

Shirk According to Buya Hamka in Al-Azhar Interpretation (Examining the History of Thought and Interpretation)

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Abstract

There are many verses that talk about shirk and produce quite a variety of interpretations. One of the commentators who is quite detailed in explaining the shirk is Buya Hamka in the interpretation of Al-Azhar. An important aspect of this study apart from looking at how shirk according to Buya Hamka is to examine the history of Buya Hamka's thoughts and interpretations so as to produce a complete interpretation which he put into Tafsir Al-Azhar. This study used a qualitative method of literature review. This method collects data obtained from various sources of literature, books, journal articles, and various related research results. This study found that Shirk according to Buya Hamka was broadly divided into two groups. First, Shirk before Islam, which is included in this category are the perpetrators of major sins and non-Muslims before converting to Islam. Second, Shirk after Islam, which is included in this section is excessive worship of other than Allah and changing God's creation. As for what influenced his thinking and interpretation: 1. Family background, 2. Education, 3. Community organizations, 4. social circumstances. Thus, the results of this study further confirm that the results of thought and interpretation cannot be separated from space and time. Therefore, apart from studying the results of interpretations or interpretation books, it is no less important to study the history of the thoughts and interpretations of a mufassir.

Keywords: *Shirk, Thought, Interpretation, Buya Hamka*

Introduction

The discussion on shirk continues to develop. This cannot be separated from seeing the importance of understanding shirk well and leaving it to manifest complete faith and creed. On the other hand, religious problems from time to time are not the same, especially in this case the problem of shirk. Therefore, the explanation of one topic may shift (add) according to the current context. Thus, the role of the ulema as the inheritors of the prophets is urgently needed, or in this opportunity those who are experts in the study of the Qur'an and commentary.

Furthermore, there are many verses that talk about shirk and have resulted in many interpretations. However, from the many interpretations, the author on this occasion chooses the interpretation of Al-Azhar. This selection is based on the author's observation that Buya Hamka is a misinterpreter who is quite detailed in explaining shirk. Therefore, as one of the well-known mufassir in Indonesia and an interpreter from the Muhammadiyah circle, it is the main attraction to examine how the meaning, thought and history of his interpretation of shirk.

So far, the author has found a lot of literature that examines shirk and its variations are quite diverse. Discussion of studies in general leads to the first two tendencies, studies that focus on the epistemology of shirk itself (KHB Bin Muhammad: 2013, Hamang: 2016, M Muhlis: 2019, Sakinah-AH Adib: 2022, Billah: 2023). Second, the discussion of shirk according to interpretation scholars and other figures (B Tujang: 2016, H Badarudin: 2017, Dedeh Kurniasih: 2019, S Nur Hasanah: 2020, M. Rifqi: 2021, M. Alhadi: 2022, Izzati: 2022). However, what worries the author is that of the many articles that appear in Google Scholar searches, according to Buya Hamka, there is no shirk. On the other hand, the author tries to search on general Google pages, then he finds a blog that talks about shirk according to Buya Hamka,

The purpose of this paper is to complete the previous literature review as described above. Therefore, in this paper at least the author will ask two questions to be answered first, What is shirk according to Buya Hamka. Second, how is the history of Buya Hamka's thoughts on shirk to become a complete understanding that he put into his commentary on Al-Azhar. These two questions become a reference for the author to be studied further and in depth. But in this article, the discussion will be more in-depth about the history, thoughts and interpretations of Buya Hamka.

Thus the author hypothesizes that Buya Hamka's thoughts on shirk lead to the first two possibilities, understandings that are not much different from previous scholars. Second, understanding combined with the local culture that developed at that time. This is based on the argument that Buya Hamka's long history in the course of his life will have a distinctive influence on his interpretation.

Research Methods

Furthermore, to make a directed discussion, and get maximum research results, the authors use a qualitative method of literature review. The primary data sources that the author intends to examine are the book of al-Azhar commentary and the book written by him himself and are supported by secondary sources related to the theme.

