The Dynamic of Contextualization in Indonesian Qura`Anic Tafsirs: A Comparative Study of *Tafsir Al-Azhar* And *Tafsir Al-Mishbāh* on The Story of The Prophet Moses

Kontekstualisasi Dinamis Tafsir Al-Qur'an Indonesia: Studi Perbandingan Tafsir Al-Azhar dan Tafsir Al-Mishbāh Tentang Kisah Nabi Musa

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Abstract

The Indonesian Qur'anic tafsirs represent a contextual approach. Each tafsir scholar has different characteristics in contextualizing the meaning of the Qur'an so that it is relevant to contemporary Indonesian society. This article aims to show the dynamic character of Indonesian Qur'anic interpretation in contextualizing the meaning of the verses about Moses in the Indonesian context. This research uses a comparative method against the al-Azhar tafsir written by Haji Abdul Malik bin Karim Amrullah, also known as Hamka, and the Tafsir al-Mishbāh by M. Quraish Shihab. The three aspects compared and the research questions include: How is the story of Prophet Moses narrated in the two tafsir books? What are the interpretation methods used in the verses about the story of Prophet Moses, and how can the lessons from the story of Prophet Moses align with the Indonesian cultural context? The research results show that both tafsir books have similarities in making the story of Moses relevant to Indonesian society. The difference is that Tafsir al-Mishbāh appears more disciplined in following the textual meaning of the Qur'anic verses. In contrast, Tafsir al-Azhar is more flexible in its storytelling improvisation, making the story of Moses more cohesive and engaging. Shihab understands the story of Moses as Allah's plan to overthrow human arrogance (Pharaoh), with a narrative flow following Allah's laws. This retelling represents Shihab's traditionalist and pragmatic thinking. In contrast, Hamka is more rational and critical. He views the story of Moses as a struggle and heroism that teaches the importance of hard work and intelligence in facing life's challenges. The findings of this research contribute to showing the dynamic nature of Indonesian contextual tafsir. It illustrates how the Qur'anic interpretation maintains its textual meaning while remaining relevant for contemporary readers.

Keywords: *Tafsir al-Qur'an, Contextualisation of Meaning, Story of Moses, Hamka, Quraish Shihab, Indonesia*

Abstrak

Tafsir al-Qur'an Indonesia telah berkembang menjadi tafsir kontekstual. Masing-masing ulama tafsir memiliki karakteristik yang berbeda dalam mengkontekstualkan makna al-Qur'an sehingga relevan dengan masyarakat Indonesia masa kini. Artikel ini bertujuan menunjukkan dinamika karakter tafsir al-Quran Indonesia dalam mengkontekstualkan makna ayat-ayat kisah Musa ke dalam konteks lokal Indonesia. Penenelitian ini menggunakan metode perbandingan terhadap tafsir Al-Azhar yang ditulis oleh Haji Abdul Malik bin Karim Amrullah, atau Hamka dan Tafsir al-Mishbāh karya M. Quraish Shihab. Tiga aspek yang dibandingkan dan menjadi pertanyaan penelitian adalah bagaimana kisah Nabi Musa dinarasikan dalam kedua kitab tafsir? bagaimana metode penafsiran pada ayat-ayat kisah Nabi Musa dan bagaimana pelajaran dari kisah Nabi Musa dapat selaras dengan konteks budaya Indonesia? Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua kitab tafsir memiliki persamaan yakni telah menjadikan kisah Musa relevan dengan konteks masyarakat Indonesia. Perbedaan keduanya bahwa Tafsir al-Mishbāh nampak lebih disiplin mengikuti makna tekstual ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, sedangkan Tafsir al-Azhar lebih longgar dalam improfisasi penceritaannya sehingga alur kisah Musa menjadi lebih padu dan menarik. Shihab memahami kisah Musa sebagai rencana Allah untuk menjatuhkan kesombongan kekuasaan manusia (Firaun), dengan alur narasi mengikuti hukum Allah. Sedangkan Hamka memandang kisah Musa sebagai perjuangan dan kepahlawanan yang memberi pelajaran akan pentingnya kerja keras dan cerdas menghadapi semua tantangan kehidupan. Perbedaan alur kisah Musa dalam kedua kitab tafsir dipengaruhi latar belakang sosial, budaya dan Pendidikan penafsir. Shihab berlatar belakang tradisionalis dan pragmatis.sedangkan Hamka modernis dan rasional. Temuan penelitian ini berkontribusi menunjukkan dinamika tafsir Indonesia yang kontekstual. Bagimanana tafsir al-Quran mempertahankan makna tekstualnya namun tidak kehilangan aktualitasnya bagi pembaca masa kini].

Kata Kunci: *Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Makna Kontekstual, Kisah Musa, Hamka, Quraish Shihab, Indonesia*

Introduction

The growing trend of contextual approaches to Qur'anic tafsir suggests a global development towards the modern world, enabling muslim societies to seek a balance between traditional and contemporary views of life.[1] The literature indicates that Qur'anic tafsir in Indonesia adopts a contextual approach, reflecting modern Indonesian society. The Indonesian context, particularly the mufassirs' local culture, influences the Qur'anic tafsir.[2] Johanna Pink explored the relationships between tafsirs and modern Indonesia and contended that both *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* exhibit modern trends in the Qur'anic exegesis. According to Pink, the modernity in the Qur'anic exegesis is revealed by 'the frequent use of early *modern reformist* exegesis and by the occasional presentation of innovative interpretationsthat

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1   Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

2   Islah Gusmian, "Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Indonesia: Sejarah dan Dinamika," *Nun, Jurnal Studi Al-Qur`an dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.32459/nun.v1i1.8; Aan Najib, "Contextual Qur'an Interpretation: The Study on the Concept of 'Hierarchy of Values' Abdullah Saeed," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2016), https://doi.org/DOI: 10.15640/jisc.v4n2a9; Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2006), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203016770.

seek to adapt the Qur'anic message to the contemporary world'.[3] In his study of modernity in *Tafsir al–Azhar*, Sirry found that Hamka's tafsir revealed modern Indonesian issues from a twentieth-century perspective and demonstrated actuality since he used local issues and examples to explicate the Qur'anic verses.[4] The exegesis of the Qur'an in Indonesia has thus tended to adopt a contextual style.

Previous studies have explored Indonesian exegeses of the Qur'an in the following areas. First, some scholars have focused particularly on aspects such as methods, characteristics, and tendencies.[5] Second, the content of interpretations includes issues such as politics, the Islamic leadership system (*khilafah)*, education, and gender.[6] Third, some researchers have delved into comparative studies among Indonesian tafsirs, as well as between Indonesian tafsirs and those from

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3   Johanna Pink, "Tradition and Ideology in Contemporary Sunnite Qur'ānic Exegesis: Qur'ānic Commentaries from the Arab World, Turkey and Indonesia and Their Interpretation of Q 5:51, Welt Des Islams", vol. 50, 2010, https://doi.org/10.1163/157006010X489801.

4   Mun`im Sirry, "What`s Modern About Modern Tafsir ? A Closer Look at Hamka`s Tafsir Al-Azhar," in *The Qurʾān in the Malay – Indonesian World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 1–261.

