

THE INTERPRETATION OF HAMKA AND MUHAMMAD QURAISH SHIHAB ON ILLUSTRATION OF HEAVEN Significance and Reflection Within the Quranic Exegesis Framework in The Archipelago

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Abstract

The motivation for this study arises from the observation that many commentators still interpret verses illustrating heaven merely as parables, without sufficiently contextualizing them to social reality. Therefore, this study remains necessary, particularly by examining the interpretations of two Indonesian mufassir from different generations: Hamka (a preacher) and Muhammad Quraish Shihab (an academic). This study is library research employing a descriptive-analysis method. The conclusions of this study indicate that both Hamka and Shihab strive to contextualize the interpretation of verses depicting heaven, contextualizing them in sociocultural paradigms and making them relevant to contemporary contexts. However, Hamka and Shihab exhibit different traits and characteristics in their interpretive approaches and narrative constructs. These differences are primarily due to Hamka's active involvement in the world of preaching, whereas Shihab operates within an academic framework. The interpretations of the verses illustrating heaven by both Hamka and Shihab are notably applicable and contextual, making them relevant to the socio-cultural context. Thus, the narratives constructed by Hamka and Shihab render the abstract and metaphysical nuances of these verses more accessible and comprehensible to the public. As Recommendation; it is necessary to create an interpretative framework for metaphysical verses based on Nusantara identity so that it can be easily understood by the audience, especially the Indonesian people.

Keywords: interpretation, illustration, heaven, Hamka, Quraish Shihab.

Interpretasi Hamka dan M. Quraish Shihab tentang Ilustrasi Surga: Signifikansi dan Refleksi dalam Kerangka Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Nusantara

Abstrak

Motivasi penelitian ini muncul dari pengamatan bahwa banyak mufassir yang masih menafsirkan ayat-ayat yang mengilustrasikan surga hanya sebatas perumpamaan, tanpa mengkontekstualisasikannya dengan realitas sosial. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini dirasa perlu untuk dilakukan, khususnya dengan mengkaji penafsiran dua mufasir Indonesia dari generasi yang berbeda: Hamka (seorang mubaligh) dan Muhammad Quraish Shihab (seorang akademisi). Penelitian ini merupakan studi kepustakaan dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif-analisis. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa baik Hamka maupun Shihab berusaha untuk mengkontekstualisasikan penafsiran ayat-ayat yang menggambarkan surga, membujuknya ke dalam realitas dan membuatnya relevan dengan konteks kontemporer. Namun, Hamka dan Shihab menunjukkan ciri-ciri dan karakteristik yang berbeda dalam pendekatan penafsiran dan konstruksi narasi mereka. Perbedaan ini terutama disebabkan oleh keterlibatan aktif Hamka dalam dunia dakwah, sedangkan Shihab bekerja dalam kerangka akademis. Penafsiran ayat-ayat yang menggambarkan surga oleh Hamka dan Shihab sangat aplikatif dan kontekstual, sehingga relevan dengan konteks sosial-budaya. Dengan demikian, narasi yang dibangun oleh Hamka dan Shihab membuat nuansa abstrak dan metafisis dari ayat-ayat tersebut menjadi lebih mudah diakses dan dipahami oleh publik. Sebagai tawaran; perlu membuat kerangka tafsir atas ayat-ayat metafisis yang berbasis identitas kenusantara sehingga bisa mudah dipahami oleh audien, khususnya masyarakat Indonesia.

Kata kunci: *penafsiran, ilustrasi, surga, Hamka, Quraish Shihab.*

تفسير حمكا ومحمد قريش شهاب للآيات المتعلقة بتصوير الجنة: الأهمية وتأثيره على إطار تفسير القرآن في نوسانتارا

