



## SOCIAL RELATIONS IN MINANGKABAU SOCIETY FROM HAMKA'S PERSPECTIVE IN TAFSIR AL-AZHAR

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### Abstract

Minangkabau is one of the cultures or ethnic groups in Indonesia that remains a popular subject for research from both cultural and religious perspectives. This is understandable given that the traditions within Minangkabau culture offer intriguing aspects for scholars to analyse. For instance, the matriarchal system in Minangkabau presents a paradox between the matrilineal perspective in culture and the patrilineal perspective in religion, showcasing the Minangkabau community's efforts to accommodate and reconcile cultural and religious approaches. This paper aims to explore the social relations within the Minangkabau community from Hamka's perspective as presented in Tafsir Al-Azhar. This study falls into the category of literary research with a qualitative approach. The data sources for this research are drawn from various library references, including the Tafsir Al-Azhar as the primary source and other related books as secondary sources. The data analysis method employed is content analysis. This research indicates that Hamka has a unique reading of social relations in Minangkabau, highlighting the distinctive influence of matriarchal/matrilineal practices on the social order of Minangkabau society. The explanation of social relations in Minangkabau exists in his tafsir as a tool to provide analogies or explanations of the meaning of verses, making them easier for readers to understand, considering that Tafsir predominantly has a social orientation.

**Keywords:** Social Relations, Minangkabau, Hamka, Tafsir Al-Azhar.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The interaction between culture and religion, especially in Indonesia, often clashes and can cause conflict and tension in social relations. In this case, not a few people still tend to ignore a wise approach in compromising the two. Religion and culture are two different things. But if examined, both have a strong relationship. Religion and culture influence each other and shape patterns of behaviour, values and collective identity in society.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, religion spreads its teachings through culture. On the other hand, culture needs religion to preserve it. This is one example of the relationship between custom and culture.<sup>2</sup>

Minangkabau is one of the cultures or ethnic groups in Indonesia that is still hot to be researched both from the *point of view of* culture and religion. This is quite understandable considering the traditions that exist in Minangkabau culture have interesting sides to be analysed by experts. For example, in the matriarchal system in Minangkabau, the paradox between the matrilineal in terms of culture and the patrilineal in terms of religion shows the *survival* efforts of the Minangkabau community to accommodate and approach the two things that look different.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rani Nurhalizah, Muh Fauzan Agil, and Abdurrahman Sakka, "Interaction of Culture and Religion: Understanding Its Impact and Contribution in Society," *Relinesia: Indonesian Journal of Religious Studies and Multiculturalism* 2, no. 1 (2023): 13–22.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Hidayat, "Alignment of Religion and Culture," Ministry of Religious Affairs BDK Jakarta, 2021, <https://bdkjakarta.kemenag.go.id/penyelarasan-agama-dan-budaya/>.

<sup>3</sup> Nurmatias, "The Ideal Man According to the View of Minangkabau Customs," West Sumatra Province Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre, accessed June 3, 2024,



This form of accommodation ultimately gave birth to the integration of culture and religion through the idiom "*adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah*". This philosophy or idiom then becomes the rationale that motivates the community to move, act and speak in the social community following the corridors that have been outlined.<sup>4</sup>

Several studies that discuss Minangkabau culture have been conducted in various tendencies. *First*, studies that focus on sociological and anthropological reviews, such as research entitled *The Minangkabau Customary Inheritance Law System* (2023), *The Political Role of Women's Leadership in the Matrilineal System in Minangkabau West Sumatra* (2023), *The Uniqueness of Minangkabau Customary Inheritance Law* (2024), and others. *Second*, it focuses on Minangkabau customs from a legal perspective, whether Islamic law, national law, or customary law. This can be seen from several writings such as research by Yoci Qurratu Hardi, et al with the titles *Acculturation of Islam and Minangkabau Customary Law* (2023), *Islamic Law Analysis of the Pitih Japuik Tradition in Minangkabau Customary Marriage in Pariaman* (2022), *The Influence of Minangkabau Customary Law Intervention on the Principles and Practices of Islamic Law* (2023), *Islamic Law Review of the Prohibition of Sasuku Marriage in Minangkabau Society* by Vidya Nurchaliza (2020), *Sasuku Marriage: A Cultural Instrument in National Legal*

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<https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/bpcbsumbang/manusia-ideal-menurut-pandangan-adat-minangkabau/>.

<sup>4</sup> Yelmi Eri Fardius, "Philosophical Values of ABS-SBK in Minangkabau," *Tajdid Science and Religious Thought Magazine* 20, no. 2 (2017).

