, but according to him he tried to present knowledge and truth as guided by the Qur'an, in accordance with the essence of the Arabic language and legal terminology, by quoting and making opinions. the opinions of scholars and commentators, with honesty, thoroughness, and distancing themselves from fanaticism.²³ According to him, It is very important to bring the far closer, and to provide Muslims with a culture that is free from foreign elements such as Israiliyat in interpretation, interacts with contemporary life, and responds to personal beliefs, rational foundations, and intellectual foundations that strong.

According to al-Zuhaili's narrative of Israiliyat, it has inadvertently caused cracks in the infallibility of some Prophets and clashed with some scientific theories that had become certain after the conquest of space and the expansion of the field of modern scientific discovery, knowing that the call of the Qur'an focuses on the use of reason and thinking, sharpening the mind, utilizing talents for good, and fighting ignorance and backwardness. ²⁴ Therefore, it is important to implement interpretation through a social and societal sciences approach so that the adage that the pious values of the *Qur'an li kulli masa wa makan* are real.

The methodology in *al-Munir's* interpretation is as follows: ²⁵

1. Dividing the verses of the Qur'an into thematic units with clear titles.
2. Explain what is covered in each surah in general.
3. Explain linguistic aspects.
4. Citing the reasons for the revelation of these verses from the most authentic narrations, rejecting weak narrations, and highlighting the stories of the prophets and important events in Islam, such as the Battle of Badr and Uhud, from biographical books the most trusted.
5. Interpretation and explanation.

²¹ Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir fi al-Aqidah wa al-Syari'an wa al-Manhaj*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1991), h. 5.

²² Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, h. 5.

²³ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, h. 5

²⁴ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, h. 8

²⁵ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, h. 9.

6. Taking laws from verses.
7. Looking at aspects of the *balaghah* and *I'rab* verses, to help clarify the meanings for those who want it, and stay away from terms that hinder understanding of the interpretation for those who don't want to pay attention to them.

Al-Zuhaili stated, "as much as possible, I will try to use thematic interpretation: This is the interpretation of various verses of the Qur'an on one topic, such as jihad, hudud, inheritance, marriage law, usury, and khamr. At the first opportunity, I will show everything related to the stories of the Qur'an, such as the stories of the prophets starting from Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim 'alaihissalam and others, the stories of Fir'aun and Musa As, as well as the stories of the Qur'an 'an among the heavenly books. Then I will refer to the comprehensive research site as the story is repeated with different styles and purposes. However, I will not mention popular narrations in explaining the story unless they are in accordance with religious rules, accepted by science, and accepted by reason, and the verses are supported by authentic hadiths, except in rare cases.²⁶

My goal is to develop an interpretation of the Qur'an that connects Muslims and non-Muslims to the Book of Allah SWT -divine revelation and the only revelation that is currently the unequivocal word of Allah- an interpretation that combines the traditional and the rational, taken from the most reliable classical and modern interpretations, writings on the Qur'an, history, the reasons for the revelation of the verses, as well as commentaries (*i'rab*) which help clarify many paragraphs. I don't need to quote many of the opinions of the commentators, but I will only mention the opinions that are most appropriate according to the closeness of the verse to the nature of the Arabic language and its context.

Textual and Contextual Approaches in the Interpretation of the Qur'an

1. Definition of Tafsir

The word tafsir comes from the Arabic word masdar, the verb (fassara-yufassiru-tafsiran) which means information and explanation. The word interpretation means explaining something that is still ambiguous and vague, in addition it means revealing something that is closed.²⁷ According to al-Zarkasyi, tafsir is a science that can use this knowledge to understand the meanings, laws and wisdom contained in the Qur'an. The definition of tafsir as an explanation of the Qur'an has been sourced from the Qur'an (QS. al-Furqan: 33), from the lafaz aspect

²⁶ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, h. 9.