الملخص

ينطلق هذا البحث من ملاحظة مفادها أن العديد من المفسرين لا يزالون يفسرون الآيات التي تصوّر الجنة على أنها مجرد أمثال. دون ربطها بالواقع الاجتماعي. ومن ثم، فإن هذا البحث يكتسب أهميته من خلال دراسة تفسير اثنين من المفسرين الاندونيسيين من جيلين مختلفين: حمكا (داعية) ومحمد قريش شهاب (أكاديمي). يعتمد هذا البحث على المنهج المكتبي باستخدام المنهج الوصفي-التحليلي. وقد خلص البحث إلى أن كلا من حمكا وشهاب يسعيان إلى تأصيل تفسير الآيات التي تصوّر الجنة. وربطها بالسياقات السوسولوجية والثقافية لجعلها أكثر ارتباطًا بالواقع المعاصر. ومع ذلك، يظهر لدى كل منهما خصائص وأساليب مختلفة في النهج التفسيري وبنية السرد. ويعزى هذا التباين أساسًا إلى الخلفية الدعوية لحمكا مقابل الإطار الأكاديمي الذي يتحرك فيه شهاب. إن تفسيراتهما للآيات المتعلقة بتصوير الجنة تتسم بكونها تطبيقية وسياقية. مما يجعلها أكثر ارتباطًا بالواقع الاجتماعي والثقافي. وبهذا، تسهم السرديات التي قدّماها في تقريب المفاهيم المجردة والميتافيزيقية لهذه الآيات إلى الجمهور وفهمها بشكل أفضل. توصية: من الضروري وضع إطار تفسيري للآيات الميتافيزيقية يستند إلى الهوية النوسانتارية. لتيسير فهمها لدى المتلقين. ولا سيما المجتمع الاندونيسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *التفسير، التصوير، الجنة، حمكا، قريش شهاب*

Introduction

Two classifications are recognized in the interpretation of the Quranic verses: *muhkam* and *mutasyabih* verses. *Muhkam* verses are those whose general meaning can be directly grasped by the reader, whereas *mutasyabih* verses necessitate reasoning, hermeneutic, and even exegesis to be understood. Similarly, verses that discuss the unseen, the abstract, and the metaphysical fall into the category of *mutasyabih* verses. The scholars' attitudes towards *mutasyabih* verses vary; some attempt to interpret or explain them, while others choose to remain silent about them. Both those who interpret and those who remain silent have their own epistemological foundations, motivated by differences in interpreting the message of surah Āli 'Imrān (3): 7. Those who remain silent (do not interpret) believe that the meaning of the ambiguous verses is known only to God, so humans do not need to interpret or understand them too deeply. While others attempt to interpret or derive meaning from the *mutasyabih* verses, believing that the Quran is guidance for humanity (Nurzanah, Hasbiyallah, and Maslani 2019; Sukamta 2022). Therefore, if its verses are 'silenced' or not 'spoken', how can people use them as a guide in life.

Scholars consider verses about heaven and hell to be *mutasyabih* because they discuss abstract and metaphysical matters. Although these verses are interpreted, their meanings generally remain close to the literal meaning or textual translation. On the other hand, verses describing heaven and hell are generally understood using the illustrative-allegorical method (*mitsl*), meaning that these verses are images created by God that are adapted to the capacity and capability of the human brain's reasoning (Bahri and Refiana 2017). Most commentators follow the illustrative-literal model, so interpretations are still likely to be based on it. Consider the verse that refers to a "paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth." In general, commentators interpret the reference to "heavens and earth" by God as a unit of measurement in human comprehension, ensuring that the information and messages of the Quran can be comprehended and accepted by human reason. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the vastness of paradise is greater than the vastness described in the Quran and beyond the human capacity to comprehend.

This research aims to analyze the interpretations of Indonesian interpreters about the verses illustrating heaven, specifically from the perspectives of two prominent interpreters in Indonesia: Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab. From an intellectual genealogy standpoint, Hamka served as a commentator, writer, and preacher, while Shihab acted as an interpreter and scholar. Hamka resided throughout the New Order period (19th and 20th centuries AD), while Shihab has lived from the Reformation era to this day (21st century AD) (Mustaqim 2005).

Hamka came from a religious family culture in Sumatra; his father was a local cleric, commentator, scholar, and reformer in the Minangkabau region (Rahmatulloh 2022). Shihab, on the other hand, came from a religious Arab family in Sulawesi, and his father was a scholar, commentator, and politician. Hamka's academic culture was built

from his non-academic study journey to a number of national and international figures and scholars. Meanwhile, Shihab was forged through academic education until his doctoral degree from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt (Munandar and Amin 2023).

