

## Virginity as an Ethical Value in the Qur'an: An Analysis of Al-Azhar's Tafsir on QS. Al-Waqi'ah Verse 36

Ahmad Naufal Afifi

State Islamic University of Madura, Indonesia

### Article Info

#### Article History:

Received: 10 December 2025  
Revised: 02 February 2026  
Accepted: 14 March 2026  
Published: 22 March 2026

#### \*Corresponding Author:

Name: Ahmad Naufal Afifi  
E-mail: [naufalafi1118@gmail.com](mailto:naufalafi1118@gmail.com)

#### Keywords

### Abstract

This article attempts to explore the concept of virginity in Buya Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar through a Qur'anic ethical approach oriented towards the values of purity (*thabarah*) and self-control (*iffah*). This study is motivated by the complexity of the issue of virginity in contemporary Islamic ethical discourse, which is not only biological in nature, but also theological, moral, and social. This study aims to reveal how Hamka interprets the term *abkār* in QS. Al-Waqi'ah verse 36 as a spiritual symbol of purity of the soul, not merely physical pleasure. Using a qualitative research method based on library research and a thematic interpretation approach (*tafsir maudū'i*), this study explores religious texts and supporting literature through linguistic, theological, and contextual ethical analysis. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically with triangulation of sources to maintain data validity. The results of the study show that Hamka shifts the meaning of virginity from the biological realm to the universal spiritual and moral realm, so that purity is understood as an ethical process that demands equal moral responsibility for men and women. This concept makes an important contribution to the renewal of Islamic ethics that is gender-equitable and relevant to the moral dynamics of modern society. The results of the study show that virginity in Hamka's perspective is a symbol of spiritual purity that represents the perfection of faith and moral integrity of believers.

Virginity, Qur'anic Ethics, Maudū'i Interpretation, QS. Al-Waqi'ah.

### Abstrak

Artikel ini berupaya mengeksplorasi konsep keperawanan dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar karya Buya Hamka melalui pendekatan etika Al-Qur'an yang berorientasi pada nilai-nilai kesucian (*thabarah*) dan pengendalian diri (*iffah*). Studi ini dimotivasi oleh kompleksitas isu keperawanan dalam wacana etika Islam kontemporer, yang tidak hanya bersifat biologis, tetapi juga teologis, moral, dan sosial. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana Hamka menafsirkan istilah *abkār* dalam QS. Al-Waqi'ah ayat 36 sebagai simbol spiritual kesucian jiwa, bukan sekadar kenikmatan fisik. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif berdasarkan riset pustaka dan pendekatan interpretasi tematik (*tafsir maudū'i*), studi ini mengeksplorasi teks-teks keagamaan dan literatur pendukung melalui analisis etika linguistik, teologis, dan kontekstual. Analisis dilakukan secara deskriptif dan analitis dengan triangulasi sumber untuk menjaga validitas data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Hamka menggeser makna keperawanan dari ranah biologis ke ranah spiritual dan moral universal, sehingga kesucian dipahami sebagai proses etis yang menuntut tanggung jawab moral yang sama bagi laki-laki dan perempuan. Konsep ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pembaharuan etika Islam yang setara gender dan relevan dengan dinamika moral masyarakat modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keperawanan dalam perspektif Hamka adalah simbol kesucian spiritual yang mewakili kesempurnaan iman dan integritas moral orang beriman.

**Keywords:** Virgin, Etika dalam Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Maudū'i, QS. Al-Waqi'ah.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Quran* is not only an ethical guide in terms of religious beliefs and principles, but it is also an ethical guide in terms of the moral and social behavior of an individual based on the religious values of purity, self-control, trust, and respect for human dignity. However, in the context of the current society, the concept of religious values such as virginity has turned out to be merely physical and biological in nature rather than its moral and spiritual aspects. Therefore, a contextual and thoughtful understanding of the religious values and principles of *Quran* ethics is necessary to make them relevant in the current society (Kamali, 2013).

One of the verses that is often associated with the issue of virginity is *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36 which reads:

فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

“Then We made them virgins.” (QS. Al-Wāqī'ah: 36)

By using the word *abkrārā*, popular readings often take this word literally, referring to biological purity, especially in the context of heavenly delights. This kind of reading often positions the female body as the major symbol of purity and purity, which gives birth to a narrow understanding and gender bias. In this context, the semantic method suggests that this word is not necessarily related to the biological meaning of the body. In the treasures of classical Arabia, *abkrārā* This word can refer to something new, spiritual purity, or something that has not been metaphorically touched. This narrow reading of the word, referring to biological purity, clearly does not take into consideration the richness of the symbolic message. This kind of reading creates a space that is more inclusive, ethical, and sensitive to theological and social issues. In this context, methodological caution is called for to avoid a narrow understanding of this word, which might be biased (Manzūr, 1990; Tamara, 1984).

