

GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAMIC SHARIA (THE STUDY OF BISRI MUSTOFA'S THOUGHT IN *AL-IBRĪZ LI MA'RIFAH TAFSĪR AL-QUR'ĀN AL-'AZĪZ*)

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Abstract: The problem of gender inequality is a significant concern in the dynamics of Islamic law. The meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in this matter is strongly influenced by the social constructs surrounding it. This article aims to find Bisri Mustofa's thoughts in *Al-Ibrīz li Ma'rifah Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīz* about verses with the theme of gender and women. This paper uses a descriptive qualitative method. The data collected were analyzed using the theory of hermeneutic philosophy and the theory of gender equality by Mansour Fakih. This article finds that Bisri Mustofa's interpretation tends to be gender-biased due to the Javanese culture surrounding it.

Keyword: gender; *tafsīr*; *al-Ibrīz*; Javanese culture

Abstrak: Problem ketimpangan gender menjadi perhatian utama dalam dinamika pensyariaan Islam. Pemaknaan ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dalam masalah tersebut sangat dipengaruhi oleh konstruk sosial yang mengitarinya. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pemikiran Bisri Mustofa dalam kitabnya yang berjudul *Al-Ibrīz li Ma'rifah Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīz* tentang ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an dengan tema gender dan perempuan. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan dua teori; teori filsafat hermeneutika, dan teori kesetaraan gender Mansour Fakih. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa penafsiran Bisri Mustofa cenderung bias gender. Kecenderungan ini disebabkan oleh budaya Jawa yang melingkupinya.

Kata Kunci: gender; *tafsīr*; *al-Ibrīz*; budaya Jawa

INTRODUCTION

One of the main principles of Islamic teachings is equal rights between humans. As for theologically, their difference lies in their

devotion and piety to God.¹ The problem is, textually, the verses of the Qur'an still leave problems. For example, some verses give the

¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Quran: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 269.

impression that men have a superior degree to women. This problem usually stems from the verse *al-rijāl qanwāmūna 'alā al-Nisā'* (4: 34).²

It is undeniable that the interpretations produced by the commentators contribute to the construction of a patriarchal culture in the Qur'an. The reason is that an interpretation work, viewed from its episteme and orientation, cannot be separated from the socio-cultural environment surrounding it. With its diversity of problems and dynamics, whether we realize it or not, this social space always colors the works of interpretation and represents their interests and ideologies.³

Studies on gender interpretation have been carried out for a long time. The current differences of opinion are no longer only focused on placing women in their actual position or giving them a role in the domestic sphere. More than that, the current debate is related to the portion they should get. Some are very narrow and tight, but some are very wide and loose.⁴

M. Quraish Shihab stated a bias against women from the past to the present. This form of bias sometimes fully equates women with men or does not give them rights. Total equality certainly has an impact on the deviation of women's nature. Meanwhile, not

giving women rights as human beings is also an act of harassment.⁵

Gender perceptions, especially in a pluralistic society, have different views. In the context of the Indonesian nation, which has ethnic and cultural diversity, the Javanese are the majority ethnic group and are known to be very thick with patriarchal culture. In the view of feminists in general, Javanese culture is a culture that does not provide equality between men and women.⁶ There are many phrases about Javanese women that describe the low status of women compared to men. It is like the expression of women as *kanca wingking* (women's roles are limited to mere domestic affairs). Another expression is *swarga nunut neraka katut* (women are weak creatures whose fate depends on a man). Including a lesser share of women's inheritance than men is common. At the same time, there is an assumption that it is time for women to be separated from men's power by demanding equal rights in all aspects.

The treasures of the interpretation of the Qur'an were born from the social constructs that surround it. Including the presence of the interpretation of the Qur'an in Javanese, of course, becomes a dynamic in itself, mainly when it is associated with gender

² Islah Gusmian, *Khaṣanah Tafsir Indonesia* (Jakarta: Teraju Mizan, 2003), 309.

³ Gusmian, 293.

⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Perempuan* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2011), 33.

⁵ Shihab, 34.

⁶ Christina S. Handayani dan Ardhian Novianto, *Kuasa Perempuan Jawa* (Yogyakarta: LKis, 2004), 3.

problems. Islamic teachings that carry the spirit of gender equality are confronted with the reality of patriarchal Javanese society, which is an exciting discussion to explore. The construction of gender in Javanese interpretation with its interpreters with Javanese socio-cultural backgrounds is a challenge in itself. Among the commentaries in Javanese is *Al-Ibrāz* by Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Qur'an Suci Bahasa Jawi* by R. Muhammad Adnan, *Al-Hudā* by Bakri Shahid, *al-Iklil*, and *Tāj al-Muslimīn min Kalām Rabb al-'Ālamīn* the work of Misbah Mustofa, and so on.

The author is interested in the book *Al-Ibrāz* by Bisri Mustofa. He is a scholar who is famous for his moderate and flexible thoughts. In addition, the background is unique. He is a Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholar who is persistent in fighting for the concept of *abl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*. Despite his *salafiyah* (traditional) background, his thoughts are moderate. This attitude stems from the *uṣūl al-fiqh* approach that he uses, prioritizing the benefit and goodness of Muslims by adjusting to the situation, conditions, times, and community needs. The thinking is contextual. For example, he expressed his opinion on Family Planning (KB) in 1968. Even though most NU

scholars had not accepted KB at that time, he had already put forth his ideas and accepted KB. He embodied the idea in his book entitled *Islam dan Keluarga Berencana*.⁷ The next question is whether he also put his moderate thoughts into his commentary work? This question will be answered in this article.

