

# Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theological Approach in Interpreting the Qur'an

Solehudin Solehudin  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia  
Email: [solehudin@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:solehudin@uinsgd.ac.id)

---

**Abstract:** Theological exegesis from classical to medieval times predominantly reflects a theocentric (*al-lahūt*) approach, which often limits the functional role of the Quran as *hudan li an-nas* (guidance for humanity). This traditional interpretation places divine attributes at the centre, sometimes overlooking the Qur'an's direct address to humans. In response, Hasan Hanafi introduced Anthropocentric Theology, a paradigm that seeks to activate theological texts for real-world applications. This study explores Hanafi's anthropocentric interpretive framework and its implications for contemporary Qur'anic exegesis. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytic method, this research is based on library research, analysing primary sources such as *Min al-'Aqidah ila as-Saurah*, *ad-Din wa as-Saurah*, and *Qadhaya al-Mu'asirah*, along with secondary literature that supports the discussion. This study applies theo-centric and anthropocentric theories to selected Qur'anic verses, aligning them with Hanafi's interpretative structure. The findings show that Anthropocentric Theology serves as both a critique of theocentric interpretations and a new interpretive direction focusing on human agency. This approach emphasizes six key dimensions: (1) Anthropocentrism (*at-tarkiz 'ala an-nās*), (2) Historical Context (*Tarikh nuzūl al-ayāt*), (3) Rationality (*Ta'aquli*), (4) Emancipation (*al-musawat fi al-huqūq*), (5) Contextualization (*at-tafsir bi'tibari as-siyāq*), and (6) Social Transformation (*at-taqhayur al-ijtima'i*). The study concludes that Qur'anic interpretation must shift from the passive acceptance of fate (*taqdīr*) to active engagement (*ikhtiār*), promoting justice, prosperity, and societal reform. By applying eclectic thematic interpretation, anthropocentric theology offers a transformative vision, shifting conditions from corruption to righteousness, oppression to justice, and poverty to prosperity, ensuring the Quran's continued relevance in modern sociopolitical contexts.

**Keywords:** Hasan Hanafi, Theocentric, Anthropocentric, Thematic-Electic

---

## A. Introduction

The search for theological interpretation works from classical times to the Middle Ages, will predominantly find theocentric interpretation style (*al-lahūt*). Reading the books of interpretation of theological flow in Islam will confirm this reality. It can be seen in some interpreters such as: Fakhruddin ar-Rāzi with his work *Mafātih al-Ghaib*<sup>1</sup>, Az-Zamakhshari with his work *al-Kasyaf*<sup>2</sup>, Şadr ad-Dīn as-Syīrāzi with his work *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fakhruddin ar-Razi is a well-known commentator among the *ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*. This book of Tafsir was printed in Tehran, Iran. It was printed by the publisher *Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah*. The art of narrating tafsir is by presenting the opponent's opinion and then executing it one by one with arguments and an all-out defense of the Sunni madhhab.

<sup>2</sup> Imam Zamakhshari is a central exegetical figure among the Mu'tazilahs. Usually this figure is contrasted with Fakhruddin al-Razi (an imaginary dialogue because they were not contemporaries with a long distance).

<sup>3</sup> Şadr ad-Dīn as-Syīrāzi, 1344. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Intisyarat Baidar Qum Publisher, 2nd printing.

The writing of tafsir is certainly concerned with the audience as the reader of the tafsir text. In classical to medieval times, theological interpretation aimed to introduce the correct aqidah from the authoritative text, the Quran. If it is found that theological interpretations dwell on the discussion of the existence of Allah, His attributes, and His deeds, it will certainly be significant and accurate at that time.

There is an undeniable reality of the emergence of double standards or the versus character. Hasan Hanafi<sup>4</sup> mentions that there is a syncretic phenomenon in thinking between religious understanding and secularism, traditional-modern, east-west, conservative versus progressive understanding and so on. This fact also needs to be noted as a problem, one of which is triggered by a rigid religious understanding.

The next stage is theological functionalization, which is transformed into human existence as the holder of Amanah on earth. This means that interpretive efforts must shift the interpretation of theological verses from theocentric to anthropocentric.

Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theology approach is a theological concept that emphasizes the role of humans in understanding and implementing religious teachings, especially Islam. There are two reasons for the emergence of Hanafi's anthropocentric ideas. *First*, the need for a new ideology to become a "weapon" in global battles is highlighted. *Second*, the need for a new theology that is not only theoretical, but also at the same time practical and becomes action or positive movements<sup>5</sup>. This approach focuses on interpretations that prioritise humans as the centre of theological studies, aiming to develop understandings relevant to contemporary social, political, and cultural contexts.<sup>6</sup>

Several studies have examined Hasan Hanafi's thoughts on the Qur'an and Tafsir. Saenong, *Hermeneutics of Liberation, Methodology of Qur'anic Interpretation according to Hassan Hanafi*. Furthermore, Muhammad Mansur's article, "Tafsir 'Realist' Methodology: A Critical Review of Hassan Hanafi's Thought", in *Contemporary Qur'anic Studies* (2002), editor Abd Mustaqim & Sahiron Syamsuddin, wrote a study of realist tafsir methodology<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, regarding Hassan Hanafi, A.H. Ridwan wrote a book entitled: *Islamic Intellectual Reform: Hassan Hanafi's Thought on the Reactualization of the Islamic Scientific Tradition* (1998).<sup>8</sup> In addition to A.H. Ridwan, E. Kusnadingrat wrote the book *Theology and Liberation: The Idea of Hassan Hanafi's Left Islam* (1999), this book explores the various methodological tools of Hassan Hanafi in an effort to transform his ideas about the Islamic Left.

