

## THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN QS. AL-HUJURAT (49): 13 FROM QURAISH SHIHAB'S PERSPECTIVE (AN ANALYSIS BASED ON HANS-GEORG GADAMER'S HERMENEUTICAL THEORY)

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### **Abstrak**

*Surah al-Hujurat ayat 13 mengandung nilai multikulturalisme yang signifikan, menekankan pentingnya penghormatan terhadap keberagaman manusia sebagai bentuk rahmat bagi seluruh alam (rahmatan li al-alamin). Ayat ini memberikan landasan teologis yang kuat untuk menciptakan kehidupan yang harmonis di tengah keberagaman. Penelitian ini berupaya memaknai ayat tersebut melalui penafsiran Quraish Shihab, seorang mufasir kontemporer yang dikenal dengan pendekatan kontekstual dan humanisnya, yang secara khusus menyoroti relevansi nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dengan dinamika sosial modern. Untuk mengungkap pesan yang lebih mendalam dari sekadar makna literal Surah Al-Hujurat ayat 13, kajian ini diawali dengan menguraikan teori-teori dasar hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer. Selanjutnya, teori tersebut digunakan sebagai alat analisis untuk memahami dan mengeksplorasi penafsiran Quraish Shihab terhadap ayat ini secara lebih komprehensif. Jenis kajian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan kepustakaan. Metode pengumpulan datanya dengan menggunakan teknik dokumentasi, sedangkan metode analisis datanya menggunakan pendekatan filosofis. Makna yang dihasilkan antara*

lain, menekankan pentingnya saling mengenal untuk menciptakan harmoni sosial, pengakuan terhadap prinsip egaliter yang menolak diskriminasi berdasarkan suku, ras, atau status sosial, serta penekanan pada ketakwaan sebagai ukuran kemuliaan di sisi Allah.

**Kata Kunci:** Multikulturalisme, Quraish Shihab, Hermeneutika, Hans-Georg Gadamer.

### **Abstract**

*Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 contains significant multiculturalism values, emphasizing the importance of respect for human diversity as a form of mercy for all nature (rahmatan li al-alamin). This verse provides a strong theological foundation for creating a harmonious life in the midst of diversity. This study attempts to interpret the verse through the interpretation of Quraish Shihab, a contemporary mufasir known for his contextual and humanist approach, which specifically highlights the relevance of Qur'anic values to modern social dynamics. To reveal a deeper message than just the literal meaning of Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, this study begins by outlining the basic theories of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics. Furthermore, the theory is used as an analytical tool to understand and explore Quraish Shihab's interpretation of this verse more comprehensively. This type of study is qualitative with a literature approach. The data collection method uses documentation techniques, while the data analysis method uses a philosophical approach. The resulting meanings include emphasizing the importance of knowing each other to create social harmony, recognition of the egalitarian principle that rejects discrimination based on ethnicity, race, or social status, and emphasis on piety as a measure of glory in the sight of Allah.*

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Quraish Shihab, Hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Human beings are unique creatures endowed by Allah swt. with reason and intellect—an advantage that distinguishes them from other creations. With this capacity, humanity possesses great potential to manage life on earth and to foster harmony, peace, and

tranquility within society. In the era of globalization, the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages has become increasingly evident as part of the dynamics of modern life. However, this diversity often presents major challenges in the effort to preserve social harmony in an increasingly complex society.<sup>1</sup>

Indonesia, as a pluralistic nation with more than 300 ethnic groups and around 1,340 tribes, demonstrates an extraordinary wealth of culture. This plurality is clearly reflected in the national motto “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (“Unity in Diversity”), which should serve as a source of strength to enrich culture and strengthen relationships among citizens. In practice, however, the diversity of Indonesia’s ethnic groups often leads to clashes or conflicts between communities, as a result of society’s limited awareness in appreciating existing differences. Minority groups, in particular, frequently face unfair treatment in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, and access to public services.<sup>2</sup>

Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 contains significant values of multiculturalism, offering universal messages that remain relevant to human life across different times. The principle of multiculturalism embodied in this verse is crucial in the context of modern society, where differences of ethnicity, race, religion, and culture are increasingly visible. The Qur'an, with its wisdom, provides a thoughtful approach to navigating such diversity while simultaneously offering guidance for building harmonious and respectful social relations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rika Rezky Siregar dkk, “Konsep Multikulturalisme dalam Surah al-Hujurat Ayat 13 Perspektif Tafsir Ibnu Katsir”, *Jurnal Semiotika-Q*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2024, hlm. 391.

<sup>2</sup>Faturohman dkk, “Analisis Terhadap Diskriminasi Rasial dan Etnis Yang Terkait Dengan Hak Asasi Terhadap Manusia”, *Jurnal Relasi Publik*, Vol. 2, No. 3, hlm. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Siti Aisah dan Mawi Khusni Albar, “Telaah Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Sosial Dari Q.S Al Hujurat: 11-13 Dalam Kajian Tafsir”, *Arfannur: Journal of Islamic Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2021, hlm. 11–13.

Further studies affirm the importance of this issue, as numerous scholarly works have explored multiculturalism from the perspectives of various Qur'anic exegetes. For example, research by Rika Siregar and M. Jamil finds that in QS. al-Hujurat (49): 13, Islam advocates for harmonious life in diversity and rejects discrimination based on ethnicity or culture. Similarly, Qur'anic exegesis focusing on specific themes can be found in Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al-Misbah*.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the principle of multiculturalism found in Q.S. al-Hujurat 13 becomes a particularly compelling topic for deeper discussion through the perspective of the Qur'an, in order to broaden understanding of this phenomenon. As the main object of study (*material object*) in this paper, the author will examine Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Q.S. al-Hujurat 13 in his *Tafsir al-Misbah*. This interpretation will be analyzed using the hermeneutical framework of Hans-Georg Gadamer, with the aim of producing insights that are more relevant and applicable in the modern era, especially within the context of Indonesian society. The type of research employed is library research, using texts as the primary sources. The method adopted is descriptive-analytical, whereby textual sources are presented and subsequently analyzed through Gadamer's hermeneutics.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### HANS-GEORG GADAMER

Hans-Georg Gadamer, a prominent German philosopher, was born in Marburg on February 11, 1900, and passed away at

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<sup>4</sup>Fauziyah Mujayyanah dkk, "Konsep pendidikan akhlak Luqmanul Hakim (kajian tafsir al-Misbah dan al-Maraghi)." *Jurnal Penelitian IPTEKS* Vol. 6.No. 1, 2021, hlm. 52-61; Moh. Cholil, "Relevansi pemikiran tafsir jihad M. Quraish Shihab dalam tafsir Al-Misbah." *Maraji: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* Vol. 1.No. 2, 2015, hlm. 538-566.

Heidelberg University Hospital on March 13, 2002.<sup>5</sup> He is best known for his magnum opus *Truth and Method* (*Wahrheit und Methode* in German), which has had a significant impact on the development of the social sciences. Thanks to this important contribution, Gadamer came to be regarded as one of the key figures in modern hermeneutical thought.<sup>6</sup> He was the son of Dr. Johannes Gadamer, a pharmaceutical chemist who also served as a *Privatdozent* at the University of Marburg, and Emma Caroline Johanna Gewiese, a devout and conservative Protestant. Gadamer grew up in a Protestant family tradition, although religion was not a dominant aspect of their lives. During his upbringing, he lived in an environment that encouraged him to embrace a rational approach to religion.<sup>7</sup>

