CHAPTER III

THE BACKGROUND OF HAMKA AND QURAISH SHIHAB

A. HAMKA

1. Biography

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Abdullah or Hamka was born on February 17, 1908 in Molek village, Maninjau, West Sumatera, Indonesia. He was Indonesian Ulama, political activist and man of letters. His father, Syeikh Abdul Karim bin Amrullah or Haji Rasul was a founder of the reformist movement in Minangkabau, West Sumatera, Indonesia, in 1906 C.E, after his back from Mecca. Among the Minangkabau society, Hamka was called Buya. The word "Buya" derives from Arabic abi or abuya that means my father. In the Minangkabau society, the title "Buya" is only inaugurated to that person who is considered as an honorable man. ⁵²

In his early formal education, Hamka just reached the second level of elementary school in Maninjau. But in the tenth of his age, he began to deepen Islamic knowledge and Arabic language in Sumatera Thawalib, the Islamic high school established by his father in Padangpanjang. Additionally, he learned the Islamic knowledge in many *suraus* (small mosque) and mosques supervised by the prominent Ulamas such as Syeikh

⁵² Rusydi. Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. HAMKA. Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas p: 1

Ibrahim Musa, Syeikh Ahmad Rasyid Sutan Mansur, R.M. Surjopranoto, and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo.⁵³

His endeavor to master both Islamic and secular knowledge pushed him to deepen philosophy, literature, history, sociology and politics by autodidact. He read many outstanding Arabian intellectuals works such as the works of Zaki Mubarak, George Zaidan, Abbas al-Aqqad, Mustafa al-Manfaluti and Hussain Haikal, that inspired him to be more progressive in thought. Furthermore, by mastering an Arabic language very well, he was capable of reading and criticizing the works of western thinkers that had been translated into Arabic, such as the works of Albert Camus, William James, Sigmund Freud, Arnold J. Toynbee, Jean Paul Sartre, Karl Marx and Pierre Loti.

In the meantime he met and discussed, for many times, with those prominent Muslim intellectuals who settled in Jakarta, such as HOS Tjokroaminoto, Raden Mas Surjopranoto, Haji Fachruddin, Ahmad Rasyid Sutan Mansur and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo.

At the beginning of his carrier, Hamka taught an Islamic knowledge at Perkebunan Tebing Tinggi, Medan, and South Sumatera in 1927, and at Padangpanjang in 1929. His high dedication in Islamic education brought him in 1951 to be installed as Pegawai Tinggi Agama (high state official of religion) by the Indonesian Minister of Religion. From 1957 to 1959 he was a lecturer at the Jakarta Islamic University and

⁵³ Ibid p: 30

the University of Muhammadiyah in Padangpanjang. In the same year, he was entrusted to be a rector of Islamic Institute in Jakarta.

Hamka not only involved himself extensively in an Islamic education, but also in social organization movements. In 1925, in Padangpanjang, he was one of the founders of Muhammadiya (one of the big Indonesian Muslim organizations) that primarily focuses on denouncing khurafat (religious fable), bid'ah (innovation in religious rituals) and the astray mystical associations. Playing a central role in both Muhammadiya and government, he occupied several important positions: as a head of branch of Muhammadiya in Padangpanjang (1928); as a founder of Pusat Latihan Pendakwah Muhammadiya (Center for Muslim Preacher Training of Muhammadiya) in 1929; as a consul of Muhammadiya in Macasar (1931); as a head of Majelis Pimpinan Muhammadiya (guidance council of Muhammadiya) in West Sumatera (1953); as Penasehat Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiya (the Adviser of the Central Guidance of Muhammadiya) in 1953; as a Minister of Religion (1977); and as a head of Majlis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulama Council) in 1981.

Hamka began to engage in political activity in 1925 as a member of one of Islamic political parties, namely Sarekat Islam. He condemned strongly the Dutch colonialist that backed to Indonesia in 1945 through his political speech and guerilla movement in Medan. In 1947 he was a head of Barisan Pertahanan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Defense

Troop). He was also a member of constituent from Masyumi (the big Indonesian Muslim political party in the 1950-1960s); he served as an expert of campaign of general election in 1955. In the mid 1960s, he was installed as a member of Badan Musyawarah Kebajikan Nasional Indonesia (Convention Unit of Indonesian National Virtue); as a member of Majelis Perjalanan Haji Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Pilgrimage); and as a member of Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional Indonesia (the Institution of Indonesian National Culture).