---

<sup>4</sup> Hasan Hanafi, *Min al'Aqidah ila as-Saurah* (Cairo; Maktabah Madbuli, Egypt, 1991)

<sup>5</sup> Hasan Ridwan, *Islamic Intellectual Reform* (Yogyakarta: Ittaqa Press, 1998, pp: 50)

<sup>6</sup> Deswita Deswita and Hidayatul Azizah Gazali, "Contextual Islamic Theology - Contemporary (A Study of Hasan Hanafi's Contextual Theology)," *Majalah Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Pemikiran Keagamaan Tajdid* 25, no. 1 (2022); Taufiqurrahman, "Epistemology Ta'wil: A Study of Hassan Hanafi's Ideas in Interpreting Al-Qur'an," *QOF* 7, no. 2 (2023); Siswoyo Aris Munandar, "Oksidentalism as an Islamic Response to the Advancement of Western Civilization; Study of Hassan Hanafi's Thought," *Jurnal Tamaddun : Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2021); Syafieh Syafieh, Katimin Katimin, and Sukiman Sukiman, "The Relevance of Hassan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theology Ideas towards the Re-Actualization of Islamic Thought in Indonesia," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal) : Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>7</sup> M. Ilham B. Saenong, "Theory of Interpretation in Social Hermeneutics of the Qur'an: Hassan Hanafi on the Alignment of the Qur'an to Humanity", in *Potensia Philosophy Journal*, (Yogyakarta: ttp, BEM - AF, 2003), pp. 15-29. Muhammad Mansur, "Realist Tafsir Methodology: A Critical Analysis of Hassan Hanafi's Thought", in *Contemporary Qur'anic Studies; New Discourses on Various Tafsir Methodologies*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002), pp.97-107.

<sup>8</sup>A.H. Ridwan, *Islamic Intellectual Reform: Hassan Hanafi's Thought on the Reactualization of the Islamic Scientific Tradition*, (Yogyakarta: Ittaqa Press, 1998).

There are still a number of studies on Hasan Hanafi that the author cannot mention in detail due to space constraints. Some of the above writings are sufficient to represent Hasan Hanafi as a figure who masters many disciplines. The mega project carried out by Hasan Hanafi is "Renewal". This is reflected in *his magnum ovum at-Turaṣ wa at-Tajdīd* (Tradition and Renewal). Hasan Hanafi's progressiveness is reflected in his writings: *Min al-'Aqidah ila ath-Ṣaurah* (From Theology to Revolution).<sup>9</sup>

In the field of Quranic interpretation, Hasan Hanafi has made a significant contribution through his dissertation entitled *Essai Sur la Methode d'Exegese (Essays on the Method of Interpretation of the Qur'an)*. This study explores the methodological foundations of Quranic exegesis, emphasising the importance of integrating historical, philosophical, and sociological dimensions in understanding the Quran. Hanafi's approach critiques traditional hermeneutical methods, arguing that contextual interpretation is essential for making Quranic teachings relevant to contemporary socio-political realities. His work aligns with his broader intellectual project of Islamic leftist thought, which seeks to bridge classical Islamic scholarship and modern critical methodologies. By advocating for a renewal of Quranic interpretation, Hanafi challenges dogmatic readings and proposes a dynamic hermeneutical framework that allows for continuous reinterpretation, considering historical developments and societal transformations. His methodological innovations have influenced many scholars of modern Islamic thought, particularly in the discourse on progressive and transformative interpretations of the Qur'an.<sup>10</sup>

## B. Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology to examine and elucidate how Hasan Hanafi employs anthropocentric theology in his exegesis of Qur'anic texts. This approach permits an exhaustive examination of the theological perspectives and historical contexts that inform these interpretations.

The method entails a systematic decipherment of primary and secondary texts, with the objective of gaining insight into the development of Hasan Hanafi's anthropocentric approach. This includes an analysis of Hasan Hanafi's written works, such as those presented in the books *Min al-'Aqidah ila as-Saurah ad-Din wa as-Saurah* and *Qadhaya al-Mu'asirah*, as well as secondary literature that provides additional context or criticism of Hasan Hanafi's approach.

This research employs the data collection technique of an extensive literature review, encompassing the works of Hasan Hanafi and other pertinent literature, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. This includes an examination of the differences and similarities between anthropocentric and theocentric theologies within the context of Islamic interpretations. This study entails the theoretical application of theocentric and anthropocentric concepts to Qur'anic texts. This entails reinterpreting Qur'anic verses through the lens of anthropocentric theology to ascertain how this perspective influences the

---

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Patri Arifin, "Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Hasan Hanafi," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Ushuluddin dan Filsafat* 13, no. 1 (2018); Carool Kersten, "Hermeneutics and Islamic Liberation Theologies: Hasan Hanafi and Hamid Dabashi," 2022; Fadlil M. Manshur, "Hasan Hanafi, New Theology and Cultural Revolution: An Analysis of Cultural Intensification," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021); Mahdi Fani et al., "The Criteria of Healthy Humans from the Perspective of Religious Texts," *Journal of Research on Religion & Health* 4, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Dicky Wirianto, *Discourse on the Reconstruction of Turaith (Tradition) According to Abed al-Jabiri and Hasan Hanafi*, Volume XI, No. 1, 2011. Page: 75

interpretation of the text in the broader context of social change, rationality, emancipation, contextualisation, and social transformation of the text.