Gadamer's monumental work, *Wahrheit und Methode*, illustrates a kind of Freudian resistance to his father's views on the *Geisteswissenschaften*. In this book, Gadamer explores in depth the questions of which methods are most appropriate for understanding and interpreting texts, and how such methods should be applied. The first set of questions relates to philosophy,<sup>8</sup> while the second focuses on the ontological dimensions of hermeneutics.<sup>9</sup> From this, it can be concluded that Gadamer's hermeneutics encompasses two major domains: hermeneutics as philosophy and as an ontological inquiry. Gadamer's shift from

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<sup>5</sup>Lukman S. Thahir dan Darlis Dawing, “Telaah Hermeneutika Hans-Goerg Gadamer; Menuju Pendekatan Integratif dalam Studi Islam”, *Rausyan Fikr*, Vol. 17 No. 2 Desember 2021, hlm. 367.

<sup>6</sup>Moh. Isomuddin dkk, “Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer: Studi Analisis Kritis Penafsiran Amina Wadud tentang Ayat Kepemimpinan”, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2021, 116.

<sup>7</sup>Mila Aulia dkk, Reinterpretasi Konsep Islam Kaffah Perspektif Fakhruddin Al-Razi (Aplikasi Teori Gadamer), *Rausyan Fikr*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Desember 2022, hlm. 358-359.

<sup>8</sup>Lihat Hans-George Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy*, (New York: Continuum, 2001), hlm. 67.

<sup>9</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004), hlm. 102.

epistemology to ontology took shape through his deep engagement with the study of language.

Among his important works are *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik* (1960), *Plato's Dialectical Ethics and Other Studies on Platonic Philosophy* (1968), and *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies* (1971). Several of his works have been translated into English, including *Philosophical Hermeneutics, Dialogue and Dialectic, Philosophical Apprenticeships, The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy, Gadamer and Hermeneutics, The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings, Kleine Schriften, and Philosophische Lehrjahre: Eine Rückschau* (1977).<sup>10</sup>

Gadamer's hermeneutical project was profoundly shaped by the thought of his teacher, Martin Heidegger.<sup>11</sup> The Heideggerian influence is particularly evident in Gadamer's shift toward an ontological and philosophical orientation that grounds hermeneutics in the interrelation of existence and language. This orientation marks a clear departure from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which is primarily concerned with epistemology and the limits of human cognition. In contrast, Gadamer emphasizes that understanding is never an abstract or ahistorical act but is always mediated by historically situated horizons and dialogical encounters. Consequently, interpretation is conceived as an open and dynamic process, irreducible to the rigid categorical structures delineated by Kant.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Hasyim Hasanah, "Hermeneutik Ontologis-Dialektis: Sebuah Anatomi Teori Pemahaman Dan Interpretasi Perspektif Hans-George Gadamer dan Implikasinya Dalam Dakwah", *At-Taqaddum*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2017, hlm. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Fahmy Farid Purnama, "Hermeneutika Filosofis Gadamer Memugar Keponakan Metode", *Irfani*, Vol. 01, No. 1, 2022, hlm. 7.

<sup>12</sup>M. Nur Kholis Setiawan dkk, *Upaya Integrasi Hermenutika Al-Qur'an dan Hadits Teori dan Aplikasi*, (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Penelitian UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2011), hlm. 34.

At the same time, Gadamer extended Heidegger's thought by adding a social dimension to the process of understanding, highlighting the dialectical interaction between the individual and others, or with the broader environment. Heidegger divided pre-understanding into three main concepts: *Vorhabe*, *Vorsicht*, and *Vorgriff*. *Vorhabe* refers to one's initial outlook or preconception of what is being understood, including perceptions, perspectives, and first impressions. *Vorsicht* denotes an awareness of possible outcomes that might arise from the process of understanding. *Vorgriff* refers to the specific concepts or frameworks used as the basis for interpreting an object.<sup>13</sup>

Gadamer adapted these three Heideggerian notions of pre-understanding in formulating his own theory of prejudice (*Vorurteil*). He departed from the reproductive hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, who held that readers could return to the past to recover the original meaning intended by the author of a text. For Gadamer, human understanding is always bound to a particular horizon. This means that interpretation cannot fully restore the meaning intended in a specific historical moment; instead, it unfolds within the context of history and the present situation.<sup>14</sup>

