



## **AMINA WADUD'S THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF TAFSIR QUR'AN AND WOMEN**

Oleh

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**Abstract:** *This study analyses Amina Wadud's thoughts on Qur'anic interpretation, particularly in her book 'Qur'an and Women'. She asserts that restrictions on women do not come from the Qur'anic text itself, but from interpretations of religious texts that are often gender-biased. Amina Wadud argues that it is not the Qur'anic text that restricts women, but the interpretation of religious texts that are often considered more important than the Qur'an itself. By using a hermeneutic methodology approach, Amina Wadud emphasises objectivity rather than subjectivity to facilitate the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, especially on gender issues. She fights for equal responsibility between men and women without ignoring the important differences between them. This research was conducted using the literature study method, using primary sources from Amina Wadud's works and related secondary sources. The results of this study show that Amina Wadud's thought brings a new perspective in Qur'anic interpretation that is more inclusive of women, challenging classical interpretations that tend to limit the role of women in Islam.*

**Keywords:** *Amina Wadud, hermeneutics, Qur'an and woman*

**Abstrak;** Penelitian ini menganalisis pemikiran Amina Wadud terhadap tafsir Al-Qur'an, khususnya dalam bukunya "Qur'an and Women". Beliau menegaskan bahwa pembatasan terhadap perempuan bukan berasal dari teks Al-Qur'an itu sendiri, melainkan dari interpretasi teks-teks agama yang sering kali bias gender. Amina Wadud berpendapat bahwa bukan teks Al-Qur'an yang membatasi perempuan, melainkan penafsiran teks agama yang sering kali dianggap lebih penting daripada Al-Qur'an itu sendiri. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metodologi hermeneutika, Amina Wadud lebih menekankan pada aspek obyektivitas bukan aspek subyektivitas sehingga memudahkan dalam interpretasi ayat-ayat Al Qur'an.terutama dalam isu-isu gender. Ia memperjuangkan kesetaraan tanggung jawab antara laki-laki dan perempuan tanpa mengabaikan perbedaan penting di antara keduanya. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode studi kepustakaan, menggunakan sumber primer dari karya-karya Amina Wadud dan sumber sekunder terkait. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemikiran Amina Wadud membawa perspektif baru dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an yang lebih inklusif

terhadap perempuan, menantang interpretasi klasik yang cenderung membatasi peran perempuan dalam Islam

**Kata kunci:** *Amina Wadud, hermeneutika, Al-Qur'an dan Perempuan*

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## A. Introduction

Amina Wadud is a Muslim intellectual who is renowned as a leader in the study of Islamic feminism. She explains the importance of women's roles in Islamic traditions and texts, especially in interpreting the Qur'an. Through her works, Wadud introduces a new perspective for understanding the Qur'an that is more inclusive of women. As a Muslim woman, she boldly proposes a shift from the classical fiqh paradigm to a more modern approach to the Qur'an that she believes must be adapted to the interpretation of the meaning.<sup>1</sup>

The theory used by Amina Wadud in interpreting is the hermeneutic approach of monotheism, where she assumes that men and women are the same in their natural creation. This approach is widely used by contemporary interpreters because in her approach she tries to read any text not only involving grammar, but also involving ideology and the origin of vocabulary or terms and others<sup>2</sup>. This hermeneutic approach in its history has not only been used in reading religious texts but also literary texts, works of art and others. Hermeneutics of monotheism emphasizes that the Qur'an has a unity of meaning from all parts of its verses. One of the goals of hermeneutics of monotheism is to explain the dynamics between universal and particular things in the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fahmi Assulthoni, Farida Yuniati, Dan Nuri Herachwati, "Hak Dan Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Hukum Keluarga (Studi Atas Pemikiran Feminisme Amina Wadud)," *Ulumuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 8, No. 1 (15 Juni 2022): hal. 228–44, <https://doi.org/10.36420/Ju.V8i1.6247>.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Amin Fathih Dan Fikri Alfadani, "Pemikiran Amina Wadud Tentang Pendekatan Hermeneutika Untuk Gerakan Gender," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 8, No. 2 (30 Desember 2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.31332/Zjpi.V8i2.4295>.

