

The Approach of Interpretation Implemented by Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar Based on Scientific Exegesis

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Abstract

Al-Quran is a sacred scripture of Islam. It is guidance for Muslims, containing not only the principles of the religion, but incites the development of intellectual as well as natural sciences. Modern Muslim scholars have developed a new methodology of the Quran exegesis known as tafsir al-'ilmī. This method is a scientific approach that focuses on commentaries of the Quran terminologies. In addition, this method is also defined as a form of commentary that applies modern sciences to interpret the verses of the Quran. Tafsir al-Azhar, written by Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (HAMKA), is a modern Malay commentary of the Quran which applies the scientific approach to the Quran exegesis. This commentary has been vastly referred to by the Malay readers for its exhibits multi-disciplinary approach. This study aims at i) collecting all the interpreted al-kawniyyah verses in the commentary, ii) arranging the verses according to the chapters of the Quran, and iii) analysing the approach of interpretation applied by Hamka. This study applies document analysis approach. The findings exhibit a total of 400 al-kawniyyah verses; 298 of which interpreted by HAMKA within seven approaches of interpretation.

Keywords: *Al-Quran, scientific exegesis, Tafsir al-'ilmī, Tafsir al-Azhar, HAMKA*

INTRODUCTION

Tafsir al-Azhar was written by Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (HAMKA), a renowned modern Malay scholar. This commentary clearly reflects HAMKA profound knowledge of both religion and modern sciences. Tafsir al-Azhar, as a whole, was actually the subject of a series of HAMKA dawn lectures that he delivered at Masjid al-Azhar, Kebayoran Baru Jakarta beginning 1959. The tafsir has acclaimed as his masterpiece work. It is written in his lucid style and reflects his scholarship during his time and contemporarily. Tafsir al-Azhar has a significant contribution promoting the reformative ideas (*işlāḥ al-dīn*) inspired by the two modern Muslims reformers, Shaykh Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Reda, in the Malay region.

In general, HAMKA applies two methods of commentary in his Tafsir al-Azhar, namely; (i) *tafsīr al-athārī* and (ii) *tafsīr al-'ilmī*. In his *tafsīr al-athārī*, HAMKA interpretes certain verse with other verses of the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w). This approach is considered as *ma'thūr* which defines words or provides definitive meaning to a vague word. On the other hand, in his *tafsīr al-'ilmī*, HAMKA interpretes verses of the Qur'an based on the interpretation

of muslims and non-muslims scholars. His interpretation of *al-kawniyyah* verses in Al-Quran, for instance, clearly follows the interpretation that of traditional muslims scholars (mufasssir) such as that of al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Rāzī and others (Mashitah, 2000: 10-12).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Tafsir, according to Ibn 'Ashūr, is a knowledge that elucidates the meanings and wisdom of the verses of the al-Quran (1984: 10). Al-Zarkashī (1988) defines *tafsir* as an act of understanding the Book of Allah *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* (S.W.T), extracting and describing its laws and wisdoms through correct application of the Arabic grammars, the morphology (*ṣarāf*), the classical Arabic linguistic expression (*bayan*), the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), the method of recitation (*qirā`at*) and the *nāsikh* (abrogation) as well as the *mansūkh* (abrogated) verses of the Quran (1988).

On the other hand, *al-`ilmī* or science is a systematic knowledge which truthfulness can be tested, analysed and proven. It can also be referred to as a knowledge of precision such as physics, chemistry and biology (Teuku Iskandar, 1996). Similarly, Sulaiman (1993) has indicated that science is a systematic analysis of natural phenomena by means of specific methods and experiments to accumulate certifiable principles and knowledge that are reliable and can be trusted .

Similarly, al-Dhahabī (1998) defines *al-tafsīr al-`ilmī* as a scientific approach that discusses in details the scientific terms in the Qur'an, and generates multi-disciplinary knowledges and philosophical views from the verses of the al-Quran. Ibrahim (2002) points out that *al-tafsīr al-`ilmī* is a scientific exegesis that elucidates the *al-kawniyyah* verses based on the scientific theories and findings, which have been formulated and discovered after the revelation of al-Quran has completed, and thus, deny the allegation that al-Quran is an invention of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.