Then, from the aspect of interpretive characteristics, Hamka uses informal language with explanatory presentations that are usually interspersed with local illustrations of events in society. Thus, the contextuality presented to the reader is based on a real-life depiction of the phenomenon as an illustration or aid in explaining the information from the interpreted verse. Meanwhile, Shihab is an academic, so the characteristics of his interpretation also tend to be systematic, both in terms of presentation structure and the analysis of interpretation he undertakes. The language he uses is also rich with academic nuances; the explanations he builds generally begin with vocabulary analysis combined with various other sources, including modern knowledge, followed by contextualization.

Therefore, with the differences mentioned above, the author is interested in further examining how Hamka and Quraish Shihab interpret the verses in the Quran that illustrate paradise. Thus, the focus of this study is: 1) How does the interpretation of Hamka and Quraish Shihab compare regarding the verses illustrating heaven? 2) How do they respond to the reality and contextuality of Hamka and Quraish Shihab's interpretations of the verses illustrating heaven? With this focus, the significance of this study is: *First*, the products of thought and interpretation are inseparable from the reality surrounding the commentator in shaping the characteristics of the interpretation carried out, whether expressed in the form of narrative, language, or interpretation orientation. *Secondly*, the responses of Hamka and Shihab to their surrounding realities will be examined, encompassing both micro realities, such as the particular geography of a specific group, and macro realities within the greater Indonesian setting, particularly in their interpretations of verses depicting heaven. *Third*, the epistemic and methodological framework established by Hamka and Shihab in their interpretation of the passages depicting paradise will be elucidated, highlighting the contextual patterns they choose to convey to readers or society.

In light of the aforementioned reasons, this study remains essential, despite the existence of several prior studies pertinent to the author's research. Mervat Albufalasa's analysis of the concepts of paradise and hell in Juz Amma. This analysis concludes that there are 54 words referencing heaven and hell, with 35 terms (65%) pertaining to hell and 19 terms (35%) pertaining to heaven. The reference to heaven and hell serves to inspire individuals to enhance virtuous actions (towards heaven) and to evoke apprehension of damnation (Mervat Albufalasa, 2021). Afterwards, more specialized works in Indonesian interpretation, such as those by Ahmad Minnanurrohman, examine heaven through the lens of the *Al-Mishbah* interpretation. The article concludes that paradise constitutes eternal life, attainable via moral actions and the necessity of God's kindness, which encompasses the divine gifts bestowed upon

humanity in a paradise including fruits, garments, and the privilege of witnessing God (Minanurrohman 2021).

Similar to Ahmad's studies, Iis Juheiriyah analyzed heaven in the Al-Azhar commentary. Her research found that heaven is the destination for those who refine their loyalty to Allah. Her study also succinctly delineates the names of heaven and some rewards bestowed upon its inhabitants (Juheiriyah 2017). Riswan Sulaeman examined the concept of heaven through the lens of Abdul Qadir Jailani's viewpoint. He concluded that the pleasures of heaven, as articulated by Abdul Qadir Jailani, are immaterial (*ruhiyyah*), with the supreme pleasure being the knowledge of God (*ma'rifatullah*) (Sulaeman 2017).

Besides studying the figure's thought, the theme of heaven is also studied conceptually. For example, Samsul and Hilal studied *Parables in the verses of heaven and hell*. Their study concluded that the Quran provides a description of paradise and hell with physical and spiritual pleasures and punishments, with the aim of making humans hope for and fear the punishment of Allah (Bahri and Refiana 2017). A conceptual study of heaven was also conducted by Saidin Manysur with the title *"The Quranic Concept of Heaven"*. The conclusion of his study is that the Quran not only describes heaven but also explains the pleasures within it and the ways or paths to obtain it (Mansyur 2018).

Based on the studies mentioned above, it appears that researchers have not yet conducted extensive comparative studies on the interpretation of paradise illustrations in the tafsirs of Hamka and Quraish Shihab, particularly regarding the symbolism of the narratives used and the implications of their interpretations in social reality. Therefore, in this study, the author will present the conceptual interpretation of verses about paradise illustrations by Hamka and Shihab in social reality. It begins by comparatively outlining their interpretations, highlighting the differences in the narratives they construct. It then concludes by drawing or mapping Hamka and Shihab's interpretations within the realm of contextual exegesis, revealing the differences in the patterns of contextual exegesis they both construct.