<sup>3</sup>Miftahul Janah Dan Muhammad Yasir, "Hermenutika Tauhid; Kritik Terhadap Penafsiran Amina Wadud Tentang Nusyuz," *Jurnal An-Nida'* 43, No. 2 (2019).

Although some Muslims reject Amina Wadud's interpretation because it is considered contrary to applicable law and the views of previous scholars, many Muslim academics are interested in studying her thoughts. This is because Wadud's intellectual ability in arguing has attracted the attention of scholars. Therefore, she is often invited to speak at international seminars and become a guest lecturer in various countries<sup>4</sup>. Amina Wadud's thoughts in her book *Al-Qur'an and Woman* (Women in the Qur'an) are influenced by Fazlur Rahman's thoughts. We can see this from the methods and approaches used in interpreting verses related to gender which are the same as the methods used by Fazlur Rahman.<sup>5</sup>

Then, entering the modern era today, there are many changes and developments in all fields, including progress in social sciences, culture, and religion. In this context, there have been many women who have not only attracted attention to be discussed but also issues regarding women (gender) which have become very relevant and actual issues to be discussed today. Starting from how she was created to how she is treated, even the recognition that the existence of women in the construction of culture and civilization, all can cause many questions. As for a woman and a man who have equal status as humans, many are shown by the verses of the Qur'an, especially in spiritual matters. The equality of women and men is also widely shown by the hadith of the prophet.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ulya, *Berbagai Pendekatan Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an Penggunaan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora Dan Kebahasaan Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*, 1 Ed. (Idea Press Yogyakarta, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Dedi Junaedi, Muhammadong, Dan Sahliah, "Metodologi Tafsir Amina Wadud Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, No. 2 (30 November 2019): 654–65, <https://doi.org/10.29313/Tjpi.V8i2.5229>.

<sup>6</sup> Baiq Tuhfatul Unsi "Analisis Konsep Tentang Wanita Amina Wadud" *Tafaqquh: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Keislaman* Volume 10, Nomor 2, Desember 2022 Hal 337.

Amina Wadud provides a new interpretation of the Qur'an, especially regarding how verses related to gender can be understood. She also received the label of feminist because she has been active and productive with her works that focus on the interpretation of the Qur'an so that she can become a figure who is known and recognized by the world. Until contracted by various world-class universities, as she has signed, to become a professor at the International Islamic University of Malaysia<sup>7</sup>. In her interpretation, she emphasizes the importance of the role of women as subjects in religious discourse, not just as objects. She has also criticized classical interpretations that often place women in a lower position, by emphasizing that the Qur'an actually gives greater rights and respect to women than is practiced in many Islamic traditions today. The purpose of this article is to determine the interpretation variables including *manhaj*, *thariqah*, *lawn*, *ittijah* used in the interpretation of the Qur'an and Women. Furthermore, it examines Amina Wadud's interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an related to the substance and essence of the Qur'an, especially in the context of gender equality.

This study also aims to identify the contribution of the interpretation of the Qur'an and Women as a modern interpretation that integrates contemporary discoveries in understanding and interpreting the text of the Qur'an, especially related to women's and gender issues. As well as exploring Amina Wadud's thoughts in developing the concept of interpretation based on gender justice and its relevance to the contemporary socio-cultural context. While the method used in this study is library research using primary sources, namely the book of interpretation of the

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<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Fahrizal Amin, "Amina Wadud: Pendekatan Hermeneutika Untuk Gerakan Gender," *Al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama* 15, No. 2 (31 Desember 2020): Hal 240, <https://doi.org/10.24042/Ajsla.V15i2.7040>.