Buya Hamka, through his explanation in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, interprets the ethical meaning of *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36, where *abkrārā* is used as a symbol of spiritual purity and moral integrity, rather than a biological one. The presence of “virgins” in heaven, in the explanation of Buya Hamka, is a symbol of the purity of the nature of believers who have been perfected by Allah in the afterlife. The reality of the afterlife, in the explanation of Buya Hamka, cannot be judged based on the physical world, but rather on the quality of faith and morals. Therefore, the biological condition of women in the world, whether married or unmarried, cannot be excluded from the concept of chastity in the verse above. The purity that is promised in the verse above is a total purification of the soul of the believers (Fatih, 2023).

Hamka's interpretation is consistent with the principles of Islamic theology on the language of heaven in the *Quran*. The language is symbolic and transcendent rather than empirical. The eschatological language is not meant to be an anatomical description. It is a pedagogical language meant to convey moral values and ethical expectations. In this context, the term “*abkrārā*” is not seen as an empirical standard. It is a metaphor for the language of the Qur'an on the concept of existential newness and purity. The symbol is meant to convey the renewal of God's favor and transcends the biological concept of man. The literal meaning is transcended into ethical depth. This approach confirms the universality of the message of renewal, justice, and hope in the *Quranic* language (Saeed, 2005).

Conceptually, this research is grounded on the ethical concept of the Qur'an. This places the verses of the Qur'an as a source of ethical value to be understood in a historical and normative sense. Approach double movement Fazlur Rahman is utilized to identify the initial context of revelation and to identify the universal ethical principles contained in the verses. Subsequently, the universal ethical principles are recontextualized to address the challenges of modern life (Rahman, 2024). With this understanding, it is recognized that Hamka's interpretation is an intellectual product that is produced as a result of a social situation and is still linked with the ethical intention of revelation. Hamka's interpretation of *abkrārā* this is not understood as a literal form of eschatology but rather as an ethical understanding of holiness and spiritual renewal. This understanding emphasizes the continuity between the normative message of the Qur'an and its relevance to the dynamics of modern society.

This study has proved that there is a paradigm shift from the biological concept of virginity to the more universal concept of the ethical-spiritual dimension in the perspective of Hamka. Virginity, in the Tafsir *Al-Azhar*, is not considered merely the physical condition of the woman but is conceived as the condition of 'iffah, which is equally applicable to both men and women. This concept of virginity has posited the holiness of the spiritual dimension, which is based on faith, moral integrity, and existence before God, over the construction of the female body as a unique symbol of social honor. Hamka has argued that the ethical principles of Islam are based on justice and moral equality, and hence, honor is not unique to one gender but is conceived as a spiritual concept that is both universal and transcendental (Al 'Alwani, 1996).

This research intends to analyze the concept of virginity *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36 according to Tafsir *Al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka, focusing on the ethical aspect of the Qur'ani that it contains. There are some studies that show that Hamka was considered an Nusantara mufasir who interpreted the verse about women morally-spiritually, not literally. Within this framework, the term *abkrārā* It is not understood as a physical symbol, but rather as a metaphor for the purity of the soul and the glory of morality that represents the spiritual transformation of man. This perspective is in line with the study of women's theology and gender equality in Tafsir *Al-Azhar* which places women as ethical subjects. What is considered to be the novelty of this research is the attempt to reconstruct virginity as a moral-spiritual concept in the ethical interpretation of the archipelago that is gender-correct and relevant to contemporary Muslim society.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative research based on library research, which is a research that focuses on the analysis of interpretive texts and supporting literature. The material object of this research is *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36, while the formal object is the interpretation of Buya Hamka in Tafsir *Al-Azhar* with a Qur'anic ethical approach. This is due to the characteristics of this interpretation, which is a modern Indonesian interpretation that focuses on the moral, social, and spiritual aspects of the Qur'an. In this research, the approach used is thematic interpretation, which is called *tafsir maudū'i*, where the concept of virginity is used as the main theme of this research. This is to analyze the Qur'anic verses, especially *Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36, not only in terms of the eschatological context but also in terms of Qur'anic ethical principles such as purity and self-

control, which are represented by the words *ṭabārah* and *iffab*, respectively. In order to support this, this research will also use the Qur'ani Fazlur Rahman, which is based on the principle of double movement, which is to read the Qur'anic verses in their initial context and then to draw their moral significance to the contemporary context.

The method of data collection is done through documentation of the primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source is in the form of a book of tafsir, i.e., Tafsir *Al-Azhar* written by Buya Hamka, while the secondary data sources include classical and modern books of tafsir, Islamic ethics, and literature related to the themes of virginity, purity, and gender in Islam. The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive-analytical method, focusing on the concept, shift in meaning, and ethics of the concept of virginity in the tafsir of Buya Hamka.