5   Karel Steenbrink, "Qur'an Interpretations of Hamzah Fansuri (CA. 1600) and Hamka (1908-1982): A Comparison," *Studia Islamika* 2, no. 2 (1995): 46–71; A. H. Johns, "The Qur'an in the Malay World: Reflections on 'Abd Al-Ra'uf of Singkel (1615–1693)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (1998): 120–45; Ahmad Levi Fachrul Avivy, Jawiah Dakir, and Mazlan Ibrahim, "Isra'iliyyat in Interpretive Literature of Indonesia: A Comparison Between Tafsir Marah Labid and Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 3 (2015): 401–7, https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n3s2p401but its presence may be found in numerous interpretive literature, including those written by Indonesian scholars. This article discusses the use of isra'iliyyat narratives in Nusantara interpretive literature by comparing traditional to contemporary interpretations. The traditional interpretive work selected is tafsir Marah Labid or also known as tafsir al-Munir by Nawawi al-Bantani. A contemporary interpretation selected is tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka. Both these interpretations are selected based on their complete 30 chapters which are still widely referred to by Indonesian society. By using the methodology of document analysis, the researcher compares the attitude of the authors towards isra'iliyyat narratives as well as the methodology of writing isra'iliyyat. Research results find that there is a difference in attitude between Nawawi al-Bantani and Hamka towards isra'iliyyat narratives. Nawawi's attitude in his interpretation is similar to that of other traditional interpretations which insert such narratives without any explanations whether the narratives may be accepted or otherwise. In contrast, Hamka was more critical towards isra'iliyyat narratives, even though the isra'iliyyat narratives he inserted in his interpretation were selected based on their acceptability and non-contradiction with al-Qur'an or the Prophet's (pbuh; Abdul Mustaqim, "The Epistemology of Javanese Qur'anic Exegesis: A Study of Sālih Darat's Fayd Al-Rahmān," *Al-Jami'ah* 55, no. 2 (2017): 357–90, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.357-390a Javanese Qur'anic-exegetical work by Sālih Darat, a prominent Javanese ulama in the nineteenth century. It is the only Javanese Qur'anic-exegetical work (kitāb al-tafsīr; Abdullah Saeed, *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Abdullah Saeed (Oxford, Britania Raya: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005).

6   Ribut Purwojuono, "Hamka's Education Thinking : Gender Equality in Islamic Education," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2015): 105–13; Muhammad Yusri, Yusof Salleh, and Cawangan Perak, "Hamka's Interpretation Metodology in Education and Muamalat With Special Reference To Tafsir Al-Azhar Juzuk Amma, " 2018, 0–6; M Djidin and Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Indonesian Interpretation of the Qur'an on Khilāfah: The Case of Quraish Shihab and Yudian Wahyudi on Qur'an, 2: 30-38," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 57, no. 1 (2019): 143–66, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2019.571.143-166; Munirul Ikhwan, "Interpreting the Qur'ān between Shari'ah and Changing Custom: On Women's Dress in Indonesia," in *New Trends in Qurʾānic Studies Text, Context, and Interpretation*, ed. Munʾim Sirry (Atlanta, Georgia: Lockwood Press, 2019)

outsideIndonesia.[7] Fourth, the history and development of interpretation ideas in Indonesia are affected by the interpretations and reform movements in the Middle East.[8] Contextualizing the message of the Qur'an is a dynamic methodological process. Indonesian mufassirs adopt different approaches and methods to contextualize the Qur'an in modern society. Our study stemmed from Johanna Pink's findings that Shihab's and Hamka's tafsirs indicate inconsistency in their tafsir approaches, falling between contextual (modernist) and textual (traditionalist). Studies on the dynamics of Indonesian tafsir to contextualize Qur'anic verses, particularly Prophet-related verses such as the story of Moses, are scarce. Pink, for example, did not particularly focus on Shihab and Hamka's tafsirs in Moses' story as they focused on an overall analysis of the two tafsirs. Thus, this study aimed to fill that void.

This paper aimed to underpin the studies of tafsirs in Indonesia and contextualize the recounts of prophets in the Indonesian cultural context. Understanding how the historical and sociological situation of a time influences an exegesis, such as that of the story of Moses, is an effort to emphasize the importance of its socio-historical context.[9] The present study explored two popular Indonesian tafsirs: *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*, written by M. Quraish Shihab (1944-Present), and *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Hamka (1908-1981). The current study focused on the story of the prophet Moses. We intended to address the following three research questions: first, how do the two *mufassirs* interpret the tafsirs of the verses of the story of the prophet Moses? Second, how are the interpretation methods and the meanings of the story of Moses in the two tafsirs demonstrated? Third, how are the lessons of the story of the prophet Moses narrated in the interpretations in alignment with the context of the Indonesian culture?

This research is a library study comparing two Indonesian tafsirs, namely *Tafsir al-Azhar* and *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*. The two tafsir books were selected because the texts analyzed here represent different generations of Indonesian exegesis of the Qur'an. Hamka wrote *Tafsir al-Azhar* in the 1960s while he was imprisoned.

7   Johanna Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsīr; R. Michael Feener, "Notes Towards the History of Qur'anic Exegesis in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 5, no. 3 (2014), https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v5i3.739; Saifuddin Herlambang and Wendi Parwanto, "Paradigm Shifts in the Interpretation of Heaven Illustration Among Indonesian Mufassirin: A Comparative Analysis of As-Singkili, Hamka, and M. Quraish," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 24, no. 1 (2023): 181–204, https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v24i1.4454.

8   Azyumardi Azra, "The Transmission of Al-Manar's Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World: The Cases of Al-Imam and Al-Munir," *Studia Islamika* 6, no. 3 (1999): 75–100, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v6i3.723; Norbani B. Ismail, "The Qur'anic Exegesis, Reformism, and Women in Twentieth Century Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 3 (2017): 469–501, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i3.5187.also known as Hamka (d.1981

9   Brannon M Wheeler, "Moses or Alexander Early Islamic Exegesis of Qurʾān 1860-60-65," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 57, no. 3 (1998): 191–215;

Conversely, *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* was written by M. Quraish Shihab in the 2000s while he was serving as Indonesia's ambassador to Egypt. Hamka served as the first chairman of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulema Council, a council of Indonesian Islamic scholars), while Shihab served as the council's chairman in 1984. Hamka was an administrator with the Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, whereas Shihab was closely affiliated with the Nadhlatul Ulama.

Data were presented through a synopsis of Hamka's and Shihab's exegeses of the story of Moses. The story embraced the birth of Moses, the youth of Moses, and Moses' dealings with Pharaoh. These three episodes are the most important in Moses' struggle to challenge Pharaoh and his regime. At birth, the baby Moses had to overcome Pharaoh's policy of killing every male child born. In his youth, Moses accidentally killed a member of Pharaoh's tribe and, as such, was sentenced to death. Finally, at the story's climax, Moses had to face Pharaoh directly.

Our readings on research methodology in Qur'anic tafsir identified several approaches: textual analysis,[10] thematic/contextual analysis[11], analytical/critical analysis,[12] and content analysis.[13] The studies reveal that the approaches can be combined in both comparative and non-comparative research. For example, Daud's non-comparative study on Hamka's *al-Azhar* tafsir used content analysis

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10   Ali Amer, "A Brief Review of Classical and Modern Tafsir Trends and the Role of Modern Tafsir in Contemporary Islamic Thought," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 39–52, https://doi.org/https://ajis.com.au/index.php/ajis/article/view/87/69. Ali S

11   Dede Rosyada, "A Contextual Method of Interpreting the Qur'an: A Search for the Compatibility of Islam and Modernity," in *International Conference on Qura`an Hadist* (Jakarta: Atlantis, 2018), 1–6. Hafiz Asyraf Amir Yusdi, at. all., "A Comparative Study between Risale-i Nur and Tafsīr Al-Azhar's Methodology in Quranic Exegesis and Its Relation to the Daʿwah," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 17, no. 4 (2020): 329–49. Nur Afifah Binti Abas and Mohd Nizam Sahad , "Thematic Analysis in The Social Sciences and Qur'anic Thematic Exegetical Analysis in The Qur'anic Sciences: A Comparative Analysis," in *Icis 2021*, 2021, 1–14.