Qur'an and Women by Amina Wadud. This literature study was conducted by collecting and analyzing data from primary sources. Other relevant sources as supporters such as scientific journals, books, and scientific articles. Then, the steps taken by the author are content analysis related to primary or secondary sources, which will produce interpretation variables by covering the interpretation method and the substance of the interpretation of the interpretive work to be studied.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Biography of Amina Wadud**

Amina Wadud was born on September 25, 1952 as an Orthodox Christian in the United States, the city of Bethesda Montgomery, Maryland with the real name Maria Teasley. She was born to a couple with different faith backgrounds, Mary Teasley's father was a devout Methodist Christian while her mother was the child of a Muslim slave in the Berber part of North Africa. According to Charles Kurzman Amina Wadud only has Malaysian blood, but she was born in the United States. Amina Wadud said that her father was a believer and a Methodist minister. However, she did not explain further about the difference between the two roles, Bishop is to lead Methodist Christians. This teaching has emerged in the mid-18th century AD and is called Methodist because of its high performance standards and is very disciplined.<sup>8</sup>

Maria Teasley had embraced Islam in 1972 and in 1974 her name was officially changed to Amina Wadud Muhsin which was chosen to

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<sup>8</sup> Andi Amirah Farhana Dan Syarif Abbas, "Telaah Pengaruh Pemikiran Tafsir Feminisme Amina Wadud Terhadap Masyarakat Muslim Barat," *El-Adabi: Jurnal Studi Islam* 02, No. 01 (2023), <https://jurnal.stainidaeladabi.ac.id/index.php/eladabi>.

reflect her religious affiliation. She also believed that she did not become a convert with her eyes closed, but rather from her experience of ongoing injustice. Amina hoped that by becoming a convert she could find a wider space to deepen her understanding of Islam, especially in getting to know Allah SWT as the Most Just Being. As translated in her book, Amina Wadud said, "I did not convert to Islam with my eyes closed to the structure and personal experience of ongoing injustice. In my personal transition which is often referred to as change, however, I focused with hope and idealism to find greater access to Allah as al-Wadud, namely the Most Just God."<sup>9</sup>

She is a widow with five children, two boys and three girls<sup>10</sup>. Amina Wadud's college studies began at the University of Pennsylvania in Education. She earned a bachelor's degree (BS) in 1975, then continued her education to the master's level (MA) in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan in December 1982. In August 1988, she received a PhD from the same university in Islamic Studies and Arabic. Some of Amina Wadud's works in book form are: *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*. While in the form of articles, "Muslim Women as Minority", "The Dynamics of Male-Female Relations In Islam", "Understanding the Implicit Qur'anic Parameters to the Role of Women in the Modern Context"<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Farhana Dan Abbas.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Aziz Zakiruddin Dan Iwan Romadhan Sitorus, "Wanita Dalam Kepemimpinan Dan Politik Perspektif Amina Wadud," *Al-Imarah: Jurnal Pemerintahan Dan Politik Islam* 7, No. 2 (2022).

<sup>11</sup> Janah Dan Yasir, "Hermenutika Tauhid; Kritik Terhadap Penafsiran Amina Wadud Tentang Nusyuz."

In the midst of her busy schedule as an academic with expertise in gender, she also continued her studies to the Doctoral level at the University of Michigan until graduating in 1989. She also had the opportunity to continue her Arabic studies in more depth at Al-Azhar University, Cairo. Her study journey was supported by Alton L. Pete Becker (Expert in Linguistics and Philology). After completing her doctorate, she taught at the International Islamic University of Malaysia from 1989 to 1992. While there, she began her association with the Women's Association which later became known as Sisters in Islam<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, Amina Wadud Muhsin is a controversial feminist figure. As a female activist who fights for gender justice, she argues that the relationship between men and women in many countries today still shows patriarchal prejudice, resulting in a lack of equal justice. Her works reflect her brain's anxiety over the injustice of society towards women. Therefore, she tries to rebuild the framework of the method of interpreting the Qur'an to produce an interpretation that is sensitive to gender and fair. Although he has only written two scientific works in book form, he has written dozens, even hundreds of papers published in various journals, seminars, and research proposals in the fields of women, gender, religion, pluralism, and humanity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Aarsal, Busyro Busyro, Dan Maizul Imran, "*Kepemimpinan Perempuan: Penerapan Metode Tafsir Hermeneutika Feminisme Amina Wadud*," Al Quds : Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis 4, No. 2 (19 November 2020): hal. 481, <https://doi.org/10.29240/Alquds.V4i2.1976>.