*Studies* by Nailatur Rahmadiyah (2024). *Third*, studies focus on the Qur'an, including *Analysis of the Integration of Islam and Minangkabau Culture in the Batagak Panghulu Tradition Based on the Qur'anic Perspective* (2024), *Minang Anthropology in the Perspective of the Qur'an: A Study of Matrilineal Descent System* (2022), *Matrilineal System of Minangkabau Tribe in Tafsir Al-Azhar* (2022). From some of the focus of the above studies, the author is more inclined to the study of Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka. As for Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka, no study examines social relations in Minangkabau from Hamka's perspective in Tafsir Al-Azhar.

This research aims to complement and fill the space in the above study which specifically wants to know Hamka's reading of the social relations of Minangkabau society in Tafsir Al-Azhar. To find out this, researchers will reveal important questions as a result of the initial hypothesis, namely, how is Hamka's view in his Tafsir on the social relations of Minangkabau society? The argumentation that reinforces this research departs from Hamka's explanation of the word *الأرحام* in Q.S. An-Nisa': 1 as a family by blood. According to him, God has revealed the sentence *Al-Arham* to remind humans of the unity of human descent. Then Hamka analogised it with the habit of the Minangkabau people who always ask about their tribe when they meet overseas. So if the person asked happens to be a tribe (one tribe), then they recognise brothers like blood.<sup>5</sup> Hamka's analogy in his tafsir indicates the social relations created from tribal relationships in Minangkabau customs. Although the people

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<sup>5</sup> Prof Dr Haji Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* 1982.

did not know each other before, after knowing that they have the same tribe in Minangkabau, then there is a relationship or relationship like brothers who have blood ties.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

This research is classified as literary research with a qualitative approach. The research data sources are extracted through a variety of library information which includes the book Tafsir Al-Azhar by Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah (Hamka) as the primary source, and other related books as secondary sources. The data analysis method used is the content analysis technique so that it will be seen more comprehensively in Hamka's views on social relations in Minangkabau in Tafsir Al-Azhar.

## **C. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Qur'anic Interpretation in the Social Life of Society in Indonesia**

As a pluralistic country consisting of many tribes, nations, ethnicities and religions, interpretation in Indonesia is also inseparable from the social conditions of society. The plurality of the Indonesian nation gave rise to works of interpretation from various nuances, such as nuances of language, fiqh, Sufism, socio-politics, and others. It cannot be separated from the development of social-religious problems in the community. This is due to the increasingly complex socio-religious problems and the rapid development of science. In addition to the increasingly complex

problems of society, differences in mindsets and perspectives of mufassirs in viewing Qur'anic verses also trigger differences in interpretation. These differences in interpretation, automatically give birth to interpretation products with various shades of epistemological differences and the mufassir's perspective on a verse. These differences are influenced by several factors. Among them is the difference in the socio-historical situation in which a mufassir lives. In addition, the mufassir's education factor also contributes to the colour of his interpretation style. Even the political situation that occurred when the mufassir did the work of interpretation was also very strong in colouring the product of his interpretation.<sup>6</sup>

The interpretation of the Qur'an in the social life of Indonesian society plays an important role in shaping social norms and values. The Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims, the majority of Indonesia's population, is the main guide in various aspects of life, both within the scope of individuals and communities. Tafsir of the Qur'an, or the interpretation of its verses, helps Muslims understand and apply Islamic teachings in the context of daily life. *Firstly*, in terms of law and ethics, Qur'anic exegesis influences social policy and regulation. The principles of sharia, rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, are implemented in various legal regulations in Indonesia. For example, regulations on zakat, marriage and inheritance are often based on interpretations of Qur'anic verses. This reflects how

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<sup>6</sup> M. Agus Yusran, "The Development of Theoretical Studies of Social Tafsir in Indonesia," *Tafakkur: Journal of Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2022).



religious teachings can shape the legal structures that govern people's lives.<sup>7</sup>

*Secondly*, in family life and education, Qur'anic interpretation guides in shaping individual morality and ethics from an early age. Religious education that starts from the household to formal educational institutions teaches values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for parents and others. The interpretation of these verses on education and character building helps to create a generation that is noble and responsible.<sup>8</sup> *Third*, in the context of social relations and cooperation, the Qur'anic interpretation encourages the spirit of togetherness and solidarity. Teachings about the importance of helping others, doing good, and upholding social justice are the basis for various social activities such as zakat, infaq, and alms. The interpretation of verses that teach about social care encourages people to be active in various charitable and humanitarian activities, which ultimately strengthen social ties.<sup>9</sup>

*Fourth*, in the face of the challenges of modernisation and globalisation, Qur'anic commentaries help people navigate change without losing their religious identity. Contextualised and modern-relevant tafsir helps Muslims in Indonesia uphold religious teachings while adapting to social and technological changes. This

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<sup>7</sup> Syamsul Arifin, *Zakat and Islamic Law in Indonesia: A Study of Interpretation and Implementation* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Nurchalis Majid, *Islam, Modernity and Indonesianness* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Substantive Islam: So that the Ummah Does Not Become Froth* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002).

