




Research Article

## Interpretation of the Prohibition on Non-Muslim Leaders in the Qur'an (Fazlurrahman's Hermeneutical Perspective)

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### Interpretation of the Prohibition on Non-Muslim Leaders in the Qur'an (Fazlurrahman's Hermeneutical Perspective)

**Abstract.** The problem of non-Muslim leaders reaps many differences of opinion between figures and each other, they have strong arguments with each other to justify their arguments. One of those who contributed to this conversation was Prof. H. Nadirsyah Hosen, Ph.D or often called gus Nadir. He created a book with the title "Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Medsos" as a response to the problem of actual interpretation today which is only textual. Researchers correlate gus Nadir's interpretation using Fazlurrahman's hermeneutic perspective. This research is library research with a qualitative approach,

primary data sources are focused on the book Tafsir Al-Quran in Medsos. The author uses data collection techniques through documentation techniques such as searching, browsing, downloading and screenshots. The question in this study is what is the meaning of the verse prohibiting the choice of non-muslim leaders in his book Gus Nadir when viewed based on Fazlurrahman's hermeneutic glasses? The results of this study found that Gus Nadir allowed the appointment of non-Muslim leaders and the interpretation carried out by him in accordance with the steps of the hermeneutic interpretation of the double movement by Fazlurrahman.

**Keywords:** Non-Muslim Leader, Gus Nadir's Interpretation, Fazlurrahman Hermeneutics

## INTRODUCTION

A leader is someone who is made the most responsible figure for his subordinates, as well as a leader in a country. The requirements for choosing and becoming a leader are very diverse, (Alfiah, 2015) one of which is religion which is made a requirement to become a leader. This has become a controversy in some circles which link that it is not permissible to choose a leader who comes from a religion other than Islam, because there is a clear argument in the Qur'an, Al-Maidah letter, verse 51.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

51. *O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends. 215) Some of them are friends to each other. Whoever among you takes them as a friend, then surely he is one of them. Surely Allah does not guide a people who do wrong (Alqur'an Kemenag, t.t.).*

In reality in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia, the law is still being debated by a number of groups. According to Syarif, there are at least three main reasons underlying the controversy about non-Muslim leaders in Indonesia. *First*, because the 1945 Constitution currently in force is inspired by the Jakarta Charter which requires the leader to be a Muslim. *Second*, Non-Muslims cannot become leaders, according to Syarif, because the majority of the population of Indonesia is Muslim. *Third*, It is not true that in Indonesia there is a convention accepted by all elements of the nation that the leader or president of the Republic of Indonesia must be a Muslim.

In his book, Prof. Nadirsyah Husen or commonly called "Gus Nadir" entitled Tafsir Al-Qur'an in Social Media, he asks a different question about whether it is true that QS Al-Maidah verse 51 and others prohibit us from choosing non-Muslims as leaders? As a response to the incident that occurred during the political contestation last year (M. Qusaih Shihab, 2002). Gus Nadir includes several chapters of discussion in his book that are problematic regarding political verses, including: interpretation of the words *saints* And *asbabun nuzul* in Qs Al Maidah: 51, How to Understand the Stories of Umar bin Khattab and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari?, Tafsir An-Nisa: 138-139 Not about Elections, Tafsir Al-Mumtahanah: Prohibition of *muwalatul kuffar* (Hasani Ahmad Said, t.t.).

Fazlur Rahman has presented a systematic and comprehensive methodology in interpreting the meaning of the Qur'an. Fazlurrahman offers a critical method, namely hermeneutics. *double movement*. This method provides a contextual and systematic understanding, thus producing an interpretation that is not atomistic, literalist, and textualist, but rather an interpretation that is able to answer current issues. Fazlurrahman begins his method by looking at the current situation to the time the Qur'an was revealed and then back to the present.