## THE MAIN THEORIES OF HANS-GEORG GADAMER'S HERMENEUTICS

For the purpose of applying hermeneutics as an analytical tool in interpreting the Qur'an, Sahiron Samsuddin has outlined a synthesis of Gadamer's major works. This effort was undertaken to facilitate the use of Gadamer's hermeneutical concepts in the

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<sup>13</sup>Fahrudin Faiz, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dmy409DeFg>

<sup>14</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *The Beginning of Knowledge* (New York: Continuum, 2002) hlm. 9.

interpretation of religious texts, particularly the Qur'an.<sup>15</sup> *First, the theory of "Historically Effected Consciousness" (Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein).* Gadamer defines this theory in his work as follows:

*"Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein is first and foremost an awareness of the hermeneutical situation. Yet attaining such awareness of the situation is by no means an easy task. The situation constitutes a standpoint that limits one's capacity to perceive something, and this situation takes the form of a horizon (the horizon of understanding)."*

According to this theory, a reader's understanding is always shaped by a particular hermeneutical situation, including tradition, culture, and lived experience. Thus, when interpreting a text, the interpreter must be aware that he or she is situated in a position that inevitably influences the process of understanding. Gadamer further emphasizes that in every act of interpretation—whether consciously or unconsciously—the effects of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (the history acting upon the individual) play a decisive role.<sup>16</sup> The primary challenge of this theory is the interpreter's ability to regulate subjectivity within the interpretive process. Therefore, the interpreter must exercise caution so as not to interpret arbitrarily or merely in accordance with personal preference.

*Second, the theory of "Pre-understanding" (Vorverständnis).* This theory explains that the influence of the hermeneutical situation (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) generates what Gadamer terms *Vorverständnis* or "pre-understanding" within the interpreter before engaging with a text. This pre-understanding constitutes the

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<sup>15</sup>Lihat Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an (Edisi Revisi Dan Perluasan)* (Yogyakarta: Nawesa Press, 2017), hlm. 76.

<sup>16</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode* (Mohr: Tubingen: J.C.B, 1990), hlm. 307

initial standpoint that every interpreter inevitably possesses when approaching a text. Gadamer states:

*"In the process of understanding, pre-understanding always plays a crucial role. Such pre-understanding is shaped by the tradition surrounding the interpreter, as well as by the prejudices (initial assumptions) formed within that tradition."*<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, pre-understanding is necessary for establishing a productive dialogue with the text. Without it, meaningful comprehension is impossible. However, pre-understanding must remain open to critique, revision, and correction whenever it proves inconsistent with the meaning intended in the text itself.<sup>18</sup> The result of such correction is termed the *"completion of pre-understanding"* (*Vollkommenheit des Vorverständnisses*).<sup>19</sup>

Third, the theory of "Fusion of Horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*). As emphasized in the preceding theory, the interpreter must continuously refine pre-understanding. This process is closely linked to the fusion of horizons, which posits that interpretation involves two horizons: the horizon of knowledge embedded in the text, and the horizon of understanding held by the reader. Both horizons necessarily play a role in interpretation. While the reader begins from his or her own hermeneutical horizon, it must be recognized that the text possesses its own horizon that may differ from, or even challenge, the reader's assumptions. According to Gadamer, these two horizons must be brought into dialogue so that the tension between them may be resolved.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Das Problem Des Historischen Bewusstseins* (Mohr: Tübingen: J.C.B, 2001), hlm. 5.

<sup>18</sup>Mila Aulia dkk, *Reinterpretasi Konsep....*, hlm. 360.

<sup>19</sup>Nur Kholis Setiawan dkk, *Upaya Integrasi....*, 38.