²⁷ Muahmmad Hasbiyallah, "Paradigma Tafsir Kontekstual: Upaya Membumikan Nilai-nilai al-Qur'an", *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan al-Hadits* 12, no. 1 (2018).

the word tafsir has many meanings, while the meaning of tafsir which originates from mu'jam is explanation and explanation.²⁸

The definition of tafsir above is actually a 'science' that can be used as an instrument to explore the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, its advantages relate to detailed 'orientation' in studying the Qur'an in general. Thus, the definition of interpretation can be reformulated into two different paradigms. First, tafsir as a 'science' by definition formulates related aspects, such as *asbab al-nuzul*, *munasabah*, *muhkam-mutasyabih*, *nasikh-mansukh*, *makkiyah-madaniyah*, *'amm-khas*, and so on which are related to instrumental issues. Second, interpretation as a 'method' by formulating related aspects, such as instructions, laws, commands and prohibitions, halal-haram, promises-threats, and so on which are related to productivity.²⁹

2. Textual Approach

The textual approach in interpretation is to understand the verses of the Qur'an based on the basis of the text. Textual interpretation is more text-oriented. Textual means that the approach to interpreting the Qur'an emphasizes the text itself.³⁰ Abdullah Saeed assesses that a linguistic-based interpretation approach is interpretation with a textual approach, the characteristic of which is understanding the verses of the Qur'an literally and textually, especially in interpreting theological and legal verses.³¹ Textual interpretation of the Qur'an refers to an explicit and literal approach in understanding and interpreting the verses of the Qur'an based on the context of the Arabic language and its grammar. In this context, interpretation is carried out by referring to sentence structure, vocabulary and Arabic grammar rules to obtain an accurate and authentic understanding of the text of the Al-Qur'an.³²

Here are some important points regarding the textual interpretation of the Qur'an: Arabic language: The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, and in-depth knowledge of this language is essential to understand the nuances and meanings contained in the text of the Qur'an. Textual interpretation requires a good understanding of the Arabic vocabulary, grammar and style used in the Qur'an. Historical and Social Context: Although textual interpretation emphasizes literal

²⁸ Agus Salim Hasanudin, Eni Zulaiha, "Hakikat Tafsir Menurut Para Mufassir", *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 2, no. 2 (2022), h. 205-207.

²⁹ Nur Afiyah, et al., "Kualifikasi Intelektual dan Moral Mufasir Pada Abad Kontemporer", *Al-Misykah: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, o. 1 (2022), h. 6.

³⁰ M. Solahudin, "Pendekatan Tekstual dan Kontekstual dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an", *al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 2 (2016), h. 115-130.

³¹ Abdullah Saeed, *al-Qur'an Abad 21; Tafsir Kontekstual*, terj. Ervan Nurtab (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), h. 30.

³² Saeed, *al-Qur'an Abad 21..*, h. 30.

understanding, understanding the historical, social and cultural context in which the Qur'an was revealed is also important to understand the deeper meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. *Tafsir Bil Ma'tsur*: This textual interpretation usually refers to classical commentaries compiled by great scholars such as Ibn Kathir, al-Qurthubi, and Al-Tabari. This interpretation is based on hadith, history and information from the companions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who understand the direct context of the verses of the Qur'an.

Qira'at Method: In textual interpretation, the qira'at method or the science of reading the Qur'an is also important. There are a variety of different qira'at used in Islamic tafsir traditions, and understanding these differences in qira'at can provide additional insight into interpreting the text of the Qur'an. *Harmonization of Verses*: In textual interpretation, it is important to ensure that different verses of the Qur'an do not contradict each other. Therefore, textual interpreters tend to look for harmonization between verses in the Qur'an to obtain a consistent and coherent understanding.

3. Contextual Approach

The word contextual has its roots in English (context) which linguistically means: first, "The part of a description or sentence that can support or add clarity to the meaning". Second; "A situation that has something to do with an event".³³ According to Noeng Muhajir, in terms contextual meaning has at least three meanings, namely: (1) contextual is defined as an effort to respond to current problems which are generally urgent. So contextual meaning is the same as conditional, (2) contextual meaning means looking at the past-present-future relationship, (3) contextual meaning means placing the relationship between the central and the peripheral.³⁴ According to Palmer, a contextual approach is interpreting the Qur'an with an approach that takes into account aspects of linguistic analysis, the popularity and background of the verses, social conditions (sociology) and anthropological aspects that existed in pre-Islamic Arabs and when the verses were revealed.³⁵

Textual Interpretation of Social Equality in *Tafsir al-Munir*

Wahbah al-Zuhaili as one of the interpreters of the contemporary period, the model of interpretation in his book *Tafsir al-Munir* appears to use several narrations. Regarding verses that discuss social equality, al-Zuhaili's preference in interpreting

³³ Tim Penyusun, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1989), h. 882.

³⁴ Noeng Muhadjir, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Rake Sarasin, 2000), h. 263-264.