The discussion about the verse about leaders in QS Al-Maidah: 51 has been done a lot, including:

1. The journal entitled "Interpretation of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Maidah Verse 51 (Application of Jorge J. E. Gracia's Hermeneutical Interpretation Theory)" was written by M. Dani Habibi, which contains the interpretation of the verse of Al-Maidah verse 51 which is reviewed based on Jorge J.E. Gracia's hermeneutical theory.
2. The thesis entitled "Non-Muslim Leadership in the Qur'an (Comparative Study of the Interpretation of Tamsiyât Al-Muslimin and the Interpretation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion)" by Yunia Nurhalimatussa'diyah, which compares two scientific sources on the evidence for non-Muslim leadership in the Qur'an.
3. The thesis entitled "Interpretation of Indonesian Ulama on Non-Muslim Leadership (Review of Verses Prohibiting the Selection of Non-Muslim Leaders in the Qur'an)" by Siti Rodiah examines the interpretation of Indonesian scholars regarding non-Muslim leadership in the Qur'an with reference books, namely Tafsir Mar'ah Labid, Tafsir al-Nur, Tafsir al-Azhar, and Tafsir al-Misbah.

From the background and previous research, it is interesting to be used as a new discussion in the research entitled "Analysis of Verses of Non-Muslim Leaders in the Book of Tafsir Al-Qur'an on Social Media (Fazlurrahman's Hermeneutics Perspective)" and the question in this research is what is the meaning of the verse prohibiting choosing a non-Muslim leader in Gus Nadir's book when viewed based on Fazlurrahman's hermeneutics? With the aim of knowing the broad and contextual meaning of the verse about the prohibition of choosing a non-Muslim leader in the Qur'an when viewed using Fazlurrahman's hermeneutics.

### **Problem Identification and Problem Definition**

Looking at the background above, various problems will be identified that will arise. Such as what is the law of choosing a leader according to the Qur'an, what are the criteria for choosing a leader according to the Qur'an, and other problems. However, considering the many problems identified, the study was limited to the problem. The limitation of the problem was carried out so that this study does not deviate from the focus of the original problem and can meet the target with maximum results. The limitation of the problem in this study only includes the verse prohibiting choosing a non-Muslim leader in Gus Nadir's book using Fazlurrahman's hermeneutic approach.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive-analytical method with a qualitative approach. This type of research is a library research (*library research*). This paper attempts to examine the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an so that the object of study in this paper is the book of interpretation of the Qur'an in Social Media by Gus Nadir. The primary data source is focused on the book *Tafsir Al-Quran di Medsos* (Examining the Meaning and Secrets of Holy Verses in the Era of Social Media). While the secondary data sources are in the form of books, interpretation books, and articles related to the research theme (John W. Creswell, 2018, hlm. 43). The data sources are in the form of documents, and the author uses data collection techniques through documentation techniques such as *asearching*, *browsing*, *download* and *screenshot*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Fazlurrahman's Hermeneutics Theory

Fazlurrahman commented on the classical interpretation method which tends to use an approach in interpreting the Qur'an separately and piecemeal, so that the problems faced are not resolved and give rise to new problems. Fazlurrahman assessed that after centuries of efforts to interpret the Qur'an, but have not produced a satisfactory interpretation of the Qur'an, he stated that a new method is needed that produces contemporary principles from the Qur'an. In short, to carry out an interpretation of the Qur'an that is able to meet contemporary demands, a set of systematic and comprehensive methodologies is needed.

Fazlurrahman offers a critical, logical and comprehensive method, namely *hermeneutics.double movement* (double movement of interpretation). According to him, this method can produce an understanding of interpretation that is contextual and systematic, not literal and not textual, so that it is able to answer contemporary problems. What is meant by double movement is: starting from the present situation to the time when the Qur'an was revealed and returning to the present. The question is why do we need to know when the Qur'an was revealed? While the past and the present have nothing in common. To answer this question, Rahman said: The Qur'an is a divine response through the Prophet's memory and thoughts, to the moral-social situation of Arab society during the Prophet's time. In the sense that the focus of understanding the Arab social background at the time the Qur'an was revealed was due to the dialectical process between the Qur'an and the reality at that time, both in the form of *punishment* (prohibition), *tahmil* (accept and continue) and *taghiyyur* (accepting and reconstructing tradition).