<sup>20</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Text and Interpretation* (New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1986), hlm. 396.

Thus, when engaging with a text from the past, one must attend to its historical horizon—the temporal and situational context in which it was produced. Gadamer stresses this point:

*"Understanding a text from the past indeed requires attention to its historical horizon. Yet this does not mean that one can fully appropriate that horizon by immersing oneself in its historical situation. Rather, one must first possess one's own horizon of understanding in order to approach and comprehend the historical horizon."*<sup>21</sup>

The reader, therefore, must remain open to acknowledging the presence of another horizon—the horizon of the text—which may differ from or even contradict that of the reader. As Gadamer affirms: *"I must allow the text of the past to speak to me."* This means not only acknowledging difference, but also recognizing that texts from the past carry messages that continue to address the present. To understand, then, is to make room for the text to speak and to disclose its meaning.<sup>22</sup> In this theory, the subjectivity of the reader and the objectivity of the text converge, with the objective meaning of the text becoming the central focus.

*Fourth*, the theory of "Application" (Anwendung) [4]. As explained above, the objective meaning of the text must remain the focus of understanding and interpretation. The next step for the reader is to apply the message or teaching conveyed by the text. This theory emphasizes that, once the interpreter has discerned the intended meaning of the text at the time of its composition, he or she must proceed to develop interpretation or re-actualization, while maintaining continuity between the original meaning and its contemporary relevance. What is to be applied is not merely the

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<sup>21</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Method*, hlm. 310.

<sup>22</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Text and Interpretation*, hlm. 396.

literal sense of the text, but its meaningful sense—a deeper significance that proves relevant and existentially meaningful beyond the text's surface meaning.<sup>23</sup>

### REINTERPRETATION OF QS. AL-HUJURAT (49): 13 IN QURAISH SHIHAB'S PERSPECTIVE

*Al-Misbah* is Quraish Shihab's magnum opus in the field of Qur'anic exegesis. It is evident that one of the factors that influenced and motivated him to write *Tafsir Al-Misbah* was his desire to help people understand and reflect upon the Qur'an. In this context, Quraish Shihab can be regarded as a humanist, deeply concerned about his surrounding environment, and highly attentive to the needs of the Muslim community to comprehend the divine message in a more profound and relevant manner for daily life.

In this regard, the author specifically refers to the interpretation presented by Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. This verse addresses several key themes:

*First*, Q.S. Al-Hujurat verse 13 discusses the fundamental principle of human relations. Hence, the verse does not begin with an address to the believers, but rather to all humankind. It emphasizes that all human beings originate from a single pair: a man and a woman. This affirmation not only highlights the physical commonality of human origin but also underscores the equality of every individual's human dignity. In the social and cultural context, where distinctions of status based on tribe, nation, or gender often prevail, this verse asserts that before God, there is no justification for superiority or pride based on lineage, race, or gender. All human beings hold the same position, and true honor can only be attained

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<sup>23</sup>Hans-George Gadamer, *Text and Interpretation*, hlm. 393-394

through piety (taqwa) to God.<sup>24</sup> This message invites humankind to establish more just and equal relationships, eliminating every form of discrimination grounded in physical or social differences.

*Second*, the verse affirms that true nobility is not measured by social status, wealth, or worldly position. In the context of the asbab al-nuzul of this verse, it was revealed to remind the Muslims who were caught up in disputes about the superiority of their tribes, with some claiming greater honor due to lineage or social standing. God revealed this verse to affirm that honor in His sight is not determined by lineage or tribal affiliation but by an individual's piety.<sup>25</sup>

In Quraish Shihab's interpretation, piety manifests in a person's efforts to remain obedient to God, avoid His prohibitions, and fulfill His commands, regardless of social position or background. Piety is thus the source of eternal nobility, attainable only through closeness to God, and not through the accumulation of wealth or worldly prestige. This nobility leads to ultimate happiness in both this world and the hereafter, which cannot be replaced by any worldly achievement.

