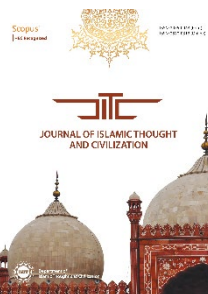
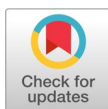


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Reading Hamka's and Shihab's Interpretations of Jihad: Abdullah Saeed's Contextual Approach

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Abstract

Jihād has been a significant issue in Indonesia over the past two decades, often linked to terrorism, radicalism, and sectarian violence, purportedly in the name of Islam. The Qur'ān, as the primary source of guidance for Muslims, presents *jihād* both as a concept of communal warfare and an expression of personal piety. However, selective interpretations of *jihād* by certain groups have contributed to theological justifications for terrorist and extremist actions. This study examined and compared the Qur'ānic interpretations of *jihād* by two prominent Indonesian Islamic scholars, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (1908–1981) and M. Quraish Shihab (1944–). Using Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach, this research analyzed the methodological, typological, and paradigmatic frameworks underpinning their interpretations. The findings suggested that both scholars emphasized the necessity to understand *jihād* verses within their historical and sociocultural context. In a contemporary context, *jihād* should be interpreted as an earnest “struggle in the cause of Allah” rather than a call for armed conflict against non-believers. This approach aligns with Saeed's view that the *jihād* verses have ethical and legal dimensions, addressing social, economic, and political challenges faced by the early Muslim community at the time of revelation rather than solely advocating for violence.

Keywords: Abdullah Saeed, contextual approach, Hamka, *jihād*, Quraish Shihab, radicalism

Introduction

Struggle in the cause of Allah, or *jihād fī sabīlillāh*, is regarded as an obligation for every Muslim, both men and women. The Qur'ān places it on equal footing with faith (*īmān*) and migration (*hijrah*). Its significance is ranked directly after a believer's faith in Allah and His Messenger before the accepted pilgrimage (*hajj mabrūr*). The importance of *jihād* in Islam is further emphasized by its appearance forty-one times in various forms throughout the Qur'ān, indicating its frequent mention, and, thus its significant role in Islamic teachings. However, in contemporary discussions, the term *jihād* has frequently been misappropriated as a theological justification for extremist and terrorist actions by certain factions within the Muslim community.¹ This misuse has transformed the term into a rallying cry for violence, exemplified in numerous terrorist attacks worldwide, including those in Indonesia, where perpetrators have invoked *jihād* as the ideological basis for their violent acts.²

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¹Muhammad Adam Abd. Azid et al., “The Trajectory of the Jihad Discourse in Malay World: An Analysis on the Bahr Al-Mādhī by Muḥammad Idrīs Al-Marbawī,” *Al-Jamī'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 1 (2022): 265–86, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2022.601.265-286>.

²Sajjad H. Rizvi, “Striving in the Path of God: Jihād and Martyrdom in Islamic thought,” review of *Striving in the Path of God: Jihād and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought*, by Asma Afsaruddin, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2017): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2017.1415858>.

The interpretation of verses related to *jihād* reveals that this concept encompasses four distinct stages: (1) a peaceful approach, (2) rational discourse, (3) physical confrontation, and (4) armed resistance. The traditional understanding of *jihād* is often limited to the fourth stage, which is primarily based on the Qur'ānic injunction to defend the Muslim community against the aggression of disbelievers, as outlined in Surah al-Baqarah 2:216.³ However, it is crucial to differentiate between the terms *qitāl* and *jihād* to avoid misinterpretation. While *qitāl* refers specifically to combat or physical confrontation, *jihād* is a broader concept that also includes spiritual struggle and striving in the way of God.⁴

The concept of *jihād* in Islam has been historically understood as a multifaceted duty of every Muslim, encompassing both spiritual and physical dimensions. Offering physical resistance, mainly through warfare, has been viewed as a primary duty meant to uphold the superiority of Islam. This perspective asserts that Islam's proper governance can only be realized under Islamic law, making military conflict a means of defending or expanding Islamic rule.⁵ Such a narrow and militaristic interpretation of *jihād* has been embraced by some groups, often under the influence of excessive ideology (*al-ghuluww*) and neglect (*al-ifrāt*), as exemplified by Salafi-Jihadi ideologies.⁶