In order to maintain the validity of the data, the current research used the triangulation method of data sources by comparing the tafsir of Buya Hamka with the point of view of other mufasir and modern Islamic ethical theories of the Qur'an. This method of data analysis is expected to produce a systematic, argumentative, and academically relevant study in exploring the concept of virginity as an ethical value of the Qur'an.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Linguistic Meaning of the term *Abkār* in *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* Verse 36

Linguistically, the word *abkār* is a plural word of *Bikr*, which is derived from the root word of *ba-kāf-sun*, which embodies the essence of the word beginning and novelty. In the treasure of classical Arabic lexicography, the word *Bikr* does not just refer to something that is physically pure and untouched, but also refers to something that is still pure and untouched in a metaphoric way. According to Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-'Arab*, the word *abkār* is used to refer to something that is pure and clean from any kind of mixture or influence, in a material and non-material way. This is a clear example of the semantic extension of the word that is not limited to the biological and physical aspect. This is a clear example of the word *abkār* as a symbol of purity and novelty.

This can also be supported by Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī in his book *Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, which puts the word *abkār* in the horizon of a broader meaning rather than the biological meaning. This word is related to a state of holiness (*ṭabārah*) in a renewed form (*tajdid al-ṭabārah*), which is the state of the soul returning to *fitrah* through the process of purification from Allah. Thus, the state of newness in the word *abkār* points to an existential renewal which is spiritual and ethical. Semantically, the word *abkār* has a moral component which cannot be solely understood as physical. This linguistic understanding is one of the key foundations to interpret *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* 36 comprehensively. This way, literalist understanding can be prevented and a transcendent and ethical-oriented understanding of the Qur'an can be achieved (al-Ashfahānī, 2009).

### The Eschatological Context of *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* Verse 36 and the Symbolic Function of the Language of Paradise

*QS Al Waqī'ah*, verse 36, contains the phrase *Fa Ja'alnabunna Abkārā*, which is in the description of the enjoyment of heaven, full of symbolism. The word *abkār*, in linguistic terms, is the plural of the word *Bikr*, which, in Arabic lexicography literature, is used to mean more than the physical, in that it contains the meaning of novelty and purity. In *Lisān al-'Arab*, Ibn Manẓūr

explained that the word *Baccarat*, used to mean something new, fresh, and untouched by any outside influence, is derived from the same root as the word used to mean virginity, purity, and novelty. Therefore, , in the eschatological description, cannot be taken to mean physical virginity alone but is a symbol of existential newness and spiritual purity (Mandzur & bin Mukrim, 1996).

This is in agreement with the hermeneutic style of the Qur'an, which focuses on the level of polysemic meaning, and *abkār* does not refer to the physical conditions as interpreted literally by some of the early mufasir such as al-Ṭabarī. Instead, *abkār* is used as a symbol of spiritual purity and eternal renewal in heaven, that is, an existential state free of earthly stains (Hadani et al., 2024). In this regard, a number of contemporary scholars, such as Muḥammad Quṭb, have highlighted the aesthetic and ethical significance of the eschatological sayings, which is a transcendent spiritual language. As a result, the reduction *abkār* of the biological aspect of the sentence will reduce the semantic content of the sentence. In the context of Surah *al-Wāqī'ah*, the description of the pleasures of heaven is a symbol of the perfection of God that transcends the boundaries of materiality. This is supported by the use of the word *Biker*, which is used in pre-Islamic Arabic hadith and literature to symbolize purity and originality (Chyta et al., 2024).

Buya Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar explained with emphasis that the description of heaven in the Qur'an is symbolic and pedagogical, not descriptive-biological. In his opinion, "*abkār*" describes a state of pleasure in which renewal is always felt without saturation, and the focus is on the perfection of God's favor, not on the female body. This interpretation indicates Hamka's tendency to put the eschatology in an ethical and spiritual context, rather than in a materialistic context (Aliamran, 2024). This emphasis of the *majazi* nature of the description of the bliss of the paradise, which is pedagogical and intended to stimulate the motivation of worship, and not the literal-biological one, which restricts the understanding of the matter to the physical dimension, is a reflection of the rational-modern approach of Hamka, which was also the approach of the Muhammadiyah movement and Muhammad Abduh, where "*abkār*" (QS. Ar-Rahman: 56-58, 70-74) means a metaphor of eternal pleasure, which is constantly renewed by the grace of the divine, and not the physical dimension of women (Affandi et al., 2023).

The symbolic understanding of the verses on heaven is supported by a number of contemporary Muslim scholars and thinkers who have rejected the literal understanding of the Qur'anic eschatological description. Abdullah Saeed, through his contextual understanding of the Qur'an, highlights that the linguistic descriptions of heaven in the Qur'an are intended to prompt moral direction rather than to encourage the development of a physical imagination about heaven (Duderija, 2023). Thus, the content of the pleasure of the hereafter is seen as a pedagogical language that guides human beings to moral change and spiritual responsibility. In this regard, the term *abkār* is seen as a metaphorical language of the Qur'an that indicates the concept of existential purity and moral change. This symbolism indicates the transcendence and morality of the eschatological message of the Qur'an.