Research Method

This study is a library research with a descriptive-analytical method. (Mustaqim 2017; Ramdhan 2021). This method not only describes or narrates the information being studied but also involves careful analysis. Similarly, in this study, not only are the interpretations of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab regarding verses about the illustration of heaven described, but an analysis is also conducted in terms of its relevance to the social context and its reflection within the framework of interpretation in the Archipelago.

This research concentrates on the narrative and contextualization of Hamka and Quraish Shihab's interpretations of passages depicting paradise. The focus is due to the numerous verses on the heavens in the Quran, which occasionally provide mutual

clarification. Consequently, the author must restrict the subjects for examination as outlined below: 1) The expanse of heaven (Surah Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 133), 2) Rivers coursing beneath heaven (Al-Baqarah [2]: 25 and 266, Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 198, An-Nisā’ [4]: 122, Muḥammad [47]: 15), 3) Companions for the denizens of heaven and the depiction of houris (Al-Baqarah [2]: 25, Ad-Dukhān [59]: 54, and Aṣ-Ṣāffāt [37]: 47-48), and 4) Hues, flora, and items that exist or are bestowed upon the inhabitants of heaven (Al-Kahf [18]: 31 and Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 64).

The formal object of this study is tafsir *Al-Azhar* by Hamka and tafsir *Al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, while the material object is verses about the illustration of heaven, such as the verses mentioned above. Supporting sources include authoritative and representative printed and online literature that can be used for theoretical, methodological, and analytical validation.

The steps taken are: 1) Presenting the biographies and characteristics of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab's interpretations. This is done to examine their academic backgrounds (thoughts), activities, and other differences related to their interpretations, so that this presentation is evident in the interpretation narratives of Hamka and Shihab. 2) Inventorying and describing the interpretation of verses about the illustration of heaven in the tafsir *Al-Azhar* and *Al-Mishbah* in a comparative form; given their activities and academic backgrounds, it is not impossible that they have different interpretation characteristics, especially in interpreting verses about the illustration of paradise. Therefore, in this presentation, the author attempts to present their two interpretations in a comparative narrative form. 3) Explaining the relevance of Hamka and Shihab's interpretations within a social context. This needs to be done to see how the two commentators contextualize the verses about heaven within the social space. Thus, not only does it make the message of the Quran a way of life, but it can also serve as a reflection for developing a deeper framework for interpretation.

Overview of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab

Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab are Indonesian commentators (*mufasssir*) who lived in different time periods. Hamka, born in Sungai Batang (West Sumatra) on February 17, 1908, and passed away in 1981 (a national scholar of the 20th century AD) (Rusydi Hamka 1981, 1984). Hamka's career spanned the pre-independence era through the Old Order (Bahri 2018; Izzan 2022; Kholid et al. 2021). Meanwhile, M. Quraish Shihab was born on February 16, 1944, in Rappang (South Sulawesi), and was active during the New Order era until the Reform era (20th-21st centuries AD) (Djidin and Syamsuddin 2019; Syamsuddin Syamsuddin, Abidin, and Syahabuddin 2021).

In the intellectual network, there are at least important figures who played a role in shaping the perspectives and thinking models of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab. Among the figures who greatly influenced Hamka's thinking was his father, who was a renowned scholar and preacher (*muballigh*) in his time, particularly in Minangkabau. Hamka's admiration for his father was so great that he poured it into a book titled '*Ayah*'

(Hamka 2019). In addition to his father's influence, Hamka's da'wah and reformist-rationalist thought were influenced by several important individuals from the Islamic Union and Muhammadiyah, including HOS Cokroaminto, H. Agus Salim, Syekh Ibrahim Musa, Syekh Ahmad Rasyid Sutan Mansur, R.M. Surjopranoto, and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo (Izzan 2022; Zulfikri and Badawi 2021). Thus, when Hamka joined the Muhammadiyah organization, he manifested his reformist-rationalist models of thought in the realities of life, including in his literary works. Besides his rationalist mindset, Hamka's genealogy and missionary instinct were also not dormant. Because his father, his teachers, and the people around him were mostly preachers, when he returned from his intellectual journey to Minangkabau, Hamka established a *muballigh* training institute. The results of his students' speeches and writings at the institution, which were included in the *Khatibul Ummah* newspaper before being compiled into a book (Herlambang 2020; Parwanto 2021).