12   Avivy, "Isra'iliyyat in Interpretive Literature of Indonesiabut its presence may be found in numerous interpretive literature, including those written by Indonesian scholars. This article discusses the use of isra'iliyyat narratives in Nusantara interpretive literature by comparing traditional to contemporary interpretations. The traditional interpretive work selected is tafsir Marah Labid or also known as tafsir al-Munir by Nawawi al-Bantani. A contemporary interpretation selected is tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka. Both these interpretations are selected based on their complete 30 chapters which are still widely referred to by Indonesian society. By using the methodology of document analysis, the researcher compares the attitude of the authors towards isra'iliyyat narratives as well as the methodology of writing isra'iliyyat. Research results find that there is a difference in attitude between Nawawi al-Bantani and Hamka towards isra'iliyyat narratives. Nawawi's attitude in his interpretation is similar to that of other traditional interpretations which insert such narratives without any explanations whether the narratives may be accepted or otherwise. In contrast, Hamka was more critical towards isra'iliyyat narratives, even though the isra'iliyyat narratives he inserted in his interpretation were selected based on their acceptability and non-contradiction with al-Qur'an or the Prophet's (pbuh

13   Ilyas Daud, "Qur'anic Exegesis as Social Criticism: The Case of Tafsir Al-Azhâr," *Ulul Albab* 21, no. 1 (2020): 24–47, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.18860/ua.v21i1.7828.

butalsodiscussed contextual analysis, particularly Hamka's criticism of Soekarno.[14] In a comparative study, Avivy et al. implemented an analytical approach to evaluate the similarities and differences between Indonesian *Tafsir Marah Labid* and *Tafsir al-Azhar*.[15] However, they did not assess the coherence of each tafsir to the real world, as our study attempted to delve into. Additionally, Herlambang and Parwanto instigated a narrative-analytical model in their comparative study of the tafsirs of heaven illustrations by As-Singkili, Hamka, and Shihab using Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shift theory to inform their analysis.[16]

Following Avivy et al. we conducted a comparative study using a content analysis approach on *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Hamka and *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* by Shihab. We focused on the similarities and differences in their interpretations of the story of Moses, examining the methods used and the moral teachings relevant to Indonesian readers. The comparative elements encompassed 1) Local context in Qur'anic exegesis; 2) The story of Moses in *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar*; 3) The relationship between text and context in these tafsirs; 4) The mufassirs' engagement with Indonesian society, and 5) Conclusion.

Our data analysis followed these procedures. First, intrinsic and extrinsic data analyses were conducted. The intrinsic analysis involved classifying the internal elements of the texts of both tafsir books, while the extrinsic analysis involved classifying the relationships of elements within the text as a whole with external components, incorporating the mufassirs' cultural and educational aspects. Next, after reading the data several times, the authors identified the emerging patterns or trends in the typology of both tafsir books. Then, data interpretations were made based on the context of both tafsir books, providing a foundation for deriving wisdom or lessons from the story of Moses in the contemporary context. These three stages of analysis culminated in a conclusion.

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14 Daud, "Qur'anic Exegesis

15 Avivy., "Isra'iliyyat in Interpretive Literature of Indonesiabut its presence may be found in numerous interpretive literature, including those written by Indonesian scholars. This article discusses the use of isra'iliyyat narratives in Nusantara interpretive literature by comparing traditional to contemporary interpretations. The traditional interpretive work selected is tafsir Marah Labid or also known as tafsir al-Munir by Nawawi al-Bantani. A contemporary interpretation selected is tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka. Both these interpretations are selected based on their complete 30 chapters which are still widely referred to by Indonesian society. By using the methodology of document analysis, the researcher compares the attitude of the authors towards isra'iliyyat narratives as well as the methodology of writing isra'iliyyat. Research results find that there is a difference in attitude between Nawawi al-Bantani and Hamka towards isra'iliyyat narratives. Nawawi's attitude in his interpretation is similar to that of other traditional interpretations which insert such narratives without any explanations whether the narratives may be accepted or otherwise. In contrast, Hamka was more critical towards isra'iliyyat narratives, even though the isra'iliyyat narratives he inserted in his interpretation were selected based on their acceptability and non-contradiction with al-Qur'an or the Prophet's (pbuh

16 Saifuddin Herlambang and Wendi Parwanto, "Paradigm Shifts in the Interpretation of Heaven

The Contextual Exegesis of the Qur'an

This section covers two primary discussions: the concept of contextual exegesis of the Qur'an, including the local aspects of the contextual exegesis, followed by the contextual characteristics of the story in the Qur'an.

The Concept of Contextual Exegesis of the Qur'an and Local Aspects of the Contextual Exegesis

Saeed argues that the methods of interpreting the Qur'an have evolved and transformed throughout Islamic history.[17] Tafsir, or the study of the Qur'anic verses, has evolved to meet the needs of a changing world. While classical tafsir focused on explaining verses and related hadiths[18], contemporary tafsir incorporates interdisciplinary approaches, viewing the Qur'an as a text connected to social and cultural issues.[19] Qur'anic tafsir includes early authoritative works and modern interpretations through language, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology, enhancing its relevance and context.[20]

Contextualizing the Qur'an is crucial for understanding it within its historical and social milieu. Tafsir is a dynamic discourse, with mufassirs engaging with the text and its context to maintain its significance in the community.[21] Walid Saleh's notion of genealogical tradition suggests that new tafsirs should relate to earlier commentaries, allowing for repetition and innovation within this tradition.[22]

Campanini (2018) proposes a structural perspective, viewing the Qur'an as a dialogue between God and humans, requiring mufassirs to interpret God's will in historical contexts. Abdullah Saeed supports this, distinguishing between the narrow context (specific words and sentences) and the broad context (socio-historical circumstances). Contextual tafsir goes beyond mere text, incorporating the mufassir's cultural and social background, offering fresh insights, and maintainingtherelevance of the Qur'an in different eras.[23]

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17 Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction.*

18 Scott, R.M. "A Contextual Approach to Women's Rights in the Quran: Readings of 4:34", The Muslim World 99, 2009

19 Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics, Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

20 Karen Bauer, "Spiritual Hierarchy and Gender Hierarchy in Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī Interpretations of the Qur'an". Journal of Qur'anic Studies 14. No. 2 (2012), 29–46

21 Mun'im Sirry, "What's Modern About Modern Tafsir ?

22 Walid A. Saleh, The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition: The Qur'an Commentary of Al-Tha'laby (Netherlands: Brill NV, 2004).

23 Massimo Campanini, "Towards a Philosophical Qur'anology : Structure and Meaning in the Qur' an," Journal of Qur'anic Studies 20, no. 2 (2018): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2018.0335.