### **Virginity as an Ethical Value of the Qur'an in Tafsir Al-Azhar**

This symbolic understanding of the verses of heaven is also highlighted in the tradition of interpretation, for instance, in the understanding of Buya Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar. In understanding the eschatology of the description of the Qur'an in a mathematical form, Hamka

understands that the description of the enjoyment of heaven should not be understood in a literal form in a material sense but in symbolic form to raise awareness of faith. In the interpretation of *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36, the word “*abkār*” in symbolic form is used to raise awareness of the renewal of divine favor in the form of spiritual purity rather than affirming the biological condition of the woman. In this sense, the meaning of the verse transcends the physical to attain a universal meaning (Kerwanto, 2022). In *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verse 36 Allah SWT. said:

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَهُمْ إِنْشَاءً ۖ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَبْكَارًا ۖ عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ۚ

“Indeed, We created them (the angels) directly, and We made them virgins. Who is full of love (again) of the same age.” (QS. Al-Wāqī'ah: 36)

According to Hamka, the phrase “*Ansyā'nābunna Insyā'an*” is a symbol of the perfect creation process and the renewal of humanity in the afterlife. The term is not only the physical state of a woman who has never been with a man; rather, it is a state of purity that is always maintained and never touched by corruption. For Hamka, the term is a symbol of the language of the Qur'an itself, which is a language of spirituality and the pleasure experienced by the soul. The concept of heaven is not only a place where one finds physical pleasure; rather, it is a field where the spirit is perfected for those who believe. As a result, the concept of virginity is a state of purity and cleanliness of the soul, which is a noble reward for pious people (Fauziyyah et al., 2022).

*QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* verses 35-37 indicates that the interpretation of the meaning of *ḥūr 'īn* and *abkrārā* cannot be separated from the theological and ethical approach of the mufasir. In this context, Tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka can be seen as a mufasir who interprets the meaning of the eschatological verses in a moral and symbolic sense rather than in a biological and literal sense. Some studies on women in Tafsir Al-Azhar affirm Hamka's tendency to position women in a position of dignity and spirituality. Therefore, the concept of virginity in *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah* is more relevant to be read in a symbolic sense rather than in a physical sense. The concept of virginity in this verse refers to purity, purity of the soul, and existential renewal in the hereafter. This interpretation of the concept of virginity changes the focus of interpretation from the physical aspect to the aspect of spirituality. This interpretation is in line with the paradigm of ethical interpretation of the archipelago, which emphasizes the moral values of the Qur'an, gender justice, and a vision of transcendental humanity .

According to Hamka, the concept of virginity is a symbol of spiritual purity for all humanity, both males and females. Hamka disagrees with the idea of female biological purity and affirms the true concept of glory is piety (Q.S. Al-Ḥujurāt 49:13) and morality. Thus, the concept of virginity is *ṭahārat al-naḥs* (purity of the soul) which leads to universal spiritual integrity. Hamka also explains the concept of purity is *iffah* self-control based on thoughts, desires, and behaviors grounded on faith and responsibility. Chastity is not a state; rather, it is a continuous moral process of self-development (Choiri & Fathony, 2021; Velji, 2024).

This view of Hamka is consistent with the ethical values of the Qur'an, which emphasizes the moral responsibility of men and women as equal and individual obligations. The ethical values emphasize that the judgment of human beings does not depend upon their sex or any other biological condition, but upon the quality of piety and spirituality of the individual human being. In this regard, the meaning of *iffah* It has been defined as self-control, which stems from the

individual's awareness of his or her faith and ethics in the sight of God. Therefore, self-honor does not mean physical characteristics, but it has been defined as a product of morality and moral responsibility. Every individual human being has the obligation of preserving his or her dignity through conscious and consistent ethics. This value emphasizes that the standard of glory for human beings, according to Islam, is universal, just, and beyond any gender construct of society (Sukti et al., 2023).

Both are commanded to hold their opinions and respect themselves, as commanded in the Qur'an. An-Nur, verses 30-31. So, the definition of virginity that is applicable to women only does not have strong textual support in the Qur'an (Gunara et al., 2024). Hamka also stressed that purity, as understood by Islam, has more to do with self-control (*iffah*) and good moral values, not necessarily physical purity, as indicated by his understanding of the verses about the maintenance of views, aurat, and the prohibition of adultery. It is one of the four main pillars of his moral understanding of wisdom, *syaja'ah*, 'is what, and *iffah*, which aims at building a spiritually and socially responsible human character. For Hamka, *iffah* means the effort towards self-control of one's lust for the sake of moral perfection, which can be applied to deal with challenges such as promiscuity among the youth (Mubarokah & Bakri, 2022).