<sup>13</sup> Aniqoh, "*Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Amina Wadud Muhsin*," Revelatia: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir 2, No. 2 (20 November 2021): 124–39, <https://doi.org/10.19105/Revelatia.V2i2.5305>.

## 2. Interpretation Methodology: Manhaj, Tariqoh, al-Lawn and Ittijah in Tafsir Qur'an and Women

Amina Wadud developed the view that religious interpretation has relative value, so that from this thought emerged a concept that distinguishes between religion itself and religious thought. In her framework of thought, there is a division between absolute and relative aspects. Religion is seen as something absolute because it contains absolute truth that cannot be disputed, while religious thought is relative, because it is the result of human interpretation of religious texts<sup>14</sup>. One of Amina Wadud's important works is the *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* which re-examines the Qur'an with a feminist worldview that supports gender justice both theoretically and practically. This book was first published in 1992 by Fajar Bakti Publications in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.<sup>15</sup>

Then the background of Wadud's thinking in interpreting the Qur'an comes from his belief that there is no method or category of interpretation that is truly objective. Each interpreter has some subjective choices. Their interpretation explanations partly reflect subjective choices and do not always reflect the intent of the text they interpret. However, Amina often does not distinguish between the text of the Qur'an and its interpretation<sup>16</sup>. Wadud's thinking is greatly influenced by the idea of "Neo-Modernism" developed by Fazlur Rahman. His motivation is to criticize several views and results of interpretation of the Qur'an related to women, with the aim of evaluating and understanding

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<sup>14</sup> Mahfud, "Konsep Hermeneutika Feminis Amina Wadud Dalam Pendekatan Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Islamida* 1, No. 2 (2023).

<sup>15</sup> Ulya, *Berbagai Pendekatan Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an Penggunaan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora Dan Kebahasaan Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*.

<sup>16</sup> Aniqoh, "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Amina Wadud Muhsin."

the position of women in Muslim culture in the modern era. Amina Wadud also uses a "reinterpretation" approach and a "double movement" method that includes various analytical approaches to explore the meaning of the Qur'an in more depth.<sup>17</sup>

The interpretation of the Qur'an and women by Amina Wadud has its own uniqueness, because her struggle to achieve equal relations in the system of relations between men and women has been proven by two things, first in a concept that has been implemented in a thematic interpretation work, entitled *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading The Sacret From Al-Qur'an Woman Perspective*, which has now been translated into Indonesian as *Women in the Qur'an*<sup>18</sup>. Second, practically, that she has dared to change the traditions and religious views that have been established for centuries by performing a historic Friday prayer with herself as the imam, in Manhattan New York, USA on March 18, 2005, although her revolutionary breakthrough later still left various controversies.<sup>19</sup>

The work of the interpretation of the Qur'an and Woman was written based on her in-depth studies, discussing the overall context such as the context of the revelation of the verses (asbabun nuzul micro and macro), the composition of the text between the grammatical text and semantics (between the subject and the object according to the interpreter), the conceptual thematic context and tartib nuzul, the socio-historical context, and a holistic approach using the hermeneutic

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<sup>17</sup>Junaedi, *Muhammadong, Dan Sahliah, "Metodologi Tafsir Amina Wadud Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an."*

<sup>18</sup>Ulya, *Berbagai Pendekatan Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an Penggunaan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora Dan Kebahasaan Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an.*

<sup>19</sup>Labibul Wildan, "Hermeneutika Komunikatif Amina Wadud Muhsin," *Indonesian Journal Of Islamic Communication* 1, No. 2 (30 Januari 2019): 36–48, <https://doi.org/10.35719/Ijic.V1i2.53>.