is seen in the adaptation of Islamic values in business practices, social media, and various other aspects of modern life.<sup>10</sup> *Fifth*, in the area of politics and leadership, Qur'anic commentaries guide the principles of just, transparent and responsible leadership. These values are often raised in political campaigns and government policies. Leaders who are considered capable of applying Qur'anic values in governance gain widespread support from the public, reflecting how religious interpretations can influence political and leadership dynamics.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Social Relations in the Context of Minangkabau Society

Referring to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word relation etymologically means relationship, or affinity.<sup>12</sup> In terms of terms, relations are interpreted as reciprocal relationships between one individual and another and influence each other. The word social comes from the Latin "*socius*" meaning society or friends. In a general sense, it means society. While in a narrow sense prioritising common interests or society.<sup>13</sup> Social relations are social relationships or a systematic series of behaviours between two or more people.<sup>14</sup> Social relations in Islam are known as *habl mi al-nas*

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<sup>10</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Robert W. Hefner, "Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratisation in Indonesia," *Princeton University Press*, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Language Dictionary Centre, *Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: Language Centre, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Agus Salim, *Social Change* (Yogyakarta: PT Tiara Wacana Yogya, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> M. Agus Yusran, "Social Relations in the Qur'an," *Tafakkur: Journal of Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2023).



(horizontal relations). According to Spradley and McCurdy, social relations or social relations that exist between individuals that last for a relatively long time will form a pattern, this relationship pattern is referred to as a pattern of social relations which consists of two types, namely: *First*, associative social relations, which are processes formed from cooperation, accommodation, assimilation, and acculturation that are intertwined and tend to merge; *second*, dissociative social relations, which are processes formed from opposition, such as competition.<sup>15</sup>

Social relations cannot be done unilaterally. It must involve two or more people or between one community and another. Social relations can occur if there are: *first*, social contact, which is a relationship between one or more people through a conversation and understanding each other's intentions and goals. This social contact can occur directly or indirectly such as through social media, telephone, mail, radio, and others. Positive and negative relationships can be formed in social contact. Positive relationships can occur if both parties understand each other. If this is not realised, conflicts and disputes will arise. *Second*, is social communication, which is the similarity of views between people who interact towards something.<sup>16</sup> Social interaction in society will run well if each individual can maintain their rights and obligations properly. Compliance with applicable norms is one of the factors

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<sup>15</sup> Abdullah, *Construction and Reproduction of Culture* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Abdulsyani, *Sociology, Schematic, Theory, and Applied* (Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara, 2007).

that support social stability. The existence of a social system in society aims to achieve common goals, social order, and social system balance.<sup>17</sup>

Minangkabau is one of the major ethnic groups in Indonesia that spreads from the west coast of Sumatra to the Malacca Peninsula, Malaysia. In Minangkabau, social relations in the context of society are a complex phenomenon, formed from customs, the matrilineal system and Islamic values. The Minangkabau people, who live in West Sumatra, Indonesia, have a unique social system that is different from most communities in Indonesia. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Minangkabau society is the matrilineal system, where the lineage is drawn from the mother's side. In this system, women play a central role in the family and inheritance. Rumah gadang, as a symbol of the family's greatness, is inherited from mothers to daughters. Women's role as homeowners and managers of household affairs gives them significant influence in family and community decision-making. This system reflects the respect and appreciation of women in the Minangkabau social structure.<sup>18</sup>

Then Minangkabau adat, known as "Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah" (Adat bersendikan syariat, syariat bersendikan Kitabullah), integrates traditional values with Islamic teachings. Social relations are governed by adat, which determines

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Amin, "Social Relations in the Qur'an," *QiST: Journal of Qur'an and Tafseer Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022).

<sup>18</sup> Irhas H. Shamad and Danil M. Chaniago, *Islam and the Cultural Praxis of Minangkabau Society* (Palembang: Noer Fikri Offset, 2022).

various aspects of life, from traditional ceremonies to marriage, to conflict resolution. This custom serves not only as a moral and ethical guide but also as a mechanism to maintain social harmony and community cohesion. The influence of adat is evident in the various rituals and traditions that are still practised today. The social structure of Minangkabau society is also influenced by a tribal (clan) system called "suku". Each tribe has a leader called "penghulu" or "Datuk" who is in charge of managing tribal affairs and mediating conflicts. Leadership in the tribal system is collective and democratic, where important decisions are made through deliberation. Penghulu are elected by consensus and must possess traits that are respected by tribe members, such as wisdom, honesty and nurturing ability.<sup>19</sup>