There have been many studies related to the gender perspective in Javanese interpretation. Some of them are "Gender dalam Tafsir Jawa (Studi Atas Tafsir *al-Huda* karya Bakri Syahid)" written by Suci Wulandari.⁸ Wulandari examines several verses of the Qur'an related to gender and women's issues in the book *al-Huda*. The paper uses an interpretive-hermeneutical approach to describe and analyze the character's interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, which are discussed in the theme of gender construction. The focus of hermeneutics, in this case, revolves around understanding, which can consider the context of the object being understood and explore what influences an interpretation.

"Tafsir Gender Jawa: Telaah Tafsir *al-Iklil fi Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* Karya Misbah Mustafa" written by Ahmad Zainal Abidin, M. Imam Sanusi al-Khanafi, and Eko Zulfikar.⁹ By using social structure analysis,

⁷ Ahmad Zainah Huda, *Mutiara Pesantren Perjalanan Khidmah Bisri Mustofa* (Yogyakarta: LKis, 2011), 61.

⁸ Suci Wulandari, "Gender dalam Tafsir Jawa (Studi Atas Tafsir *al-Huda* karya Bakri Syahid)," *Qof* 2, no. 1 (2018), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/32894945>

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⁹ Ahmad Zainal Abidin, M. Imam Sanusi Al-Khanafi, dan Eko Zulfikar, "Tafsir Gender Jawa: Telaah Tafsir *Al-Iklil Fi Ma'ani Al-Tanzil* Karya Misbah Mustafa," *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam* 18, no. 1 (31 Januari 2019): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.14421/MUSAWA.2019.181.1-17>.

they examine several verses of the Qur'an with the theme of Misbah Mustafa's gender perspective in his commentary. "Hak-Hak Wanita Perspektif Tafsir Jawa (Studi Komparatif Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa dan Misbah Mustofa)" by Aunillah Reza Pratama.¹⁰ Using the descriptive-analytical-comparative method, Reza compares the two figures in their interpretation of women's rights.

While researching women in the book of *Al-Ibriz*, as far as the author searches, only found one article entitled "Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa Terhadap Ayat-Ayat tentang Perempuan dalam Kitab *Al-Ibriz*" written by Faiqoh.¹¹ In his research, Faiqoh uses the descriptive-interpretative analysis method. The descriptive method is used to describe the biography, scriptures, condition of Javanese women, and the interpretation of Bisri Mustofa objectively. Furthermore, the descriptive explanation was interpreted to understand further Mostofa's thoughts and interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an about women, which were then analyzed to find their relevance to the conditions of Javanese society at that time.

Unlike the previous writings, this article focuses on Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of verses about gender and

women. The interpretation is analyzed using two theories; first, the theory of hermeneutical philosophy. The second is the theory of gender equality by Mansour Fakih.

METHODS

This article uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected using library techniques. The primary source is the book by Bisri Mustofa entitled *Al-Ibriz li Ma'rifah Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. At the same time, secondary data is obtained from each article related to the theme of this paper. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using two theories—first, the theory of hermeneutical philosophy (philosophical hermeneutics). The focus of attention of this theory is to get a comprehensive understanding of Bisri Mustofa's thoughts. Besides that, it also explores its psychological, sociological, and historical aspects so that it influences his thinking. With this theory, the factors that influence the results of an interpretation will be known, both in terms of the methods and approaches used, sources of interpretation, and pre-understanding that influence Bisri Mustofa in interpreting verses about gender. The purpose of this theory is to put the results of the interpreter's

¹⁰ Aunillah Reza Pratama, "Hak-Hak Wanita Perspektif Tafsir Jawa (Studi Komparatif Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa dan Misbah Mustofa)," *Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta* (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga,

2016), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/21961/>.

¹¹ Faiqoh, "Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Perempuan dalam Kitab *Al-Ibriz*" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 2013), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/7662/>.

understanding in appropriate portions and propositions to produce new meanings from previous understandings in the form of contextualization.¹²

The second theory used as an analytical tool is the theory of gender equality, Mansour Fakih. This theory is suitable for applying socio-cultural, geographical, educational, economic, political, and cultural strata, which are relatively heterogeneous. According to this theory, gender inequality and gender differences are manifested in five ways, namely a) subordination, b) marginalization, c) stereotypes, d) violence, and e) double burden.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Bisri Mustofa's Biography

Bisri Mustofa was born in Sawahan Village, Gang Palem, Rembang City, to Zainal Mustafa and Siti Khodijah. His first name is Mashadi. He has several brothers and sisters. In the first marriage, his father married Dakilah, who had two sons, namely Zuhdi and Maskanah. His father remarried Khadijah and had a son Mashadi (Bisri Mustofa's first name). Finally, his father married Umm Salamah and gave Misbah and Maksum.¹³

In 1923, Zainal Mustafa performed the pilgrimage with Siti Khadijah, taking his children, who were still small. When travelling to his homeland, at the Port of Jeddah, Zainal Musthafa fell ill and died there, so Siti Khadijah and her children only returned to Indonesia. Zainal Mustafa's body must be buried in Jeddah. After arriving in Indonesia, the care of Mashadi and his younger siblings were assisted by his half-brothers, Zuhdi and Mukhtar. It was then that Bisri Mustofa began to learn to read the Qur'an and the procedures for worshipping Zuhdi, his older brother. In 1925 AD, coinciding with the month of Ramadan, Zuhdi took Bisri Mustofa to a boarding school in the Bulu Manis area, Kajen, Pati, which KH Hasbullah raised to study religion.¹⁴ However, Bisri Mustofa did not feel at home and finally returned to Rembang.