This study employs a thematic-eclectic method of interpretation to analyse Qur'ānic texts, which combines various interpretative approaches to produce a more cohesive and socially relevant understanding of the text. These steps include identifying themes, classifying linguistic forms, and structuring meaning in accordance with current social realities. Through this methodology, this study aims to offer a more dynamic and applicable interpretation of Hasan Hanafi's theology, illustrate how his approach can influence modern understandings of Islamic teachings, and highlight its relevance to contemporary societal issues.

### C. Result and discussion

#### 1. Theoretical Basis of Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theology

As mentioned earlier, anthropocentric theology is both a continuation and critique of theocentric theology. The vortex of the study of the interpretation of Quranic verses revolves around the existence of God (*wujūd*); both the interpretation of God's Substance, Attributes (*Asmā' wa as-sifāt*), and His activities (*af'āl*). The text of the Quran is understood by classical interpreters as theological information, introducing the existence of God with all the things attached to Him<sup>11</sup>.

The products of classical interpretation until medieval times, the discussion of theological verses textually has a theocentric character (*al-lahūt*). In the next round, namely modern and contemporary, there began to be an offer of theological interpretation thinking that shifted from theocentric to anthropocentric (*an-nasūt*). The main points of Hasan Hanafi's anthropocentric theological approach are as follows:

##### a. Humans are positioned as the Primary Subject

In the context of philosophy and religion, especially in the study of sacred texts such as the Quran, humans are often considered the main subject. This means that humans are seen as entities that have awareness, responsibility and an important role in understanding and carrying out the teachings conveyed in the text<sup>12</sup>.

Here are some aspects where humans play the role of the main subject: *first*: Awareness and Knowledge (*al-wa'yu wa al-ma'rifah*). Humans are the only creatures with the ability to think, reflect, and seek knowledge. In the Quran, humans are often invited to contemplate the signs of Allah's greatness in the universe and in themselves.

*Second*, Freedom and Choice (*al-huriyyah wa al-khiyariyy*). Humans are given the freedom to choose between good and evil things. The Quran emphasises the importance of using reason and conscience to make decisions in accordance with Islamic teachings.

*Third*, Responsibility and Trust (*al-mas'uliyah wa al-amanah*). Humans are considered caliphs on earth, which means they have a great responsibility to safeguard and maintain the universe's balance. This includes social, moral, and spiritual responsibilities.

*Fourth*: The Purpose of Human Life (*ghāyat hayāt al-insān*). According to the Quran, the main purpose of human life is to worship God and to follow the right path. This gives direction and meaning to human life and emphasises the importance of the relationship between humans and their Creator.

---

<sup>11</sup> Nurul Huda, Arqom Kuswanjono, and Agus Himmawan Utomo, "Theological Anthropocentrism: An Interpretation of Scripture and Semitic Theodicy in Overcoming the Environmental Crisis," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2023); Deswita and Azizah Gazali, "Contextual Islamic Theology - Contemporary (A Study of Hasan Hanafi's Contextual Theology)."

<sup>12</sup> Fani et al., "The Criteria of Healthy Humans from the Perspective of Religious Texts."

*Fifth*, Self-Development (*tanmiyy*). The Quran encourages humans to constantly develop and improve themselves spiritually, morally, and intellectually. This process involves constant learning and self-reflection.

b. Social and Political Relevance:

Hasan Hanafi emphasizes that theology must have relevance to current social and political issues. Theology should not only be a theoretical study but should also provide practical solutions to the problems faced by society.

The social and political relevance of the Quran refers to how its teachings can be applied in contemporary social and political contexts. The Quran provides spiritual guidance and guidance on various aspects of life, including social relations and political governance. Here are some aspects of the Quran's social and political relevance:

- Orientation to Social Justice (*al-'is al-ijtima' yyah*). The Quran emphasises the importance of social justice. Its verses often call for humanity to be fair to others, avoid discrimination, and fight for the rights of oppressed people. This principle of justice can be applied to the legal system and social policies to create a more just society.
- Orientation to Economic Prosperity (*ar-rakhā fi al-iqtisād*). The Quran teaches the importance of economic well-being for all people. Concepts such as *zakat* and *sadaqah* are tangible forms of social concern in Islam that aim to reduce economic disparities and help the underprivileged in society. This principle can be implemented in economic policies to create a more equitable distribution of wealth.
- Orientation to Political Participation (*Mutaba' ah as-Siyasah*). The Quran supports the principle of *shura*, deliberation or consultation in decision-making. This can be interpreted as support for public participation in political and decision-making processes. Democracy and transparent governance can be seen as modern applications of the *shura* principle.
- Affirming the Rule of Human Rights (*al-Huquq al-insaniyyah*). The Quran recognises and respects basic human rights, including the right to life, freedom of religion, and protection from violence and oppression. These teachings are particularly relevant to global efforts to promote and protect human rights.
- Having Collective Responsibility (*al-mas'uliyah al-jama'ah*). The Qur'an teaches the importance of solidarity and collective responsibility in building a harmonious society. This principle encourages cooperation and collaboration between individuals and groups to achieve common goals that benefit the entire community.
- Anti-corruption: The Quran explicitly condemns corruption and abuse of power. This teaching is relevant to efforts to eradicate corruption and build a clean and accountable government.

c. Criticism of Traditionalism: This approach criticises traditional views that tend to be rigid and inflexible in interpreting religious teachings. Hanafi encourages the reinterpretation of religious teachings in a more dynamic and contextual manner.