In *Tafsir al-Azhar*, HAMKA pays significant attention to interpreting the verses (*ayat al-kawniyyah*) in relation to *aqidah* (belief). The verses that touch on the nature of the universe and the creation of human being are comprehensively interpreted by invoking the reader to ponder on their meanings and arguments. Muslims, he holds, must aggressively venture into scientific knowledge in order to restore the glory of Islam and the Muslim era (Mashitah, 2000).

It is of a great significant to analyse the validity of his approach in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, which has been vastly read and quoted among Malay scholars, intellectuals and academicians. In addition, his ideas and thought on modern scientific knowledge must also be studied in comparison with his contemporary scholars. Thus, this study aims at collecting all the interpreted *al-kawniyyah* verses in the commentary, arranging the verses according to the chapters of the Quran, and analysing the approach of interpretation applied by Hamka.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory case research design was implemented by the researcher throughout this qualitative and quantitative study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2011) and Masri (2004), a research can be categorised as an exploratory research if the study has yet to be done by any other researcher or the findings of the study did not fulfill its objectives or satisfy the expectation of the researcher. This exploratory case research has been conducted with the aims

at determining, collecting as well as analysing the methodology interpretation applied by HAMKA in his interpretation of the *al-kawniyyah* verses in *Tafsir al-Azhar*.

A total number of four hundred (400) verses were selected as purposive sampling to be analysed in this research. These samples represent more than fifty percent of the total seven hundreds and fifty (750) verses classified as the *al-kawniyyah* verses found in the Qur'an. These samples were analysed using the statistic descriptive analysis approach, in order to identify the proportion or frequency the *al-kawniyyah* verses interpreted by HAMKA. In addition, document analysis approach was used to analyse the application of *tafsir al-al-'ilmī* in his interpretation of *al-kawniyyah* verses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has successfully fulfilled the following objectives. First, the distribution and proportion of interpreted or uninterpreted *al-kawniyyah* verses found in *Tafsir al-Azhar* are accordingly classified. Second, the methodology applied by HAMKA in his interpretation of the *al-kawniyyah* verses is based on the scientific exegesis (*tafsir al-'ilm*).

DISTRIBUTION OF VERSES OF AL-KAWNIYYAH IN TAFSIR AL-AZHAR

The findings of this quantitative study were obtained from the application of the document analysis approach on the sampling of four hundreds (400) *al-kawniyyah* verses in all ten (10) volumes of *Tafsir al-Azhar*. The sampling indicates that only two hundreds and ninety eight (298) *al-kawniyyah* verses were interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific exegesis. The details of these verses are in Table 1:

Table 1: The Distribution of Verses *al-Kawniyyah* Verses in *Tafsir al-Azhar*

Volume	Verses	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
1	16	13	3
2	6	4	2
3	20	14	6
4	17	12	5
5	50	34	16
6	43	29	14
7	42	33	9
8	46	37	9
9	63	42	21
10	97	80	17

a) Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume One of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 2: Number of Verses in Volume One

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Fātiḥah	1	1	0
Al-Baqarah	2	12	3

The table shows that only sixteen (16) verses from the total of two hundreds and ninety three (293) verses in the two *surah* in the first volume of Tafsir al-Azhar are related to the verses of *al-kawniyyah*. One verse is in *surah al-Fātiḥah* and another fifteen (15) verses are in *surah al-Baqarah*. It appears that three (3) verses were not interpreted based on scientific fact.

b) Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Two of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 3: Number of Verses in Volume Two

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
Āli 'Imrān	3	3	0
an-Nisā`	4	1	2

In Volume Two of Tafsir al-Azhar, there are six (6) verses related to *al-kawniyyah*. Three verses are in *surah* Āli 'Imrān and another three verses are in *surah* an-Nisā`. Only two verses of *al-kawniyyah* in *surah an-Nisā`* were interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

c) Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Three of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 4: Number of Verses in Volume Three