For contextualists, understanding the Qur'an involves examining the words related to specific verses, cases, or events. The socio-historical context includes the early recipients of the Qur'an and the broader network of the Prophet's life, norms, values, and practices, reflecting the norms and values of that era. [24]

Contextual Qur'anic tafsir goes beyond textual analysis to include the interpreter's personal, cultural, and social background. This approach brings new ideas and perspectives, highlighting the relevance of the mufassir's context and circumstances. In essence, Qur'anic tafsirs are shaped by and reflect the mufassirs' local contexts.[25]

Concerning the local aspects of the contextual style, Saeed argues that contextualists consider the social, political, and cultural context, as well as the setting in which tafsir occurs today. This trend aligns with global developments to enable Muslim societies to seek a balance between traditional and modern views of life. Saeed further maintains that despite the growing number of scholars developing their contextual tafsir approaches, their interpretations and understandings of the Qur'an differ greatly. This can be further seen in the discussion of the two tafsirs.[26]

The Contextual Characteristics of the Story in the Qur'an

Research on Qur'anic stories has evolved from traditional to modern approaches, shifting from an atomistic to a holistic perspective.[27] These stories have unique structures, characters, and language styles, differing from other verses on worship, law, and mu'amalah. Qur'anic stories are told in a narrative style. Prophets' stories in the Qur'an are not narrated chronologically or holistically from beginning to end; instead, they are fragmented into smaller parts.[28] Inconsistencies between sections can occur. Language style is a distinct feature used by a writer to convey meanings. A mufassir's simple words can create beautiful impressions through their

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24 Abdullah Saeed, "Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach to Ethico-Legal Texts of the Quran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71, no. 2 (2008): 221–37, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X08000517.particularly among those Muslims referred to as \"progressive-ijtihadis\". One of the primary concerns of this reading is that in order to understand and interpret the ethico-legal content of the Quran and relate that content to the changing needs and circumstances of Muslims today, it is important to approach the text at different levels, giving a high degree of emphasis to the sociohistorical context of the text. In the classical tafsīr this emphasis on socio-historical context was not considered important, particularly in the interpretation of the ethico-legal texts, despite the frequent use of asbāb al-nuzūl literature. In this paper, I will explore how progressive-ijtihadis are adopting a contextualist reading of ethico-legal texts of the Quran. To illustrate this, I will use one or two such texts (verses

25 Sirry, "What`s Modern About Modern Tafsir ? A Closer Look at Hamka`s Tafsir Al-Azhar."

26 Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction.*

27 Johns, "A Humanistic Approach to I'jaz in The Quran: The Transfiguration of Language

28 Teona Sukhiashvili, "Moses in the Qur'an," *Journal of Religious and Theological Information* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.1080/10477845.2020.1832361.

language style.[29]

Mustansir Mir introduced tasrif to analyze Qur'anic stories. Tasrif refers to the varied ways God's messages are spread throughout the Qur'an. Mir notes that the Qur'an narrates stories of major prophets in multiple places, splitting them into sections and emphasizing different parts. This repetition and contextualization link story parts to relevant themes. Tasrif principles provide insights into the Qur'anic texts, revealing both general and specific meanings in different contexts.[30]

Sayyid Quthb termed the Qur'anic style "taswïr," stating that he sees the events described in the texts as if they were happening before him. For Quthb, every word of the Qur'an is a vivid communication device, bringing scenes to life and highlighting a key feature of the Qur'anic structure. Classical mufassirs, according to Quthb, recite Arabic poems to gain a deeper understanding of the words, allowing readers to experience the text emotionally.[31]

To achieve a contextual meaning of Qur'anic stories, we can exploit a structural approach that includes both objective and subjective meanings. The objective meaning can be analyzed through a narrative approach, which is part of literary criticism and examines the genre, style, and structure of a text. Applying narrative analysis to the Qur'an involves exploring and analyzing its stories, including content, plot, language style, and rhetoric.[32] Language style analysis examines both aesthetic values and meanings in literature.[33] This approach focuses on language patterns, levels, and structures. Proper use of language style can enliven simple sentences. Stylistic analysis is vital in literature studies if it reveals the unity of a work and contributes to its overall aesthetic purpose

The contextual meanings of the stories in the Qur'an are classified into functionality instead of main characters. The Qur'an functions to strengthen Muhammad's prophetic mission.[34] The experiences of the prophets narrated in the Qur'an provide today's readers with contextual meanings of the stories, suggesting that contextual meanings demonstrate interactions between the worlds of prophets,

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29 Teona Sukhiashvili, "Moses in the Qur'an,"

30   Mustansir Mir, "Some Aspects of Narration in the Qur'an," in *Sacred Tropes : Tanakh, New TestamenL, and Qur'an as Literature and Culture*, ed. Roberta Sterman Sabbath ((Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 93–106, https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004177529.i-536.25.

31 Johns, "A Humanistic Approach to I'jaz in The Quran: The Transfiguration of Language

32   A. H. Johns, "In Search of Common Ground: The Qur'Ān as Literature?," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 4, no. 2 (1993): 191–209, https://doi.org/10.1080/09596419308721006.

33   Syihabuddin Qalyubi, *Ilm Al-Uslub, Stilistika Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press Yogyakarta, 2017).

34   Sukhiashvili, "Moses in the Qur'an."

readers, or readers and today's circumstances.

The Story of Moses in the *Tafsir al-Mishbāh and Tafsir al-Azhar*

The findings of this research are presented in two sections. First, we depict the exegetic processes used by these two mufassirs in producing their works, including their retellings of three episodes in the story of Moses (i.e., his birth, his youth, and his confrontation with Pharaoh). Second, we present the significance of these two mufassirs in the story of Moses, including the wisdom and values conveyed.

How the Two Works of Exegesis Retellings the Story of Moses

Tafsir al-Mishbāh

The Prophet Moses was a major prophet, one of the five *ulul 'azmi* (having a strong determination). His story is presented in several chapters of the Qur'an. A digital search of the Qur'an finds that the name Moses is found in 34 chapters (*surahs)*, namely al-Baqarah, al-Nisā', al-Mā'idah, al-An'ām, al-A'rāf, Yūnus, Hud, Ibrāhīm, al-Isrā', al-Kahfi, Maryam, Tāha, al-Anbiyā', al-Haj, al-Mu'minūn, al-Furqān, al-Syu'arā', al-Naml, al-Qashash, al-Ankabūt, al-Sajdah, al-Ahzāb, al-Shāffāt, al-Mu'min, Fushilat, al-Syūra, al-Zukhrūf, al-Dukhān, al-Ahqāf, al-Dzāriyāt, al-Najm, al-Shāf, al-Nāzi'āt, and al-A'la. The story of Moses is spread through various chapters and verses, and elements are frequently repeated, particularly Moses' speech to the Israelites and Pharaoh.