In placing virginity as a symbol of spiritual purity, Hamka, in a sense, criticizes society that places the female body as the main site of family and social honor. In *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, moral guidance does not focus on physical supervision but rather on creating a sense of awareness of piety and accountability to God. This creates a broader concept of sanctity that goes beyond biological categories to ethical qualities that each person possesses, regardless of gender discrimination. In accordance with the ethical approach of modern Nusantara interpretation of the Qur'an (Wijaya et al., 2025), The focus of morality shifts from the control of the body to the transformation of collective morality. Therefore, the idea of Hamka can be seen as an ethical idea that aims to restore the honor of the true, just, and universal values of the Qur'an (Herlambang & Parwanto, 2023).

### Criticism of Biological Reduction of Virginity and Gender Bias

The ethical interpretation of virginity, as suggested by Hamka, is not only conceptually significant but also relevant in the empirical level of the current social condition. Several studies have proven that the current social norms regarding gender and the female body are still significantly affected by patriarchal systems that are embedded in society's culture and politics (Pratiwi et al., 2025). The idea of virginity as merely a biological characteristic of females is closely associated with the social construction that places the honor of the family on the female body alone. Statistical data and social studies have proven that the current condition of gender discrimination is a reality, thereby affirming that the issue of virginity is not only a theological issue but a social problem that can be statistically proven, as shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Global gender bias indicators based on UNDP GSNI 2023

Sources	Key Findings
UNDP GSNI 2023	±90% of the population in 80 countries has at least one gender bias
GSNI 2023	±43% believe men are more worthy of being political leaders

The media discourses also contribute to the maintenance of such inequalities by emphasizing the concept of virginity as a measure of morality for women and accepting the idea of double standards. Women's bodies are also used as symbols of family honor. Such discourses contribute to symbolic injustice and gender-based moral inequality (Boudon, 2003; Ouahid et al., 2025).

There is an implicit criticism of a certain social construct in the ethical interpretation of Hamka, which emphasizes the biological aspect of virginity. In some societies, including in Indonesia, physical integrity in women's bodies tends to become the main criterion for assessing the honor of families and society. This phenomenon indicates the presence of a strong gender bias in society, where women's bodies become the main object of control and moral burden for society. On the other hand, men's moral obligation to preserve their personal purity tends to lack balanced pressure. In his moral-spiritual approach, Hamka emphasizes that human glory is built on the quality of faith and morality, rather than physical attributes. In this way, the concept of virginity becomes an ethical obligation that is universal, balanced, and beyond discriminatory constructs (Noble, 2018).

Gender bias in the concept of virginity may be traced from the tradition of understanding and building social laws that often emphasize moral control over women's bodies. Various studies have pointed out that patriarchal understanding often interprets the verses referring to chastity in a selective manner to promote gender biases in sexual ethics. Women are often used as the central symbol of collective honor, while the moral responsibility of males is often given less importance. In fact, the Qur'an has clearly stated that males and females should hold their own views and also protect their own honor as stated in QS. An-Nur 24:30-31. This also indicates that gender bias is more a product of patriarchal social and cultural construction rather than the Qur'anic text itself (Nafisah, 2022).

Empirical data from social studies show that unequal gender norms are still very prevalent in society. Research in Ethiopia, for example, it was reported that 44.1% of students had views in favor of gender inequality norms, especially regarding domestic roles and sexual relationships. The findings confirm that social constructions of male superiority and female subordination remain reproduced in higher education spaces. This condition shows how biological biases and traditional stereotypes continue to operate through established cultural discourses. Without an ethical-critical reading of religious texts as Hamka does, popular discourse has the potential to strengthen the theological legitimacy of this inequality. Therefore, moral-spiritual reinterpretation is important to prevent the reproduction of gender stigma and injustice.

While Hamka does not use contemporary gender language, we can see that, in his Tafsir Al-Azhar, he is aware of patriarchal injustice. In refusing to use a biological definition of virginity, he is criticizing patriarchal practices that subjugate women in the name of religion and is giving a new definition of chastity as a moral virtue connected to belief and self-control. This is in agreement with contemporary Muslim feminist ideas that suggest that human honor is connected to belief and integrity, not to the body. In terms of the *Maqasid al-Shariah*, if we reduce virginity to a biological status, we are not seeing the larger picture of justice, dignity, and moral development. In a holistic ethical system, purity is a spiritual, psychological, and social virtue that is applicable to

all people, male and female. In this context, we can see that Hamka’s interpretation is a way of liberating the Qur’anic text from gender bias and returning to the original principles of justice and benefit (Barlas, 2019; Septiani et al., 2025)..

Hamka criticizes the social and religious perspectives on the matter, which consider it a biological issue for females, and argues that this limits the scope of the ethics of Islam as defined in the *Quran*. He also emphasizes the fact that the honor of Muslims is based on piety and integrity and not on physical conditions, which makes it a universal and fair basis for ethics. By considering it a matter of spiritual purity, the issue of virginity, as discussed by Hamka, criticizes the patriarchal perspectives and promotes fair and non-discriminatory views on gender relations within the context of Islamic ethics (Rahman, 2009; Shihab, 2012).