The education system in Minangkabau society also plays an important role in shaping social relations. Traditional education, known as "Surau", not only teaches religious knowledge but also instils customary and ethical values. The tradition of "merantau", where Minangkabau men leave their hometowns to seek knowledge or employment, also contributes to social dynamics. Merantau aims not only to seek a better life but also as a form of devotion to family and community. Migrants often return with new experiences and knowledge that enrich social and economic life back home. Islam plays an important role in the social life of the Minangkabau people. Islamic values are integrated with customs, forming a strong moral

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<sup>19</sup> Kori Lilie Muslim, "Islamic Values in Culture and Local Wisdom (Minangkabau Cultural Context)," *Fuaduna, Journal of Religious and Community Studies* 1, no. 1 (2027).

and spiritual foundation. The influence of Islam is visible in everyday practices, such as in the customary legal system that often refers to Islamic sharia, as well as in religious ceremonies that are an integral part of social life. This integration creates a balance between local traditions and religious teachings, making Minangkabau society a unique example of harmonisation between custom and Islam.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Social Relations in the Qur'an

In social relations, human abilities that have advantages and disadvantages and have compatibility with one another will produce associative social relations patterns and dissociative patterns. The formation of associative and disassociative patterns in social relations is a natural thing, considering that humans tend to do good and do bad. For this reason, the Qur'an provides a message to build this pattern of social relations with a signal conveyed in the Qur'an Surah al-Hujurat: 13 which gives a message in conducting social relations as a whole, not only talking in one religion but talking across tribes, kabilah, nations that aim to get to know each other. So that when there is already mutual knowledge, it will lead to closeness to carry out more useful social relations.<sup>21</sup>

Social relations in the Qur'an cover various aspects, including family relations, society, state, religious relations to inter-religious

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<sup>20</sup> Shamad and Chaniago, *Islam and the Cultural Praxis of Minangkabau Society*.

<sup>21</sup> Aas Siti Sholichah, "The Concept of Social Relations in the Perspective of the Qur'an," *Mumtaz* 3, no. 1 (2019).

relations. All are accommodated so that humans as caliphs on earth can carry out their duties to the fullest. Yusran details social relations in the Qur'an into three divisions<sup>22</sup>, including *first*, relations with family and society. In this relationship, there is a reciprocal relationship between parents and children. Q.S. Al-kahf: 46, implies the responsibility of parents to provide, care for, nurture, educate and direct their children towards a good life until they reach adulthood. Likewise, the responsibility of children to respect, pay attention, care for, and provide the best service to their parents is contained in Q.S. An-Nisa: 46. In addition, there is a reciprocal relationship between husband and wife. This relationship contains the responsibility of the husband in interpreting the word *qawwamun* in Q.S. An-Nisa: 34 as stated by M. Quraish Shihab which is divided into three things, namely the principle of deliberation, not to be arbitrary, and the command to the husband to treat well.<sup>23</sup> Good communication between husband and wife is the key to maintaining the relationship, and it is a joint task, it is not allowed for a husband to be authoritarian or vice versa. A good relationship will lead to a good home life.

The next relationship is kinship. Al-Zuhaili describes the stratification of relationships described by Allah starting from the closest people, namely parents, relatives, close neighbours, distant

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<sup>22</sup> Yusran, "The Development of Social Interpretation Theoretical Studies in Indonesia."

<sup>23</sup> M.Q. Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Message, Impression and Concordance of the Qur'an* (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2012).

neighbours and then the wider community (Q.S. An-Nisa: 36).<sup>24</sup> In the relationship that occurs with neighbours, every Muslim is also commanded to build relationships with his neighbours after parents and relatives. In Q.S. An-Nisa:36 above, the neighbour referred to in this verse has a broad meaning, including those who are not of the same religion or even those who are unknown.<sup>25</sup> Next is the relationship with society. For al-Qardhawi, one of the most important social concepts in the Islamic social system is to build relationships with the community at large. This command appears in the concept of *ukhuwah*, both *ukhuwah insaniyyah*, *ukhuwah Islamiyyah* and *ukhuwah wathaniyyah*.<sup>26</sup>

*Second*, social relations among Muslims. For Hamka, people who have both grown faith in their hearts, it will not be possible to be enemies. If a dispute arises, it is nothing but a misunderstanding. So if this happens, we return to verse 6 of Surah Al-Hujurat to do *tabayyun* and investigate carefully first so as not to be hit by a disaster because of our ignorance.<sup>27</sup> *Third*, social relations with non-Muslims. Ar-Razi believes that Allah has underlined a foundation that faith is not built on coercion, but based on knowledge and careful consideration to choose a particular religion. The world is a place of tests and trials which give freedom to others even to make choices. Q.S. Yunus: 99 explicitly reinforces and affirms the

<sup>24</sup> Al-Zuhailiy, *Tafsir Al-Munir Fil Aqidah Wa Shari'ah Wa Al-Manhaj* (Damascus: Darul Fikr al-Muatsir, n.d.).