*Third*, the verse emphasizes the importance of mutual acquaintance among human beings. Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, explains the meaning of ta'aruf, derived from the root word 'arafa, meaning "to know." The grammatical pattern used in this verse implies reciprocity, suggesting that ta'aruf is not merely about knowing, but about mutual recognition. This conveys the message that mutual understanding—of identity, culture, and life experiences—can strengthen social bonds among individuals. The

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<sup>24</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), Cet. III, hlm. 261.

<sup>25</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, hlm. 261.

more one side comes to know the other, the greater the opportunity for mutual benefit, whether on a personal or social level. In this sense, *ta’aruf* not only fosters harmonious relationships but also creates opportunities for sharing knowledge, perspectives, and experiences that enrich collective life.<sup>26</sup> It can thus be understood that mutual recognition functions as a means to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, as well as to promote peace, tolerance, and cooperation. By engaging in mutual recognition, people can appreciate differences, discover common ground, and build solidarity, ultimately strengthening healthier and more productive social relations.

*Fourth*, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* explains that the two attributes of God—‘Alīm (All-Knowing) and *Khabīr* (All-Aware)—describe the perfection of God’s knowledge. While ‘Alīm emphasizes God’s all-encompassing knowledge, *Khabīr* highlights His intimate awareness of all things. The verse that combines these two attributes points to matters that are impossible or extremely difficult for human beings to know: the place of death (Q.S. *Luqman*: 34), hidden secrets (Q.S. *At-Tahrim*: 3), and the true quality of a person’s piety and honor in the sight of God as conveyed in this verse. It reminds us that human beings cannot fully judge the faith and piety of others, for only God possesses this perfect knowledge. At the end of the verse, God signals that His determination of honor is the most truthful and just, unlike human standards, which are often contested. As the All-Knowing and All-Aware, God alone understands the essence of nobility, which may not always be visible to human eyes.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, humankind should pay greater

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<sup>26</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, hlm. 262.

<sup>27</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, hlm. 264

attention to divine guidance, for it provides the best direction for their welfare in this world and the hereafter.

Finally, the author seeks to integrate the interpretation of QS. al-Hujurat (49): 13 according to Quraish Shihab with Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical theory. The purpose of this integration is to demonstrate that the hermeneutical approach can be applied in the development of Islamic sciences, particularly in the study of the Qur'an and Tafsir.

### 1) Historical Consciousness

As is well known, in every process of interpretation, a *mufassir* (exegete) cannot be separated from the tendencies inherent within himself, including the socio-cultural background surrounding him.<sup>28</sup> This is also true for Quraish Shihab when interpreting verse 13 of Surah al-Hujurat. Based on his educational background, Quraish Shihab is a figure inclined toward religious moderation, consistently prioritizing harmony. His academic formation at Al-Azhar University shaped him into a proponent of moderate Islam (*Islam washatiyyah*).<sup>29</sup>

Egypt, as a center of Islamic studies and intellectual reform, exerted a significant influence on Quraish Shihab during his education at Al-Azhar University. Influenced by prominent figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, he developed modernist thought that integrates both classical and contemporary approaches. As a distinguished figure in the field of Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia,<sup>30</sup> He pays close attention to social and

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<sup>28</sup>Dewi Ulya Mailasari, "Pengaruh Ideologi Dalam Penafsiran," *Jurnal Hermeneutik* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2013, hlm. 53 - 63

<sup>29</sup>Endad Musaddad, "Metode dan Corak Tafsir Quraish Shihab: Tela'ah atas Buku Wawasan Al-Qur'an", *Al-Qalam*, Vol. 21 No. 100, 2004, hlm. 61.

<sup>30</sup>Dian R. Basuki dan Howard M. Federspiel, *Kajian Al-Qur'an di Indonesia; Dari Mahmud Yunus hingga Quraish Shihab*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

historical contexts in his commentary, seeking to interpret Qur'anic verses in light of the dynamics of modern society so as to remain relevant in addressing the problems of the Muslim community. He is recognized not only as a profound intellectual but also as a humanist deeply concerned with the condition of Muslims.