interpretation methodology. Languages that have gender characteristics, such as Arabic, create certain pre-texts for their users. Everything is classified as male or female. In addition to analyzing gender according to the Arabic language of the Qur'an, Amina Wadud also analyzes certain keywords and phrases related to humans in general and women in particular, to reveal contextual understanding<sup>20</sup>. The hermeneutic model used relates to three aspects: First, the context when the text was written (revealed), Second, the grammatical composition of the text, and Third, the text as a whole, namely the *welthanschauung* or worldview of the text.<sup>21</sup>

After studying the book of interpretation of the Qur'an and Woman, the author found that the *manhaj* (method) used by Amina Wadud is to use a thematic and contextual interpretation approach with a main focus on the issue of gender justice, not tied to the order of the *mushaf*. She also applies the reinterpretation and double movement methods, which trace the historical context of the revelation of the verses and then connect them to modern reality. In her interpretation, she uses *Thatiqah Sastra* in the Arabic language aspect, especially in words that are often interpreted with gender bias. With her feminist approach, Amina Wadud seeks a fairer and more inclusive interpretation for women, highlighting the moral message of the Qur'an that supports equality. Then, *Al-Lawn* in the interpretation of the Qur'an regarding the feminist (female) interpretation used by her is grouped into 3, namely

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<sup>20</sup>Andi Rosa, *Tafsir Kontemporer Metode Dan Orientasi Modern Dari Para Ahli Dalam Menafsirkan Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Depdikbud Bantenpress, 2015).

<sup>21</sup>Syukri Abubakar Dan Muhammad Mutawali, "Pandangan Amina Wadud Terhadap Perempuan Menjadi Imam Sholat Laki-Laki (Suatu Pendekatan Tafsir Hermeneutik)" 9, No. 1 (2020), Online At [Http://Journal.Uinmataram.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Schemata](http://Journal.Uinmataram.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Schemata).

traditional interpretation, reactive interpretation, and holistic interpretation. First, traditional interpretation, or interpretation that uses certain topics according to the ability and level of interest of the reader. The topics used in this interpretation include law (fiqh), nahwu, shorof, history, tasawuf, and others that are in accordance with the interests and expertise of the interpreter. This type of interpretation model is juz'iiyyat, atomistic, and specific. This indicates that the discussion is not complete because the interpretation is done verse by verse and not thematically. The discussion seems incomplete; little effort is made to discuss specific issues in the Qur'an. talking about certain topics based on the Qur'an itself. Without this discussion, the reader may lose the overall meaning of the Qur'an. Furthermore, Amina stated that this type of traditional interpretation seems exclusive, because it was only written by men. It is not surprising that only men's awareness and experiences are reflected in it. To reduce gender injustice in family life and society, it is important to include women's experiences, views, and opinions. Family and society can be minimized.<sup>22</sup>

Second, the second interpretation is a reactive interpretation, which focuses on the reactions of modern intellectuals to the various obstacles faced by women according to the Qur'an. The arguments put forward and the methods used are often based on feminist and rationalist concepts, but without a thorough examination of the Qur'an. Thus, despite the spirit of liberation, there is no visible connection with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, namely the Qur'an<sup>23</sup>. and Third holistic, Because the previous traditional and reactive interpretation

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<sup>22</sup> Ulya, *Berbagai Pendekatan Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an Penggunaan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora Dan Kebahasaan Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*.