Criticism of traditionalism in the Islamic context often comes from thinkers and reformers who see the need to reinterpret religious teachings to make them more relevant in the modern context. Traditionalism, which refers to the strict maintenance of established interpretations and practices, is often criticised for being unresponsive to changing times and challenges. Here are some of the main criticisms of traditionalism.

- Rigidity in Interpretation. One of the main criticisms is that traditionalism tends to be rigid in its interpretation of sacred texts, such as the Quran and Hadith. This

inflexible interpretation can hinder innovation and the adaptation of religious teachings to changing social, political, and scientific contexts.

- Rejection of Ijtihad. Traditionalism often rejects or limits *ijtihad*, the intellectual endeavour to interpret religious teachings contextually. This can hinder the development of Islamic thought, which is dynamic and responsive to contemporary issues.
- Gender Discrimination. Some criticisms of traditionalism include views on gender roles that are considered to be outdated. Traditional interpretations often position women in limited roles, contrary to the values of gender equality that are increasingly recognised worldwide.
- Conflicts with Human Rights. Traditionalism is sometimes accused of conflicting with modern human rights principles, such as freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and minority protection. This criticism highlights the need for a reinterpretation of religious teachings that is more in line with international human rights standards.
- Intellectual Stagnation. Overemphasis on tradition can lead to intellectual stagnation, isolating Muslim communities from scientific and technological developments. This hinders social and economic progress in Muslim countries.
- Inability to Face Contemporary Challenges. Traditionalism may be less effective in dealing with contemporary challenges such as globalisation, climate change, and technological developments. Non-contextualised interpretations can hinder finding solutions that align with Islamic values and are relevant to modern situations.
- Radicalism and Extremism: Some critics link traditionalism to the rise of radicalism and extremism, although not all traditionalists espouse extreme views or engage in violence. These critiques highlight how narrow and rigid interpretations can be manipulated by groups with specific political or ideological agendas to suit their needs.

In the face of these criticisms, many Muslim thinkers and scholars are pushing for a more inclusive and dynamic approach to interpreting Islamic teachings. They emphasise the importance of *ijtihad*, historical context, and dialogue between civilisations to ensure that Islamic teachings remain relevant and useful in contemporary life.

#### d. Emancipation and Liberation

One of the main goals of anthropocentric theology is to achieve human emancipation from all forms of oppression. It seeks to liberate humans from structural shackles, whether political, economic, or social.

Emancipation and liberation in the Islamic context refer to efforts to free individuals and communities from various forms of oppression, injustice, and inequality, whether in terms of gender, social, political, or economic. If interpreted appropriately and contextually, Islamic teachings can provide a strong foundation for emancipation and liberation. The following are some important aspects of emancipation and liberation in Islam:

#### a. Freedom and Gender Equality

- 1) Equality of Rights and Duties. The Quran teaches that men and women are created from the same soul and have equal rights and obligations in many aspects of life. These verses can be interpreted as supporting the fight for gender equality.
- 2) Education for All. Islam emphasises the importance of education for all human beings, regardless of gender or any other factor. Education is an essential tool for emancipation, enabling both women and men to reach their full potential.

#### b. Social Justice:

- 1) Resistance to Oppression. The Qur'an condemns all forms of oppression and promotes social justice. Verses that speak of justice and fair treatment can be used as a basis for fighting for social rights and against structural injustices.
- 2) Wealth Distribution. The principles of zakat and sadaqah in Islam encourage a more equitable distribution of wealth, thereby helping to reduce economic and social disparities.
- c. Political Liberation:
  - 1) Principle of Deliberation (*Shūra*). The Quran teaches the principle of shura or deliberation in decision-making, which can be interpreted as support for democratic participation and inclusive governance.
  - 2) Resistance to Injustice. Islam teaches resistance to injustice and oppression by tyrannical rulers. This provides a basis for supporting political movements aimed at overthrowing authoritarian regimes and establishing just governments.
- d. Economic Liberation
  - 1) Prohibition of Riba (Interest). The Quran prohibits usury which can lead to economic exploitation. It encourages a fairer economic system and reduces practices that harm the poor.
  - 2) Economic Empowerment. Islam encourages productive and fair economic activities, including fair trade and community economic empowerment through waqf and collective enterprises.
- e. Religious Freedom:
  - 1) No Compulsion in Religion: The Quran affirms that there is no compulsion in religion (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 256). This principle supports freedom of religion and opposes any form of coercion.
  - 2) Protection of Minorities. Islam teaches the protection of minority rights and respect for diversity. This can be applied in the modern context to support the rights of religious and ethnic minority groups.
- f. Human Rights Enforcement  
Human Dignity. Islam recognises and respects the dignity of all human life. It supports human rights and opposes all forms of discrimination and inhumane treatment.
- e. Dialogue between Philosophy and Science:
  - a. Integration of Philosophy and Theology
    - 1) Philosophy in Islam. Islamic philosophy combines rational thought and religious teachings. For example, Ibn Rushd (*Averroes*) argued that there is no conflict between philosophy and religion, as both seek truth. He also argued that rational knowledge could strengthen faith.
    - 2) Rational Theology. Al-Ghazali, although initially critical of philosophy, later developed an approach that integrated rationality with theology, known as 'rational theology' or 'kalām'. This shows that dialogue between philosophy and religion can result in a synthesis that enriches both fields.
  - a. Science in Islamic Perspective
    - 1) Scientific Interpretation of the Qur'an. Some Muslim scholars have attempted to relate modern scientific discoveries to Quranic verses, showing that this holy book contains clues about the universe that can be understood through science. However, this approach must be taken with caution to avoid imposing an out-of-context interpretation.