The first movement that is carried out is from the current situation to the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, in the sense of understanding the meaning and importance of a statement by considering the historical situation or problem from which the Qur'anic statement emerged as an answer. In other words, understanding the entire Qur'an as a whole and certain teachings is a response to a particular situation. Then, these specific responses are generalized and stated as statements that have general moral goals that can be "filtered" from specific verses related to the socio-historical background and the ratio legis that are often expressed. During this process, attention must be paid to the direction of the teachings of the Qur'an as a

totality so that every specific meaning or meaning that is understood, every law that is stated, and every goal or target that is formulated will be related to the others. In short, in this first movement, the study begins from specific things in the Qur'an, then explores and systematizes general principles, values and long-term goals

Then, the second movement of this theory is after finding the general principles from the time the Qur'an was revealed, then it returns to the present. In the sense that the general teachings (principles) must be realized in the specific socio-historical context of the present. For this, it is necessary to study the current situation carefully and analyze its elements in order to assess and modify the situation as far as necessary and set new priorities for implementing the values of the Qur'an in a new way. This second movement will also act as a correction to the results of the understanding and interpretation carried out in the first movement. Because if the results of this understanding cannot be applied in the present, it means failing to live the current situation well or failing to understand the Qur'an. Because, it is impossible that the depth of the specific order (Arab society) in the past cannot be realized in the present context. This is done by considering the differences "in the specific things that exist in the present situation" which includes both changing the rules in the past so that they are in line with the demands of the present situation (as long as they do not violate the general principles in the past) and changing the present situation as far as necessary until it is in accordance with these general principles.

Fazlur Rahman further assured that if these two moments of double movement are successfully realized, surely the commands of the Qur'an will come alive and be effective again. Therefore, the smoothness of the first task is very dependent and indebted to the work of historians. While the second task, although it greatly requires the instrumentality of social scientists (sociologists and anthropologists), in order to determine "effective orientation" and "ethical engineering", the work of the scholars is what is relied on.

### Interpretation of Verses of Non-Muslim Leaders in Gus Nadir's Book

In his book, he quotes *saints* in QS almaidah verse 51

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنَّهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

51. O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends. 215. Some of them are friends to each other. Whoever among you takes them as a friend, then surely he is one of them. Surely Allah does not guide a people who do wrong.

According to him, the context of asbabun nuzul and the reading of classical interpretations such as at-Tabari and Ibnu Katsir do not find words *awliya'* in this verse it means leader, but a kind of ally or alliance.

Scholars of interpretation differ regarding the cause behind the revelation of these noble verses. As-Saddi mentioned that this verse was revealed regarding two men. One of them said to the other after the battle of Uhud, 'As for me, I will go to that Jew, then I will seek refuge with him and join Judaism with him, perhaps he will be of use to me if something happens or something happens'. Meanwhile, the other

said, 'As for me, I will go to so-and-so who is a Christian in the land of Syria, then I will seek refuge with him and join Christianity with him'. Then Allah SWT said: "O you who believe, do not make Jews and Christians your 'awliya...." until the next few verses.