³⁵ Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), h. 34-45.

appears to be textual and does not refer to the contemporary context, and sometimes he even explains it briefly and concisely. This article highlights and limits the discussion of social equality verses to the following three things;

1. Equality between the People and the Leaders

One of the themes of equality between the people and their leaders in the Qur'an is expressed in QS. al-Maidah [5]: 42 as follows;

فَإِنْ جَاءُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

"If they (the Jews) come to you (to ask for a verdict), then judge between them or turn away from them, and if you turn away from them then they will not harm you in the slightest. But if you decide (their case), then decide fairly. Indeed, Allah loves the just."

Asbab al-nuzul this verse was narrated by al-Humaidi in the book *Musnad* from the path of Jabir bin Abdullah who said: "There was a man from among the people of Fadak who committed adultery, then the people of Fadak sent letters to the Jews who lived in the city of Medina asking them to ask Muhammad about the law. adultery: 'If Muhammad orders the punishment of lashing, then take that decision, if he orders you to stone the perpetrator, then don't take that decision.' Then the Jews who lived in Medina asked the Prophet SAW. about the punishment, the story of which is as stated earlier. Finally the Prophet SAW. ordered him to be stoned. After that, the verse came down, "If they (the Jews) come to you (to ask for a decision), then decide (the matter) between them..." (QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 42).³⁶

In al-Zuhaili's interpretation, this verse explains case decisions that require justice. This is in line with the QS explanation. al-Ma'idah [5]: 49 below;

وَأَنْ أَحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

"And you should decide matters between them according to what Allah has revealed."

Al-Zuhaili explained that the Prophet Muhammad was ordered not to turn to be a just judge to give legal decisions between them (the Jews). This is because Allah will protect and protect the Prophet from the ugliness of humans. As understood, the aim and purpose of the verse above is to explain the situation of the two options given to the Prophet regarding the Jews who asked him for a legal decision. In this context, the Jews wanted an easier and lighter form of punishment for them such as lashing instead of stoning. Therefore, if the Prophet turned away

³⁶ *Asbab al-Nuzul Al-Ma'idah* [5]: 42, (CD The Holy Qur'an 0.8, Harf International Technology Company, 2002).

and was not willing to give a legal decision according to their wishes, of course they would be offended and angry, perhaps they would even try to harm the Prophet.³⁷

Allah SWT explained that the hostility, hatred and efforts of the Jews to harm the Prophet would not harm themselves in the slightest. Allah ordered the Prophet to be willing to be a fair interpreter to provide legal decisions between them fairly, honestly and objectively. Fair decisions themselves are an attitude that is loved by Allah and are the basic provisions of the Qur'an and Islam, both between fellow Muslims and towards enemies. This verse is an expression of astonishment at the steps taken by the Jews to appoint the Prophet as their judge, and they have appointed someone who they believe to be a wrong person as their judge. After that, the Jews turned away and did not want to accept the legal decision of the person they had chosen and appointed to give the legal decision.

Furthermore, al-Zuhaili provides information in the verse above that dhimmi infidels submit a report of a case to the imam (leader), if the case is an act of injustice such as murder, torture, ghashaban and various other forms of criminal acts, the leader can process it to provide legal decisions between them, without any differences of opinion among the scholars. If this is not the case, according to Imam Malik and Imam ash-Shafi'i, the leader has the freedom to choose between accepting the report and processing it legally, or rejecting it. Of course, the decision to process and reject is adjusted to the report submitted to the leader.

Al-Zuhaili's explanation and interpretation, although he points to the existence of fair decisions that must be made by a judge/imam/leader, he does not explain further by referring to the current context. Al-Zuhaili only explains the limited data he has by referring to the textual verses. The explanation of the verse above should be directed at equality between the leader and the people, where if the people have certain problems and concerns and need the leader's help, this verse can be a basis and solution. That in every decision made regarding the report received, the leader must consider the decision fairly.³⁸

The values of social equality, including the value of justice in the paragraph above, are actually necessary in building a multicultural society that can live in harmony amidst the reality of differences, as in Indonesia. With the current condition of society which lives heterogeneously due to the opening of communication barriers and technological developments, a fair attitude has become important in dealing with the reality of the differences faced by both leaders and the people.

³⁷ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid III, h. 548.

³⁸ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid III, h. 549.