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
Al-Mā'idah	5	4	3
Al-An'ām	6	10	3

The study also reveals that there are only twenty (20) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* in Volume Three of Tafsir al-Azhar. Seven (7) verses are in *surah* al-Mā'idah and another thirteen (13) verses are in *surah* al-An'ām. Three verses of *al-kawniyyah* from each of the two *surahs* were not interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

d). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Four of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 5: Number of Verses in Volume Four

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-A'rāf	5	11	5
at-Tawbah	6	1	0

The table shows that there are seventeen (17) verses of *al-kawniyyah* in both *surah* al-A'rāf and *surah* at-Tawbah. Sixteen (16) verses are in *surah* al-A'rāf and one is in *surah* at-Tawbah. There are five (5) verses in *surah* al-A'rāf that were not interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

e). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Five of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 6: Number of Verses in Volume Five

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
Yūnus	10	3	0
Hūd	11	1	1
Yūsuf	12	1	2
al-Ra'd	13	6	1
Ibrāhīm	14	1	1
al-Ḥijr	15	5	5
al-Naḥl	16	17	6

Table 6 discloses that there are fifty (50) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* in all seven (7) *surah*. Two (2) verses are in both *surah* Hūd and *surah* Ibrāhīm respectively, and six (6) verses appear in both *surah* Yūnus and *surah* Yūsuf, seven (7) verses are in *surah* al-Ra'd, ten (10) verses are in *surah* Al-Ḥijr, and twenty three (23) verses are in *surah* Al-Naḥl. Further analysis indicates that sixteen (16) verses that are related to *al-kawniyyah* were not interpreted based on the scientific facts.

f). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Six of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 7: Number of Verses in Volume Six

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Isrā`	17	2	2
al-Kahfi	18	5	3
Maryam	19	1	0
Ṭaha	20	7	1
al-Anbiyā`	21	2	2
al-Ḥaj	22	6	3
al-Mu`minūn	23	6	3

The table shows that there are forty three (43) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* in volume Six of Tafsir al-Azhar. One (1) verse is in *surah* Maryam, four (4) are in both *surah* al-Isrā` and *surah* al-Anbiyā`, sixteen (16) verses are in *surah* al-Kahfi and *surah* Ṭaha and the other eighteen (18) verses appear in both *surah* al-Ḥaj and al-Mu`minūn. The analysis indicates that fourteen (14) verses were not interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

i). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Seven of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 8: Number of Verses in Volume Seven

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Nūr	24	3	2
al-Furqān	25	2	2
al-Shuṅṅarā`	26	1	0
al-Naml	27	7	2
al-Ankabūt	29	2	0
al-Rūm	30	13	0
Luqmān	31	3	1
al-Sajdah	32	2	2

Table 8 represents a total of forty two (42) verses that are related to *al-kawniyyah* which appear in all eight *surah* listed in Volume Seven of Tafsir al-Azhar. In details, one (1) verse is in

surah al-Shu‘arā`, two (2) verses are in *surah* al-Ankabūt, twelve (12) verses appear in three (3) *surah*, i.e, al-Furqān, al-Sajdah and Luqmān, five (5) verses are in *surah* al-Nūr, nine (9) verses are in *surah* al-Naml and another thirteen (13) verses are in *surah* al-Rūm. The analysis reveals that nine (9) verses of *al-kawniyyah* in Volume Seven of Tafsir al-Azhar were not interpreted based on the scientific facts.

j). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Eight of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 9: Number of Verses in Volume Eight

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Aḥzāb	33	1	1
Saba`	34	1	3
Fāṭir	35	5	1
Yāsīn	36	13	1
al-Şāffāt	37	2	2
Şād	38	3	0
az-Zumar	39	4	0
al-Ghāfir	40	3	0
Fuṣṣilat	41	5	1