In addition to religious studies, for four years, Bisri Mustofa also studied at the Ongko Loro school, a People's School for the sons of the earth. He received a certificate from the school in 1926. Then he recited the Koran at the Kasingan Islamic Boarding School, Rembang, under the tutelage of KH Cholil Harun. At first, Bisri Mustofa had no interest in studying at the Islamic boarding school, so the results obtained were unsatisfactory. He

¹² Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermenentika Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: ELSAQ, 2011), 7.

¹³ Bibit Suprpto, *Ensiklopedi Ulama Nusantara: Riwayat Hidup, Karya, dan Sejarah Perjuangan 157 Ulama Nusantara* (Jakarta: Gelegar Media Indonesia, 2010), 269–73.

¹⁴ Afif Juliat Nur Cholis, "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Kauniyah Dalam Tafsir al-Ibriz Karya KH. Bisri Mustofa Rembang" (Institute Agama Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2002).

decided not to return to the pesantren. After not returning for several months, in early 1930 AD, Bisri Mustofa was ordered to return to Kasingan to KH Cholil Harun. Bisri Mustofa was then handed over to one of the senior students, the brother-in-law of KH Cholil Harun named Suja'i, to study. It was done because he was not ready to learn directly from KH Cholil Harun.¹⁵

In 1932 AD, Bisri Mustofa asked KH Cholil Harun's blessing to move to the Termas Islamic Boarding School, Pacitan, which KH Dimiyati managed. However, the request was rejected, so he only recited tabarrukan (asking for blessings) from the cleric. KH Cholil Harun tried to restrain Bisri Mustofa from learning to much from him. KH Cholil Harun did it because he intended to match Bisri Mustofa with his daughter, Ma'rufah bint Cholil Harun, who was still 10 years old. The marriage also took place in 1935 AD. He was blessed with several sons and daughters from this marriage, namely M. Cholil Bisri, A. Mustofa Bisri, M. Adib Bisri, Audah, Najikhah, Laabib Nihayah, and Atikah.

As the son-in-law of a cleric, Bisri Mustofa had to help teach the books to the students. Feeling inadequate, he returned to study regularly with Kiai Kamil and Kiai Fadholi in Karang Geneng, Rembang.¹⁶ In 1936, Bisri Mustofa performed the

pilgrimage, stayed in Mecca for a year, and studied with the teachers.

- a. Sayyid 'Alwī al-Malikī. From there he studied the 'Tafsir Jalālayn by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥāllī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.
- b. KH. Muhaimin. From him, he studied the book Jam' al-Jawāmi' by Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.
- c. Shaykh Hasan Mashshāṭ. From him, he studied the book Manhaj Żawī al-Naẓār by Shaykh Mahfūẓ al-Turmūsī.
- d. Sayyid Amin. From him, he studied the book Alfiyyah Ibn Malik by Ibn Malik.
- e. Shaykh 'Alī Malikī. From there, he studied the book al-Ashbāh wa al-Naẓā'ir by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and the book al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī by al-Naysaburī.
- f. Shaykh 'Umar Hamdan. From there, he studied the books of aḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and aḥīḥ Muslim.
- g. KH Bakir. From there he studied the book Lubbāb al-Uṣūl by Shaykh Islām Abī Yaḥyā Zarkashī, the book 'Umdāt al-Abrār by Muḥammad bin Ayyūb, and the 'Tafsīr al-Kashshāf by al-Zamakhsharī.

After returning from the pilgrimage, Bisri Mustofa helped KH Cholil take care of the Kasingan Islamic boarding school,

¹⁵ Huda, *Mutiara Pesantren Perjalanan Khidmah Bisri Mustofa*, 13.

¹⁶ Huda, 16.

Rembang. After he had enough, he returned to his hometown with his family and founded a boarding school later named Raudlatut Thalibin, Leteh Rembang. Apart from being the caretaker of the pesantren, Bisri Mustofa also played a role during the war of independence. The Ministry of Religion appointed him as an emerging leader. In 1950, he was appointed Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (Ministry of Religion) of Rembang Regency. In addition, he has held many positions in the next ministerial period. Bisri Mustofa died at 63 years, on February 16, 1977 AD, at the Dr Karyadi Hospital in Semarang due to a heart attack. He bequeathed an educational institution which was then cared for by KH Ahmad Mustofa Bisri until now.¹⁷

During his life, Bisri Mustofa produced many writings in various fields of science, such as interpretation, theology, hadith, fiqh, Arabic literature, and several other fields. Most of his works are translations of the books he had studied while studying in Mecca. One of his major works is the commentary book *Al-Ibrīz li Ma'rifah Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīz*. This book uses Arabic *pegon* writing in three volumes. Bisri Mustofa compiled it for approximately four years, starting in 1957-1960 AD and published by Menara Kudus. This book of interpretation is

still being used and studied in various Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Al-Ibrīz received much praise from Hasbi as-Shiddiqy, Khadijah Nasution, and Martin Van Bruinessen.¹⁸

2. *Al-Ibrīz*, Book of *Tafsīr* in Javanese

Al-Ibrīz is Bisri Mustofa's monumental work written in Javanese using the Arabic *pegon* writing format. Before starting to write, Bisri Mustofa first discussed with kyai Wildan from Kendal, Central Java and kyai Bakir from Comal, Pemalang, Central Java about other books of interpretation such as: *Tafsīr al-Mannār* by Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Rīdā, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr al-Jawābir* by Ṭanṭawi Jawhari, *Mahāsīn al-Ta'wīl* by Al-Qāsimī, and *Tafsīr Mazāyā Al-Qur'an* by Abī Su'ūd.