<sup>25</sup> Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkamil Qur'an* (Khairo: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyah, 1964).

<sup>26</sup> Al-Qardhawi, *Ma'alim Mujtama'il Muslim Alladzi Nasyuduhu* (Khairo: Darus Shuruq, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

prohibition of coercion in religion, as it is not following the will of Allah who gives freedom in faith.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. Hamka & Tafsir Al-Azhar

Prof. Dr H. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, known as Buya Hamka, was born in Sungaibatang, Tanjung Raya, Agam, West Sumatra, on 17 February 1908 and died on 24 July 1981 in Jakarta. His father was Dr H. Abdul Karim Amrullah (Haji Rasul), and his mother was Siti Safiyah binti Gelanggar who had the title Bagindo nan Batuah. Hamka's father was a pioneer of the *Islah* (*tajdid*) movement and one of the main figures of the renewal movement that brought Islamic reform (youth) in Minangkabau.<sup>29</sup> Overshadowed by his father Abdul Karim Amrullah, the teenage Hamka travelled extensively. He migrated to Java at the age of 16 instead of completing his education at the Thawalib. After a year, he returned to raise Muhammadiyah in Padang Panjang. The experience of being rejected as a teacher at a Muhammadiyah-owned school because he did not have a diploma and his limited Arabic language skills encouraged the young Hamka to go to Makkah. Through the Arabic language he learnt, Hamka explored history and literature by himself. Back in the country, Hamka worked as a journalist while becoming a religious teacher in Deli. After his marriage, he returned to Medan and led the *Pedoman Masyarakat*. Through his works, *Di*

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<sup>28</sup> Ar-Razi, *At-Tafsir Al-Kabir Wa Mafatihul Ghoib* (Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1990).

<sup>29</sup> Hamka, *Minangkabau Customs Facing the Revolution* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2021).

*Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah and Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, Hamka's name soared as a writer.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from being a scholar, he was also a writer, journalist, and teacher, and dabbled in politics. During the revolution, physical Indonesia's During the industrial revolution, Hamka guerrilla warfare in West Sumatra with the Barisan Pengawal Nagari dan Kota (BPNK) mobilised the people's unity against the return of the Dutch. In 1950, Hamka brought his small family to Jakarta. Initially, he worked at the Department of Religious Affairs but resigned because he was involved in politics. In election general 1955 election, Hamka was elected to the Constituent Assembly representing Masyumi. He was involved in the reformulation of the state foundation. Political stance Masyumi opposed communism and anti-democracy Guided influenced Hamka's relationship with President Soekarno. After Masyumi was dissolved according to Decree of Presidential 5 July 1959 Hamka published the short-lived *Panji Masyarakat*, which was banned by Soekarno after he published a piece written by Hatta, who had resigned as vice-president, entitled "Our Democracy". Democracy Our ". With the influence of communism in Indonesia, Hamka was attacked by the cultural organisation Lekra. Charged with subversive behaviour, Hamka was taken from his home to Sukabumi prison in 1964. While ill as a prisoner, he completed *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Widia Fithri, *Hamka's Islam and Minangkabau Customs from a Hermeneutic Perspective* (Padang: Research Centre of IAIN Imam Bonjol Padang, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad Fikri Albarsani, "Buya Hamka and the Marriage and Inheritance System in Minangkabau" (UIN Sunan ampel Surabaya, 2022).



In the scientific field, Buya Hamka did more independent studies such as philosophy, literature, history, sociology, and politics. He was a writer who produced many works, the results of his written works both related to literature and religion all totalled around 79 works. Among these works are *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah*, *Tasawuf Modern*, *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, *Khatib Ummah*, *Merantau ke Deli*, *Islam and Adat Minangkabau*, *Layla Majnun*, *Islam and Democracy*, *Tasawuf Development from Century to Century*, *Islam and Kebatinan*, *Expansion of Ideology*, *Philosophy of Ideology*, *Adat Minangkabau Facing Revolution*, *Muhammadiyah in Minangkabau*, and his most famous work is *Tafsir al-Azhar Juz 1-30*. Hamka received the title "Ustadziyah Fakhriyah" (Doctor Honoris Causa) from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, and an honorary degree from the National University of Malaysia and was confirmed as a professor through Moestopo University, Jakarta. John L. Espito included Hamka in the *Oxford History of Islam*. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gusdur) wrote that Hamka has an orientation of thought that is responsive to the needs of society for change. He was not just the leader of the Al-Azhar Grand Mosque or the Muhammadiyah organisation, but the leader of Muslims as a whole, regardless of class.<sup>32</sup>

The name of the book *Tafsir al-Azhar* was given by the Rector of al-Azhar University in Egypt, Sheikh Mahmud Syaltut.<sup>33</sup> The writing of *Tafsir al-Azhar* began in 1958 in the form of descriptions in the

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<sup>32</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, "Is Buya Hamka a Great? An Introduction," Gusdur.net, 1983, <https://gusdur.net/benarkah-buya-hamka-seorang-besar/>.