Research Results and Discussion

A. Meaning of Shirk

Shirk etymologically comes from the word *fi'il madhi* which is composed of the letters *syin*, *rad* and *kaf* which have the meaning of comparison or disagreement.¹ Whereas *شرك* in the book *al-mufradat fii gharibil Qur'an* has a mixed meaning of ownership or association/alliance.² Not much different, in *al-Munawwir's* dictionary the word *shirk* has the meaning of duplicating God or shirking.³ *Ibn Mandzur* in the book *Lisanul Arabic* gives a terminological understanding that what is meant by *shirk* is associating partners with Allah in matters of divinity or it can be said to deify substances other than Allah.⁴

On the other hand, quoted from the NU Online page, that *shirk* is not only deifying other than Allah or leaving it. But those who worship Allah and worship other than Allah. This can be seen in *Surah al-An'an* verse 82 which is interpreted with *Surah*

¹ Abu AL-Husain Ahmad Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1994). 265

² Ar-Raghib Al-Ashfahani, *Al-Mufradat Fi Gharibil Qur'an*, ed. Ruslan Nurhadi, 1st ed. (Depok, West Java: Fawa'id Khazanah Library, 2017). 368

³ Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Al-Munawwir (Arabic-Indonesian Dictionary)*, 14th ed. (Surabaya: Progressive Library, 1997).765

⁴ Ibn Manzur, *Lisanul Arab*, ed. Amin Muhammad Abdul Wahab (Beirut: Dar Ihya al Thurath al Arabiy, 2009).448

Lukman verse 13.⁵ Furthermore, Nurcholis Majid said that shirk does not only glorify fellow creatures. But being proud of yourself and stepping on the pride of others is also included in the meaning of shirk.⁶ In the Qur'an itself, the word shirk and its derivations appear 168 times with 63 different words. However, according to al-Raghib al-Asfahani only 11 verses are directly related to the word shirk and he divides it into two parts:

First, al-shirk al-adhim, namely verses that explain major shirk. Verses that fall into this category include QS al-Nisa (4:48 and 116), QS al-Maidah (5:72), QS al-An'am (6:148) and QS Mumtahanah (60:12).

Second, al-shirk al-asgar, namely verses that explain minor shirk. Verses that fall into this category include QS al-A'raf (7:190), QS at-Taubah (8:5 and 30), QS Yusuf (12:106), QS al-Kahf (18:110), and QS al-Haj (22:17).⁷

Not much different, Yusuf al-Qordhawi also divides shirk into two parts, namely shirk khafiy and shirk jaliy. As for the behavior of shirk khafiy if he asks for forgiveness then he will be forgiven by Allah, while the behavior of shirk jaliy will not be forgiven by Allah.⁸ However, in conclusion, these two types of shirk are actions that are prohibited by Allah SWT.

B. According to Ulama Interpretation

1. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

Shirk is making a rival that resembles Allah and loving that counterpart as you love Allah. This act is a great tyranny because it is related to the faith of Muslims. The way to purify oneself from shirk is to believe wholeheartedly that only Allah SWT has power and authority.⁹

2. Plague al-Zuhaili

According to him, shirk is an act of wrongdoing caused by mixing faith with behavior that partners with Allah. The behavior in question is making other gods

⁵ Dwi Khoirotnun Nisa, "Be Careful With 2 Kinds of Shirk," NU Online, last modified 2013, <https://nu.or.id.nasional/hati-hati-dengan-2-kind-syirik-IKxAv>.

⁶ Nurcholis Majid, *Doors to God*, Cet. 1. (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1994). 36

⁷ Ar-Raghib Al-Ashfahani, *Mufradat Al Fadz Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: al-Dar al-Syamsiyah, 2009). 452

⁸ Yusuf Al-Qordhawi, *The Guide to Repentance* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2008). 50

⁹ Muhammad Mustaqim bin Roslan. Nur Salsabila Binti Sidek, "Yusuf Qardhawi's Views on the Concept of Shirk: Analysis of Tawakkal and the Practice of Islamic Communities in Malaysia," Center for Da'wah and Leadership Studies (2022), <http://www.ukm.my/fpi/>.

exist with Allah, serving, worshiping, loving, asking for help from him, and doing things that are not because of Allah.¹⁰

Thus, the study and discussion of shirk gives rise to many different meanings. But what needs to be underlined is that the word shirk never comes out of the meaning of association or alliance. The discussion of shirk in this section is limited by the author, later it will be explained in more detail in the interpretation section of Buya Hamka.