The main reason Bisri Mustofa wrote the book *Al-Ibrīz* is explained in the preamble of his book as follows.

“Al-Qur'an al-Karim sampun kathab dipun terjemah dening para ahli terjemah, wonten ingkang mawi babasa Walandi, Inggris, Jerman, Indonesia lan sanes-sanesipun, malah wonten ingkang mawi tembung daerah Jawa, Sunda lan sak panunggalanipun ugi sampun kathab. Kanthi terjemah-terjemah wau, umat Islam saking sedoyo bangsa lan suku-suku lajeng

¹⁷ Suprpto, *Ensiklopedi Ulama Nusantara: Riwayat Hidup, Karya, dan Sejarah Perjuangan 157 Ulama Nusantara*, 269–273.

¹⁸ Sabik Al Fauzi, “Melacak Pemikiran Logika Aristoteles dalam Kitab al-Ibrīz Lima'rifati Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīz” (Universitas slsam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2008), 35.

kathab ingkang saget mangertosi makna lan tegesipun."¹⁹

"The Qur'an has been translated into many languages, including Javanese. The goal is that all nations from different tribes can understand the meaning of the Qur'an."

In addition, due to the needs of the local Javanese-speaking community, Bisri Mustofa then wrote his interpretation in the commentary in a simple and easy-to-understand way for anyone who studied it. He expressed it as follows:

"Kangge nambah khidmah lan usaha ingkang sae lan mulya punika, dumateng ngarsanipun para mitra muslimin ingkang mangertos tembung daerah Jawa, kawulo sugubaken terjemah tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Aziz mawi cara ingkang prasaja, entheng sarta gampang pahamanipun".²⁰

"To add to the khidmah of this good and noble effort, to the honorable Muslims who understand the Javanese language, I present a translation of the interpretation of the Qur'an al-Aziz, the book compiled in simple, light and easy to understand language."

Bisri called his book a translation of the interpretation of the Qur'an. While the sources he took from the commentary books, such as the *Jalalayn* commentary, *Baiḍawī's* commentary, *Khāzin's* commentary, etc. There is no accurate data that says when this book was written. The explanation in the Latin version of *Al-Ibrīz* says that Bisri Mustofa began writing the book in 1369 H or 1951 AD. However, in other versions, such as in articles and other scientific writings, this interpretation book was written from 1957 to 1960. *Al-Ibrīz* was finished writing just before

dawn on Thursday 29 Rajab 1379 H (28 January 1960 AD) in Rembang, Central Java.²¹ Before being published and disseminated to the public, *Al-Ibrīz* was first rehearsed by several scholars from Kudus, Central Java, each of whom was an expert in the field of Al-Qur'an and Tafsir scholarship. They are Kyai Arwani Amin, Kyai Abu Ammar, Kyai Hisham, and Kyai Sya'roni Achmad. In 1961, this commentary began to be printed and copied to the publishers of Menara Kudus.²²

Menara Kudus published it in two editions. The first edition consists of three volumes with a total of 2270 pages. Each volume consists of 10 chapters in the Qur'an. The first volume contains the interpretation of chapters 1-10 of pages 1-563. Pages 1 and 2 are the introduction to the book. There is information about the background of the book's writing, sources of interpretation, the interpreters of the *Al-Ibrīz* commentary, systematics of writing the book, etc. Pages 3-563 are the contents. The second volume contains the interpretation of chapters 11-20, starting from pages 564-1366. The third volume contains the interpretation of chapters 21-30, starting from pages 1367-2270. The second edition is printed in the form of 30 volumes/*juḡ*. Each volume contains an interpretation of one-by-one *juḡ*

¹⁹ Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibrīz li Ma'rifah Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Aziz* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1960), 1.

²⁰ Mustofa, 1.

²¹ Mustofa, 2270.

²² Mustofa, 2.

in the Qur'an. The goal is to be more practical in its use.

According to Gus Adib (Bisri Mustofa's grandson), before Bisri Mustofa died, he had time to write a book of interpretations of *Al-Ibriz* in Indonesian. Around March or April, Gus Adib found the last 15 chapters of the Indonesian-language commentary *Al-Ibriz* in handwritten form. As for the other 15 early chapters, their whereabouts are unknown. However, with the discovery of the last 15 chapters, Bisri Mustofa has certainly completed the other 15 early chapters of the Indonesian-language commentary on *Al-Ibriz*.²³ Then the most recent is the exclusive edition of *Al-Ibriz* Latin version, the second printing published in January 2015, published by the Indonesian Strategic Studies Institute from Wonosobo, Central Java. His mentor is his own son, Ahmad Mustofa Bisri. The book is compiled in one volume containing 30 chapters in this edition. This new form presents the Latin meaning of writing and the meaning of each word. In addition, it is also equipped with a colored recitation code, fadhillah surah, because of the revelation of the verse (*asbab al-nuzul*), classification of the verses of the Qur'an, guidance for remembrance, and prayer for completing the Qur'an.²⁴

As for the systematics of writing, the Qur'an is written in the middle with a translation between lines (*gandul*). The interpretation is written in the margin marked with numbers, and the verse number is located at the end. In contrast, the translation number is located at the beginning. Other information is marked with: *tanbih*, *fa'idah*, *muhimmah*, etc. Bisri Mustofa also explained the meaning and type of each surah and the number of verses. The language used is Javanese, either in the form of *keromo* (a polite Javanese language usually used when the interlocutor is an older person) or *ngoko* (a Javanese language usually used with the interlocutor of the same age).