The first episode in Moses' story tells of his birth. It consists of verses 1–14, a grouping of verses that tells of the mother and child and explains the steps taken by Moses to empower the subjugated and defeat Pharaoh and his regime. Through an *awḫainā*, an ordinary person's dream, Moses' mother was told to send the baby Moses to the River Nile.[35] The Pharaoh's family then found the baby Moses. Pharaoh's wife told him that Moses would bring refreshment and urged him not to killMosesas he had the other Israelite children.[36]

The following grouping of verses, spanning verse 10 to verse 11, describes Moses' mother's angst after sending her son up the Nile. God calmed her heart so that she was able to ask Moses' sister for information about his whereabouts.[37] Verses 12 and 13 then tell how God returned Moses to his mother. God made Moses unwilling to nurse from all the women who tried until, ultimately, his mother was brought to

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35 Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbāh; Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur`an*,Vol.10, 309-310

36 Shihab, Vol. 10, 311-312

37 Shihab, Vol. 10, 314

the palace and made his wet nurse.[38]

The next episode told in the Qur'an is Moses' youth. According to al-Qashash, verses 20–26, when Moses entered an area under Pharaoh's control—near Memphis or Ain Syams—he saw two young men fighting. One of these men was an Israelite from the same tribe as Moses, while the other was an Egyptian from Pharaoh's tribe. The young Israelite asked Moses for help, and Moses killed the Egyptian. Moses realized what he had done and regretted it.[39] Moses' killing of the Egyptian was soon widely known, and information reached Egypt's rulers. After discussing the situation, they decided that he had to be sentenced to death.

Verse 20 tells how a young man, sympathetic to Moses' plight, came and urged him to leave Egypt.[40] Moses thus fled Egypt in a state of fear. Upon reaching a spring outside Madyan, he met two women who were tending to their goats. Because the strong male goatherds were controlling the spring, these young women could not water their goats. Thus, Moses decided to help them. Verse 25 tells how these two women, having met with Moses and receiving his assistance, returned to their home and told their father why they had returned home earlier than usual.[41] Verse 26 states that these women were impressed by Moses, and one of them—recognizing Moses' strength and trustworthiness—suggested that he would immediately be hired to tend to the flock.[42]

The next episode, which is repeatedly mentioned throughout the Qur'an, is Moses' dealing with Pharaoh. The most complete recitation of this episode is found in Surah al-A'rāf, verses 103–126. Verse 103 tells how Allah had sent Moses to convey His words to Pharaoh and the other leaders of his regime. At the time, in the 15th century BCE, *Pharaoh* was the title held by the supreme ruler of Egypt and thus was similar to the terms *Emperor* for the ruler of Persia and *Najāsyi* for the ruler of Ethiopia. After examining the word *Pharaoh*, Shihab connected it with Moses' prophethood. In verse 103, it is stated that Moses was sent to Pharaoh and his fellow leaders, not his people. This verse indicates that one reason for the prophethood of Moses was the salvation of his people, the Israelites, and their release from the oppression of Pharaoh and his regime.[43]

Verses 104–105 tell about Moses' meeting with Pharaoh. At this meeting,

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38   Shihab, Vol.10, 315

39   Shihab, Vol. 10, 319-320

40   Shihab, Vol. 10, 326

41   Shihab, Vol. 10, 332

42   Shihab, Vol. 10, 334

43   Shihab, Vol. 5, 195

Moses told Pharaoh, "Oh Pharaoh, great ruler of Egypt, surely I am a messenger of the Lord, the Keeper of the Universe. I have come to you, oh Pharaoh and leaders of Egypt, with evidence and miracles from the Lord Who tends to you all. For that, you should release the Children of Israel and allow them to follow me to Bayt al-Maqdis, for there we have been sent by God."[44] Verses 106–108 describe the response of Pharaoh and his fellow leaders after hearing Moses' demands. Pharaoh asked Moses to prove the truth of his declaration, evidence that he was the messenger of God. Moses immediately responded by casting his staff to the ground, where it transformed into a male snake.[45]

Verses 109–110 tell how, after witnessing Moses' deed, Pharaoh's peers began talking among themselves, saying that Moses had done witchcraft and thus could not be trusted. To ensure that Moses was left in an unfavorable position, they said that he had come to expel Pharaoh from his kingdom. Heeding these words, Pharaoh asked his fellows what he should do. The eminent among his people recommended that the pharaoh postpone any action, such as murder, and wait for another opportunity. During this time, they would call all available magicians to the palace.[46]

Pharaoh received this advice and immediately followed the recommendation of the eminent persons and sent a number of emissaries to the kingdom's magicians to invite them to the palace. Verses 115–116 tell how these magicians answered Pharaoh's call.[47] Verse 115 conveys the competition between Moses and the Egyptian magicians. The truth became known, and the magicians' tricks were unraveled. The magicians and their supporters were defeated.[48]

Tafsir al-Azhar

Hamka's exegesis of Moses' birth, as told in Surah al-Qashash, verses 7–13, is titled "Cerita Musa dengan Ibunya" (The Story of Moses and His Mother). The general introduction to *Tafsir al-Azhar* talks about Moses' postnatal conditions as well as his mother's anxieties. The Pharaoh had ordered his "security forces" to check the Israelites' homes; any male children they had would be killed immediately, while female children would be left alone.[49] The early discussion of verse 7 notes how Moses' mother had nursed him in a state of ear, having seen signs that Pharaoh's troops

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44   Shihab, Vol.5, 197

45   Shihab, Vol. 5, 198-199

46   Shihab, Vol. 5, 201

47   Shihab, Vol.5, 203-204

48   Shihab, Vol.5, 206

49   Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* ,Vol. 7 (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional, 2003),5301

would soon come. The following verse tells how Moses' mother was commanded to set the baby Moses adrift in the Nile.

The opening of verse 8 tells that this baby was found and taken in by Pharaoh. In verse 9, it is told how Pharaoh's wife urged him not to kill the child.[50] The next grouping of verses is identified as a new chapter entitled "Kosonglah Hati Ibu Musa" (Empty is the Heart of Moses' Mother). This grouping of verses reveals Moses' mother's condition after letting her son go, and how her behavior almost made the secret of Moses' birth known.[51] At the beginning of verse 13, it is said, "So We restored him to his mother." Moses' mother's sorrow was alleviated as she nursed her son while receiving payment from the palace. Although Moses was her son, he was still the adopted child of Pharaoh.[52]

The next episode covers Moses' escape to Madyan. Hamka titles this grouping of verses "Membuang Diri ke Madyan" (Self-Exile in Madyan) and starts his discussion with a general introduction that presents the death that involved Moses as having become public knowledge. A young man who sympathized with Moses' plight came and suggested that he immediately leave Egypt. Based on this advice, as described in verse 21, Moses fled Egypt in a state of fear while looking over his shoulders. Verse 22 shows how Moses chose the direction of his escape: to the north and a land called Madyan.[53]

Verse 23 tells of Moses' arrival outside Madyan. There, he found a well or spring where the locals would collect water for their goats to drink. At this site, Moses saw two women trying to chase their goats away from the well/spring. Thus, Moses asked, "What is your problem?" The two young women then told him of their plight.[54]

Verse 25 tells how, after receiving the assistance of Moses, the young women returned to their homes. They told their father of the young man who had helped them. He then asked one of his daughters to find the young man. Moses was called, and they met with their father. Moses told him of his journey to Madyan. The father of these women told Moses not to worry, for he had arrived in Madyan and was outside Pharaoh's territory. The daughter who had been sent to fetch Moses then asked her father to give wages to Moses. These wages were given to Moses in return for him taking care of their cattle.[55]

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50 Hamka, Vol. 7; 5302–5303

51 Hamka, Vol. 7: 5303–5304

52 Hamka, Vol. 7: 5305–5306

53 Hamka, Vol. 7: 5316–5318

54 Hamka, Vol. 7: 5318–5319

55 Hamka, Vol. 7;5320-5323

The following episode in the story of Moses is his obligation, as a prophet and messenger of God, to meet Pharaoh. Hamka names this grouping of verses, covering Surah al-Aʿrāf verses 103–112, "Perjuangan Musa AS" (The Struggle of Moses). The duty of Moses was to free the Israelites from slavery. To achieve this goal, Moses had to face Pharaoh and the elites of his government.[56]