- 2) Scientific Ethics. Islam offers an ethical perspective that can guide scientific practices. For example, principles such as justice, human welfare, and environmental responsibility can guide the development and application of new technologies.
- b. Contemporary Issues and Interdisciplinary Dialogues
  - 1) Bioethics. Dialogue between Islam and science is particularly relevant in the field of bioethics. Issues such as cloning, genetic engineering, and euthanasia require ethical guidance that can be found in religious teachings and moral philosophy.
  - 2) Ecology and Sustainability. Islam teaches that humans are responsible as stewards of the earth, which includes the protection of the environment. This dialog can help develop a sustainable and ethical approach to environmental issues.
  - 3) Technology and Ethics. Technological advances, such as artificial intelligence and big data, raise complex ethical questions. Islamic perspectives can contribute to the discussion on how technology should be used for the common good and to avoid negative impacts.
- c. Interdisciplinary Approach
  - 1) Academic Collaboration. Encouraging dialog between Muslim scientists, philosophers, and theologians to work together on interdisciplinary research projects can lead to new insights and innovative solutions to global challenges.
  - 2) Education and Public Awareness. Introducing a curriculum that integrates science, philosophy, and religious teachings in educational institutions can help create a generation with a holistic understanding and the ability to dialogue across disciplines.

Hanafi also emphasises the importance of dialogue between theology, philosophy, and science. According to him, religious understanding must be enriched with rational and scientific thinking to produce more comprehensive and relevant insights.

Hasan Hanafi sought to develop a theology that was not only speculative, but also practical and applicable. His approach invites Muslims to think critically and creatively about understanding religious teachings to make a greater contribution to the progress and welfare of humanity.

## 2. Interpretive Principles of Anthropocentric Theology

The theoretical estuary of Hasan Hanafi's interpretation is the Hermeneutics of Interpretation based on "reality to text" and not vice versa. Several principles have been formulated by Hasan Hanafi in this regard. Hasan Hanafi's Quranic Hermeneutics is geneologically influenced by the philosophy of Hans Goerg Gadamer. His influence is in terms of how to change a meaning subjectively to objectively, based on the reality revealed by the subjectivity of the interpreter. According to Hasan Hanfi, hermeneutics will become axiomatic if it uses the following construct of steps: *First*, the historical criticism step. *Second*, the step of eidetic criticism; and *third*, the step of practical criticism. This is the emphasis of Hanafi's socio-phenomenological approach.

Historical criticism of Hanafi's hermeneutics seeks an interpretation that is objective and universal. *Eidetic* criticism concerns the understanding or interpretation of historical situations that cause the emergence of scriptural texts to be interpreted to find the real facts that may still be hidden (*eidos-eidetic*). In this area of *eidetic* criticism, Hanafi does not



adequately explain what *eidetic* means. However, Hanafi always associates the word 'eidetic' with the area of interpretation. The word 'eidetic' is often used in discussions of *phenomenology*.

To resolve the aspect of interpretation and its social functionalization, Hanafi attempts to provide some gradual steps as follows:

*First*, there is a socio-political commitment to the issue. *Second*, looking for something is a common behaviour. *Third*, a synopsis of verses that specifically discuss a theme is created. *Fourth*, linguistic forms should be classified. *Fifth*, a structure is built. After the linguistic forms provide meaning orientation, the mufasir tries to compile a structure that departs from the meaning of the object. *Sixth*, the facts should be analysed. *Seventh*, comparisons should be made between ideals and reality. *Eighth*, the forms of action were described.

Hasan Hanafi is a contemporary Islamic philosopher and thinker from Egypt who is known for his anthropocentric theological approach in Qur'anic interpretation. This approach emphasises the role of humans in understanding and applying religious teachings in concrete social and historical contexts. Here are some of the principles of Anthropocentric Theology introduced by Hasan Hanafi:

1. Anthropocentrism (*at-tarkiz 'ala an-nās*). This approach places humans at the centre of understanding. Hasan Hanafi argues that religious texts must be read in light of human experience and their socio-historical conditions.