As for the method of interpretation, based on the sorting carried out by Nasiruddin Baidan, *al-Ibriz* uses the *ijmali* (global) method, namely explaining the verses of the Qur'an in brief with explanations using popular language, easy to read and understand.²⁵ However, in certain parts, Bisri Mustofa added several explanations that were deemed necessary which were marked by the terms *tanbih*, *fa'idah*, *muhimmah*, *qiṣṣah*, *ḥikāyah*, and *mujarrabah*.

3. Compilation of *Al-Ibriz* in Javanese Socio-Culture

²³ Faiqoh, "Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Perempuan dalam Kitab Al-Ibriz," 22–23.

²⁴ Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibriz Versi Latin (Tafsir Al-Quran Babasa Jawa)* (Wonosobo: Lembaga Kajian Strategi Indonesia, 2015), vi–xiii; 613–64.

²⁵ Nashruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Quran; Kajian Kritis terhadap Ayat-Ayat yang Beredaksi Mirip*, 2 ed. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011), 9.

In order to see the socio-cultural situation when the interpretation of *Al-Ibriz* was compiled, the author uses a hermeneutic approach. Before compiling a book of commentaries, each interpreter must have brought its own "text" in the form of assumptions, experiences, political situations, and the scientific disciplines that surround it, whether consciously or not. Therefore, this section is essential to examine the introductory text, namely the situation, perspective, and social conditions that underlie Bisri Mustofa when compiling his book of interpretation.

An interpreter will not be able to escape from the influence of the primordial-cultural environment that has been attached to him. Quraish Shihab emphasized that socio-cultural and ideological conditions greatly influence the results of one's interpretation. *Al-Ibriz* was compiled by Bisri around 1958-1959 and then published in 1961. The book was arranged in a very thick Javanese cultural context. He lives in the Rembang area as a caregiver for the Raudhatuth Thalibin Islamic Boarding School. Faiqoh, based on his interview with Gus Adib, stated that at that time, women were still backward, and it was not natural for them to leave the house, even to seek knowledge. The tradition of young marriage

is also still a lot going on. Women are positioned below men. However, Bisri Mustofa is known as a moderate scholar. In terms of education, for example, their daughters even study up to the university level.²⁶

There are many terms in Java that can be used to describe the position of women. Some of them are *kanca wingking* (women are only complementary friends in the domestic area), *swarga nunut, neraka katut* (women's happiness and misery depend on the fate of men), and *sing lanang mikul, dene sing wadon nggendhong* (men are more and greater responsibility than women). Because of the great responsibility, men are entitled to a larger share of the inheritance (*mikul*), while women get one share (*nggendhong*).²⁷ Javanese cultural values like this also color the interpretation of Bisri Mustofa as contained in *Al-Ibriz*.

Through *The Religion of Java*, Geertz has already influenced the ethnographic studies of Javanese society. His trichotomy theory (*santri, abangan, and priyayi*) has transformed into a term used to characterize the diversity model of Javanese Islamic society. The sharpest criticism is addressed to the classification of *priyayi*, which is considered irrelevant if included in the Javanese religious typology map.²⁸ It is

²⁶ Faiqoh, "Penafsiran Bisri Mustofa Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Tentang Perempuan dalam Kitab *Al-Ibriz*," 25.

²⁷ Wulandari, "Gender dalam Tafsir Jawa (Studi Atas Tafsir al-Huda karya Bakri Syahid)," 84.

²⁸ Adib Fathoni, "Santri dan Abangan dalam Kehidupan Keagamaan Orang Jawa," *At-Taqaddum* 4,

because *priyayi* is considered a term that refers to social stratification, not a religious categorization of the Javanese Islamic community.

In subsequent developments, the terms *santri* and *abangan* have their place in ethnographic studies of Javanese Islamic society. Although Javanese do not even use the two terms, the point is to identify Javanese Muslims who are religiously devout (*santri*) and disobedient (*abangan*). However, according to their respective perceptions, the *santri* think that the *abangans* are not infidels but Muslims who have not studied Islam seriously. Meanwhile, the *abangan* think that the *santri* is ideal for true Muslim life. *Santri* and *abangan* are interconnected and attract positive perceptions of each other.²⁹

Historically-geographically, the first area that contacted Islam in Java was the coastal area. The proof is that five of the nine Walisongo members were buried in the coastal area.³⁰ This area covers the areas of Tuban, Lamongan, and Gresik. Although this area was originally an area of the Mataram kingdom, which Javanese Islam characterized, because of the significant influence of Walisongo, this area was able to maintain the characteristics of Javanese *santri*

culture. If we look further, geographically, the coastal areas are relatively characterized by *santri*, and the interior areas are characterized by *abangan*. From the community, *santri* are identical with Javanese Muslims who practice religion by Islamic law. Meanwhile, the *abangan* community is a group of Muslims who practice Islam in a syncretistic way, compared to the *santri* group, which is standardized.³¹

This socio-historical background with the ideology of the *santri* and the Islamic community contributed to the construction of Bisri Mustofa's thoughts. He grew up in a specific coastal area of Java with a diverse culture of *santri*. He also grew up in a religious environment, namely a boarding school. The coastal Javanese *santri* community has become a 'hermeneutic situation' surrounding Bisri Mustofa, including traditions, culture, ideology, and life experiences. Gadamer mentions the necessity of having a good history (a history that influences a person), whether consciously or not, plays a significant role in forming an understanding. The message of this theory is that an interpreter of the text must not escape the subjectivity that is influenced by the history that surrounds it.³²

no. 1 (18 April 2016): 104–5, <https://doi.org/10.21580/AT.V4I1.729>.