<sup>33</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

dawn lecture at the Great Mosque of al-Azhar. In addition to the form of study, this tafsir is also published in the magazine Gema Islam since 1966. Most of the writing of Tafsir Al-Azhar was done in prison. After being released from detention, Hamka then made improvements and refinements to the writing of Tafsir al-Azhar. When the improvements and refinements were deemed adequate, then the book Tafsir al-Azhar was published in 1967.<sup>34</sup>

Tafsir al-Azhar is written using Indonesian Malay in Latin letters in which Hamka refers to the results of the 1954 Congress that Indonesian comes from Malay. This interpretation starts from Surah al-Fatihah to the end of Surah an-Nas following *tartib as-suwar*. In addition, Tafsir al-Azhar was written by Hamka based on the views and framework of the method (*manhaj*) which appears to refer to the rules of the Arabic language, the interpretation of salaf scholars, *asbab al-nuzul*, *nasikh-mansukh*, Hadith Science, Fiqh Science and other supporting sciences. Hamka also explains the power and *ijtihad* in comparing and analysing the thoughts of the *madhhabs*. The background of the writing of Tafsir al-Azhar includes the awakening of the interest of the younger generation in the Indonesian homeland who do not have Arabic language skills to know the contents of the Qur'an. The next reason is that the publish or *da'wah* experts who know Arabic are still minimal in general knowledge so they feel awkward in delivering *da'wah*. So tafsir al-

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<sup>34</sup> Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia: From Hermeneutics to Ideology* (Bandung: Teraju, 2003).

Azhar is a helper for them to deliver da'wah.<sup>35</sup> Despite this, in the introduction, Hamka realised that he was not someone who specialised in one of the branches of Islamic science or other sciences described in the Qur'an such as kauniyah verses and so on. However, he chose to keep writing Tafsir Al-Azhar because, for him, a tafsir that is too ideal cannot be composed by someone.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of writing, this Tafsir begins with a preface and introduction, then he continues by giving an explanation of the Qur'an, the i'jaz of the Qur'an, the content of the miracles of the Qur'an, the Qur'an lafaz and meaning, interpreting the Qur'an, the direction of tafsir, why it is called tafsir al-Azhar, divine wisdom and reading instructions. After that Hamka began interpreting the Qur'an from Surah al-Fatihah to Surah an-Nas. Each juz begins with a preface or preamble and is given a title or subject matter theme according to the group of verses. Hamka's working steps in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an include: *first*, writing the verse and translation of the verse; *second*, explaining the meaning of the name of the surah, related identities such as the place and time of the revelation of the verse; *third*, mentioning the cause of the revelation of the verse in question if the asbabun nuzul is found; *fourth*, interpreting the verse with the verse, with the prophet's hadith, with the qaul sahabah or tabi'in; *fifth*, mentioning the prophetic narrative, companions, and salihin scholars if there is one; *Sixth*, highlighting some differences in the interpretation of the

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<sup>35</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.

<sup>36</sup> Hamka.

verse; *Seventh*, linking and contextualising the interpretation of the verse with contemporary events of the time; *Eighth*, opening up personal life experiences, others if they are related to the interpretation; *Ninth*, mentioning ancient poems; *Tenth*, ending the interpretation with an invitation to meditate on the verse.<sup>37</sup>

Hamka used the tahlili method in his tafsir work, which was inspired by his father's tafsir work "Tafsir Al-Burhan". Although using the tahlili method, Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar does not place much emphasis on explaining the meaning of vocabulary. Hamka emphasises a lot on understanding the verses of the Qur'an as a whole. Hamka's interest in Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Ridha, Al-Maraghi and Sayid Qutb made the writing of his tafsir much influenced by the Kitab Tafsir Al-Manar, Al-Maraghi and Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an. Then, the dominating style in Tafsir Al-Azhar is *al-Adab al-Ijtima'i*.<sup>38</sup> This style of social culture can be seen clearly in Tafsir al-Azhar because in general he links the interpretation of the Qur'an with social life. When he gets the opportunity to discuss issues that exist in society, then Hamka will use the opportunity to convey the instructions of the Qur'an to treat the problems and diseases of society that were felt at the time he wrote the tafsir.<sup>39</sup>

## 5. Social Relations in Minangkabau from Hamka's Perspective in Tafsir Al-Azhar

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<sup>37</sup> Hamka.

<sup>38</sup> Avif Alviyah, "Buya Hamka's Interpretation Method in Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Journal of Ushuluddin Sciences* 15, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>39</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.