The following is a more in-depth explanation of the principle of anthropocentrism in Hasan Hanafi's interpretation:

- a. Humans as the Main Subject (Anthropocentric). In anthropocentrism, humans are considered the main subject of interpreting religious texts. Hasan Hanafi argues that revelation is addressed to humans and therefore must be understood in the context of human experience. This means that the interpretation of texts must always consider human needs, conditions, and situations.
- b. The Importance of Human Experience (*al-muhtam bi al-khibrah*). Human life experiences, both individually and collectively, form an important foundation for interpreting religious texts. Hasan Hanafi emphasizes that revelation must be translated into the concrete reality of human beings and their daily experiences. Thus, religion becomes not only abstract but also relevant and applicable.
- c. Social-Historical Context (*as-siyāq i-at-tarikhi*). Anthropocentrism emphasises the importance of the social and historical context in understanding religious texts. Hasan Hanafi argues that every religious text is born in a certain historical context and must be understood within the framework of that context. This means that the interpretation of religious texts must be responsive to social and historical shifts.
- d. Human Empowerment (*Taqwiyah al-insan*). The Anthropocentric approach aims to empower humans. Hasan Hanafi sees religion as a tool for human liberation and emancipation from all forms of oppression. The anthropocentric interpretation aims to raise human awareness of their rights and obligations and encourage them to actively change their social conditions.
- e. Ethics and Human Values (*al-Akhlaqa wa al-Qiyam*). Anthropocentrism also emphasises the importance of human values and ethics in the interpretation of religious texts. Hasan Hanafi believes that religion should support and promote values such as justice, freedom, and equality. Religious interpretations should encourage ethical behaviour that respects human dignity.
- f. Rationality and Criticality (*ta'aqul wa tanqīd*). This approach also recognises the importance of rationality and critical thinking in the interpretation of religious texts.

Hasan Hanafi emphasizes that humans must use reason and logic in understanding religious teachings, so that religious interpretations become relevant and accountable.

Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentrism Theology-based Quranic Interpretation attempts to create a more humane, relevant, and contextual interpretation of the Quran. This approach emphasises that religion should serve as a positive force that empowers humans and promotes human values in their everyday lives.

2. **Historicity:** Hasan Hanafi emphasised the importance of the historical context in interpreting religious texts. He argues that revelation must be understood in terms of the time and situation in which it was revealed, as well as its relevance to the contemporary context.

According to Hasan Hanafi, historicity is a principle that emphasises the importance of the historical context in understanding and interpreting religious texts. This principle is rooted in the belief that revelation is revealed in a certain social, cultural, and historical context and therefore must be understood within the framework of that context. The following is a more in-depth explanation of the concept of historicity according to Hanafi:

- a. **Historical Context of Revelation (*as-syiyāq at-tārikhi*).** Hasan Hanafi emphasizes that each Qur'anic verse was revealed in a specific historical context. To understand the true meaning of the text, it is important to know the social, political, and cultural situation at the time of the revelation. This helps uncover the message being conveyed in its original context.
- b. **Relevance to Contemporary Conditions (*munāsabat nash ma'a ash-r al-hadīth*)** In addition to understanding the original historical context, Hanafi scholars also emphasise the importance of interpreting religious texts in accordance with contemporary conditions. Revelation must be understood and applied in the context of today, considering the social, cultural, and technological changes that have occurred since the text was first revealed.
- c. **The Dynamic Process of Interpretation (*'amaliyah ad-dināmīkiyah*).** The interpretation of religious texts is not a static process but a dynamic one. Hasan Hanafi argues that the interpretation of religious texts must always evolve along with the changing times and human development. Historical interpretations must adapt to new contexts and provide relevant solutions to modern problems.
- d. **Interaction between Text and Context (*at-Ta'āmul baina nas wa as-siyāq*)** In the historicity approach, there is a close interaction between the text and context. A good interpretation must integrate the meaning of the text with the historical reality in which the text is applied. This means that understanding religious texts must always consider the historical factors that influence their interpretation.
- e. **Historical Awareness in Interpretation (*al-wa'yu at-tārikhi fi at-tafsīr*):** Hanafi invites mufassirs to have a deep historical awareness when interpreting religious texts. This includes understanding the historical events that influenced the revelation, the development of religious thought, and social changes that occurred throughout Islamic history.
- f. **Overcoming Anachronism (*al-hifz 'ala shalih at-tafsīr*):** One of the goals of the principle of historicity is to avoid anachronism, which is the tendency to apply modern understandings or interpretations to past contexts without considering historical differences. By understanding the historical context, the mufassir can avoid this mistake and produce a more accurate and relevant interpretation of the Qur'an.

With the principle of historicity, Hanafi seeks to create a more contextual and relevant interpretation of religion. This approach emphasises that religious texts must be understood

within their historical framework and applied dynamically in accordance with changing times and current human needs. This historic interpretation aims to keep religion alive and meaningful in contemporary human lives.

3. Rationality (*at-ta'āquli*) This theological approach encourages the use of reason and logic in understanding religious texts. Hanafi believes that rationality is the key to bridging religious tradition with the challenges of modernity.

According to Hasan Hanafi, tafsir must emphasise the use of rationality and scientific methodology to understand the Quran. He proposes that the Quran is not only a religious text but also a text that can be understood using reason and contemporary knowledge. Hasan Hanafi promotes a critical approach to the Quran that considers the historical, social, and cultural context in which the revelation was revealed. In his view, rationality helps deepen the understanding of the universal values contained in the Quran, as well as its relevance to the challenges of modern times.