²⁹ Zamakhsari Dhofier, "Santri Abangan dalam Kehidupan Orang Jawa: Teropong dari Pesantren," in *Agama dan Tantangan Zaman* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1983), 180, 182.

³⁰ Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKis, 2005), 5–6.

³¹ Clifford Geerts, *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa* (Bandung: Pustaka Jaya, 1981), 6–7.

³² Hans George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, ed. oleh Joel Weinsheimer dan Donald G. Marshall (London: Continun, 2006), 300.

4. Bisri Mustofa's Interpretation of Gender Verses

The author directs it to the main themes around women in this section. There are four main themes: the creation of women, women's social movement space, inheritance issues, and polygamy.

a. Human Creation

Chronologically, the Qur'an does not explain the origin of human creation. The creation story refers to hadiths, *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, and narrations that refer to the Torah, the Bible, and the Talmud.³³ The substance of the origin of the events of Adam and Eve is also not distinguished. Indeed, there are signs that God created Adam from clay, then from his rib, God created Eve. However, the information comes from the hadith, not from the Qur'an. Eve, who is considered a woman who became Adam's wife, is never mentioned in the Qur'an. Some circles are still questioning the claim that Adam was the first human and male sex.³⁴

The only verse that hints at this creation are the QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 1. The keywords that become the source of the analysis in this verse—which later gave rise to debate—are the sentences:³⁵

- 1) *Nafs wāḥidah* (oneself)

- 2) The object designated by the pronoun *minhā* (himself)
- 3) What is meant by the word *zanjabā* (partner)?

Bisri Mustofa explains this verse by;

Hei eling-eling para manungso, kbususe abli Makkah, umume manungsa kabeh. Sira kabeh podobo takwa marang pangeran kang anitabake siro kabeh saking wong siji iya iku nabi Adam, lan nitabake garwane (ibu Hawa) ugo saking nabi Adam, lan nuli saking Adam-Hawa Allah ta'ala nitabake manungsa akeh banget lanang lan wadon. Lan podo wediyo marang Allah kan asamane tansah siro anggo sumpah, lan podo ho anjaga sanak aja nganti pedot. Sak temene Allah ta'ala iku tansah nginjen-nginjen amal sira kabeh.

"O humankind, especially the residents of Mecca. Fear God who created you all from one person, namely the Prophet Adam and created from him his wife (Eve's mother), and from Adam-Eve Allah created many men and women. Moreover, fear you to Allah whose name you take an oath, and take care of the relationship, not to be cut off."

The following is the meaning based on the keywords above. (1) The sentence *min nafs wāḥidah* Bisri Mustofa interprets it with *saking awak-awakan kang siji* (from one body, namely Adam). (2) The pronoun *minhā*, Bisri Mustofa, interprets it with *saking nafs* (from the nafs). (3) He interpreted the word *zanjabā* with *bojone nafs* (Nafs' husband). Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of the verse explains that Allah created Eve from Adam. However, he did not explain further from what part God created Eve.

³³ Nasarudin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000), 226–28.

³⁴ Riffat Hasan dan Fatima Mernissi, *Setara di Hadapan Allah*, ed. oleh Tim LSPPA (Yogyakarta: LSPPA, 1994), 44–50.

³⁵ Gusmian, *Khaṣanah Tafsir Indonesia*, 303.

b. Male and female leadership (women's social space)

The issue of women's leadership remains a problem. The adage that men are the primary determinant and responsible for all family decisions is also entrenched in Javanese culture. Moreover, if it is related to the problem of women's roles in the public sphere, such as being a leader, it is a classic debate that has never been narrowed down to one formulation. Especially if this is related to political leadership in a country, few people consider women unfit to be leaders.³⁶

The problem of women's leadership usually stems from QS. Al-Nisā' [4]: 34, *al-rijāl qawwāmūn 'alā al-nisā'*. The keywords debated in this case are the words *rijāl* and *qawwām*. Quraish Shihab understands *rijāl*—the plural form of *rajul*—in terms of husbands.³⁷ However, in another explanation, he rectifies his opinion. He explained, after reading the writings of Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Ashūr, the word *rijāl* does not mean husband. Because in the language of the Qur'an, the word *rijāl* is never used in the sense of a husband.³⁸ This verse is often used to refuse women to become domestic and public leaders. Another root of the problem lies in the word

qawwām. In general, in the view of commentators, this word is defined as a leader, ruler, person in charge, and educator. This view was expressed by some classical commentators such as al-Ṭabarī,³⁹ al-Rāzī,⁴⁰ and al-Zamakhsharī.⁴¹

Bisri Mustofa explains this verse as follows.

Wong-wong lanang iku dikuusaake mengatasi wong-wong wadon. Sebab jenis lanang iku kaparingan kaluwihan ingatase jenis wadon. Bab ilmu. Akal. Wilayah. Lan liyan-liyane, lan sebab olehi infaq marang wong-wong wadon. Wong-wong wadon kang shalihah yaiku wong wadon kang taat marang lakine, kang ngreksa awakke lan liya-liyane nalika lakine lunga. Bojo wadon kang siro kuatirake nususyuz, nasibatono. Menawa wes terang nusyuz, aja baturi turu. Yen meksa ora mendo-mendo, ajaren nanging aja banget-banget. Menawa wes bali taat maneh, sira aja nganiyaya, sak temene Allah ta'ala iku Maha Lubur lan Maha Agung.