The opening of verse 104, according to Hamka, exposes the power of Moses as the messenger of God, having traveled to Pharaoh's Palace and declaring his identity and his duty. Moses stated that he was the messenger of God even though the Egyptians held Pharaoh to be God. Verse 105, according to Hamka, continues with Moses' statement of his prophethood. At the end of verse 105, Moses also declares his purpose: the exempting of the Israelites from slavery. Pharaoh pondered Moses' first visit flippantly. In verse 106, it is stated that Pharaoh asked Moses for evidence that he was God's messenger. Verses 107 and 108, meanwhile, expose how Moses proved his prophethood.[57]

Witnessing Moses' miracle as proof of his prophethood, the people attending Pharaoh's court began conversing about it. Verse 109 states that the eminent among Pharaoh's people viewed Moses as a magician who was very knowledgeable of his craft. They viewed Moses' demand to release the Jewish people from slavery as a threat to Pharaoh's power. Verses 111–112 tell how they urged Pharaoh to respond to Moses' challenge. They asked Pharaoh not to kill Moses or his brother, Aaron (Harun). Rather, Pharaoh was advised to call the magicians of his kingdom and have them pitted against Moses. They argued that Moses and Aaron could be defeated by ten of Egypt's most preeminent magicians.[58]

Hamka identifies verses 113–126 as a new episode entitled "Ahli-Ahli Sihir Dikumpulkan" (The Magicians Are Brought Together). Hamka's exegesis of verse 113 begins with an introduction, namely the spread of Pharaoh's order throughout the land. After both sides had agreed upon terms, the competition of magicians began; for this, Hamka referenced Thāha, verses 58–59, which notes that the competition was held based on an agreement between Pharaoh and Moses. Verse 115 tells how the competition concluded.[59] Meanwhile, verse 118, according to Hamka, tells how the truth won out, and God's miracles and greatness were shown through Moses' staff, while the magicians' illusions were dispelled.[60] Verse 119 exposes the magicians'

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56   Hamka, Vol. 3: 494

57   Hamka, Vol. 3: 495–496

58   Hamka, Vol 3: 496–497

59   Hamka, Vol.3: 499–500

60   Hamka, Vol. 3: 500–501

defeat. After witnessing the situation and realizing that they were facing no human magic, the magicians could only admit that they were witnessing the power of God.

## The Relationship between Text and Context in *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar*

Structural analysis of both tafsir books suggested similarities and differences in contextualizing the story of Moses. Shihab began with an intrinsic analysis before identifying the context of the time of revelation and the present day. Intrinsic elements of the story of Moses in *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* can be divided into several parts. First, *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* presents groupings of Qur'anic verses and their Indonesian-language translation. Second, it applies a *munāsabah* analysis referring to the analysis of the connections between verses/groupings of verses with their preceding and following verses. Through *munāsabah* analysis, the contextual relationship between the story of Moses and the Arab society contemporary to the Prophet Muhammad—which consisted of Christians and Jews who also considered Moses one of their ancestors—is identified. Third, it provides an analysis of the different parts (words or phrases) of certain verses. In his exegesis, Shihab frequently connected his analysis of individual words with values or philosophies relevant to the story, such as the role of women outside the domestic sphere and the selection of leaders. Fourth, it provides a conclusion. The relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Contextual Connection of *Tafsir al-Mishbâh*
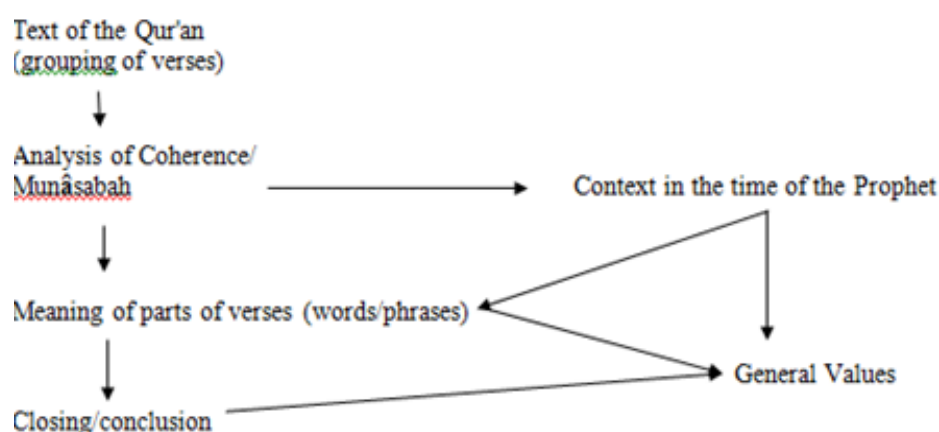
Our data analysis indicated that Tafsir al-Azhar started with a contextual approach by grouping verses into themes. Intrinsic elements of *Tafsir al-Azhar* include the following: first, the title of each grouping of verses in this tafsir is analyzed. Second, the Qur'anic verses and their Indonesian-language translations are discussed. Third, a general introduction and discussion on the origins and heritage of the subject of the grouping are presented. The profile may be sourced from historians, other verses that have similar meanings to the hadiths of the Prophet, or other sources. The profiles in *Tafsir al-Azhar* are sometimes presented together with *munāsabah*, meaning the relationship between verses/groupings of verses and previous groupings of verses or verses with similar themes. The introduction in *Tafsir al-Azhar* also presents the context at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Fourth, an analysis of parts of verses or important words is presented, followed by a conclusion. In his exegesis, Hamka often linked the meaning of various episodes to the Indonesian context by retelling the struggles of Indonesian revolutionaries against the Dutch or Hamka's own everyday experiences. The exegetic elements of *Tafsir al-Azhar* can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Contextual Connection of *Tafsir al-Azhar*
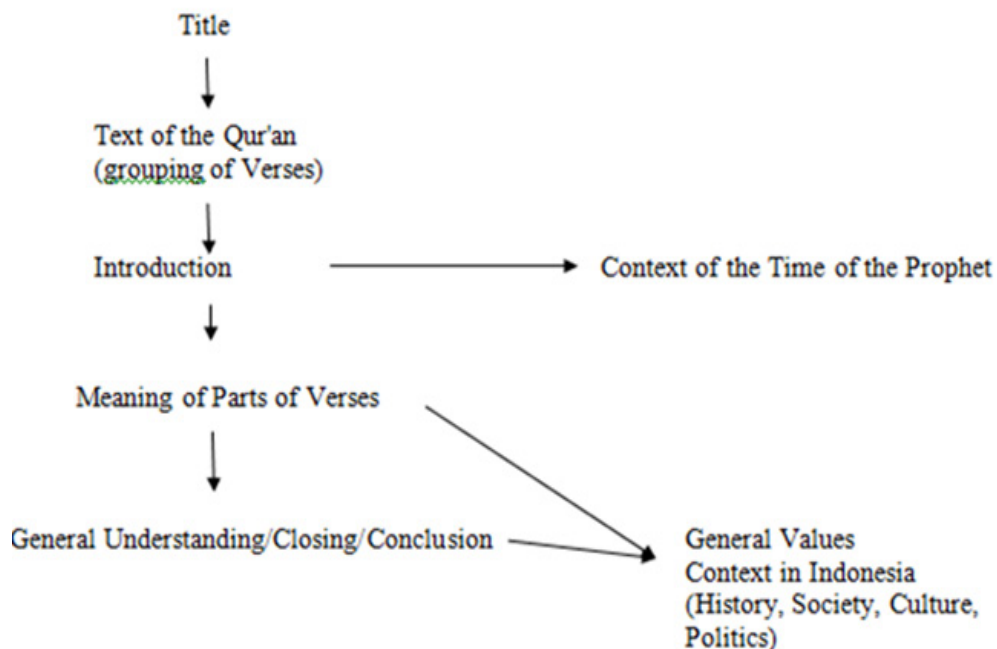
The strongest distinction between *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* liesin how the mufassirs identified their meanings and contextualizations. In *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*, Shihab commenced with textual meanings before identifying the story's plots. Conversely, in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Hamka is more flexible in his narrative improvisation by grouping verses into themes. As an example of the differences in these two thinkers' understanding of Qur'anic verses, the following table compares how they introduced the story of the birth of Moses.