Table 8 shows that Volume Eight of Tafsir al-Azhar contains nine (9) *surah* all together. There are forty six (46) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* in all these *surah*. Two (2) verses appear in *surah* al-Aḥzāb, three (3) verses in *surah* al-Ghāfir, four (4) verses in *surah* Saba, four (4) verses in *surah* al-Şāffāt, four (4) verses in *surah* az-Zumar, six (6) verses in *surah* Fāṭir, six (6) verses in *surah* Fuṣṣilat, and fourteen (14) verses in *surah* Yāsīn. Further analysis reveals that nine (9) verses that are related to *al-kawniyyah* in Volume Eight of Tafsir al-Azhar were not interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

k). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Nine of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 10: Number of Verses in Volume Nine

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Shūrā	42	4	2
az-Zukhruf	43	2	1
al-Dukhān	44	1	0
al-Jāthiyah	45	1	2
al-Aḥqaf	46	1	0
al-Faṭḥ	48	0	1
al-Ḥujurāt	49	1	0
Qāf	50	6	0
az-Zāriyāt	51	4	4
at-Ṭūr	52	4	1
an-Najm	53	3	1
al-Qamar	54	2	1
al-Raḥmān	55	7	3
al-Wāqi'ah	56	6	4
al-Ḥadīd	57	0	1

The table shows that there are sixty three (63) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* in Volume Nine of Tafsir al-Azhar. One (1) verse is in each *surah* al-Mā'idah, al-Dukhān, al-Aḥqaf, al-Faṭḥ, al-Ḥujurāt and al-Ḥadīd respectively, nine (9) verses are in *surah* al-Jāthiyah, az-Zukhruf and al-Qamar, eight (8) verses are in both *surah* an-Najm and at-Ṭūr, six (6) verses appear in *surah* al-Shūrā and Qāf respectively, eight (8) verses are in *surah* az-Zāriyāt and twenty (20) verses appear in both *surah* al-Raḥmān and al-Wāqi'ah. There are twenty one (21) verses of *al-kawniyyah* that appear in all fifteen (15) listed *surah* in this volume were not interpreted based on the scientific facts.

l). Verses of *al-Kawniyyah* in Volume Ten of Tafsir al-Azhar

Table 11: Number of Verses in Volume Ten

<i>Surah</i>	Number of <i>Surah</i>	Interpreted Verses	Uninterpreted Verses
al-Jumu'ah	62	0	1
at-Ṭalāq	65	2	0
al-Mulk	67	4	4
al-Ḥāqqah	69	1	2
al-Ma'ārij	70	3	0
Nūḥ	71	4	0
al-Muzammil	73	1	1
al-Qiyāmah	75	5	3
al-Insān	76	2	1
al-Mursalāt	77	3	0
an-Nabā`	78	8	0
an-Nāzi'āt	79	6	1
'Abasa	80	6	2
at-Takwīr	81	8	0
al-Infiṭār	82	3	0
al-Inshiqāq	84	4	0
al-Burūj	85	1	0
al-Ṭāriq	86	4	0
al-Ghāshiyah	88	2	0
al-Fajr	89	2	1
as-Shams	91	4	0
at-Ṭīn	95	4	0
al-'Alaq	96	1	0

al-Zilzilah	99	2	0
al-Qāri'ah	101	0	1

There are one hundred and eight (108) verses related to *al-kawniyyah* appears in twenty five (25) *surah* listed in Volume Ten of Tafsir al-Azhar. In details, four (4) verses are in *surrah* al-Jumu'ah, al-Burūj, al-'Alaq and al-Qāri'ah, six (6) verses are in *surah* at-Ṭalāq, al-Muzammil and al-Zilzilah, twenty one (21) verses appear in *surah* al-Ḥāqqah, al-Ma'ārij, al-Insān, al-Mursalāt, al-Infiṭār, al-Ghāshiyah and al-Fajr, twenty (20) verses appear in *surah* Nūḥ, al-Inshiqāq, al-Ṭāriq, as-Shams and at-Ṭīn, seven (7) verses are in *surah* an-Nāzi'āt. Most of the verses are in *surrah* of al-Mulk, al-Qiyāmah, an-Nabā', 'Abasa and at-Takwīr with the total number of forty (40) verses. Further analysis on each of these verses indicates that only seventeen (17) verses were not interpreted by HAMKA based on the scientific facts.