**Implications of Qur’anic Ethics for Contemporary Discourse**

The ethical understanding of virginity in terms of spiritual purity redefines the Islamic discourse in contemporary times because it changes its focus from managing women’s bodies to social transformation. It also supports and promotes the notion of human honor being based on piety (QS. al-Ḥujurāt: 13) and not on physical attributes, and it promotes justice between men and women and human dignity. This is more relevant in the present era in which body-based standards and differential moral standards continue to impact women in the areas of education, health, and social life. Thus, it is important to reaffirm Islamic ethics in the areas of justice and equality in order to transform social norms and build a more dignified Muslim society (Ni’mah & Ritonga, 2023; Sarwanih, 2025).

Table 2. Empirical findings on gender norms, virginity discourse, and their ethical implications

No.	Data Source	Key Findings	Ethical Implications
1	UND GSNI (2023)	±90% of the population in 80 countries has a gender bias	Global social norms are still influenced by patriarchal constructions
2	UNFPA (2024)	Premarital norms on virginity limit access to sexual education	Moral stigma impacts reproductive health
3	Naghizadeh et al. (2024), <i>Reproductive Health</i>	Conservative attitudes towards virginity correlated with low female autonomy	Social control over women’s bodies affects well-being
4	Castleton et al. (2025), <i>PLoS One</i>	Masculinity norms and sexual stigma hinder access to health services	Gender double standards have a systemic impact
5	Wittmann et al. (2025), <i>Sexual Medicine Reviews</i>	Virginity stigma affects the mental & social health of migrants	Body-based honor values have cross-cultural impact

The Table 2 shows that gender-based social norms are still very strong and have a real impact on women’s lives in various countries. The UNDP report (2023) indicates that around 90% of the population in 80 countries still has a gender bias, confirming the strength of patriarchal

constructions globally. UNFPA findings (2024) show that premarital norms on virginity limit access to sexual education and have an impact on reproductive health. Study It also emphasized the correlation between the stigma of virginity, low female autonomy, and barriers to access to health services and mental well-being. Thus, Qur'anic ethics that emphasize piety and justice are relevant to challenge the reduction of women's honor to the biological aspect.

Buya Hamka's interpretation of *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah: 36* reframes virginity as a symbol of spiritual purity and moral integrity rather than a biological status. By shifting the emphasis to faith and moral maturity, he broadens eschatological interpretation toward an ethical paradigm that upholds human dignity. This approach challenges cultural constructions that reduce women's honor to bodily conditions and instead affirms that glory in Islam is rooted in moral responsibility and spiritual quality (Izutsu, 2002; Kholifah, 2022). This approach, in a way, questions and critiques the way society is more likely to associate moral judgments with women's bodies while exempting men from such a moral equation. Hamka argues that purity is a universal moral value that is applicable to all, making a case that honor is a product of faith, integrity, and self-control, and not biological and gender-based determinants. In this way, this interpretation of the hadith is a normative corrective to societal biases that are not morally justifiable in Islam (Dragu & Simpson, 2017; Shihab, 2012).

The ethical perspective of virginity supports the promotion of gender equal moral education by understanding chastity as self-control (*iffah*) and shared responsibility, not controlling women's bodies. Hamka's contextual approach emphasizes the centrality of Qur'anic moral values, avoiding literalism and objectification, and supports a just, humane, and maqāṣid-oriented understanding (Nasr et al., 2015; Syed Bidina et al., 2017). In fact, the Tafsir Al-Azhar, as interpreted by Hamka, stresses that the interpretation of the eschatological texts must not be literal, but rather must be contextualized within a comprehensive Qur'anic ethics that is infused with values. In doing so, he avoids the sensational and materialistic portrayals of heaven, and instead, stresses the importance of the texts in the formation of spiritual awareness. In fact, the maqasid approach to the interpretation of the eschatological texts views them as a source of guidance for moral change, not merely as a form of description that is not connected to the values of (Gozali et al., 2022).

Such an understanding of Hamka provides a normative foundation for Islamic education that can be gender-equitable and character-based. In this understanding of Hamka, chastity is not defined in terms of social control over women's bodies, but rather in terms of the internalization of values like *iffah*, responsibility, and integrity for all students. Such an understanding promotes ethical awareness, spiritual maturity, and moral autonomy for all, as well as equality and dignity between men and women in accordance with the ethical vision of the Qur'an (Lubis et al., 2025).

Hamka's concept of *QS. Al-Wāqī'ah: 36*, while transcending the literal sense of virginity, also encompasses purity as a global and dynamic moral-spiritual imperative in front of God. This concept of purity is not physical or biological but in terms of the process of self-development in relation to the dignity of man. This concept is helpful in promoting a balanced Islamic discourse in relation to human issues in contemporary society (Rusmana et al., 2023).