Table 1. The Birth of Moses According to *Tafsir al–Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al–Azhar*

Tafsir Al-Misbah	Tafsir Al-Azhar
Pharaoh was anxious about his kingdom's fall, which would happen through a person prepared by Allah for that purpose. He was the Prophet Moses. He was born without Pharaoh's knowledge, but his mother was very worried. This verse describes the situation of the mother and child and explains the first steps taken by Allah to bring victory to the oppressed and bring about the fall of Pharaoh and his regime.	Pharaoh's government urged the "security forces" to check and investigate the home of every Israelite. If these homes contained a male child, then that child would be killed immediately. Female children, meanwhile, were left alone. Fortunately, when Moses' mother was pregnant, her stomach was not large, and Pharaoh's spies did not know about Moses' birth. For Moses' mother, the first days after giving birth were not dangerous. However, she realized that Moses' birth would eventually be known. Over time, she became increasingly more anxious.

Table 1 shows that both exegetes had a different approach to telling the story as a consequence of using different sources of information. Shihab was more cautious, trying not to present an understanding that deviated too far from the text of the verse. Readers, thus, were expected to follow the story of Moses as presented in the Qur'an rather than rearrange it to reflect human logic. The reader may be curious about how Moses was born without Pharaoh's soldiers knowing and how a mother could give birth without her neighbors knowing. However, because the Qur'an only states that Moses' mother felt anxious after giving birth to a son, Shihab avoided guessing or collecting information from non-Qur'anic sources. Hamka's exegesis was more progressive and added more information, including the fact that the Egyptian security forces were on patrol and that Moses' mother was able to escape their notice. The story of Moses appears to come to life and presents a causality that the human mind can readily understand.

The textual tendencies in *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*'s retelling can be attributed to Shihab's understanding of exegesis, which does not entirely accept innovation. Although Shihab did not approve of purely textual analysis, he also disapproved of the rationalist school of exegesis, which he perceived as relying excessively on *ta'wil* (reason) in interpreting the Qur'an.[61] The plot of Moses' story in the textual *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* supports Pink's doubt about the modernity of this tafsir. Pink states that *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* is a typology of tafsir with a modern characteristic. Nevertheless, Pink assumes that *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* is inconsistent because the discussion in the tafsir indicates an orthodox or conservative approach.[62]

Hamka's progressive and rational attitudes relate to his critical trait and freedom of expression reflected in his Qur'anic tafsir.[63] Hamka used a multidisciplinary approach to exegesis, relying on a variety of sources, both historical (the hadiths and views of the Prophet's Companions) and rational (other types of knowledge).[64] Hamka sought a balanced relationship between reason and revelation. He not only cited or quoted the views of his predecessors but also drew on his own experiences and explorations.[65] In Hamka's exegesis, the story of Moses is presented more interestingly and comprehensively. The narrative of Moses in *Tafsir al-Azhar* follows a causality that is understandable to the human mind, and Hamka contextualizes it with Indonesian values. The story of Moses becomes the story of actual and real challenges being overcome.

The Moses story in *Tafsir al-Azhar* confirms its modern feature because of its progressive and rational approach. Mun'im Sirry's research on the modernity of the *Tafsir Al-Azhar* also confirms the modernity of this tafsir and contends that Hamka's tafsir engages modern issues of particularly Indonesian community's life using the 20th-century perspective. Sirry further elucidates that Moses' story in Hamka's tafsir is interesting because Hamka exploited Indonesian local issues and examples to describe the Qur'anic verses, which has made his tafsir more actual.[66]

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61 Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur`an, Fungsi Dan Peran Wahyu Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat*, 90-91

62 Pink, "Tradition, "Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsīr

63 Anwar Mujahidin, "Indonesian Context of The Meaning of Qur'an; a Study on the Verses of Power in Tafsir Al-Azhar and Al-Mishbah," Atlantis 137, no. Icqhs 2017 (2018), 306.

64 Sharifah Norshah Bani Syed ; Wan Helmy Shahriman Wan Ahmad; Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh; Mohd Ariff Nafizi Ibrahim Bidin, "The Approach of Interpretation Implemented by Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar Based on Scientific Exegesis," The International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences 7, no. 4 (2017), 207, https://doi.org/DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i4/2798.

65 Avif Alfiyah, "Metode Penafsiran Buya Hamka Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar," Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin 15, no. 1 (2017): 25,31; https://doi.org/10.18592/jiiu.v15i1.1063.

66 Sirry, "What`s Modern About Modern Tafsir ? A Closer Look at Hamka`s Tafsir Al-Azhar."

The Relationship between the Context of *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* with the Mufassirs' Engagement in Indonesian Society

Shihab's conservatism and Hamka's modernism in their tafsirs of Moses influenced their contextuality. Shihab, however, provided no explanations about which verses were quite clear and did not relate the story to the contemporary context. Meanwhile, Hamka's description was intriguing, and he included the relevant stories of the sociohistorical Indonesian society. For example, in the verse reciting young Moses, Moses did not intentionally kill someone and was recommended to leave Egypt.

Table 2. Moses Left Egypt for Madyan According to *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar*

Tafsir al-Mishbāh	*Tafsir al-Azhar*
After Moses was advised to leave Egypt immediately, he left with a sense of fear and said, "Oh, God, save me from the wrongdoers." Shihab then explains different parts of the verses, beginning with the word *tilqā* (similar to *liqā*, meaning 'meeting place').	Moses left Egypt in a state of fear and kept looking over his shoulders. In this verse, Moses' fear does not mean he is a coward. Rather, he was afraid of being caught, as this would cause the failure of his greater mission and purpose. Hamka compares Moses' fear to that of the Indonesian soldiers when facing the Dutch and their arsenal. The revolution was not intended solely for fighting or showing their strength. The Indonesian soldiers chose to retreat into the forest. If they had chosen to fight the Dutch with the weapons at their disposal, the Indonesian soldiers would have been eradicated, and had they been eradicated, their revolution would have failed.

Notwithstanding *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* appears to be conservative, numerous sources have been referred to. This tafsir shows a relationship between the meaning of verses and general knowledge. For example, Shihab discusses the genealogical and geographical background of Madyan concerning the mention of Madyan in Surah al-Qashshash, verse 22. This general knowledge enriches readers' understanding of the story, but its meaning remains textual.