C. Biography of Buya Hamka

Has the full name Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, but in everyday life he is more popularly known as Buya Hamka. He was born in West Sumatra, Agam, Tanjung Raya to be precise on the Batang River on February 17, 1908 or in the Hijri year 1326. Besides having a real name, Buya Hamka also received a regional title, namely Datuk Indomo. Buya Hamka is an Indonesian scholar and writer. Buya Hamka is actively known as a scholar, writer, writer and Islamic figure. Seeing his extraordinary services in the field of religious studies in particular, Buya Hamka by al-Azhar University in Egypt and the National University of Malaysia received an award in the form of an Honorary Doctorate (Honoris Causa).¹¹

Born to Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah and Safiyah, Buya Hamka was the eldest of four children. His father Abdul Karim or who is popularly known as Haji Rasul, was the originator of the Ishlah Movement (tajdid) in Minangkabau. In his childhood, Buya Hamka often heard rhymes about the Minangkabau world from his anduang (grandmother) in his daily life. This usually happens if the father has to travel to carry out da'wah. Then Buya Hamka moved to Padang Panjang following the move of his mother and father.

In the city of Padang Panjang, Buya Hamka attended a village school and attended evening classes at the religious school founded by Zainuddin Laby El-Yunusy in 1916. Because of his love for language lessons, Buya Hamka quickly became fluent in Arabic. When Hamka was about 10 years old, his father founded Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang. After three years in the village school, his father sent him to Thawalib,

¹⁰ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, Tafsir Al-Munir, ed. Abdul Hayyle Al-Kattani (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013), <http://www.gemainsani.co.id>. 112

¹¹ Haidar Musyafa, Buya Hamka: A Biographical Novel, ed. Faried Wijdan, Cet. 1. (Tangerang, 2018).

so that he could learn more about religion and language, and at the same time, could also study the classics. Apart from formal schooling, Buya Hamka also received religious teachings at surau and mosques from well-known scholars such as Sheikh Ibrahim Musa and Sheikh Ahmad Rasyid. Born and living in Minang land, he was brought up in the Minangkabau tradition. His childhood was full of inner turmoil because at that time there was a violent conflict between natives and youth over the application of Islamic teachings. There are many things that are not justified in Islam, but are practiced in the lives of ordinary people. This experience will then be poured in the interpretation of al-Azhar.

Since childhood, Buya Hamka has been known as a wanderer. Even his father gave the title Si Bujang Jauh to Buya Hamka. Until finally in 1924, at the age of 16, Hamka moved to Yogyakarta and there he learned a lot about the modern Islamic movement from figures such as HOS Tjokroaminoto, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, RM Soerjopranoto and H. Fachruddin. From there he began to make comparisons between Islamic political movements, namely the East India Islamic Sarekat, and the social movement Muhammadiyah. He lived there for six months with his brother-in-law AR St. Mansour. He learned a lot from his brother-in-law, both about dynamic Islam and politics. Here he became acquainted with the thoughts of Muhammad Jamaluddin Al-Afgani, Muhammad Abduh and Rosyid Ridha who at that time were influential Islamic figures.¹²

Buya Hamka returned to Maninjau in 1925. New enthusiasm and insights about dynamic Islam were brought back from Java. In addition, he brought several valuable works containing the thoughts of scientists of that time. He has dared to speak in public with the provision of experience and knowledge, both in religious knowledge and general knowledge. He began to subscribe to the idea of renewal and Muslim organizations, both in Indonesia and abroad, to open his eyes. He became a correspondent for Pelita Andalas in Medan in 1927 and went on pilgrimage. Upon returning from Mecca, he did not go straight to Minangkabau; instead, he lived in Medan for some time. It was in this city that he wrote many articles in various magazines at that time.