"Men are given the power to take care of women. They are given advantages over women in terms of knowledge, reason, territory (guardianship), and the obligation to provide a living for women. A pious woman obeys her husband and takes care of herself when her husband leaves. The wife you are worried about is nushuz, then advise her. If the nushuz is clear, then separate the bed. If they are still nushuz, hit them but do not be too hard. When they are obedient again, then do not abuse them. Allah is Most High, Most Great."

Bisri Mustofa interprets the word *rijāl* with *piro-piro wong lanang* (as for some men) and *qawwām* with *nguwasani* (mastery). At first

³⁶ Gusmian, 309.

³⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 309–10.

³⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbab Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2001), vol. I: 404.

³⁹ Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2000), 82.

⁴⁰ Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 88.

⁴¹ Muḥammad ibn 'Umar Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq al-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, 2009), vol. I: 523.

glance, the above interpretation shows the impression of patriarchy. The reason; First, men are given the power to dominate women. Second, men are given an advantage over women in several respects. Third, the man (husband) is obliged to provide a living for the woman (wife).

c. Inheritance

The third problem related to equality between men and women is the issue of inheritance. Textually, Al-Nisā' [4]:11 determines the share of women and half of the men—*li al-dhakar mithl hadhdh al-unthayayn*⁴²—. Quraish Shihab explained that the distribution of such inheritance is placed in the context of needs. Considering this need makes the share of women half less than the share of men. The reason is that men's need for wealth is more significant, such as the demand to provide for their children and wives.⁴²

Consideration of needs is a reason that is also used by several classical interpretations such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, and al-Zamakhsharī. Al-Rāzī said there are four reasons men get a more significant share than women:⁴³

- 1) Men meet all the needs of women because they are obliged to provide for women.

- 2) Men are more perfect than women in three respects; creation, intellect, and religion.
- 3) Women are intellectually lacking and high in lust, so significant damage will occur in their lives if they are given much wealth.
- 4) Men with perfect intellect will use the wealth for more valuable things in this world and the hereafter.

Bisri Mustofa, in his commentary, explains this verse by;

Allah ta'ala merintahake, nalika ana wong-wong mati tinggal anak lanang-wadon, anak lanang oleh bagian warisan rong bagian anak wadon. Dadi upomo ninggal tinggalan warisan telu ewu, anak lanang oleh rongewu, anak wadon sewu. (lamun anak lanang mau ijen, telung ewu mau tibo anak lanang kabeh).

"Allah has commanded that if someone dies and leaves a son and a daughter, the son will receive twice as much inheritance as the daughter. So, for example, if the inheritance is three thousand, the son will receive two thousand and a thousand daughters (but if there is only one son as the heir, then the three thousand will be sons)."

Referring to Bisri Mustofa's interpretation above, it is known that women's inheritance share is half of that of men. However, apart from his interpretation in the book of *Al-Ibriz*, he provides an alternative regarding the division of inheritance. He stated that the distribution of inheritance does not have to be in a 2:1 condition. The alternative can be done by sharing voluntarily.

⁴² Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, vol. II: 353.

⁴³ Al-Rāzī, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. IV; 203.

d. Polygamy

The fourth issue that is most often debated is the issue of polygamy. This problem refers to Al-Nisā' [4]: 3. Various interpretations arise regarding this polygamy law, including those who allow polygamy because it is not prohibited by religion and even sunnah by the Prophet.⁴⁴ Second, allow it because it is textually in the Qur'an, but chooses not to do it because they feel unable. Third, prohibit polygamy because it is not by the moral values carried by the Qur'an.⁴⁵

Regarding this matter, Bisri Musthofa provides the following explanation.

Wong-wong Islam ing zaman awal, yen ono kang ngerumat yatimah ing mangka kabeneran ora mabram (anak dulur umpamane) iku akeh-akehe dikawin pisan. Nalika iku nganti kedadeyan ana kang due bojo wolu utawa sepuluh. Bareng ayat nomor 2 mau tumurun, wong-wong mau podo nuli kuatir yen ora biso adil, nuli akeh kang podo sumpek, nuli Allah nurunake ayat kang nomor 3 iki, kang surasane: yen siro kabeh kuatir ora biso adil ana ing antarane yatim-yatim kang sira rumat, iyo wayuh lara-lara wae utawa telu-telu utawa papat saking wadon-wadon kang sira senengi, aja nganti punjul sangking papat. Lamun siro kabeh kuatir ora bisa adil nafaqah lan gilir, mangka nikaha siji wae, utawa terima ngalap cukup jaryah kang sira miliki, nikah papat utawa siji, utawa ngalap jaryah iku sejatine luwih menjamin keadilan (ora melempeng).

"The Muslims in ancient times, if someone took care of an orphaned woman and happened not to have a mahram (such as a brother's child), then they usually married all of them. So, at that time, many men had eight or ten wives. After the second verse came down, the people were worried that they would not

do justice, and many were restless. Allah revealed this third verse, which reads: if you are worried that you will not be able to do justice among the orphans you are raising, then marry two, three, or four of the women you like, not more than four. If you are worried that you will not be able to provide an adequate income and share in rotation, then marry only one woman or just the jāriyah (slave girl) you have."

According to Bisri Mustofa, polygamy may be carried out under two conditions; First, it can be fair. Second, do not exceed the limit of four women. The fair conditions that he meant in polygamy were fair in external matters, such as rations for giving a living and sexual relations. While fairness in inner matters, such as love, is not a requirement in polygamy.