Although he spent most of his life in educational, political, social and religious activities, he was also acknowledged as the most prolific of Indonesian writers. In the 1920s, he was a journalist of many printed media: Pelita Andalas, Seruan Islam, Bintang Islam and Seruan Muhammadiya. In 1932, he published a journal in Macasar, namely al-Mahdi. During his life, he worked as an editor in many magazines such as Kemajuan Masyarakat, Pedoman Masyarakat, Panji Masyarakat and Gema Islam. He was also a chief of editor for many magazines: Pedoman Masyarakat (1936-1942), Panji Masyarakat (1956) and Mimbar Agama, a magazine owned by the Department of Religion from 1950 to 1953.

Hamka wrote so many books on Islamic knowledge and novels. His masterpiece book is his thirty volumes Tafsir al-Azhar. Meanwhile, his great novels that got large attention from the Malay people in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck, Di

Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah and Merantau ke Deli. Hamka passed away on July 24, 1981 in Jakarta when he was 73 years old.

2. His Works

As the prominent Ulama and the man of letters, Hamka had written so many scholarly and religious books and novels as listed below:

- Khatibul Ummah, three volumes (written in Arabic)
- Pembela Islam (the history of the Caliph Abu Bakar Shiddiq) (1929)
- Arkanul Islam, (1932)
- Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah, Jakarta: Pedoman Masyarakat, Balai Pustaka, (1936)
- Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck, Jakarta: Pedoman Masyarakat, Balai Pustaka, (1937)
- Di Dalam Lembah Kehidupan, Jakarta: Pedoman Masyarakat, Balai Pustaka (1939)
- Tashawwuf Modern, (1939)
- Lembaga Hidup, (1940)
- Negara Islam, (1946)
- Revolusi Agama (1946)

- Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi, (1946)
- Dibanting Ombak Masyarakat, (1946)
- Di Dalam Lembah Cita-Cita (1946)
- Sesudah Naskah Renville, (1947)
- Pidato Pembelaan Peristiwa Tiga Maret, (1947)
- Menunggu Beduk Berbunyi, (1949)
- Ayahku, (1950)
- Mandi Cahaya di Tanah Suci, (1950)
- Mengembara di Lembah Nil, (1950)
- Kenangan-Kenangan Hidup 1,2, 3and 4 (Hamka's autobiography from 1908 to 1950)
- Sejarah Umat Islam, volume I, (written in 1938)
- Sejarah Umat Islam, volume II
- Sejarah Umat Islam, volume III
- Sejarah Umat Islam, volume IV
- Pedoman Muballigh Islam. The first printing in 1937
- Agama dan Perempuan, (1939)
- Muhammadiyah Melalui Tiga Zaman, (1946)

- 1001 Soal Hidup, (the collection of many articles in Pedoman Masyarakat, published in 1950)
- Pelajaran Agama Islam, (1956)
- Perkembangan Tashawwuf dari Abad ke Abad, (1952)
- Empat Bulan di Amerika, volume I, (1953)
- Empat Bulan di Amerika, volume II
- Pengaruh Ajaran Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia, (Hamka's speech in awarding ceremony of Doctor honoris causa in Al-Azhar University, 1958)
- Soal Jawab, (1960)
- Ekspansi Ideologi, (1963)
- Hak Asasi Manusia Dipandang dari Segi Islam, (1968)
- Studi Islam, Jakarta: Panji Masyarakat (1973)
- Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Islam, (1973)
- Tafsir al-Azhar, 30 volumes, (1966)

3. The Characteristic of Tafsir al-Azhar

First of all, this work was series of discourses which delivered by Hamka when shubuh lecture at al-Azhar mosques exactly in Kebayoran Baru since 1959. Name of al-Azhar was given by Syeikh Mahmud Shaltut, head of al-Azhar University when he came to Indonesia on December 1960. It was hoped became al-Azhar university in Jakarta. This nomenclature was related to genesis place of this exegesis work, namely "Masjid Agung al-Azhar.⁵⁴

There are many factors which supported Hamka to produce this exegesis work. It was said by Hamka in preface of his book Tafsir al-Azhar. He wanted to implant Islamic spirit and believe in the soul of Indonesia teenagers who have any interest to understand al-Quran, but they no longer have any ability and expert in Arabic Language. His preference to write this book was supposed to give understanding easily for preachers and speakers and increase any impression in delivering speeches better than the sources which taken from Arabic. 55