4. Emancipation (*al-mu'is an-nisaiyyah*): Hasan Hanafi sees religion as a tool for human liberation from all forms of oppression, be it political, social, or economic. Anthropocentric interpretations aim to empower individuals and communities to achieve justice and equality.

Hasan Hanafi's emancipatory interpretation reflects his progressive approach to the Quran. He advocates reading the Quran with social context and justice in mind and freeing the text from restrictive or oppressive interpretations. Hasan Hanafi emphasizes the importance of understanding the Quran as a source of inspiration for social justice, gender equality, and liberation from political and economic oppression. His approach encourages Muslims to translate the Quran's universal values into actions that support justice and human emancipation.

5. Contextualisation (*at-tafsir bi'tibari as-siyaq*): This approach emphasises the importance of interpreting religious texts according to the current social and cultural contexts. Hanafi emphasises that interpretation must be responsive to changing times and the needs of contemporary society.

According to Hasan Hanafi, contextualisation in tafsir refers to an approach to understanding the Quran in the context of time, place, and relevant social conditions. Hasan Hanafi believes that to properly understand the messages of the Quran, we must consider the social and cultural conditions in which the revelation was revealed. This involves understanding the historical context of Arabia at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as identifying universal values that can be applied in the context of today. His approach emphasises that the Quran is not just a static text but also a guide that can be interpreted with relevance for the challenges and changes of the times.

6. Social Transformation (*at-taqhayur al-ijtima'i*). Hasan Hanafi believes that religion must play an active role in social transformation. Anthropocentric interpretations should contribute to positive social change, leading to societal progress and development.

According to Hasan Hanafi, tafsir refers to the concept that the Quran should be a source of inspiration for positive social change and renewal in society. Hasan Hanafi encourages Muslims to use the Quran as a guide to improve unjust social conditions and to promote values of equality, justice and humanity. His approach underscores the importance of understanding Quranic messages not only theoretically but also practically in the context of building a more just and harmonious society. Social transformation in his tafsir proposes that the Quran is not only relevant in matters of

worship but also as a guide to transforming social realities and achieving broader humanitarian goals.

With these principles, Hasan Hanafi attempts to develop interpretations that are not only spiritually relevant but also pragmatic and functional in the contemporary social context. This approach emphasises that religion must always be dynamic and adaptive to changing times, and that humans have a central role in understanding and implementing religious teachings.

### 3. Working Steps and Representation of Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theological Interpretation

Hasan Hanafi<sup>13</sup> as an interpretation expert who carries the *Maudū'i-eclectic* interpretation method. The distinctive feature of Hasan Hanafi's interpretation epistemology is to change the interpretation tradition "from text to reality" to; "from reality to text" (*min al-waqi' ila an-nas*)<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, Hasan Hanafi formulated eight steps that must be taken when a mufasir interprets the Qur'an: A mufasir must have concerns and a commitment to change certain social conditions, Formulate the purpose of the interpretation, Inventorying verses related to the theme of need, Classify the verses on the basis of their linguistic forms, Build a structure of meaning that is appropriate to the target audience, Identify actual problems in reality, Connect the ideal structure as a result of text deduction with factual problems through statistical and social science calculations, Produce a practical formula as the final step of the transformative interpretation process.

The theological verses in the Quran were collected thematically and categorised into sub-themes, and then interpreted in accordance with the principles of anthropocentric interpretation.

In Hasan Hanafi's perspective, the Quranic verses about the attributes of God (*Auṣāf*) are no longer intended to explain God. The attributes of *wujud*, *qidam*, *baqa*, *mukhalafat li al-hawadisi*, *qiyamuhu bi nafsihi* and *wahdaniyyah* are interpreted by Hasan Hanafi with a humanistic orientation. For example, *Wujud* is a human existence that must be shown. The nature of *qidam* has an anthropocentric meaning as a socio-historical experience and comes after the nature of "wujud." The nature of *Baqa* shows the nature of constancy and consistency that humans must build in themselves. The nature of *mukhalafat li al-hawadisi* and *qiyamuhu bi nafsihi* shows his distinction from others. Finally, the nature of *wahdaniyyah* indicates the meaning of human experimentation in the effort of unity and unification<sup>15</sup>.

For example, when a verse about God's justice is found in the Qur'an, it should be derived from the message to man and his humanity (*hudan li an-nās*). This means that humans must do justice, not be unjust, not reduce the measure, for example, not betray, and so on. Allah's justice is theocentrically complete and becomes an absolute belief. The emphasis of interpretation should be on God's commands to do justice, with reference to key words such as; *'ādil*, *tawāzun*, *muqsih*, *wasath*, and so on. How the names of Allah (*al-Asmā al-Husnā*) in a broader scope are drawn and used as a reference for thinking and acting. For example, the

---

<sup>13</sup> Hasan Hanafi's principles of interpretation, *Thematic Method in the Modern World* in Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemology of Contemporary Tafsir*. These principles are an important basis for the Maudhū'i method,

<sup>14</sup> Hasan Hanafi, *Min al-'Aqīdah ila as-Ṣaurah; al-Muqaddamat al-Naḍariyyah* (Beirut: Dar at-Tanwīr li ath-Thiba'ah wa an-Nasyr, 1st Printing, 1988). The core idea of Hasan Hanafi's *mawḍū'i* method is *mawḍū'i al-khiyari* (thematic-eclectic). An interpreter does not need to interpret the entire Quran even if it is thematically based. Rather, he should interpret it based on its importance and urgency. Therefore, an interpreter (المفسر) must at the same time be a researcher (المُباحث). A mufasir must first research what is the actual problem facing the people, find the causes. After finding them conclusively, he should then turn to the Quran to find a solution.