Meanwhile, M. Quraish Shihab's studies in Egypt, at least, served as an important stimulus for the formation of his rational thinking pattern. In addition, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Thayib, who is his teacher, also visited Indonesia. Ahmad Thayib emphasized that Al-Azhar graduates must think openly, be reformist, and not be exclusive. So, from the Grand Sheikh's narrative, it sufficiently represents how M. Quraish Shihab's mindset was formed, as well as a picture of education at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, especially after M. Abduh and M. Rasyid Ridha, the two scholars who often voiced the ideas of renewal and rationalization of Islamic thought at Al-Azhar, until finally, a normalization and regulation of thinking was established for subsequent generations of Al-Azhar (Izzan 2022; Sahiron Syamsuddin 2021; Syamsuddin Syamsuddin, Abidin, and Syahabuddin 2021).

History of Writing and Characteristics of Presenting Tafsir

The genesis of the *Al-Azhar* commentary commenced when Hamka assumed the role of administrator and manager of the Al-Azhar mosque in Kebayoran Jakarta circa 1956. In addition to his role as the mosque administrator, Hamka regularly conducted studies and speeches on Quranic interpretation after daybreak at the Al-Azhar mosque. Hamka presented the results of his studies in the *Gema Islam* journal from approximately 1958 until the end of 1963, specially in volumes 18-19. Then, in 1964, Hamka was detained for two years on charges of holding a hidden meeting. So, while in the iron bars, Hamka also continued writing his tafsir, which he called '*Hikmah Ilahi*, because Hamka could focus on completing the writing of his tafsir (Gunawan 2021; Hamka 1989; Rush 1930; Zulkarnaini 2021).

Al-Mishbah is a book of tafsir written by M. Quraish Shihab in 1999 and finalised in 2003. During the specified pre and post-periods, M. Quraish Shihab was engaged in both academic and governmental activities, including: serving as faculty and assistant rector at IAIN (now UIN Alauddin, Makassar) from 1974 to 1980, lecturer at IAIN (now UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta) in 1984, member of the Lajnah Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an since 1989, rector of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta for two terms from 1992 to

1996 and 1997 to 1998, chairman of MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) from 1985 to 1998, Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 1998, and Indonesian Ambassador to Egypt, concurrently representing Djibouti, from 1999 to 2002 (Ichwan and Amin 2022; Izzan 2022; Shihab 2012).

Hamka's interpretation is characterised by an organised technique— employing a sequential paradigm that follows the order of the surahs in the mushaf. In providing the interpretation, Hamka employs a thematic model of verses, indicating that within a single surah, specific themes are addressed over multiple verses. For instance, regarding the notion of paradise in Al-Wāqī'ah (56), Hamka categorises it among verses 16–26 and 27–49. Before interpreting the verses, Hamka noted the title or theme addressed within them, thereafter recorded the collection of verses along with their meanings, and ultimately provided an interpretation of each verse while maintaining their interrelation.

In the meanwhile, Hamka's model and M. Quraish Shihab's presentation are quite similar. For instance, when it comes to organising verses that address the idea of heaven in Al-Wāqī'ah (56), M. Quraish Shihab has a tendency to diverge. Shihab breaks them down into two halves, 10–26 and 27–40; however, he doesn't provide any indication of a topic or title for the talk. Comparable to what Hamka accomplished in terms of presenting the hierarchy of its interpretation, this work begins with the drafting of the verses and their translation, followed by an interpretation of at least two or more verses inside a single interpretation.

The Interpretations of Verses Illustrating Heaven by Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab

At first, about the vastness of heaven, described as "*as wide as the heavens and the earth*" (Āli 'Imrān [3]:133), Hamka interprets this breadth beyond only the hereafter. Hamka asserts that those who diligently pursue righteousness, regardless of their socioeconomic status or institutional affiliation, will attain a significant position in the afterlife and encounter benevolence in their worldly dealings. Consequently, Hamka interprets "*the vastness of heaven*" as the extensive nature of God's recompense for virtue, spanning from this world to the Hereafter (Hamka 1989). While Quraish Shihab understood the vastness of Heaven, he presented it not only as an allegory reflecting the human mind's capacity to grasp such vast information but also to inform Muslims so they would not become arrogant and believe that only '*he and his group*' could enter Heaven. With the narrative of heaven being '*as vast as the heavens and the earth*', all those who submit to God will have a spacious place there (Shihab 2002).