¹² Editor in Muhammadiyah, "Buya Hamka, Literary Ulama Tanah Melayu - Muhammadiyah," accessed August 12, 2023, <https://muhammadiyah.or.id/buya-hamka-ulama-sastrawan-tanah-melayu/>.

As a scholar who thirsts for knowledge, Buya Hamka taught himself in many ways. Among them are philosophy, literature, history, politics, and sociology in the Islamic and Western worlds. Armed with highly proficient Arabic language skills, he was able to study the works of well-known scholars and poets in the Middle East such as Zaki Mubarak, Jurji Zaidan, Abbas Al-Aqqad, Mustafa Al-Manfaluti, and Husayn Haykal. In addition, he also used Arabic to study the works of French, English and German scholars such as Albert Camus, William James, Sigmund Freud, Arnold Toynbee, Jean Paul Sartre, Karl Marx and Pierre Loti.

Buya Hamka's character, knowledge, and concern for the fate of Muslims made him well-known in his own country and in other countries, such as Malaysia and the Middle East. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak, once stated that Buya Hamka was the pride of all Southeast Asia. Buya Hamka passed away on July 24, 1981. To this day, his works, thoughts, and other contributions-his influence is still being felt in promoting Islam in Indonesia. He is respected as a scholar and writer in the country of his birth, as well as in the archipelago, including Malaysia and Singapore.

In the end, the success of Buya Hamka from various fields, for example the interpretation that is being researched, according to the author, is influenced by one of his principles. Which on one occasion Buya Hamka once said "As an independent nation, we should have siri, have self-respect".¹³Every individual has freedom, freedom of the nation, there is no place to fear except Allah, there is no strong and powerful except all of that with the permission of Allah SWT.

D. Buya Hamka's works

As explained above, that Buya Hamka is not only an expert in the field of interpretation but also in other fields of knowledge such as literature, sociology, politics and so on. Therefore, there are so many of his writings that have been published and published in books, numbering more than a hundred. Some of Buya Hamka's works are as follows:

1. Under the Protection of the Kaaba (1936)
2. The Sinking of the Van Der Wijck Ship (1938)
3. Migrating To Deli (1939)

¹³ Buya Hamka, Ghoro: Jealous for God, Cet. 7. (Depok, West Java: Human Echoes, 2020). 136

4. My Father (1949)
5. Philosophy of Life (1950)
6. Islamic Studies (1956)
7. Budi Institute (1962)
8. Interpretation of Al-Azhar (1967)
9. The Position of Women in Islam (1973)
10. Modern Sufism (1983)
11. Ideological Revolution and Social Justice (1984)
12. Sufism Development and Purification of Islamic History (1993)¹⁴

E. Buya Hamka's Interpretation of Shirk Verses

The first verse whose interpretation is to be seen is as follows:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

Meaning: indeed Allah does not forgive those who join forces with him, but he forgives other actions, and whoever shirk Allah has indeed committed a grave sin (An-Nisa 4: 48)

In the interpretation of al-Azhar, when interpreting Surah an-Nisa verse 48, Buya Hamka explained that believing in Allah is the basis of religion, and whoever joins him will not be forgiven. He explained at length about shirk and the views of other scholars. But in conclusion he said that the sin of shirk can be forgiven with the first several arguments: the meaning of the verse "he forgives the perpetrators of sins other than shirk with whom he wishes" is the generality of major sins arising because he has shirk beforehand. Second: If the shirk really repent, they will surely be forgiven by Allah as the previous companions.¹⁵

In interpreting Surah an-Nisa verse 116, Buya Hamka added his interpretation that shirk after he converted to Islam: monotheism is like the body which includes health and strength. Shirk is far astray as straight lines and parallels. In this verse shirk is influenced by satan. So that many worship other than Allah, for example stones, daggers, places of honor, graves and so on. Of course this is contrary to human nature which acknowledges the One God, He continued: shirk changes God's creation.