THE INTERPRETATION APPROACH BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EXEGESIS (TAFSIR AL-'ILMĪ)

This analysis aims at identifying the sources, the method and the systematic interpretation of the verses of *al-kawniyyah* in Tafsir al-Azhar. The following are the findings of the analysis that are based on the observation and the document analysis.

a). The Interpretation Based Approach on al-Quran

HAMKA applies this approach in his interpretation of the verse 60 of *sūrah* al-Mā'idah and the verse 38 of *sūrah* al-An'ām. The insightful interpreted meaning of the verse 60 is about the transformation of people into apes and swine which can also be found in the verse 65 of *sūrah* al-Baqarah. Furthermore, in the verse 38 of *sūrah* al-An'ām, HAMKA interpreted the word (دَابَّةً) as animals on earth that fly and creep on their bellies as featured in the verse 45 of *sūrah* al-Nūr (2012. Vol. 3).

HAMKA has also applied this first approach towards two other *al-kawniyyah* verses from *sūrah* al-A'rāf; the verse 54 and the verse 58 featured in the fourth volume of Tafsir al-Azhar. The first verse mentions about the greatest creation of the earth and its atmosphere and both were brought into being by Allah (S.W.T) within six days. Based on the Quran, HAMKA interprets that the six day in the time of hereafter is equal to 6 000 years of human reckoning. This difference in time has also been mentioned in the verse 47 of *sūrah* al-Ḥaj and the verse five of *sūrah* Al-Sajdah. However, the verse of *sūrah* al-Ma'ārij contradicts the two verses. The verse discloses that the day of the Resurrection is equal to 50 000 years in totality (2012. Vol. 4).

b). The Interpretation Approach Based on Hadith

Sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse that was interpreted by HAMKA based on this second approach also featured in *sūrah* al-Baqarah and it is the verse 187. In this verse, the meaning of white thread was interpreted as daybreak and black thread as the onset of night. Those interpretations were based on a hadith narrated by Bukhari dan Muslim that is associated with an action of a person named Adī ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī who was confused with the actual meaning of the threads featured in the verse. He put those two threads on his mattress to see the

difference and later referred his action to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). In his response, the Prophet said that the white thread represents the crack of dawn and the black one exemplifies the darkness of night (2012. Vol. 1).

Further, the verse 189 of the same *sūrah* is the third sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse interpreted by HAMKA based on a hadith transmitted by Ibn 'Asākir from Ibn 'Abbas which is about the formation of the new moon. The hadith features the two companions of Prophet Muhammad, known as Mu'āz ibn Jabbal and Tha'labah ibn 'Usmān who claimed that the new moon appeared to look like a thread before it turned into the full moon. Allah later revealed in this verse that the new moon is being referred as a mean to measure time and fixed seasons for the pilgrimage (2012. Vol. 1).

c). The Interpretation Approach Based on Stories of The Companions and *Tābi'īn*

The third approach implemented by HAMKA to interpret *al-kawniyyah* verses is based on narration of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as well as their contemporaries known as the *Tābi'īn*. The first sample is the verse one of *sūrah* an-Nisā` which explains about the existence of humankind. It began with a single man who had been given a mate created from his soul. HAMKA made this interpretation with a reference to the phrase 'a single man' that had been referred as Prophet Adam (A.S) by the *Tābi'īn* known as Mujāhid ibn Jabīr. Thus, he also narrated that Allah created Hawwa' from the shortest rib on Prophet Adam's left side. This narration was reported by a group of the *Tābi'īn* named Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Munzir and Abī Ḥātim. Thus, another *Tābi'īn*, called Abū al-Shaykh, has also reported about the same occurrence narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, one of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) (2012. Vol. 2).