From the above elaboration, it becomes clear that Quraish Shihab's interpretation bears a socio-communitarian character (*adab al-ijtima'i*), whereby he seeks to highlight social issues relevant to contemporary life. Through his understanding of the Qur'an, he engages such issues in dialogue with the sacred text, demonstrating how the Qur'an provides solutions to societal problems. He also consistently emphasizes a linguistic approach in his exegetical work. For him, grasping the meanings of words and vocabulary in the Qur'an is an essential step in uncovering God's intent, for without mastery of this aspect, comprehending the divine message would be difficult to achieve.<sup>31</sup>

## 2) Pre-understanding

Quraish Shihab's interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 reflects the strong influence of his socio-humanitarian outlook, his educational background, and the modern context in which he is situated. In his exegesis, he emphasizes that this verse is addressed to all of humanity (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ), not solely to the believers as many classical exegetes tended to interpret it, restricting its scope exclusively to the Muslim community.<sup>32</sup> This perspective

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<sup>31</sup>Rahmadi Agus Setiawan, Corak Penafsiran Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah, *MUSHAF JOURNAL*, Vol. 3 No. 1 April 2023, hlm. 134-135

<sup>32</sup>As one of the most renowned classical exegetes, Ibn Kathir tended to interpret this verse within the internal context of the Muslim community. He prioritized an interpretation that emphasized the unity of Muslims and the importance of maintaining *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood). In his commentary, Ibn Kathir placed greater emphasis on the social relations among Muslims, highlighting the necessity of preserving cohesion and avoiding enmity. Abu Fida' Ism'il bin Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Quran al-Adzim*,

demonstrates Shihab's pre-assumptions in reading the verse comprehensively. He critically reviews the interpretations of other exegetes, which he considers less accurate, and then proposes an alternative reading based on his own understanding and perspective.

When examined through the construction of his argument, one can observe notable similarities between Shihab's interpretation and that of Fazlur Rahman regarding QS. al-Hujurat verse 13.<sup>33</sup> This resemblance is shaped by their shared intellectual engagement with social and humanitarian issues. Fazlur Rahman, who emphasizes contextual understanding and social relevance in his interpretation, and Quraish Shihab, whose thought is influenced by modernity and socio-humanitarian concerns, both approach the verse as articulating a fundamental principle of human relations that remains highly relevant to contemporary society.

### 3) Fusion of Horizons

Based on the initial understanding of Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 as a call addressed to all of humanity (بِأَيْمَانِ النَّاسِ), and not solely to the believers, Quraish Shihab's interpretation stands in contrast to several earlier exegetes who limited the verse to Muslims alone. Shihab argues that if the verse were directed only to believers, it

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(Maktabah Dar al-Ghaddi alJadid), hlm. 478. Al-Qurtubi also emphasized social relations among individuals. However, he placed greater focus on the principles of social justice and ethical conduct within the Muslim community. Although he did not entirely reject a universal perspective, Al-Qurtubi concentrated more on issues of internal cohesion and morality in interpersonal relations among Muslims. Al Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al Qurthubi*, diterjemahkan dari *Al Jami 'li Ahkaam Al Qur'an*, terj. Akhmad Khatib, (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam), 2009, hlm. 101-119.

<sup>33</sup>Fazlur Rahman sought to contextualize his exegesis in light of the social challenges of the modern era. He viewed QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 as a call to eliminate social, racial, and ethnic discrimination. Rahman emphasized that this verse should be understood within a broader global social context, not limited merely to relations among Muslims, but also as a mandate to uphold equality and social justice across the world. Fazlur Rahman, Tema-Tema Pokok al-Qur'an, terj. Anas Wahyudin, (Bandung: Pustak, 1996), hlm. 55.

would create a contradiction, since believers are already included within the Muslim community. Thus, he maintains that this verse carries a universal message applicable to all humankind, not merely to those who profess faith.