¹⁴ Hidayah Pratami, "Characteristics of Buya Hamka's Da'wah" (IAIN Metro, 2020). 32

¹⁵ Buya Hamka, Interpretation of Al-Azhar, Juz V-VI. (Jakarta: Panjimas Library, 1989). 123-128

Therefore every Muslim must be careful to keep his tauhid not to be mixed with others. Because keep in mind satan has always been a real enemy for a Muslim. Because satan always affects the feelings of the worshiper so that he is increasingly misled and deceives his nature.¹⁶

In Surah al-Maidah verse 72, here Buya Hamka gives an interpretation of shirk as follows:

--- انه من يشرك با الله فقد حرم الله عليه الجنة ومأه النار ---

This is the point of the teachings of Prophet Isa. The explanation of this teaching is repeated by the Qur'an, in accordance with what is missing one, according to what is missing one, which has not yet had time to be twisted into another meaning. Eternal life is heaven. The one God, is the one who has no other partner with him. And the Messiah is solely ordered by God, or in Indonesian which is more subtle: has been sent by God to be His Messenger. Associating others with God, including associating Jesus Christ himself with God is an act of tyranny.¹⁷

From the interpretation above, it can be seen that Buya Hamka provides further explanation about shirk by looking at the editorial of the verse in question. It is an interesting point for the writer that shirk in this verse is categorized as an unjust act. Of course this is very continuous with the interpretation of Surah Lukman verse 13.

Furthermore, the word shirk whose interpretation is to be seen is in Surah al-An'am verse 148:

سيقول الذين أشركوا لو شأ الله ما أشركنا ولا آباؤنا ولا حرمنا من شيء -

Not only is Allah the Almighty created nature by himself, but He himself also arranges it. No other allies with him. Therefore, the only one worthy of worship is Him, one cannot associate with others. Of all the symptoms that grow from the cause of associating it. Up to determining the forbidden animals and forbidden gardens, for the worship of idols, everything is an act of shirk and that is what the Prophet warned the musryikin.

This interpretation further reinforces that Buya Hamka is very concerned about the relationship between the verses before and after it. Apart from that, he also

¹⁶ Hamka, Interpretation of Al-Azhar. 360-365

¹⁷ Hamka, Interpretation of Al-Azhar. 429

interpreted the verse as related to a developing phenomenon. But if we return to the word *shirk*, in this verse it is more directed to the character of polytheists where when they make a mistake they will say this is our fate and all that Allah has arranged. He further explained that characters like this still exist today.¹⁸

The last verse whose interpretation of *shirk* is to be examined further is Surah al-Mumtahanah verse 12 as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يَبِيَعْنَكَ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ ---

According to the hadith narrated by Bukhari, received from Aisha, that the Prophet accepted the arrival of women who wanted to convert to Islam, then he conveyed the prohibitions contained in this verse. After they received everything, the apostle said: now we have accepted your allegiance.¹⁹

In this verse, Buya Hamka does not explain further about *shirk*. However, when reading the interpretation of this verse, the author concludes that when someone wants to convert to Islam, he or she should be witnessed by many people. This of course will bring benefits in other fields, for example: information on Islam becomes *da'wah*, the convert is more easily recognized because it is witnessed by many people and finally promises to be in a crowded hall will certainly affect a person's physical condition.

F. Interpretation Journey

Tafsir al-Azhar is a monumental work of Buya Hamka. This interpretation book is written in Indonesian with old spelling. The writing of this interpretation began with encouragement and pressure from Buya Hamka himself. Because Buya Hamka saw that many young people wanted to know the contents of the Qur'an, but they did not master Arabic properly. Therefore, this condition made Hamka more enthusiastic to publish it immediately.

At first, this book was delivered at dawn lectures at the al-Azhar mosque since 1959. He wrote it every dawn at the end of 1958. However, entering 1964 this interpretation had not yet been written. The writing of this book was stopped in the same year because he was arrested by the Old Order government. With the condition

¹⁸ Hamka, Interpretation of Al-Azhar. Juz VII-VIII. 133-135

¹⁹ Hamka, Interpretation of Al-Azhar. Juz XXIII. 115

of being detained, Buya Hamka's enthusiasm to continue writing did not fade, and even created more opportunities to write for Hamka.