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Hamka interprets *Abkārā* (QS. *Al-Wāqī'ah*: 36) not in a biological but a symbolic sense of universal moral purity and spiritual renewal. Virginity is reconstructed as 'iffah an ethical responsibility equally binding on men and women, a humanist and gender-just interpretation of the *Qur'an*. The study contributes to a strengthening of ethical, contextualist *Qur'anic* interpretation, a more proportionate response to gender-biased social constructions, but it is limited to one verse and one tafsir. Further studies should be comparative, interdisciplinary, and empirical in nature to enrich and deepen the discourse.

## DECLARATION OF USING AI

The authors used ChatGPT to assist in improving the language clarity and readability of the manuscript. All outputs generated by the AI tool were carefully reviewed and edited by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the content of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Affandi, Y., Abdillah, M. A., Asna, L., & Alhuwaymil, M. S. (2023). The Process of Human Creation in The View of HAMKA With The Nazhariyyat Al-Siyaq Approach (Analysis of The Book of Al-Azhar). *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*, 25(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.25.1.15006>
- al-Ashfahānī, A.-R. (2009). *Al-Mufradāt fi Gharib al-Qur'an*. Dār al-Qalam.
- Al 'Alwani, T. J. (1996). The Testimony of Women in Islamic Law. *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 13(2), 173–196. <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v13i2.2329>
- Aliamran, S. (2024). Buya Hamka's perspective on misogynistic hadith. *AGENDA: Journal of Gender and Religious Analysis*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.31958/agenda.v6i2.13123>
- Barlas, A. (2019). *Believing women in Islam: Unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an*. University of Texas Press. <https://doi.org/10.7560/315910>
- Boudon, R. (2003). Beyond Rational Choice Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100213>
- Choiri, M., & Fathony, A. (2021). Reconstruction of the Interpretation of Women's Freedom in the Qur'an: A Critical Study of the Thought of Zaitunah Subhan and Fatimah Mernissi. *KACA (The Gift of Allah's Light): Journal of Usbuluddin Science*, 11(1), 30–47. <https://doi.org/10.36781/kaca.v11i1.3239>
- Chyta, D. A., Harahap, M. I., & Simamora, N. A. (2024). The Angel of Heaven in the Tafsir Fī Zīlāl of the Qur'an by Sayyid Quṭb. *Kamaya: Journal of Religious Sciences*, 7(3), 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.37329/kamaya.v7i3.3515>
- Dragu, T., & Simpson, H. K. (2017). *Veto Players, Policy Change, and Institutional Design*. Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse. <https://www.iast.fr/articles/>
- Duderija, A. (2023). The Concept of a Religiously Ideal Muslim Woman in Two Treatises on the Customs of Bosnian Muslims. *Hawwa*, 21(3), 213–230. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341395>
- Fatih, M. (2023). Ashabul A'raf in the Perspective of Indonesian Tafsir: A Comparative Study of

- Tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka and Tafsir al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab. *PROGRESSA: Journal of Islamic Religious Instruction*, 7(1), 44–58. <https://doi.org/10.32616/pgr.v7i1.438.44-58>
- Fauziyyah, A. N., Asaad, A. M., & Mahmud, A. (2022). Characteristics of a Hard Heart from the Perspective of Tafsir al-Azhar. *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies*, 1(3), 307–328. <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v1i3.2209>
- Gozali, M. P., Kurniawati, & Ibrahim, N. (2022). Buya Hamka: Nationalism in Islamic Education in Indonesia. *International Journal of Social Science and Business*, 6(4), 528–535. <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijssb.v6i4.46968>
- Gunara, Y., Irsyad, N., & Zulaiha, E. (2024). Female Circumcision in Signal Verse of the Qur'an. *SPECTRUM: Journal of Gender and Children Studies*, 4(2), 124–135. <https://doi.org/10.30984/spectrum.v4i2.1191>
- Hadani, A., Hasyim, M. F., & Nurjannah, E. (2024). The Authenticity of Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'thur: An Epistemological Review of Tafsir Al-Tabari. *Al-Thiqah: Journal of Islamic Sciences*, 7(2), 284. <https://doi.org/10.56594/althiqah.v7i2.196>
- Herlambang, S., & Parwanto, W. (2023). Paradigm Shifts in the Interpretation of Heaven Illustration Among Indonesian Mufassir: A Comparative Analysis of As-Singkili, Hamka, and M. Quraish. *Journal of the Study of Qur'an and Hadith*, 24(1), 181–204. <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v24i1.4454>
- Izutsu, T. (2002). *Ethico-religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Vol. 1). McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Kamali, M. H. (2013). Peace as a Universal Islamic Value. *ICR Journal*, 4(2), 169–187. <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v4i2.472>
- Kerwanto, K. (2022). Visualization of Women in the Qur'an: A Sufi Tafsir Approach to the Vocabulary of al-Ḥūr (Angels). *EZRERIC*, 8(2), 129. <https://doi.org/10.21043/esoterik.v8i2.16341>
- Kholifah, N. (2022). Women's Glory In Islamic Perspective (Representation Of Buya Hamka's Thoughts). *Al Huwiyah: Journal of Woman and Children Studies*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.24042/.v2i1.11416>
- Lubis, D. S., Syafiq, M., Hasibuan, R. L., & Sari, H. P. (2025). The Role of Islamic Education in Promoting Gender Equality: Traditional and Contemporary Perspectives. *QOSIM Journal of Social Education & Humanities*, 3(2), 597–604. <https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v3i2.933>
- Mandzur, I., & bin Mukrim, M. P. Y. 1996. (n.d.). *Lisa>n al-'Arab Juz 1*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Manzūr, I. (1990). *Lisān al-'Arab*. Dār Ṣādir.
- Mubarokah, S. R., & Bakri, S. (2022). Women's Education in Surah an-Nuur verse 31 Tafsir al-Azhar. *Yinyang: Journal of Islamic Studies of Gender and Children*, 73–88. <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v17i1.5186>
- Nafisah, M. (2022). Narasi Bias Gender Dalam Tafsir Nusantara: Studi Analisis Makna Zauj sebagai Pasangan di Surga. *Al-Fanar: Journal of Qur'an Science and Tafsir*, 5(2), 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v5n2.149-165>
- Nasr, S. H., Dagli, C. K., Dakake, M. M., Lombard, J. E. B., & Rustom, M. (2015). *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*. HarperCollins. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=GVSzBgAAQBAJ>
- Ni'mah, D., & Ritonga, S. (2023). Virginity as a Symbol of Honor: A Gendered Analysis of Kandangan Village through the Lens of Simone de Beauvoir. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy and*