Quraish Shihab's initial interpretation of QS. al-Hujurat 13 subsequently merges with various conditions and contexts surrounding its revelation. First, the object of this verse is humanity as a whole, not exclusively the believers. Second, the verse was revealed to remind Muslims who had become entangled in disputes over tribal superiority, where some tribes claimed greater nobility based on lineage or social status. Third, the verse underscores the importance of mutual acquaintance (*ta'āruf*) among human beings. Fourth, *Tafsir al-Misbah* explains that the divine attributes '*Alīm* (All-Knowing) and *Khabīr* (All-Aware) signify God's perfect knowledge. The verse reminds that only God can fully judge one's faith and piety, and that His determination of true honor is the most accurate, not the one disputed among human beings.<sup>34</sup> Through these four aspects, Quraish Shihab combines contextual presuppositions with the understanding of the circumstances in which the Qur'anic text was revealed.

#### 4) Application

After uncovering the meanings embedded in the verse and recontextualizing its interpretation, Quraish Shihab conveys a deeper and more relevant message that can be derived from its literal sense. In his exegesis, Shihab highlights the concept of *ta'āruf* (mutual acquaintance), which carries profound relevance for contemporary times. In this context, *ta'āruf* does not merely signify superficial or physical acquaintance, but rather a deeper

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<sup>34</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah...*, hlm. 261-264.

understanding of fellow human beings—including their identities, cultural backgrounds, and diverse life experiences. In today's era of globalization and pluralism, *ta'āruf* calls upon humanity to appreciate differences and to foster more constructive communication, thereby nurturing mutual understanding and respect among people, which in turn strengthens social bonds.

Furthermore, the egalitarian message contained in this verse becomes increasingly pertinent in light of today's social challenges. The verse underscores that true honor is not determined by tribe, lineage, or social status, but by one's piety before God. In the modern context, this means that every individual, regardless of social, cultural, or economic background, possesses equal opportunities to attain dignity in the sight of God through acts of worship and virtuous deeds. This aligns with the principles of egalitarianism that advocate equality and social justice while opposing all forms of discrimination or injustice rooted in transient external factors.

With regard to the degree of piety, the verse teaches that human beings often become ensnared in the pursuit of worldly markers of honor such as wealth, position, and power. Yet these are merely temporary and may even lead to ruin if made the ultimate goal in life. In contrast, true and lasting dignity is attained by drawing nearer to God, obeying His commands, avoiding His prohibitions, and embodying His attributes in daily life.<sup>35</sup> Thus, piety (*taqwā*) serves as the key to achieving enduring honor—bringing not only fulfillment in this world but also ultimate happiness in the Hereafter.

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>35</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, hlm. 264.

The interpretive process of Quraish Shihab regarding QS. al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 can be analyzed through Gadamer's four fundamental theories: historical consciousness, pre-understanding, fusion of horizons, and application. Shihab's interpretation is shaped by his educational background and his humanistic, moderate, and contextual worldview, particularly influenced by his studies at al-Azhar University and by modernist Islamic thinkers. In his exegesis, Shihab calls upon the community to appreciate diversity, emphasize equality, and measure human dignity based on piety rather than tribe, race, or social status.

By fusing horizons and applying the verse within contemporary contexts, Shihab's interpretation of QS. al-Ḥujurāt 13 provides meanings that remain relevant for today's life. The verse teaches the importance of mutual acquaintance (*ta'āruf*), the elimination of prejudice, and the reminder that true dignity is attained only through closeness to God, not through worldly achievements. This exegesis thus serves as a guide for life that prioritizes values of mutual recognition, egalitarianism, and piety—principles that are crucial to be practiced both personally and socially amid the dynamics of modern times.

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