As explained in the previous discussion, the cultural style of society is quite evident in Tafsir al-Azhar, so not a few of Hamka's interpretations are found analogous to the conditions and social life of the community. For example, when Hamka explains the prohibition of calling with bad names found in Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 11, Hamka gives an example of a custom in society that he had experienced when he was a child. The expression is as follows:

"Things like this also exist in the customs of our country. People are given nicknames that arise from habits, traits, forms, or events that they experience. There was a man named Ilyas; his friends in the surau called him Ilyos Kuda, because when he looked up, he looked like a horse! When this writer was born, his father named him Abdulmalik. Because his father was a pious man, many villagers, when they had a son, immediately named him Abdulmalik. Because there are many children named Abdulmalik, all of them are known by additional nicknames: *si Malik Iman*, *si Malik Uban*, *si Malik Ekor*, *si Malik Ketupat*, *si Malik Rumah*, and various ends of names that each grow according to their own 'history'. As a child, I was called 'si Malik Periuk'!

From this story, it is clear that calling people by bad names should be stopped and replaced with good names, as the Prophet (s.a.w.) exemplified by changing *Zayd al-Khail*'s nickname to *Zayd al-Khair*. 'The worst of nicknames is an ungodly name after Faith.' So if a person has believed, the atmosphere has changed from jahiliyah to Islam, the name

should be changed to a good one and following the basis of one's faith. Because the change of name also affects the soul."

From the above expression, it can be seen that Hamka used the opportunity to explore the social issues of the surrounding community in conveying the instructions of the Qur'an. In this case, it is no exception in his tafsir Hamka also commented or presented examples of social life in Minangkabau society. If traced, there are 119 Minang / Minangkabau words scattered in Tafsir Al-Azhar starting from the first juz to the last juz. There are 15 Minang/Minangkabau words in volume 1, 27 words in volume 2, 8 words in volume 3, 11 words in volume 4, 13 words in volume 5, 10 words in volume 6, 9 words in volume 7, 6 words in volume 8, 11 words in volume 9, and 9 words in volume 10.<sup>40</sup> From a total of 119 Minang / Minangkabau words that appear in Tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka discusses several subjects related to Minangkabau, namely *first*, the expression of *the* word Minang / Minangkabau as a place or village or regional name, for example, Hamka explains the name of the area in Minangkabau, Sungai Batang and Tanjung Sani, where at that time there was a man who was not responsible for his wife.<sup>41</sup> *Secondly*, *the* equivalent or synonym of words in Minangkabau to explain the meaning of the verse. For example, the word dream in Minangkabau is known as "rasian".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Hamka.

<sup>41</sup> Hamka.

<sup>42</sup> Hamka.

*Third*, explaining the verse of the Qur'an by analogising it to events or conditions that exist in Minangkabau, for example when Hamka describes the pattern of adornment like the jahiliyah, he gives an example of Minangkabau women who wear kurung clothes but the kurung clothes are tight so that their curves are visible.<sup>43</sup> *Fourth*, explaining Minangkabau traditions or culture, such as matrilineal culture, or Minangkabau culture before the arrival of Islam. *Fifth*, analogising the meaning of the verse content with a Minang expression or proverb. For example, when explaining the word arrogance in Q.S. Fussilat: 15, Hamka brings up the Minang proverb "*Dikacak langan lah bak langan, kacak batih lah nak batih*" (someone who feels he is perfect). *Sixthly*, the word Minangkabau as an expression of the name Syaikh Khatib al-Minangkabau. Finally, the *seventh* is explaining the Qur'anic verse by incorporating the social conditions of society in Minangkabau.

Hamka in his tafsir pretty much explains the social relations of society in the context of Minangkabau customs. Of the 119 words of Minang / Minangkabau, 35 words describe the social society of Minangkabau. In maintaining relations with each other, according to Hamka interpretation, the Minangkabau people have a tradition called *ba-baso*, which is to be respectful to others, receive herbs or guests with all respect, respect teachers, love students, and speak respectfully to those who deserve respect. In the case of visiting a relative's or nephew's house, one should call out from afar to the small children playing in the yard so that the whole house knows

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<sup>43</sup> Hamka.

that he is coming so that those who are not wearing clothes are dressed appropriately.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, the prominent thing that Hamka revealed regarding the social relations of society in Minangkabau is the matriarchal/matrilineal practice that dominantly influences the social order of Minangkabau society. Among other things, the Minangkabau community refers to blood kinship with the mother's tribe. Hamka analogised the word *Al-Arham* in Q.S. An-Nisa': 1 with the habit of Minangkabau people who always ask the tribe if they meet overseas. So that if the person asked happens to be of the same tribe (one tribe according to the mother's lineage), then they recognise brothers of the same blood,<sup>45</sup> and this is related later to the inadmissibility of marrying fellow tribesmen of the mother's descendants because it is considered to have a strong bond of brotherhood.<sup>46</sup> Then, if one of the members of the tribe is afflicted with calamity, all the people of the tribe will defend (interpretation of Q.S. Al-Ma'arij: 13).<sup>47</sup>