2. Equality between the Rich and the Poor

Equality between the rich and the poor is also contained in the explanation of the Qur'an, which is stated in the QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135 as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ
عَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوُّوا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
خَبِيرًا

"Wahai orang-orang yang beriman! Jadilah kamu penegak keadilan, menjadi saksi karena Allah, walaupun terhadap dirimu sendiri atau terhadap ibu bapak dan kaum kerabatmu. Jika dia (yang terdakwa) kaya ataupun miskin, maka Allah lebih tahu kemaslahatan (kebaikannya). Maka janganlah kamu mengikuti hawa nafsu karena ingin menyimpang dari kebenaran. Dan jika kamu memutarbalikkan (kata-kata) atau enggan menjadi saksi, maka ketahuilah Allah Mahateliti terhadap segala apa yang kamu kerjakan."

In the *Tafsir al-Mishbah* it is explained that this verse was revealed in connection with an incident of dispute between the rich and the poor. At that time, the Prophet Muhammad tended to defend the poor because he felt sorry for their poverty, so Allah revealed the verse above.³⁹ Quraish Shihab's explanation is in accordance with another tradition, that Ibn Abu Hatim narrated from al-Suddi, he said: "When this verse was revealed to the Prophet, two men came to him having a dispute, one rich and the other poor. Initially the Prophet SAW was on the side of the poor because according to him it was impossible for the poor to wrong the rich, but Allah was not willing unless he remained fair between the rich and the poor."⁴⁰

In al-Zuhaili's interpretation, this verse explains that Allah has ordered His servants who are believers so that they really uphold justice, so that they are not influenced by the criticism of people who like to criticize, and so that they cooperate with each other, synergize shoulder to shoulder, mutually assist and support in upholding justice. Al-Zuhaili understands that justice is general, covering all fields and scopes, such as in the field of judicial law between humans, work in any sector, and in the family sphere. For example, a judge must enforce justice between people, a businessman must act fairly between his workers and employees, a husband must act fairly between his wives and children in treating them and in giving, and so on.

Apart from that, al-Zuhaili also emphasized the importance of giving testimony correctly. This is because Allah is always committed to the truth that pleases Him, so that the testimony given is valid, fair and true regardless of anyone and without being confused by partiality and bias. For al-Zuhaili, in giving

³⁹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2003), Juz IV, h. 617.

⁴⁰ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid III, h. 322.

testimony, no one should side with the rich because of their wealth, nor against the poor because they show pity and pity because of their poverty. Everyone must act neutrally, not follow desires that lead to falsehood, and not act fanaticism, which can encourage abandoning a fair attitude in all matters. Al-Zuhaili emphasized that everyone should always be firm and consistent in upholding justice in any circumstances.⁴¹

Thus, al-Zuhaili's interpretation indicates two important things that must be considered. *First*, uphold justice intensely and synergize and cooperate in upholding it without the slightest shadow of fear and worry. *Second*, carry out or provide testimony correctly and honestly, even if the testimony is very burdensome for yourself, your parents or relatives. Do not differentiate or consider between the rich and the poor, because Allah knows best about both matters. Apart from that, giving testimony must be based on gaining God's approval, not following desires that can lead you into the valley of destruction.⁴²

Al-Zuhaili's interpretation preference for the QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135 above clearly refers to the textual verse. There are indications that the explanation of the meaning of the verse does not differentiate between the rich and the poor in terms of testimony, which is not clarified and expanded by al-Zuhaili in looking at the contextual meaning. Once again, al-Zuhaili only interpreted according to the textual context of the verse so that he was unable to open the horizon of understanding social equality between the rich and the poor. However, the explanation of QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135 above can still be used as a basic benchmark for promoting the values of equality between the rich and the poor. Anyone is not allowed to differentiate between the two in social life, because all of them are the same before God.

3. Equality between men and women

Equality between Men and women are often at the center of studies and this is commonly referred to as gender equality. One of the verses of the Qur'an that explains this equality is QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13 as follows;

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِئِنْ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O people! Indeed, We created you from a man and a woman, then We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant."

⁴¹ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid III, h. 323.

⁴² Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid III, h. 325-326.

Al-Zuhaili explained this *Asbab al-nuzul* verse by including two narrations. *First*, from Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from Ibn Abimulaikah, he said, "At the time of the conquest of the city of Mecca, Bilal climbed the Kaaba, then shouted the call to prayer. There are some people who say, Are those black slaves calling to prayer over the Kaaba? Then some others said, 'If Allah doesn't like it, or if Allah SWT wants something, He will change it.' Then Allah SWT revealed this verse. The Prophet Muhammad SAW then called and warned them not to be proud of each other's lineages, to favor each other with the abundance of wealth, and to insult the poor."