From the moderate perspectives, *jihād* extends beyond armed resistance. It also refers to the internal struggle against one's basic desires (*jihād al-nafs*), advocating for moral and ethical self-discipline. This view holds that violence is neither necessary nor morally justified when peaceful means of resistance are available. Furthermore, it emphasizes the spiritual and ethical dimensions, promoting a peaceful and non-violent interpretation. In contrast, radical militant groups interpret *jihād* as a divine mandate to wage war against non-Muslim 'infidels,' often justifying acts of terrorism and violence with selective interpretations of Qur'ānic verses and Hadiths.⁷

The current study sought to present an alternative understanding of *jihād* through the exegesis of two prominent Indonesian scholars: Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (known as Hamka) and M. Quraish Shihab. These scholars played an essential role in reinterpreting the concept of *jihād* in contemporary discourse. Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* challenges the conventional interpretation of *jihād* as warfare, offering a broader understanding. He posits that the implementation of *jihād* represents an individual's spiritual achievement, integral to the expression of faith.⁸ Similarly, Shihab's *Tafsir*

³According to Wahbah Zuhailī, the word *qitāl* in this verse refers to *jihād*, which is made compulsory for believers to fight enemies who are indeed unbelievers putting harm to Muslims. Amad Atabik and Moh Muhtador, "Jihad and Interpretation of Religious Texts on Female Terrorists in Indonesia," *QIJS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 11, no. 1 (May 4, 2023): 1–30, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v11i1.16342>.

⁴Abad Badruzaman, "Toward an Indonesian Current in Islamic Exegesis: An Attempt to Contextualize the Maqasid al-Qurān," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 2 (2019): 516–518, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.2.505-524>.

⁵Rusli, "Indonesian Salafism on Jihād and Suicide Bombings," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 8, no. 1 (2014): 91–111, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2014.8.1.91-111>.

⁶Yusuf Qardhawi, *Fiqh Jihad* (The Jurisprudence of Jihad), trans., Irfan Maulana Hakim, et al (Bandung: Mizan, 2010), xlvii.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Hamka said: "Arti jihad adalah umum, perang adalah satu di antaranya. Kesungguhan dan kegiatan yang didorong oleh hati tulus-ikhlas, melakukan amar ma'ruf, hanyi munkar, berda'wah, mendidik dan mengasuh ummat kepada kesadaran beragama, pun termasuk dalam jihad juga. Adapun jihad yang berupa perang adalah menunggu perintah dari *al-Imam al-A'zham*" (The meaning of jihad is general; war is one of them. Seriousness and activities driven by a sincere heart, enjoining right and forbidding wrong, preaching, educating and nurturing the ummah to religious awareness,

al-Misbah expands on this view. It asserts that the term *jihād* has several meanings and can either mean sincere effort or tiredness, difficulty, suffering, anxiety, and other feelings that must be overcome to achieve a goal. In other words, difficulties can only be defeated through intense efforts and sacrifices, which is the underlying meaning of jihad. However, the means should be suited to the goal and the available capital.⁹

The contemporary relevance of the interpretations outlined above has become increasingly pronounced in recent decades. This is because radical groups have progressively narrowed the concept of *jihād*, reducing it to violent conflict and justifying acts of terrorism. This misinterpretation of *jihād* diminishes its broader and more peaceful connotations, distorting its true essence. In light of this, Hamka's and Shihab's interpretations of *jihād*, with their critical contributions to addressing contemporary religious issues within Muslim society, would serve as the primary focus of this research.

A significant body of literature has explored the relationship between *jihād* and Islam, with scholars, such as Asma Afsaruddin,¹⁰ Hasnan Bachtiar,¹¹ Moh. Nailul Muna,¹² M. Coirun Nizar,¹³ and Patompo Adnan¹⁴ providing comprehensive analyses of *jihād* from both medieval and modern perspectives. Afsaruddin, for instance, argues that the association of *jihād* with armed combat and martyrdom is a later, misinterpreted development, diverging from the Qur'ānic conception. Bachtiar and others contend that the dynamics of radical Islam and globalization have shaped the discourse surrounding *jihād*. Furthermore, various scholars have examined the diverse interpretations of *jihād* within the Indonesian Islamic context.

Despite this rich body of scholarship, a gap remains in Indonesia's contemporary interpretation of *jihād*, particularly in how modern exegetes, such as Hamka and Shihab approach the concept from a socio-historical perspective. Therefore, the current study addressed this gap by employing Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach to analyze the interpretations of *jihād* in *Tafsir al-Azhar* and *Tafsir al-*

are also included in jihad. As for jihad in the form of war, it is waiting for orders from al-Imam al-Azhari. Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Exegesis of al-Azhar), Vol. 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982).