<sup>23</sup> Wildan, "Hermeneutika Komunikatif Amina Wadud Muhsin."

models failed to represent the intent of the Qur'an in relation to the position of women towards men, Amina Wadud gave birth to a holistic interpretation model, namely an interpretation that reconsiders the entire method of interpreting the Qur'an and relates it to various modern social, moral, economic and political issues, including issues concerning women, and this is where Amina Wadud places herself.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Ittijah is the attitude of the interpreter, his views, his school of interpretation, and the direction that dominates him in terms of ideology<sup>25</sup>. The basis of Amina Wadud's philosophy is based on the gender justice approach in interpreting the Qur'an, which she developed by emphasizing equality between men and women. Amina Wadud believes that no technique or interpretation is completely objective, therefore she emphasizes the importance of linking interpretation to the social and historical background, as well as the current conditions of society. Her style is strongly influenced by Fazlur Rahman's 'Neo-Modernism', in which she sees the need for a dual movement approach - first studying the historical meaning and then transferring its principles to the present. Wadud's research focuses on the significance of the Qur'an in relation to the ideals of universal justice, especially gender relations. From a feminist perspective, Wadud aims to reveal the ethical message of the Qur'an, which upholds the principles of justice, equality, and inclusiveness in interpersonal relationships, especially in matters relating to Islamic women.

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<sup>24</sup> Ubay Harun, "Konsep Feminisme Perspektif Amina Wadud," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Ushuluddin Dan Filsafat* 17, No. 1 (30 Juni 2021): 75–89, <https://doi.org/10.24239/Rsy.V17i1.706>.

<sup>25</sup> Rosa, *Tafsir Kontemporer Metode Dan Orientasi Modern Dari Para Ahli Dalam Menafsirkan Ayat Al-Qur'an*.

Fazrul Rahman and Amina Wadud have a number of similarities in their approach and understanding of the interpretation of the Qur'an, especially in terms of fighting for a more dynamic and relevant understanding for the modern social context. Amina Wadud is known as a progressive Islamic thinker who is greatly inspired by the liberation theology school in Islamic studies. The liberation theology school in the context of Islam emphasizes the importance of liberating oppressed groups, such as women, through religious interpretations that focus on the values of justice and equality between women and men<sup>26</sup>.

In Amina Wadud's thinking, the main focus is on the interpretation of the Qur'an that considers gender justice and equality. She tries to interpret the Qur'an through the perspective of Islamic feminism, which combines Islamic theological thought with the principles of feminism. Islamic feminism aims to achieve gender equality based on Islamic teachings without abandoning the principles of faith. This feminist theology encourages re-examining the texts of the Qur'an so that they not only reflect a patriarchal perspective, but are also more inclusive of women. In addition, Amina Wadud was also influenced by the idea of monotheism as an ethical principle, which believes that the oneness of God demands justice and equality for all humans. She saw monotheism as a basis for rejecting all forms of oppression, including injustice against women..<sup>27</sup>

Then, the main purpose of the Qur'an is to instill moral values such as justice, compassion, and equality. Therefore, Rahman criticized

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<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Amin Fathih Dan Fikri Alfadani, "Pemikiran Amina Wadud Tentang Pendekatan Hermeneutika Untuk Gerakan Gender," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 8, No. 2 (30 Desember 2022).

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Aziz Zakiruddin Dan Iwan Romadhan Sitorus, "*Wanita Dalam Kepemimpinan Dan Politik Perspektif Amina Wadud*" 7, No. 2 (2022).

the classical interpretation approach which often focuses on linguistic aspects or sharia law without considering moral messages and fundamental values. He argued that many rules in classical interpretation are suitable for the context of 7th century society, but are less relevant to be applied literally in modern life.

Fazlur Rahman's approach is famous for his concept called double movement. This concept involves two important stages in interpretation:

- a. The first stage is to understand the socio-historical context when the verses of the Qur'an were revealed, including the cultural, social, and political situations of Arab society at that time. This is to see how the verses are a direct response to the conditions of society at that time.
- b. The second stage is to identify universal moral or ethical principles in the verse. Once the universal principle is found, it can be applied to the modern context without having to be tied to specific rules that may have been more relevant in the past.