Second, from Ibn Asakir in al-Mubhamat said, 'I found information from the writings of Ibn Basykawal, Abu Bakr bin Abu Dawud in his interpretation narrated that this verse was related to Abu Hindun. When the Prophet ordered the Bani Bayadhah to marry Abu Hindun to one of their women, they said, 'O Messenger of Allah, do we marry our daughters to our slaves?' Then this verse came down." Al-Zuhri said, "This verse was revealed in relation to Abu Hindun specifically."⁴³

This verse discusses the equality of fellow human beings, and what is noble in the sight of Allah the most devout. Everyone is prohibited from favoring each other's lineage and must respect each other and not boast about their lineage.⁴⁴ For Quraish Shihab, the first fragment of the verse above: *indeed we created you from a man and a woman is an introduction to emphasize that all humans have the same level of humanity before Allah SWT, there is no difference between one tribe and another.* There is also no difference in human values between men and women because everything was created from a man and a woman. This introduction leads to the conclusion mentioned by the last part of this verse, namely *that the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious.*⁴⁵

Wahbah al-Zuhaili interprets this verse by reviewing the previous verse which calls on believers to educate them with noble morals. Meanwhile, in this verse, the call refers to humans in general so that it is in line with the information mentioned after it and emphasizes the prohibitions mentioned previously, as well as giving the understanding that the message in this verse is addressed to all humans absolutely, namely the prohibition of insulting, criticizing, etc. Al-Zuhaili explained that humans were created by Allah from one origin, from one soul, from Adam and Eve. Therefore, everything is the same, there is no place to be proud of one's lineage, and it is not appropriate for fellow human beings to insult and criticize each other.

Al-Zuhaili also emphasized that fellow humans who come from the same lineage should get to know each other, not ignore each other and be at odds. In other

⁴³ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid XIII, h. 581.

⁴⁴ Lukman Nul Hakim, et al., "Etika Sosial Perspektif Mufassir Nusantara: Kajian Qs. Al-Hujurat Ayat 9-13 Dalam Tafsir Al-Ibriz", *Al-Shamela: Journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023), h. 84.

⁴⁵ Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah...*, Juz XIII, h. 615.

words, Allah created mankind to know each other, not to be proud of each other's lineages. Apart from that, the emphasis in this verse is also on piety, so that it can change a person to be more noble, virtuous and honorable. Apart from that, this verse is a proof for the Malikiyyah school of thought which does not require kafa'ah (equivalence) in marriage except for kafa'ah in religion.⁴⁶

Referring to the description of al-Zuhaili, QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13 explains at least three things; equality, mutual recognition between communities, and benchmarks for a person's glory based on piety and good deeds. Humans are similar to comb teeth in their origins. Because, they come from the same father and mother, namely Adam and Eve. Allah SWT explains that He created creatures from a pair of men (father) and women (mother), if He willed, He had the power to create them without a pair of men and women, like the creation of Adam, or without a man like the creation of Jesus, or without women like the creation of Eve.⁴⁷

Thus, it is clear that al-Zuhaili interpreted this verse textually. Although al-Zuhaili did not expressly state, as did Qurais Shihab, that he promoted equality between men and women, he nevertheless emphasized the aspect of piety to differentiate between fellow humans, both men and women. This textual interpretation should continue to be developed by referring to the contemporary context with descriptions that do not differentiate between men and women, such as in terms of education, career, involvement in politics, social affairs and so on. Explanation of QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13 above is often used as a guide for experts to promote the values of gender equality by contextualizing the meaning contained therein in accordance with developments and demands of the times.

CLOSING

From the fairly brief description above, this article concludes that al-Zuhaili's interpretation of verses relating to social equality tends to use a textual approach to verses. This can be found from the three examples of al-Zuhaili's interpretation regarding the verses on social equality, namely kequality between the people and leaders (referring to QS. al-Maidah [5]: 42), equality between the rich and poor (referring to QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 135), and equality between men and women (referring to QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13). In interpreting these three main themes, al-Zuhaili reviews the verses textually in a coherent manner and does not discuss the importance of being fair, equal, moderate and not comparing people in the current context. Al-Zuhaili's interpretation shows that even though he lived in contemporary times, in interpreting the Qur'an he did not adapt it to the social conditions that surrounded his life.

⁴⁶ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid XIII, h. 590.

⁴⁷ Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir...*, Jilid XIII, h. 592-594.

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