So, despite the similarities and differences in interpretation regarding the vastness of heaven above, both agree that the description of heaven as wide as the heavens and the earth is a form of Quranic parable to accommodate the capacity of human intellect. As for the difference, Hamka, as a preacher, emphasized the aspect of expanding the meaning of heaven in the context of worldly and afterlife happiness. Meanwhile, Shihab interprets '*vast*' to mean that Heaven is not only for individuals or

groups who make truth claims about their own group or sect, but that everyone is entitled to enter paradise based on the good they have done.

Secondly, about *'Heaven with rivers flowing beneath it'* (Al-Baqarah [2]: 25, 266; Āli 'Imrān [3]: 198; An-Nisā' [4]: 122; Muḥammad [47]: 15), Hamka interprets *'flowing water'* as a symbol of *'prosperity and fertility'*, embodying plenty that signifies desire, advantage, and tranquilly. Moreover, Hamka elucidated the concept of *'fertile and prosperous'* via representations of plantations and rice fields throughout many areas of Indonesia, tracing its roots to *'flowing water'*. Hamka used the coconut groves in Minahasa, the gardens in Kalimantan, the rice fields in Sulawesi, and the clove gardens in Solok, West Sumatra, which produced weekly yields, as exemplars (Hamka 1989).

While Shihab interprets *Heaven with rivers flowing beneath it'* with the following interpretations: 1) Textually, the flowing rivers are interpreted as water coursing beneath a palace and its adjacent gardens or verdant trees; 2) As an embodiment of paradise's beauty, these rivers transcend human reason and intellect, distinguishing them from earthly rivers; 3) By integrating scientific understanding with the Quran, flowing water or rivers are deemed purer than stagnant water, which may harbour numerous harmful bacteria detrimental to health (Shihab 2002).

Third, regarding *'Pairs for the inhabitants of heaven'* (Al-Baqarah [2]: 25), the term *'Pairs'* in that verse is understood by Hamka in the context of *'wives'*. Whether they are angels prepared by Allah or righteous wives who are reunited and re-dedicated to their husbands. The wives were free from physical and spiritual defects (Hamka 1989). a different Hamka, Shihab tends to interpret *'Pairs'* in the context of a *'biological partner'*, thus including partners for both men and women (Shihab 2002). Then, in interpreting the beauty of the angels (Ad-Dukhān [59]: 54 and Aṣ-Ṣaffāt [37]: 47-48), *"And We have paired them with beautiful women."* Angels are described with all their beauty, including having beautiful eyes. Hamka interprets it in two forms: 1) Beautiful eyes in their true meaning, meaning beautiful like the eyes of beautiful girls in general in this world; and 2) Beautiful in terms of her behavior, she always keeps her gaze down and lowered (Hamka 1989). Meanwhile, Shihab uses linguistic analysis of the root words *'hur'* (meaning 'round/slanted') and *'in'* (meaning 'large and beautiful eyes'), so according to Shihab, it can be understood in its essence that angels are creatures with wide, round, or slanted eyes, as desired by the inhabitants of heaven. It can also be understood metaphorically, meaning their eyes are slanted in the sense that their gaze is limited only to their spouse, or they have wide (open) eyes to always look at their spouse with full attention (Shihab 2002).

Fourth, regarding the color green in heaven (the color of heaven's clothing, cushions) as well as gold and silver jewelry (Al-Kahf [18]: 31, Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 64, Al-Insān [76]: 21). Hamka interprets textually that the type of clothing referred to is green silk, and the green clothing given to the people of Heaven (*ahl al-Jannah*) consists of two types: 1) inner garments (made of thin green silk), and 2) outer garments (robes/tunics) made of thick green silk. In the verse about paradise being dark green

(Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 64), Hamka calls it the color of twilight (in Hamka: *lembayung*). Then, regarding the gold and silver jewelry given to the inhabitants of Heaven, Hamka said it will be given according to the wearer's measure and needs (not excessively) (Hamka 1989).