<sup>15</sup> Hasan Hanafi, *Ad-Dīn wa Ṣaurah*, 112-132.

nature of Allah, the Most Rich, is revealed in the form of action with concrete efforts so that Muslims become empowered and prosperous. Key words in the Quran, such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, waqf, and grants, become arguments for having wealth.

#### D. Conclusion

The study of Hasan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theology highlights two key aspects: his interpretive conclusions and recommendations for academics and policymakers. Anthropocentric theology offers a critical and alternative approach to Quranic interpretation, shifting the focus from divine-centred discourse to human-centred meaning. This method orients interpretation towards human agency (anthropocentrism), historical context, rationality, gender equality, contextualisation, and social transformation.

Hasan Hanafi applies an eclectic thematic interpretation to analyze theological themes in the Quran, aiming to address real-world injustices such as inequality, oppression, and poverty. His approach encourages active human effort (*ikhtiar*) to transform society rather than passively accepting fate (*Taqdir*). The goal is to shift conditions from corruption to righteousness, tyranny to justice, and poverty to prosperity.

This study advocates for a transformative interpretation of Hanafi's ideas, transitioning from a theocentric to an anthropocentric paradigm. Further research should develop sub-thematic interpretations based on local social realities to ensure that Quranic teachings provide practical solutions to contemporary societal challenges.

#### Reference

- Ridwan, A. H. *Islamic Intellectual Reform: Hassan Hanafi's Thought on the Reactualization of the Islamic Scientific Tradition*. Yogyakarta: Ittaqa Press, 1998.
- Arifin, Muhammad Patri. "Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Hasan Hanafi." *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Ushuluddin dan Filsafat* 13, no. 1 (2018).
- Deswita, Deswita, and Hidayatul Azizah Gazali. "Contextual Islamic Theology – Contemporary (A Study of Hasan Hanafi's Contextual Theology)." *Majalah Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Pemikiran Keagamaan Tajdid* 25, no. 1 (2022).
- Wirianto, Dicky. "Discourse on the Reconstruction of Turaith (Tradition) According to Abed al-Jabiri and Hasan Hanafi." *Volume XI*, no. 1 (2011).
- Fakhruddin ar-Razi. *Mafātih al-Ghaib*. Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah.
- Fani, Mahdi, Morteza Abdoljabbari, Foroozan Atashzadeh-Shoorideh, and Marzieh Karamkhani. "The Criteria of Healthy Humans from the Perspective of Religious Texts." *Journal of Research on Religion & Health* 4, no. 1 (2018).
- Hanafi, Hasan. *Ad-Dīn wa Šaurah fi Misr, 1952-1992*. Cairo: Maktabah Madbuli, Volume VII, 1981.
- . *Min al'Aqīdah ila as-Šaurah; al-Muqaddamat al-Naḍariyyah*. Beirut: Dar at-Tanwīr li ath-Thiba'ah wa an-Nasyr, 1st Printing, 1988.
- . "Thematic Method in the Modern World." In Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemology of Contemporary Tafsiṛ*.
- Kersten, Carool. "Hermeneutics and Islamic Liberation Theologies: Hasan Hanafi and Hamid Dabashi." In *Arabic Studies*, 2022.
- Saenong, M. Ilham B. "Theory of Interpretation in Social Hermeneutics of the Qur'an: Hassan Hanafi on the Alignment of the Qur'an to Humanity." *Potensia Philosophy Journal*. Yogyakarta: BEM - AF, 2003.

- Manshur, Fadlil M. "Hasan Hanafi, New Theology and Cultural Revolution: An Analysis of Cultural Intensification." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021).
- Mansur, Muhammad. "Realist Interpretation Methodology: A Critical Review of Hassan Hanafi's Thought." In *Contemporary Qur'anic Studies: New Discourse on Various Interpretation Methodologies*, 2002. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Munandar, Siswoyo Aris. "Oksidentalism as an Islamic Response to the Advancement of Western Civilization: Study of Hassan Hanafi's Thought." *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2021).
- Huda, Nurul, Arqom Kuswanjono, and Agus Himmawan Utomo. "Theological Anthropocentrism: An Interpretation of Scripture and Semitic Theodicy in Overcoming the Environmental Crisis." *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2023).
- Şadr ad-Dīn as-Syīrāzi. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Intisyarat Baidar Qum, 2nd printing, 1344.
- Syafieh, Syafieh, Katimin Katimin, and Sukiman Sukiman. "The Relevance of Hassan Hanafi's Anthropocentric Theology Ideas towards the Re-Actualization of Islamic Thought in Indonesia." *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2020).
- Taufiqurrahman. "Epistemology Ta'wil: A Study of Hassan Hanafi's Ideas in Interpreting Al-Qur'an." *QOF* 7, no. 2 (2023).
- Zamakhshari. *Al-Kasyāf 'an Haqāiq at-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fi Wujūh at-Ta'wīl*.