In her view, Amina Wadud criticized classical interpretations because according to her, these interpretations were heavily influenced by the patriarchal culture that developed in society at the time the interpretations were made. Wadud saw that classical interpreters, who were mostly men, often interpreted the verses of the Qur'an from a male perspective and in the context of a patriarchal culture that tended to place women in a lower position<sup>28</sup>. As a result, many of the results of interpretations, according to Wadud, were not in line with the principles of justice brought by Islam.

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<sup>28</sup> Irsyadunnas Irsyadunnas, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Gender Ala Amina Wadud Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer," *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 14, No. 2 (7 Juli 2015): 123, <https://doi.org/10.14421/Musawa.2015.142.123-142>.

Wadud considered that classical interpretations needed to be reviewed so that the true values of the Qur'an, especially those related to justice and equality, could be translated more relevantly in the present day. According to her, interpretations should not be viewed as final or unquestionable, because they are human in nature and influenced by the social and cultural contexts of the time. Approaching a more inclusive interpretation, Wadud used the double movement method that he took from Fazlur Rahman. This method combines an understanding of the socio-historical context when the revelation came down, then looking for the moral essence or universal principles in the verses, so that they can be applied in a modern context. With this approach, Wadud hopes to present an interpretation that reflects true Islamic values, namely justice, equality, and universal humanity.

### 3. Interpretation of the Substance of the Qur'an in the Book of Tafsir Qur'an and Women

Wadud emphasized various traditional interpretation subjects whose interpretation models and findings favor men over women (gender bias). Such interpretations are considered irrelevant in the current context and must be revised and adjusted to the current environment. The interpretation of women's leadership in the Qur'an is one of the themes discussed in the study of verse interpretation which according to Wadud must be reinterpreted and is not relevant to current conditions. The verse used as evidence for men's leadership over women is Surah al-Nisa verse 34:<sup>29</sup>

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

<sup>29</sup> Amina Wadud, *Al-Qur'an Dan Perempuan: Membaca Ulang Teks Suci Dari Sudut Pandang Perempuan*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

"Men (husbands) are the protectors of women (wives), because Allah has made some of them (men) excel others (women), and health".

#### QUR'AN AND WOMAN

With regard to *faddala*, men and women, the following verse is central:

Men are [*qawwamuna 'ala*] women, [on the basis] of what Allah has [preferred] (*faddala*) some of them over others, and [on the basis] of what they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are [*qanitat*], guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded. As for those from whom you fear [*nushuz*], admonish them, banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then, if they obey you, seek not a way against them. (4:34).

Needless to say, this verse covers a great deal more than just preference. This is classically viewed as the single most important verse with regard to the relationship between men and women: 'men are *qawwamuna 'ala* women'. Before discussing this, however, I want to point out that this correlation is determined on the basis of two things: 1. what 'preference' has been given, and 2. 'what they spend of their property (for support of women),' i.e. a socio-economic norm and ideal.

The translation I have inserted, 'on the basis of,' comes from the *bi*<sup>16</sup> used in this verse. In a sentence, it implies that the characteristics or contents before *bi* are determined 'on the basis' of what comes after *bi*. In this verse it means that men are *qawwamuna 'ala* women only if the following two conditions exist. The first condition is 'preference', and the other is that they support the women from their means. 'If either condition fails, then the man is not 'qawwam' over that woman'.<sup>17</sup>

My first concern then is *faddala*. The verse says the position between men and women is based on 'what' Allah has preferred. With regard to material preference, there is only one Qur'anic reference which specifies that Allah has determined for men a portion greater than for women: inheritance.<sup>18</sup> The share for a male is twice that for the female (4:7) within a single family. The absolute inheritance for all men will not always be more than that for all women. The exact amount left depends on the family's wealth in the first place.