On January 21, 1966, Buya Hamka got his freedom back to coincide with the end of the old order government. This opportunity was not wasted by him to continue to refine the writing and improve the interpretation of al-Azhar. After feeling adequate, with infinite gratitude, this interpretation was finally published for the first time in 1967.²⁰ This interpretation explains in a straightforward manner the life of the interpreter and also contemplates the history of life and the socio-politics of that period. Among the references to the interpretation of al-Azhar are Tafsir Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, al-Manar, al-Maraghi, Jalalini. As for hadith books, for example Sunan Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, and al-Muwatha.

G. Analysis

As one of the scholars and commentators who lived in the 20th century, Buya Hamka was quite detailed in explaining the shirk that he set forth in the interpretation of Al-Azhar. Basically, the results of his interpretation are not much different from the figures of previous interpretations. But what distinguishes him is sometimes interpreting by looking at the current context. From the interpretation that the author explained above, it can be concluded that Buya Hamka's life and scientific background clearly left an impression and influenced the style and characteristics of his commentary works. The characteristics of his interpretation range from adabi-ijtima'i or literature and society. Much of the history of Buya Hamka's life journey that he passed is set forth in this book of interpretations. Apart from that, in terms of the thoughts he channeled in his commentary, Buya Hamka was heavily influenced by reformers at that time, for example, Jamaludin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha. However, as a great and charismatic scholar, in giving Buya Hamka's interpretation, he also often quoted the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the words of friends and tabi'in so that this interpretation of Al-Azhar by Buya Hamka

²⁰ Islah Gusmian, Treasures of Indonesian Interpretation, Cet.1. (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2013).60

became a collaborative work of interpretation between the interpretations of bil mamsur and bil ma 'quul.²¹

Thus, the results of this study further confirm that the results of thought and interpretation cannot be separated from space and time. Therefore, apart from studying the results of interpretations or interpretation books, it is no less important to study the history of the thoughts and interpretations of a mufassir. In general, what influences his thinking and interpretation is divided into four parts: 1. Family background, he comes from a family of scholars and his father is a Minangkabau reformer. 2. Education, apart from being a scholar, Buya Hamka was also a writer, journalist and studied with many influential figures before and after independence. 3. Ormas, Buya Hamka was active in Muhammadiyah and had held important positions such as branch head, regional head, and advisor to the central leadership. 4. social circumstances, he lived before and after independence and when the old order was still in power, he was also accused of being pro Malaysia.

Conclusion

In the Qur'an, the word shirk and its derivations appear 168 times with 63 different words. However, according to al-Raghib al-Asfahani there are only 11 verses that are directly related to the word shirk and he divides it into two parts, namely major and minor shirk. According to Buya Hamka, shirk is broadly divided into two groups. First, Shirk before Islam, which is included in this category are the perpetrators of major sins and non-Muslims before converting to Islam. Second, Shirk after Islam, which is included in this section is excessive worship of other than Allah and changing God's creation.

In general, what influences Buya Hamka's thinking and interpretation, the author divides into four parts: 1. Family background, he comes from a family of scholars and his father is a Minangkabau reformer. 2. Education, apart from being a scholar, Buya Hamka was also a writer, journalist and studied with many influential figures before and after independence. 3. Ormas, Buya Hamka was active in Muhammadiyah and had held important positions such as branch head, regional head, and advisor to the central

²¹ Admin, "Buya Hamka's Pattern of Interpretation in His Masterpiece Tafsir Al-Azhar – Indonesian Ulema Council," accessed August 12, 2023, <https://mirror.mui.or.id/guidance-syariah/paradigma-islam/36161/corak-penafsiran-buya-hamka-in-his-masterpiece-tafsir-al-azhar/>.

leadership. 4. social conditions, when the old order was still in power, he was accused of being pro-Malaysia.

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