⁹M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'ān: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Grounding the Qur'ān: The Function and Role of Revelation in Society's Life) (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 501.

¹⁰Asma Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹¹Hasnan Bachtiar, Luciana Anggraeni, Muhammad Asep, "Rethinking the Contemporary Discourse of Jihād," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 9, no. 2 (2019): 306–325, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2019.9.1.306-325>.

¹²Moh. Nailul Muna, "Ragam Pemaknaan Jihad dalam Kitab *Fath al-Bârî* dan *Irshâd al-Sâri* (Various Interpretations of Jihad in the Books of *Fath al-Bârî* and *Irshâd al-Sâri*)," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis* 7, no. 2 (2017): 352–374, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2017.7.2.352-374>.

¹³M. Coirun Nizar, and Muhammad Aziz, "Kontekstualisasi Jihad Perspektif Keindonesiaan (Contextualizing Jihad from an Indonesian Perspective)," *Jurnal Ulul Albab* 16, no. 1 (2015): 21, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v16i1.2784>.

¹⁴Patompo Adnan, "Pemaknaan Jihad dan Problem Aplikasinya dalam Tataran Sosial (The Interpretation of Jihad and Its Application Problems in the Social Sphere)," *Ulumuna* 10, No. 1 (2006): 44–58, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v10i1.431>.

Misbah. This study offered a new perspective on *jihād*, reinterpreting it within the current Indonesian context and highlighting its relevance to contemporary Islamic thought.¹⁵

Additionally, the concept of *jihād* as articulated in the Qur'ān has yet to be systematically analyzed using Saeed's contextual methodology, which is a key contribution of this research. Through an engagement with existing literature and the introduction of a new interpretive framework, the current study enhanced new understanding of *jihād* while also presenting a valid counter-narrative to the distorted interpretations put forth by radical militant groups. The implications of this analysis are both theoretical and practical, contributing to promote moderate Islamic thought in a contemporary context.¹⁶

2. Hamka's Interpretation of the Jihad Verses in the *Tafsir al-Azhar*

In Islamic law, *jihād* is considered as a fundamental obligation for the Muslim community, ensuring that the world remains free from oppression and tyranny. Historically, *jihād* has been viewed as religiously motivated warfare aimed at defending the Muslim community against unwarranted aggression.¹⁷ However, the root meaning of *jihād* extends far beyond this, encompassing any form of struggle or effort in pursuing righteousness. Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, better known as Hamka (1908–1981), offers a sophisticated and nuanced interpretation of *jihād* that transcends the conventional readings of his time. As a prominent modern exegete who lived through Indonesia's colonial era, Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* represents a pivotal fusion of classical Islamic scholarship and modern contextual analysis.¹⁸

Hamka's interpretation of *jihād* is based on two primary meanings: *jihād* as warfare (*ḥarb*) and *jihād* as earnestness, sincerity, and diligent effort. In the Qur'ān, many verses invoke *jihad* in various forms, both as imperative commands (*fi'l amr*) and informative statements (*mudāri*'), reflecting the term's multifaceted nature. Table below shows the unfolding meaning of the word *jihād*:

¹⁵The contextual interpretation offered by Abdullah Saeed resulted from his intellectual concern over the increasing trend to interpret the Qur'an in a strictly literal manner, as propagated by Salafi scholars. For Saeed, such a textual interpretation reduces the original message of the Qur'an because it ignores other important dimensions such as historical context (i.e., time of revelation) and broader implications. Saeed's fears are visible from his classification of the trends in modern Islamic thought propagated by legalist traditionalists, theological puritans, militant extremists, political Islamists, secular liberals, cultural nominalists, classical modernists, and progressive *mujtahids*.

¹⁶Contextualist interpreters, according to Saeed, believe that the Qur'an's teachings should be applied differently according to context. The Qur'an is a practical life guide that should be implemented differently in different conditions/atmospheres, not rigid laws. Supporters of this interpretation style assert that legal scholars or interpreters must pay attention to the social, political, and cultural context of revelation and the contemporary context of interpretation—Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 214.

¹⁷Mehdi Berriah, "Ibn Taymiyya's Conception of Jihad: Corpus, General Aspects, and Research Perspectives". *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 12, no. 1 (2022): 43–70. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2022.12.1.43-70>.

¹⁸Bukhori Abdul Shomad, Anwar Mujahidin, and Ahmad Choirul Rofiq, "Implications of Hamka's Thoughts in Tafsir al-Azhar on the Standpoint of Islamic Social Organizations in Preventing Authoritarianism in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 14, no. 1(2024): 91–111, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v14i1.91-116>.