The same verse as Al-Maidah 51 is QS An-Nisa verse 144:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكُفْرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَعِّلُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا

144. *O believers, do not make the unbelievers your loyal companions (175) by abandoning the believers. Do you want to give a clear reason for Allah (to punish you)?*

Verse 144 of the letter An-Nisa above also forbids us from taking non-Muslims as "saints". Ibn Katsir said: God forbids his believing servants to take infidels as partners saints them, not the believers. What is meant by the terms saints in this verse is to be close friends with them, loyal, sincere, and keep their love secret and reveal the secrets of the believers to them. So, Ibn Kathir does not interpret the words saints as a leader. Both in QS al-Maidah: 51 and in QS an-Nisa: 144. What is meant by saints in this context and understanding is to befriend in the sense of allying and forming an alliance by leaving the Muslims. The context of al-Maidah verse 51 is when Muslims lost in the battle of Uhud. So, there are those who are tempted to cross over by allying with the Jews and Christians. That is what is forbidden

After presenting asbabun nuzul and Ibn Katsir's explanation, Gus Nadir also presented other books of interpretation, among others: Tafsir al-Baidhowi, Tafsir fi Zhilalil Qur'an, Tafsir Jalalain, Tanwir al-Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas, Tafsir al-Khazin, Tafsir al-Biqai, Tafsir Muqatil, Tafsir Sayyid Tanthawi, Tafsir al-Durr al-Mansur. Of all the books quoted, none of them define the word saints in QS al-Maidah verse 51 as a leader

Then, in the next chapter, Gus Nadir also linked QS an-Nisa verses 138-139 and QS al-Mumtahanah verse 1

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكُفْرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ أَيْبَتَعُونَ عِنْدَهُمْ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا

(Namely) those who take the disbelievers as protectors (174) by abandoning the believers. Do they seek strength with the disbelievers? (Know that) all glory belongs to Allah. QS An-Nisa verse 139

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۖ ثَلْفُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ حَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

*O you who believe! Do not take My enemies and your enemies as your friends. You convey to them (things that should be kept secret) out of compassion (for them). But they have denied the truth that has come to you. They expelled the Messenger and you (from Mecca) because you believed in Allah, your Lord. If you go out to strive in My way and seek My countenance, (do not do so). You tell them secretly (things that should be kept secret) out of compassion. I know best what you conceal and what you declare. Whoever among you does so has certainly gone astray from the straight path.*

According to him, the two verses are also related to the case of the prohibition of non-Muslim leaders. The interpretation of the classical and modern Ulama above is in accordance with the final verse regarding *muwalatul kuffar* which is the first verse of *surah al-Mumtahanah* (Ahmad Sabri, 2020). This is the verse that clearly expresses the reason why *muwalatul kuffar* is forbidden because of the reason of treason. This verse was revealed concerning Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah who leaked the Prophet's plan to attack the city of Mecca. Hatib sent a secret letter to his close relatives in Mecca. Therefore, the verse was revealed. This is about betrayal, not leadership.

When discussing the interpretation of words in *al-Maidah: 51* and *An-nisa: 138-139* that the prohibition on making infidels as allies is because of betraying the Muslims, not about choosing a leader. Apart from taking from the revelation of the verse, there is also a clue in the verses above the phrase "my world is strong" (by leaving the believers). (Al-Abrasyi, Muhammad 'Athiyah, 1969) In other words, the infidels (help each other, protect and form alliances) with each other, why are there people who in a war situation actually betray and leave the believers by forming alliances, loyal friends with the infidels (Dr. Mulyono, M.Pd, 2004). That means, all the series regarding the prohibition of taking infidels as allies in the verses above the meaning is the same: the context is in the atmosphere of war and making them loyal friends/allies so they can potentially betray Muslims.

The reason for refusing to show affection and give loyalty to the infidels is because of betrayal, so the logic of "what else" becomes a mess here. Those who are surprised by the fact that there is no book of interpretation that says allies meaning leaders, then they argue "making them loyal friends is not allowed, let alone leaders". This is absurd logic because it does not understand the above prohibition. The correct logic is: it is permissible to appoint non-Muslims as governors or ministers or TNI commanders or other positions as long as they do not betray by leaving the Muslim community.