The verse 58 of *sūrah* al-A'rāf discusses about the lush vegetations that are permitted to grow by Allah on a land with fertile soil. This third sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse was also interpreted based on supposition made by the same *Tābi'īn*, Ibn 'Abbas, on the verse itself. For him, the fertile soil personifies soul that accepts faith and is guided it whereas parched one exemplifies irreligious soul. Further, HAMKA has interpreted another *al-kawniyyah* verse found in the very same *sūrah* and it is the verse 133. Apparently, this verse mentions about typhoons, locusts, lices and frogs and the interpretation made by HAMKA (2012, Jld.4) of this verse was based on the narration of two *Tābi'īn* known as Ibn Kathīr and Ibn 'Abbas. They narrated about the heavy rain that continuously pouring down after the occurrence of great typhoons and it has resulted in a flood that caused massive destruction. Other than the narration of those two *Tābi'īn*, HAMKA has also made his reference to the interpretation made by another *Tābi'īn* known as Mujāhid ibn Jabīr. He narrated that the flood has led to the outbreak of cholera which became the major cause of death for many human beings (2012. Vol. 4).

d). The Interpretation Approach Based on Opinions of Exegeses (*Mufassirīn*)

The fourth approach used by HAMKA in interpreting the *al-kawniyyah* verses in Tafsir al-Azhar is by making his reference to dispositions disclosed by various exegetes or writers who published commentaries of the quran. The sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse, also featured in *sūrah* al-Baqarah, is interpreted based on the disposition of an exegete and it is the verse 173. This verse too, discusses about the forbiddance of eating the flesh of swine for muslims and HAMKA (2012, Jld.1) made his interpretation of this verse by taking into consideration the disposition

given by Imam al-Qurtubī as cited in Tafsīr al-Qur`ān al-‘Azīm. In his disposition, al-Qurtubī made his conclusion based on other dispositions made by majority of muslim scholars that all parts of swine flesh and skin are prohibited for muslims except for its hair because it is inedible (2012. Vol. 1).

The second sample of the *al-kawniyyah* verse is also interpreted based on the disposition of an exegete is the third verse of *sūrah* al-Mā`idah that disposes the forbiddance of eating the meat, blood and flesh of a swine. For the interpretation of this verse, HAMKA referred to a disposition of Ibn Kathīr cited in the narration of Ibnu Abī Hātim and reported by Abū Umāmah or Şuday ibn ‘Ajlān. Further, Narrated Abū Umāmah he had been appointed by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) to meet his people to further elucidate on Islamic law and later he was served with food that was prepared from coagulated blood. According to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), the blood is prohibited to be consumed and he recited that verse of *sūrah* al-Mā`idah to emphasize about it (2012. Vol. 3).

e). The Interpretation Approach Based on Opinions of Muslim and Western Scholars

The first sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse interpreted based on this fifth approach is the verse 57 of *sūrah* al-A`rāf which mentions about the resurrection of the dead. In interpreting about this occurrence, HAMKA made his reference to dispositions of two Muslims scholars; Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Syeikh Husain al-Jesar. According to Ibn Sina, during the Day of Resurrection, the human body that is reduced to dust at death will be reconstituted and reunited with its soul. This is because the soul is a complete substance and independent of the body and therefore, the decay and destruction of the body does not affect the soul at all. In addition, the human body is subjected to destruction since it was made of micro atomic particles and these particles might be absorbed together with other minerals by the vegetations. Later, if they are consumed by humans, the particles turn into blood which is the most prominent element in human generating. This cycle will revert itself once the human body is buried and reduced to dust. The viewpoint of Syeikh Husain al-Jesar on the other hand, would rather be on the natural process that takes place after the destruction of the dead human body and this was cited in a book of al-Hushunul Hamidiyyah. Both scholars agree to conclude that the soul will be reunited with its body during the Day of Judgement (2012. Vol. 4).