Meanwhile, Shihab, differing from Hamka's, Shihab interprets '*green color in heaven and gold and silver ornaments*' in the context of being 'symbolic or metaphorical'. '*Green*' represents '*fertility, beauty (pleasing to the eye)*', so the color '*green*' in clothing is not only soft and comfortable to wear, but also fits well and looks beautiful on the body. Whereas '*gold and silver in heaven*' represents '*grandeur and luxury*'. Thus, luxury according to Shihab, like the context of the world's inhabitants' customs, is something considered grand and beautiful, for example, palaces are very synonymous with luxury, so this is an illustration of paradise to be understood by human minds (Shihab 2002).

The Relevance of Hamka and Quraish Shihab's Interpretations of Heaven Illustrations in a Social Context

As elucidated in the introduction, verses about heaven and hell are classified as *mutasyabih* because talk about metaphysical or unseen phenomena. Consequently, commentators typically interpret those verses literally, asserting that the Quran's depiction of heaven serves as a parable from Allah, enabling the human intellect to comprehend the conveyed information, although, if articulated in its true form, the human mind would struggle to understand or accept it (Ilyas 2003).

Conversely, the Quran's revelation aims to serve as a guide for human life (Al-Baqarah [2]: 185). However, if its verses, particularly those addressing metaphysical issues, are interpreted solely in a textual manner, the message or information conveyed by a verse becomes stagnant and effectively 'dead,' thereby diminishing the Quran's relevance and efficacy as a guide for human life. Therefore, some commentators attempt to interpret or explain the interpretation of verses about metaphysical matters, not only in a metaphorical sense (a form of textual interpretation), but also by bringing out the significance of the verses based on existing realities and providing a more rational and logical interpretation.

Similarly, Hamka and Shihab did the same, although in some verses they were relatively the same as most commentators, namely explaining the Quran as a metaphor (*mitsl*) when describing Heaven. Nevertheless, the way Hamka and Shihab depict (*misl*) does not simply allow the verse to "speak" for itself textually, but uses other depictions based on illustrations of reality. For example, Hamka uses the example of fertile plantations and rice fields in several regions of Indonesia when interpreting "*Heaven, with rivers flowing beneath it.*" Hamka did this – beside being a characteristic of a preacher's language, which generally uses examples and gentle language when explaining something – as an effort to make it easier for the public to understand, as the examples explained are real-life realities. While Shihab, beside interprets the text literally, he also uses scientific principles. When interpreting "*Heaven with rivers flowing*

beneath it," he believes flowing water is more hygienic and cleaner than stagnant water. Therefore, the implications of Hamka and Shihab's interpretations illustrate to society that heaven is full of coolness, peace, and prosperity, far from negative things – as their reasoning of their arguments is built upon both real-life examples and scientific knowledge.

Then, on the other hand, in some verses about the illustration of heaven, Hamka and Shihab give a more applicable and contextual interpretation. For example, Hamka interpreted the vastness of heaven (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 133) not only in the context of the afterlife, but also including a state of safety, comfort, peace, and harmonious relationships within the family and with others, which also represents the vastness of heaven in the context of the world. Hamka's interpretation is quite practical and contributes to understanding the vastness of heaven compared to some interpretations that generally interpret it illustratively (*mitsl*). There's often an expression, "*baiti jannati*" (home sweet home). A home likened to a heavenly place is one that contains coolness, peace, and harmony. Similarly, in the context of society or social life, a peaceful, comfortable, and harmonious state reflects the conditions in heaven. This seems to be what Hamka wanted to emphasize – especially as a preacher (*muballigh*). Therefore, he needed to contextualize his interpretation so that society could better understand and easily digest what he interpreted and communicated.

Similarly, Shihab's approach, a contextual model, differed slightly from Hamka's. As an academic living in the contemporary era, various Islamic religious schools and movements also emerged in Indonesia. Many of these religious movements made truth claims, considering their group's way and practices of Islam as the most appropriate and correct, thus condemning the ways and practices of other individuals or groups. Therefore, when interpreting the vastness of heaven (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 133), Shihab did not do so textually as illustrated in the Quran. Instead, Shihab attempted to contextualize his explanation, stating that all those who purify their piety toward God are entitled to enter paradise, not just specific groups or factions.