Hamka began his exegesis from surah al-Mukminun. He considered that he could not finish the course perfectly as long as possible his life. Since 1962 this exegesis discourse which was delivered at mosque al-Azhar, published in 'Panji Masyarakat' Magazine. This discourse was continuous until politic confusion affair. The mosque al-Azhar was charged as nest of 'Neo Masyumi'and 'Hamkaisme'. Hamka was caught by the authority of New Period (Orde Baru) on a charge of betray country at 12 Rabiul al-Awwal 1383/ 27 Januari 1964. His detention for two years gave him opportunity to finish the writing of this exegesis.

⁵⁴ Prof.Dr.Hamka. Tafsir al-Azhar. Juz: XXII. Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Panjimas, 2002, p:57-59

⁵⁵ Ibid p:50

Tafsir al-Azhar is the work of Hamka that exhibit the knowledge expert of the owner that consist all of sciences and information. Hamka used some sources are; al-Quran, Prophet Tradition (Hadits), the opinion of thabi'n, narration based on believed exegesis books such al-Manar and Mafatih al-Gayb, and some poetries such poetry of Moh.Ikbal. This book was written as thinking with analytic method. And the characteristic of this this book was seen from the literary style with sociological character (adabi ijtima'i). it has been known by the strong colour of Indonesia sociology and culture which used by Hamka when interpreted Quranic verses.

B. OURAISH SHIHAB

1) Biography

Quraish Shihab was born on 16th of February, 1944 at Rapang South Sulawesi. He belongs to the educated Arabian descent. His father, Prof. Abdur Rahman Shihab is Islamic scholar and professor of exegesis. He considered as business man and politician whose a good reputation among society of South Sulawesi. His educational contribution was proven from his effort to head two universities in Ujung Pandang. Both are Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) and State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Alaudin Ujung Pandang.

As a child of professor, Quraish got motivation and loving devotion to exegesis from his father firstly. His father often invited his

children to gather after maghrib. At this time, he delivered advices to his children in the form of Quranic verses. A young Quraish wrestles with Quran since six to seven old. He joined the recitation of the Quran which was established by his father. He not only order them to recite Holy Quran, but also explain them the Quranic stories. His loving devotion to Holy Quran grew basely since that time.

His formal education began from elementary school to second of junior high school in Makassar. On 1956, he was ordered to study in Pondok Pesantren Darul Hadits al-Faqihiyyah Malang. He studied very hard and two years later he was very good in Arabic Language. When his father had known his expert in Arabic and his diligence to wrestle with Islamic studies, he sent Quraish and brother of him Alwi Shihab to al-Azhar Cairo by scholarship from province of Sulawesi.

He received in second I'dadiyah al-Azhar (as like Junior High School in Indonesia) on 1958. He finished his senior high school al-Azhar and continued to al-Azhar University in Ushuluddin faculty and the major of Tafsir and Hadits. He got license degree (LC) on 1967. Two years later, 1969 Quraish got Master's degree in the same major with thesis namely al-I'jaz at-Tasyri'I al-Quran al-Karim (low miracles of Holy Quran).

At 1975 he was called to Makassar by his father who was head of university. His father asked him to execute the education of IAIN Alauddin. He became head vice of university who was in charge of academic and university student affairs. Besides he held the formal

position, he often represented his father to carry the main duties out. He was hand over some positions over by over. Such us coordinating staff of private university of VII region, in east region of Indonesia and assistant of east Indonesia Police Leader in character building field. He also finished some researches in the midst of activities. Both are "Penerapan Kerukunan Hidup Beragama di Indonesia" (1975) and "The problem of Wakaf in South Sulawesi" (1978)

He deepened tafsir and hadits to reach his dream. At 1980 Quraish studied back to al-Azhar and took specialization of exegesis. He just needed two years to get a doctor's degree. His dissertation on the title "Nazm ad-Durar lil al-Biqa'I Tahqiq wa Dirasah (Study and Analyze the Authenticity of Biqa'I book namely Nazm ad-Durar) was defended by him with the citation on "Mumtaz ma'a martabah asy-Syaraf al-Ula (summa cumlaude).