The knowledge and information covered in Shihab's tafsir represent a partial approach because of its partial discussion of themes and meanings. For instance, in the story of Moses' escape to Madyan and meeting with a shepherd girl, Quraish Shihab relates this to the law of women working outside the house. This law shows the atomistic perspective utilized in *Tafsir al-Mishbāh,* similar to the classical tafsirs, which view the Qur'anic verses as partial. The stories in the Qur'an are not perceived as a whole entity that holds an internal coherence.[67]

The difference and similarity of the contextuality of *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* lies in their mufassirs' character, personality, and circumstance. As Mun'im Sirry writes, the work of tafsir represents its mufassir because of the subjective elements in exegesis that are relevant to the mufassir's circumstances. The Qur'anic tafsir is connected with its mufassir's local context. A mufassir brings their issue influenced by their tradition, language, and other cultural aspects.[68] Shihab's conservative approach to Qur'anic exegesis reflects his socio-political attitudes. During President Soeharto's rule, Shihab was appointed Minister of Religious Affairs. Shihab was also an active member of MUI, leading the organization between 1984 and 1998 and serving as its director of cadreization between 1994 and 1997.[69] As widely noted, MUI was a main source of religious legitimacy for Soeharto's New Order government. During that period, Shihab also wrote several articles using a thematic exegetic approach to legitimize the New Order, arguing that its development, family planning, and other programs reflected the values of the Qur'an and Islam.[70]

Hamka's critical approach to *Tafsir al-Azhar* reflected his role in socio-political life, and his tafsir was eventually completed while he was imprisoned on charges of treason. Hamka had a dynamic relationship with Soeharto's New Order government. He was willing to become the first chairman of MUI. Hamka associated this organization with a *kue bika* (honeycomb cake) as it faced pressure from above (i.e., the government) and from below (i.e., the public), and thus any mismanagement would be ruinous. In one case, MUI issued a fatwa prohibiting Muslims from saying "Merry Christmas" a position that was opposed to the official government. This fatwa was controversial, and when the government faced pressure to rescind the fatwa, Hamka decided to resign from his leadership at the MUI. Hamka firmly rejected the prohibited fatwa, saying Merry Christmas.[71]

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67 67 Johns, "A Humanistic Approach to I'jaz in The Quran: The Transfiguration of Language

68   Sirry, "What`s Modern About Modern Tafsir ? A Closer Look at Hamka`s Tafsir Al-Azhar."

69   M. Quraish Shihab, *Logika Agama: Kedudukan Wahyu Dan Batas-Batas Akal Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005).

70   Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur`an, Fungsi Dan Peran Wahyu Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat*, 405

71   Avivy, "Isra'iliyyat in Interpretive Literature of Indonesia: A Comparison Between Tafsir Marah Labid and

Works of exegesis are representations of their writers' socio-political attitudes and thereby represent the diverse socio-political views in society. Wheeler writes that one's interpretation of a text cannot be separated from the context in which one is situated. This statement also holds for exegetes, who claim authority in textual interpretation.[72] Wheeler's view, supported also by Saeed, indicates that local contexts are directly connected to textual interpretation processes.[73] In other words, the Qur'an's text must be read not only as a linguistic construct but also as a message with historical and sociological roots.

Conclusion

Shihab viewed the story of Moses as Allah's plan to strike down a human (the Pharaoh's) illusion. The story, thus, follows the law (*sunnah*) of Allah without consideration of human rationality. The story of Moses presents wisdom about education, politics, leadership, and economics, indicating a pragmatic choice—i.e., how to act when dealing with a certain situation—rather than an ideological one. Meanwhile, Hamka understood the story of Moses as one of struggle and heroism. As such, the story of Moses is told as heroic, full of intrigue and tension. Hamka appears critical of the story he exegeted, viewing it as an irrational tale. In Hamka's retelling, the story conveys wisdom regarding social, cultural, and political criticism, one aware of the value of equality—including gender equality.

Tafsir Al-Azhar."but its presence may be found in numerous interpretive literature, including those written by Indonesian scholars. This article discusses the use of isra'iliyyat narratives in Nusantara interpretive literature by comparing traditional to contemporary interpretations. The traditional interpretive work selected is tafsir Marah Labid or also known as tafsir al-Munir by Nawawi al-Bantani. A contemporary interpretation selected is tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka. Both these interpretations are selected based on their complete 30 chapters which are still widely referred to by Indonesian society. By using the methodology of document analysis, the researcher compares the attitude of the authors towards isra'iliyyat narratives as well as the methodology of writing isra'iliyyat. Research results find that there is a difference in attitude between Nawawi al-Bantani and Hamka towards isra'iliyyat narratives. Nawawi's attitude in his interpretation is similar to that of other traditional interpretations which insert such narratives without any explanations whether the narratives may be accepted or otherwise. In contrast, Hamka was more critical towards isra'iliyyat narratives, even though the isra'iliyyat narratives he inserted in his interpretation were selected based on their acceptability and non-contradiction with al-Qur'an or the Prophet's (pbuh; Syafiq Hasyim, "Fatwa Aliran Sesat Dan Politik Hukum Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Mui)," *Al-Ahkam* 25, no. 2 (2015): 241, https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2015.25.2.810.

72   Wheeler, "Moses or Alexander Early Islamic Exegesis of Qurʾān 1860", 60

73   Saeed, "Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach to Ethico-Legal Texts of the Quran."particularly among those Muslims referred to as \"progressive-ijtihadis\". One of the primary concerns of this reading is that in order to understand and interpret the ethico-legal content of the Quran and relate that content to the changing needs and circumstances of Muslims today, it is important to approach the text at different levels, giving a high degree of emphasis to the sociohistorical context of the text. In the classical tafsīr this emphasis on socio-historical context was not considered important, particularly in the interpretation of the ethico-legal texts, despite the frequent use of asbāb al-nuzūl literature. In this paper, I will explore how progressive-ijtihadis are adopting a contextualist reading of ethico-legal texts of the Quran. To illustrate this, I will use one or two such texts (verses

The *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* is more cautious in its reconstruction of the verses' meaning, ensuring the story is told following the textual meaning of the verses. Meanwhile, the *Tafsir al-Azhar* is looser in its appropriation of the verses' meaning, thereby providing a telling of Moses' story that is both coherent and interesting. The connection between the text and contexts, i.e., the context of the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the context of present-day Indonesia, is not drawn consistently through the verses interpreted. Quraish Shihab tended to connect the verses' contexts with the themes present in Islamic studies. In contrast, Hamka tended to follow the culture of influential figures and connect it to the Indonesian context

The research findings indicated that the development of tafsir in Indonesia has embraced a contextual approach, though the style of analyzing Qur'anic verses differs between mufassirs. For Indonesian readers, the interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly the story of Moses, has been adapted to their context. This trend is influenced by the mufassirs' educational backgrounds, upbringing, and roles as da'wah activists. They are both educators and dedicated preachers engaged with their society's socio-cultural and political dynamics. Both tafsir books demonstrate a dynamic approach to preserving the fundamental meaning of the Qur'anic text while remaining open to contemporary interpretations.

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Supplementary Materials

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Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Anwar Mujahidin, Muhammad Shohibul Itmam and Ahmad Chorul Rofiq. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Anwar Mujahidin and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript

Data availability statement

The data set presented here which is available within catalog national Indonesia library (Perpustakaan Nasional) , https://opac-bp.perpusnas.go.id/

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose

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