Thus, the spirit of Islam is justice and its opposite is tyranny. If there is a righteous person (capable of doing justice and upholding justice) yes, we support him even if he is not a Muslim and Allah will help the righteous person. If there are Muslims who are tyrannical and commit tyranny, don't support them. God will not help the unjust.

### **Analysis of Gus Nadir's Interpretation in Fazlurrahman's Hermeneutic Perspective**

In his book titled *Tafsir al-Qur'an on Medsos*, Gus Nadir presents three verses that become references in understanding the controversy of the ban on electing non-Muslim leaders, the verses include: *QS Al-maidah* verse 51, *QS An-nisa* verses 138-144, and *QS Al-Mumtahanah* verse 1. The focus of the discussion is the word *allies* in all the above verses. Ibn Katsir and other books of interpretation do not interpret words *allies* as a leader, both in *QS al-Maidah* verse 51 and *Annisa* verse 144. What is meant by *allies* in this context and understanding is to befriend in the sense of allying and forming an alliance by leaving the Muslims. The context of *al-Maidah* verse 51 was when Muslims lost in the battle of Uhud. So, there were those who were tempted to cross over by allying with the Jews and Christians.

From Gus Nadir's explanation of the interpretation of the verse prohibiting the election of non-Muslim leaders, the author tries to correlate it with the theory of double movement hermeneutics offered by Fazlurrahman. In his theory, there are two ways to produce a contextual and systematic interpretation (Al-Mahalli, Imam Jalaludin As-Suyuti, 2004). The first movement is to start from the contemporary situation towards the era of the revelation of the Qur'an. If we look at Gus Nadir's explanation, he begins his interpretation by referring to the *asbabun nuzul* verse where the verse was revealed, and what context underlies the revelation of the verse, then he explains the interpretation from classical and modern interpretation books (Anastasiia Kuzmenko, Tatiana Chernova, Oksana Kravchuk, Maryna Kabysh, Tetyana Holubenko, 2023). Not only that, he also provides conclusions and input from his own opinions. So in this case it is in line with the methodological steps of double movement hermeneutics.

Then the second step is to return from the time when the Qur'an was revealed to the present. Gus Nadir relates this issue to contemporary issues, according to him it is permissible to appoint non-Muslims as governors or ministers or TNI commanders or other positions as long as they do not betray by leaving the Muslim community. This is because the spirit of Islam is justice and its opposite is injustice. If there are people who are just (able to do justice and uphold justice) then we support them even though they are not Muslims and Allah will help those just people. If there are Muslims who are oppressive and commit injustice, then don't support them. Allah will not help oppressors.

## CONCLUSION

The problem of choosing a leader from among non-Muslims has become a contemporary problem, there are many differences of opinion between one figure and another, they each have strong arguments to justify their arguments. One of those who took part in this discussion was Prof. H. Nadirsyah Hosen, Ph.D or often called Gus Nadir. Gus Nadir explained three verses that are used as reference material in understanding the controversy over the prohibition of choosing a non-Muslim leader, these verses include: QS Al-Maidah verse 51, QS An-Nisa verses 138-144, and QS Al-Mumtahanah verse 1. He began his discussion by explaining each of them *asbabun nuzul* and the focus of the sentence that is a problem in those verses. After performing interpretations from classical and modern interpretation books, he found that all of the links are about the prohibition of taking infidels as partners saints in these verses the meaning is the same, namely: the context is in a war atmosphere and makes them loyal friends/allies so that they have the potential to betray Muslims. He also explained that there is no translation of the words saints which means leader, but the words saints interpreted as a helper, close friend, and assistant.

In conclusion, he allowed to appoint and elect leaders from non-Muslims as long as they did not betray by leaving the Muslim community. If associated with Fazlurrahman's hermeneutic theory, the author concludes that the argument presented by Gus Nadir in his book entitled *Tafsir Al-Qur'an on Social Media* is also in accordance with Fazlurrahman's interpretation steps called double movement hermeneutics.

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