Beside being contextual within the vastness of heaven, the color green and the clothing given to the inhabitants of heaven are also contextualized by Hamka and Shihab, both of whom explain that there is no need to be excessive in dressing. Luxury and elegance don't necessarily have to be expensive, but the ideal outfit is one that fits, suits, and looks good on the wearer. In the context of clothing, whether it's shirts, jewelry, or anything else, there's no need to be excessive. If done excessively, it's not only less pleasing to the eye, but it can also lead to undesirable consequences. For example, wearing excessive jewelry could make people envious or jealous, and it could attract thieves or bad people to commit crimes against the person wearing it. Therefore, in the context of paradise alone, according to the interpretations of Hamka and Shihab, Allah provides clothing that is not excessive, suitable, and pleasing to the eye for its inhabitants. All the more so in the world, humans should pay attention to how they dress, adorn themselves, and so on.

Reflection on the Interpretation of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab about the Illustration of Heaven within the Quranic Interpretation Framework in the Archipelago

Hamka and Shihab have both endeavored to situate the understanding of texts concerning the afterlife in a socio-religious framework, although with distinct characteristics. The disparities in the contextualization attributes exhibited by both are significantly shaped by their academic backgrounds and their positions within their various eras and generations. However, it is worth appreciating that the contextualization efforts made by Hamka and Shihab in the verses explaining heaven not only add to and strengthen the classical interpretations that generally explain the depiction described by the Qur'an. For example, about 'paradise beneath which rivers flow' (Al-Baqarah [2]: 25)—with the aim of making it easier for humans to understand the information explained by Allah.

However, Hamka and Shihab strive to expand the interpretation of the verses illustrating heaven, including a heaven with rivers flowing beneath it – for example, Shihab mentioned that flowing water is relatively cleaner than stagnant water. Hamka said that flowing water typically symbolizes beauty and fertility, for example, for irrigation and so on. What Hamka and Shihab did was not only to contextualize verses about heaven within social reality but also to accommodate Indonesian identity in the language of interpretation they used, especially as Hamka did.

So, with the efforts made by Hamka and Shihab, at least they have opened the door for interpreters or Quran study enthusiasts to develop a framework for Quranic exegesis methodology not only to explain verses with metaphysical nuances such as verses about heaven, hell, angels, jinn, and so on. However, it also packages it within the framework of Indonesian or Nusantara (Archipelago) identities. Thus, with a framework and methodology that accommodates Indonesian identities, it will certainly be easier to digest and understand, especially for the Indonesian people.

As an example demonstrated by Shihab when interpreting the vastness of heaven (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 133). Shihab explains that such a vast heaven is not only for certain religious groups or sects. But every person or group has their own opportunity to enter heaven as long as they meet its conditions and requirements. Shihab's interpretation seeks to accommodate Indonesian identity with the various religious streams that exist in Indonesia. Therefore, it is necessary to consider and even accommodate the national identity, especially the plural identity, in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, including verses with metaphysical nuances, as long as they can be used and fall within the scope of the verse's information, without forcing it.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion that has been conducted, it appears that when Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab interpret the verses about the illustrations of heaven, both of them

attempt to reformulate and significantly differ from the interpretations of other commentators in general. Hamka and Shihab strive to contextualize the interpretation of verses about illustrations of heaven based on real-life illustrations and reality-oriented. Although Hamka and Shihab have distinct characteristics and traits in terms of language choice and contextualization models, Hamka is more active in the realm of preaching (*muballigh*), whereas Shihab is academic. Hamka and Shihab's interpretations of the verses that illustrate heaven are quite applicable and contextual, as they relate to the social and community context. Thus, the narratives constructed by Hamka and Shihab make the verses with abstract-metaphysical nuances easy for the public to understand. With the interpretative model employed by Hamka and Shihab in several verses about the illustration of paradise, the information in the Qur'an becomes relevant to the purpose and function of the Qur'an, namely as a way of life and suitable for all times and places (*salihun li kulli zaman wa makan*)

This writing shows that not only normative-practical verses (*fiqh*/Islamic law) can and need to be reinterpreted or re-contextualized, but also verses with theological-metaphysical nuances need to be re-contextualized, as demonstrated by the efforts of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab. Thus, similar themes or other themes still abound in the Qur'an that need to be further studied from various perspectives and theories. Therefore, the author hopes for further studies and new breakthroughs in the study of the Qur'an and its interpretation—including in Indonesia, with various analyses and approaches being undertaken.

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