The second sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse interpreted based on the same approach is the verse 26 of *sūrah* al-Ḥijr. In his interpretation of this verse, HAMKA was found to criticize the Darwin’s Theory of Evolution. HAMKA states that the theory is incomplete and does not reveal the truth about the creation of human since it emphasises only the similarities of the humans and monkeys in terms of their natures and behaviours. This, according to him, has clearly indicated the uncertainty of Darwin’s Theory of Evolution compared to the revelation of this verse (2012. Vol. 5).

f). The Interpretation Approach Based on Common Scientific Facts

The first sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse interpreted by HAMKA based on his knowledge and experiences is the verse 14 of *sūrah* al-An`ām. It states about Allah (S.W.T) as the Creator of the gardens, the date palms and both the trees of the olive and the pomegranates. HAMKA focuses on elaborating the interpretation of the word (أَنْشَأَهَا) based on the apprenticeship of Tawhid-ul-Rububiyyah and in accomplishing it, he uses the exemplification of rice cultivation that is very

common in Asian regions as well as in his hometown, Indonesia. It begins with the transplanting process in which the pre-germinated seedlings are transferred from a seedbed to the flooded rice field. These seeds will then grow into greenish rice crops, reach their maturity, turn yellowish and produce grains. HAMKA commented that this will only happen with the will of Allah (S.W.T) (2012. Vol. 3).

The next sample of *al-kawniyyah* verse interpreted by HAMKA based on knowledge and experiences is the verse four of *sūrah* al-Ra'd. The feature of this verse discusses the various types of soils on earth surface and they are all suitable for vineyards, fields of grains, date palms and both clusters or non-clustered vegetation. HAMKA in interpreting this verse, uses the exemplification of various parcels of arable land used in rice cultivation to enhance the difference in interpreting the word *clusters* and *non-clustered*. According him, rice crops from different parcels of the same paddy field will never produce grains with the same quality. He further relates his finding about the various qualities of the date produced by its palms planted in Madinah despite of their physical similarities. In supporting these two findings about the difference, HAMKA states that each district in Indonesia is identified by its own cultivation. He mentions about the well-known durian originated from Kampung Besar, the famous duku fruit of Palembang and the harvested rice of Ampat Angkat (2012. Vol. 5).

g). The Interpretation Approach Based on Scientific Fact

HAMKA relates his interpretation of the verse sixteen (16) *surah* al-Hijr to the stars which resemble beautiful ornaments that glitter at night for those who observed (بُرُوجًا وَرَبَائِحًا لِلنَّاطِرِينَ). HAMKA classifies the form of observations into three; 1) an observation on the stars in the universe, 2) an observation on the stars and its affiliation to mankind such as the Bedouin who names the stars after animals species around them, and 3) an observation of modern sciences on the universe such as the discovery of the galaxy and the existence of one hundred (100) million stars. HAMKA also cited the opinions of Omar Khayyan, the writer of the *Rubu'at*, who regarded the constellations formed by the sun, the moon and the prominent stars, as Twelve Burooj (2012. Vol. 5).

In verse forty (40) *surah* Yaasin, which mentions on the dissimilarity in the circulation of the sun and the moon, HAMKA presented a theory which indicates that the sun completes its circulation within the period of three hundreds and sixty five (365) days, whereas the moon takes three hundreds and fifty four (354) day, eleven (11) days in difference, to complete its circulation. Human able to travel to the moon only after the theory of the distance between the sun and the moon was formulated to be around ninety three (93) million miles away and the moon is located about two hundreds and forty (240) millions kilometers away from the sun. This theory further estimated that the journey from the nearest star to the sun will take four (4) light years which is equals to one hundred and four (104) million miles away. If the velocity of light-years is about one hundred and eighty six (186) million miles away, thus the travel back and forth of the nearest star to the sun will take about eight years to complete (2012, Vol. 8).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis indicates that Tafsir al-Azhar is a masterpiece work on exegesis that has its own nobility. The tafsir has been systematically arranged and the elaborations of the verses are written in simple and comprehensible language Tafsir al-Azhar has been the

reference to Malay readers for its multi-disciplinary approach which utilizes various information derived from intellectual (*aqli*) and religious (*naqli*) sources. Although his approach is very uncommon to many during his era, this study will perhaps initiate further studies on the actual stance of HAMKA as well as other exegeses on scientific exegesis.

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