A unique thing is also expressed by Hamka in his tafsir. He said that the Minangkabau people prefer and give priority to girls rather than boys. This was revealed by Hamka when explaining the jahiliyyah custom of the Arabs who liked to kill girls in Q.S. Al-Isra's verse 31. Hamka compared it with the Minang tradition of having a motherly family, where children who are more awaited and

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<sup>44</sup> Hamka.

<sup>45</sup> Hamka.

<sup>46</sup> Vidya Nurchaliza, "Islamic Law 3, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>47</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*.



expected are daughters because they will inherit and maintain high heirlooms. As for boys, when they become teenagers, they are no longer allowed to sleep in their mothers' houses. They go to the Surau or Langgar to sleep. In the morning, they return home to help their mothers and fathers in the rice fields. As for the young man who still relaxes at home at inappropriate times such as during the day, it will be seen as disrespectful to the people in his village.<sup>48</sup> This is closely related to the tradition of migrating<sup>49</sup> to Minangkabau for boys. The purpose of migrating for Minangkabau youth is to seek provisions for life, knowledge, and skills that will be used as provisions for building the country. On the other hand, some say that because men do not have ownership rights over land and high heirlooms, only limited to the right to use, because everything is held by women.<sup>50</sup>

From the explanation above, it can be understood that Hamka is quite strong in incorporating elements of Minangkabau culture in his tafsir, including describing the social conditions of society in Minangkabau. This can be seen from the number of times Hamka used the word Minang / Minangkabau in his tafsir. This is understandable given the historicity of Hamka whose father and mother were Minang people. Moreover, Hamka's mother is a descendant who strongly holds the Minang culture and has a high position in her tribe. However, Hamka, on the other hand, does not

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<sup>48</sup> Hamka.

<sup>49</sup> Hamka, *Minangkabau Customs Facing the Revolution*.

<sup>50</sup> Azka Azkia Amelia and Dkk, "The Tradition of Migrating Minang People in the Song Kelok Ampek Puluah Ampek," *Artikulasi* 1, no. 2 (2021).

necessarily agree with all the traditions or practices that exist in Minangkabau customs, especially in the tradition of inheritance in Minangkabau, which is very influential and directly related to social and family matters in Minangkabau. Regarding inheritance, for example, Hamka criticised people who still use the old Minangkabau tradition that men have no obligation or dependence on their wives and children, only on their nephews. So the inheritance of a man in Minang used to fall not into the hands of his children.

Hamka often provides input based on the perspectives he believes in either in his tafsir book or in other works to Minangkabau people who still use old customs before the arrival of Islam to prioritise Islamic rules over old customary rules that conflict with Islamic rules. Even Hamka through his work *Adat Minangkabau Facing the Revolution*, which initially received criticism and anger from the *ninik mamak* because of its content that invites Minangkabau customs to evolve in a direction that is in line with Islamic teachings, finally succeeded in gathering all Minangkabau traditional leaders including H. Agus Salim in a Customary Congress held in Bukittinggi in 1952. This congress succeeded in changing the Minangkabau customary rules regarding inheritance to be divided into two parts, namely high heirloom property (which is obtained from generation to generation from ancestors according to the maternal line) and low heirloom property (husband's and wife's livelihoods derived under Islamic

law).<sup>51</sup> So in practice, there is no longer a mixture of high heirloom property and low heirloom property which affects religious practices and community and family relations in Minangkabau. This also shows the socio-cultural dynamics of the Minangkabau community that moves and develops from old traditions to customs that adjust to the teachings of Islam and shows the *survival* efforts of the Minangkabau community to accommodate and provide approaches to religion and culture.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Hamka has his reading of social relations in Minangkabau which he expressed in Tafsir Al-Azhar. The description of the social relations of Minangkabau society exists in his tafsir as a tool to provide an analogy or description of the meaning of the verse to be more easily understood by the reader, considering that this Tafsir is dominantly social. Furthermore, according to Hamka, Minangkabau society has its uniqueness where matriarchal/matrilineal practices dominate in giving influence to the social order of society in Minangkabau. Although Hamka is a Minang-blooded mufassir, according to the author in this case, Hamka still maintains his objectivity in providing arguments related to social patterns or practices in Minangkabau society. So there are many inputs expressed by Hamka in his tafsir book to revolutionise Minangkabau culture in a better direction.

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<sup>51</sup> Hamka, *Islam and Minangkabau Customs* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1984).

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