- Contemporary Thought*, 1(2), 169–188. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jipct.2023.1.2.169-188>
- Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press.
- Ouahid, H., Sebbani, M., Cherkaoui, M., Amine, M., & Adarmouch, L. (2025). The influence of gender norms on women's sexual and reproductive health outcomes: A systematic review. *BMC Women's Health*, 25(1), 224. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-025-03768-2>
- Pratiwi, C., R., Siti, M., Fitri, W., & Suhandi. (2025). Visualisasi Bidadari Surga Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Analisis Konstruksi Sosial Gender Dalam Tafsir Ath-Thabari). *Al-Fabmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 4(2), 574–588. <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfabmu.v4i2.426>
- Rahman, F. (2009). *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. University of Chicago Press.
- Rahman, F. (2024). *Islam & modernity: Transformation of an intellectual tradition* (Vol. 15). University of Chicago Press.
- Rusmana, D., Nuraini, N., & Rahtikawati, Y. (2023). Gender Relations on Quranic Interpretation in Indonesia (Interpretation Analysis on Turjuman Al-Mustafid's Tafsir, Al-Azhar's Tafsir, and Al-Misbah's Tafsir). *FOKUS Journal of Islamic and Social Studies*, 8(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jf.v8i1.3893>
- Saeed, A. (2005). *Interpreting the Qur'an; Towards a Contemporary Approach*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203016770>
- Sarwanih. (2025). Reinterpreting Female Sexuality in Islam: A Maqāṣidī Exegesis of QS Āli 'Imrān:14 toward Gender-Just Hermeneutics. *Al Furqan: Journal of Qur'an Science and Tafsir*, 8(1), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqon.v8i1.3586>
- Septiani, E. D., Harmawan, A. M., & Safiroh, S. A. (2025). Islam and Gender Justice: An Analysis of the Interpretation of Women's Verses in the Modern Context. *Journal Central Publisher*, 2(4), 1959–1970. <https://doi.org/10.60145/jcp.v2i4.432>
- Shihab, M. Q. (2012). "Grounding" the Quran: The Function and Role of Revelation in People's Life. Mizan Publishers. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ahUaAAAAIAAJ>
- Sukti, S., Warsito, T., Qodir, Z., & Jubba, H. (2023). Gender Justice: Education, Leadership and Islamic Inheritance Rights (An Analysis Study of Hamka Haq's Thoughts). *Journal of Religious and Social Studies*, 18(2), 130–137. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jsam.v18i2.4166>
- Syed Bidina, S. N. B. B., Wan Ahmad, W. H. S., Mat Teh, K. S. B., & Ibrahim, M. A. N. (2017). The Approach of Interpretation Implemented by Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar Based on Scientific Exegesis. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(4), 194–207. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v7-i4/2798>
- Tamara, N. (1984). *Hamka Di Mata Hati Ummat*. Sinar Harapan.
- Velji, M. (2024). Proposing an Islamic Virtue Ethics Beyond the Situationist Debates. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2023.2296467>
- Wijaya, A., Muchlis, I., & Rohmatulloh, D. M. (2025). Rethinking Gender Justice in the Quran: A Critical Exploration of Muslim Feminist Perspectives. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 26(1), 77-98. <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i1.5704>