1982 is new chapter and second step for Quraish to continue his career. He devoted himself to IAIN Alaudin Makassar. But two years later (1984) he was given new post in Jakarta as teacher of Ushuluddin faculty and post graduate programme at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah. He was well-known among Indonesian fastly because of his expert in Quranic exegesis. He became head of university of IAIN Jakarta about two periods (1992-1996 and 1997-1998). As long as two months he became Minister of Religion in the first of 1998. And then he was installed as special ambassador plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary Republic of

Indonesia for Republic of Arab Egypt and republic of Djibouti held in Kairo.

Quraish coming to Jakarta gave new situation and was welcomed warmly by society. It was proven by many activities were done among them. He taught and held some important positions. Such as he became the leader of MUI (the committee of Indonesia Islamic Scholarships) center (1984)

2) His Works

- -Tafsir Al-Amanah, this work is articles collection from rubric of exegesis was guided by him in Amanah Magazine. And published by Mustika Kartini on 1992. The contents are the interpretation of surah al-Alaq and al-Mudatsir.
- -Membumikan Al-Qur'an, Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat. This work was published by Mizan publishing on 1992. The content is about some problems of life.
- -Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhui atas Berbagai Persoalan Umat.
 Published by Mizan publishing on 1996. This work became best seller.
 It content is some problems explained topically as Quranic information
- -Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim. This work was published by Pustaka Hidayah on 1997, the content is interpretation of twenty four short

surah as long as time of reveal. ran dari 24 surat pendek yang didasarkan padaurutan turunnya.

- -Al-Asma Al-Husna. This work is about 99 Names of God.
- -Mukjizat Al-Qur'an this work published by Mizan on 1997. The content is karya the specification and the miracles of al-Quran.
- -Tafsir Al-Misbah. This work considered as a high product of Quraish Shihab. Published by Lentera Hati, Jakarta, 2000.

And many other works are not mention here. Such as article, rubric in some newspapers, or some books were published.

3) The Characteristic of Tafsir al-Misbah

Tafsir al-Misbah was published firstly on 2000 by Lentera Hati Jakarta. It was divided by some volumes based on completeness of the chapters (*surah*) discourse on Al-Quran. Every volume has different quantity dependently upon the quantity of every chapter. It has fifteen volumes. It nomenclature of this work 'Tasir al-Misbah Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian al-Quran' can guess from his interest that has been emphasized by him in this book. He wants to deliver attractively the massage, the impression, and the harmonious of the al-Quran to Indonesian. He wants this book become *misbah* (Arabic Languge) or a light in the darkness. He hopes this work give lightness for them whom look for guidance for life.

This exegesis was written by him with analytic method. It was known from his interpretation on this book. He interpreted verse by verse, chapter by chapter as possible as Quranic structure. He also wrote this book depend on his interest to thematic tafsir. He considered that this method can present the view and the massage of al-Alquran deeply and completely. Therefore this book used two methods that combine analytic method and thematic method. The type of this exegesis is *Ijtima'I* or sociological type.

Tafsir al-Misbah is one of *tafsir bi al-Ra'yi*. This conclusion was taken from his statement in the last of his preface on this book. He wrote: "finally, the writer would like to say to all of readers that everything written in this book is not only interpreting according to writer his self. The writer also excerpted the opinion of old scholars and contemporary scholars, especially the expert of exegesis Ibrahim Umar al-Biqa'i (W 885 H/1480 M), the higher work of al-Azhar recently, Sayyid Muhammad Thantawi, Syeikh Mutawalli al-Sya'rawi, sayyid Quttub, Muhammad Thahir ibn as-Syur, Sayyid Muhammad Husssein Thobathoba'I and the others of interpreters. ⁵⁶

He through some steps to interpret and to explain the Quranic verses. In the First of chapter discourse he presented the number of verse and the purpose of the chapter or main topic of the chapter. It was seen when he interpreted surah al-Baqarah. He explained the maintopic of this

⁵⁶ Quraish Shihab. Tafsir al-Misbah Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Quran. Vol: 1 Jakarta: Lentera Hati p:20

surah is the verses of al-baqarah story. It told story of bani Israil with the cow (al-baqarah). By this story was found the true of Allah guidance. The writing of the verses was arranged thematically based on the order and by following the transition. Then he explained the meaning of the words were needed and explained munasabah of the verse that was be interpreted with last verse. At last he interpreted the verse by following the opinion of the exegesis scholars and the tradition of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him that related with the interpreted verse.