5. Analysis of Gender Equality Theory from the Perspective of Mansour Fakih

Today, there are no fundamental problems in positioning women in their proper position, both in domestic life and community life. According to Mansour Fakih and his theory of gender equality, gender inequality (gender role) and gender differences (gender differences) are manifested in five ways, namely a) subordination, b) marginalization, c) stereotypes, d) violence, e) double burden.

Subordination assumes that women are lower in rank than men, and even their

⁴⁴ Misbah Mustofa, *Taj al-Muslimin min Kalam Rabb al-'Alamin* (Tuban: Majlis Ta'lif wa al-Khatṭat, 1989), 1504-6.

⁴⁵ Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman; Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 84.

existence is not essential.⁴⁶ One example is the assumption that women are more emotional and irrational, so they cannot lead and therefore must be placed in unimportant positions. Marginalization is a pattern of impoverishment for women.⁴⁷ This pattern occurs in the household, workplace, and other areas of community life. This process results in the economic impoverishment of women, such as less inheritance for women than for men. Stereotypes are negative labeling of women, such as women preening, which is always synonymous with trying to attract the attention of the opposite sex.⁴⁸ This mindset impacts blaming women when

sexual violence occurs. Violence is violence, both physically and psychologically, against women. This assumption arises because women are considered weaker than men.⁴⁹ Finally, the double burden, namely the domestic workload, is more for women. All domestic work is considered the responsibility of women. The entry of women into the public sphere makes women bear two burdens at once, namely domestic and public.⁵⁰

The following table will be written in Bisri Mustofa's interpretation of verses about women to facilitate the analysis.

No.	Theme	Interpretation	Gender Construction Analysis
1	The creation of women (Al-Nisā' [4]: 1)	Woman (Eve) was first created from a man (Adam), without further explanation, whether from Adam's rib or the type of Adam. In the view of Javanese society, women are considered creatures that are identical to negative things because the left side of the rib symbolizes them. In contrast, Bisri Mustofa tends to avoid this kind of perception.	There are two understandings regarding the origin of the creation of women. First, it states that Eve (created from Adam's rib. Second, it states that a woman was created not from Adam's rib but Adam's kind. Bisri Mustofa, in his interpretation, mentions that Eve was created from Adam but did not clearly state from which part of Adam. Amid the perception of Javanese society – at that time – those women were identical with negative things based on the origin of their creation, in the author's opinion, Bisri Mustofa was more inclined to avoid this assumption. He prefers to state that women are created equal to men. So, there is no impression that women are subordinate creatures.

⁴⁶ Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Islam*, 7 ed. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 15–16.

⁴⁷ Fakih, 13–15.

⁴⁸ Fakih, 16–17.

⁴⁹ Fakih, 17–20.

⁵⁰ Fakih, 21–23.

2	The space for movement and the role of women (Al-Nisā' [4]: 34)	Men are given power over women. Men are given advantages over women in terms of knowledge, reason, <i>wilayah</i> (guardianship), and because men are obliged to provide a living for women. Meanwhile, a pious woman is a woman who is obedient to her husband and takes care of herself when her husband is away.	This verse emphasizes the role of women, both in the domestic and public spheres. Bisri Mustofa's interpretation at least points to two things; first, the privilege of men, both physically and psychologically, which is more supportive in leadership and control. Second, men are obliged to provide a living for women. In addition, there is a definition of pious women who are obedient to their husbands and take care of themselves when their husbands leave. If you refer to Mansour Fakih's theory, it appears that there is subordination, that women are inferior or even unimportant. For example, the assumption that women are more emotional and irrational so they cannot lead and therefore should be placed in an unimportant position.
3	Inheritance (Al-Nisā' [4]: 11)	Allah commands that if someone dies leaving a son and daughter, the inheritance for women is half of the inheritance for men.	Referring to Mansour Fakih's theory, Bisri Mustofa's interpretation contains elements of marginalization (impoverishment) of women. However, beyond his interpretation, he provides an alternative to the division of inheritance. The division no longer refers to the 2:1 conception. The alternative can be done by sharing voluntarily.
4	Polygamy (Al-Nisā' [4]: 3)	Polygamy can be done because it can be done fairly and not more than four women. The fair conditions referred to are related to living issues, sexual relations, and so on. Whereas in mental matters, such as love, it is not a requirement in polygamy.	According to Bisri Mustofa, polygamy is allowed, provided it does not exceed the limit of four women. Regarding al-Nisā': 3, it should also be related to al-Nisā': 129, which has ruled out the possibility of polygamy. He also explained fair conditions that only relate to outward issues, not to inner issues. His interpretation of polygamy can be categorized as an act of psychological violence. No matter how polygamous women are, in essence, they will never be 100% sincere to accept. A clear example is that among the

			wives of the Messenger of Allah, they also felt jealous of each other.
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CONCLUSION

The main themes around gender and women are still being debated. In the discussion about the creation of women, Bisri Mustofa tends to avoid opinions that subordinate women. He interprets that Eve was created from Adam, without explanation, from Adam's rib or Adam's kind. Meanwhile, in the interpretation of women's social space, inheritance, and polygamy, according to the perspective of Mansour Fakih's theory of gender equality, *al-Ibriz*'s interpretation tends to subordinate women. It can be seen from the explanation of the permissibility of polygamy with a maximum limit of 4 wives which only requires outward justice. In matters of the mind, such as love, it is not used as the primary condition. This opinion is a form of psychological violence against women. This opinion was caused by the condition of the Javanese society at that time, which was still thick with patriarchal culture. Some of Bisri Mustofa's thoughts regarding women (beyond his interpretation in *al-Ibriz*) are moderate. Although not as moderate as his thoughts on other themes, they can be said to be quite relevant in his time.

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