In addition, if verse 4:34 refers to a preference demonstrated in inheritance, then such a materialistic preference is also not absolute. This connection is often favoured because the other condition for *qiwamah* is that 'they spend of their property (for the support of women)'. Thus, there is a reciprocity between privileges and respons-

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Wadud's interpretation of this verse follows the method of historical *contextualization*. He tried to find the true meaning or original meaning of the word "Qawwamuna" After reviewing the available materials and viewpoints (قوامون), he found that this word has many meanings. According to al-Zamakhsharī, this statement reflects the responsibility of men towards women. Then, Al-Maudhudi stated that men are the leaders of women, while Sayyid Qutb stated that this statement is limited to the relationship between husband and wife, while Wadud stated that men and women are members of the family, a social institution. Each has a responsibility, women are responsible for bearing

children and being the protector of human life. He concluded that this verse describes a certain socio-economic situation where a husband is the provider for his wife and children.<sup>30</sup>

Then, according to Amina Wadud's interpretation of human creation in Surah An-Nisa verse 1:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا  
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

"O people! Fear your Lord who created you from one person (Adam), and (Allah) created his partner (Eve) from (himself); and from the two of them Allah gave birth to many men and women. Fear Allah in Whose name you ask for each other and (maintain) family relationships. Indeed, Allah always guards and watches over you."



In this case, the interpretation made by Amina Wadud is not much different from other hermeneutic thinkers whose research only focuses on gender and the permissibility of previously prohibited laws,

<sup>30</sup> Arsal, Busyro, Dan Imran, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan."

and vice versa. She rejects the idea that women were created from Adam's rib. Meanwhile, God created Adam in the right form. Amina Wadud sees this as the result of gender interpretation. Amina Wadud emphasizes important phrases in the verse above: *nafs wahidah*, *min*, and *zauj*. According to her, the term *nafs* refers to all human origins in general, not just feminine or masculine. According to her, the story describes the origins of human history according to the Qur'an. However, commentators usually interpret the term "*nafs*" as Adam. In fact, there is no clarification in the Qur'an regarding whether the word *nafs* refers to Adam or Eve. As a result, the main problem in this difficulty is that the word *nafs* is *mu'annath*, but why is it read as male by classical commentators.<sup>31</sup>

According to Amina Wadud, it is possible that this lack of explanation led Qur'anic interpreters such as al-Zamashari and other scholars to rely on the Biblical account, which states that Eve was created from Adam's rib or loin. In this case, it is not how Eve was formed, but rather that she was Adam's partner. According to Amina, a partner consists of complementary forms of one reality, with differences in nature, quality, and function, but these two harmonious components complement each other as parts of a greater whole. Each member of the couple logically needs the other, and both exist solely by virtue of their relationship. In this sense, the creation of Eve and Adam for Amina Wadud is part of the plan of Adam's creation, and thus both are equally important.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Eka Prasetyawati, "Pemikiran Hermeneutika Amina Wadud Muhsin," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 4, No. 1 (8 Agustus 2020): 28–49, <https://doi.org/10.53429/Spiritualis.V4i1.42>.

<sup>32</sup> Junaedi, Muhammadong, Dan Sahliah, "Metodologi Tafsir Amina Wadud Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an."

### C. Conclusion

Amina Wadud in her book of interpretation of the Qur'an and Women uses a hermeneutic approach to monotheism with a comprehensive methodology. This methodology includes *manhaj* which uses thematic and contextual interpretation methods with a double movement approach, *thariqah* which uses a literary approach especially in the Arabic language aspect, *al-lawn* which groups feminist interpretations into three categories, namely traditional, reactive, and holistic, and *al-ittijah* which is oriented towards justice and gender equality in the interpretation of the Qur'an.

The substance of Amina Wadud's interpretation emphasizes several important aspects, including the reinterpretation of verses that are considered gender biased, the rejection of interpretations that place women in a subordinate position, a contextual understanding of verses related to the relationship between men and women, and interpretations that uphold the principles of justice and gender equality. Amina Wadud's contribution to thought has brought a new perspective to the interpretation of the Qur'an that is more inclusive of women while still adhering to the universal principles of the Qur'an. This research is expected to be a foundation for subsequent research, especially in exploring deeper aspects that have not been studied in depth, such as a comparison of interpretations using other approaches. In this article, there are still many shortcomings from all sides and contents.

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