Table 1. Different Meanings of *Jihād* from Hamka's Perspective

Meaning	Verses
<i>Ḥarb</i>	Al-Baqarah: 218; al-Nisā': 95; al-Anfāl: 72, 74, 75; al-Tawbah: 16, 19, 20, 24, 41, 44, 81, 86, 88.
Earnestness, sincerity, and intense effort	Al-Furqān: 52, Fātir: 42, al-An'ām: 109, Luqmān: 15, al-Nahl: 38, 110, al-'Ankabūt: 6, 8, 69, Āl 'Imrān: 142, Muḥammad: 31, al-Nūr: 53, al-Mā'idah: 53, 54, 55.

According to Hamka, the word *jihād* in the sense of warfare (*ḥarb*) appears several times in the Qur'ān, however, its meaning is not limited to it. One of the key verses in Hamka's references is Surah al-Baqarah 2:218, which describes the ultimate sacrifice of the believers: "Indeed, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah, they can expect the mercy of Allah; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."¹⁹ Hamka argues that this verse encapsulates three stages of faith: (1) declaring belief in Allah and His Messenger, (2) migrating to protect one's faith, and (3) being willing to sacrifice one's life for the cause of Islam. For Hamka, this call to *jihād* applies not only to the early Muslims but to all generations including modern-day Muslims. He contends that if Muslims are not allowed to practice their faith or live according to Islamic law freely, they are duty-bound to resist, whether through migration or armed struggle.²⁰

However, Hamka emphasizes that *jihād* is not confined to warfare. It also involves striving to promote what is right, educate the community, and support the spread of Islam. Thus, *jihād* manifests as various efforts, such as preaching, social reforms, and community building, which are all integral to the Islamic mission. In this sense, *jihād* is a comprehensive concept that requires personal commitment and struggle in diverse forms.²¹ This call to *jihād*, according to Hamka, is not only to the early Muslims living in the Prophet's lifetime but to all generations succeeding them. All Muslims have to defend their community against oppression and aggression and ensure that the religion of Islam can be practiced freely. Thus, if applied to the context of Indonesia today, this means that Muslims have to emigrate or engage in warfare if they are no longer permitted to implement Islamic law or worship freely.²²

Hamka considers that any earnest effort to serve Islam by promoting what is right and preventing what is wrong, calling people to Islam, and educating and supporting the Muslim community is a form of *jihād*. Besides, armed struggle is permissible only with the explicit approval of those in authority.²³

Another verse says: "Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and live in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided—they are allies of one another. But those who believed and did not emigrate—for you there is no guardianship of them until they emigrate. And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help, except against a people between yourselves and whom is a treaty. And Allah is Seeing of what you do."²⁴

According to Hamka, this verse highlights the selflessness and dedication required of believers in all acts of *jihād*, whether through material sacrifice or physical combat. It reflects the deep commitment that all Muslims should embody in striving for Allah's pleasure, regardless of their challenges. Hamka understood this verse to carry a similar message detailed in Surah al-Baqarah

¹⁹al-Baqarah 2:218.

²⁰Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol. 2, 184.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴al-Anfāl 8:72.

2:218. However, the definition of *jihād* is more complex as it stresses the element of sacrifice by investing personal wealth and even one's life in the cause.²⁵

But those who have believed and emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided—it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.

And those who believed after [the initial emigration] and emigrated and fought with you—they are of you. But those of [blood] relationships are more entitled [to inheritance] in the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah is Knowing of all things.²⁶

These two verses describe the noble position and worth of those who left their businesses, homes, and families in Mecca to preserve their religion (*muhājirūn*) and those who welcomed the persecuted refugees in Medina (*anṣār*). According to Hamka, such self-denying actions signify the completion of their inner faith, their complete surrender to the will of God, and their sincere wish to earn His pleasure.²⁷

The faith of the early believers was repeatedly tested but also strengthened through trials, hardships, and sacrifices, while the reward for their actions was with God alone. However, Hamka argued that Muslims living today must not think that they are not allowed to prove their faith: “And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.’”²⁸

However, the trials of the early generation of Muslims are well-known and their honourable position is attested by God: “And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth? Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Mekkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best [reward]. And Allah, with what you do, is Acquainted.”²⁹

When a believer answers the call for *jihād*, forsakes the comforts he finds in his home, and is willing to face hardships and pain, he proves the strength of his faith. In other words, it is easier to pray, fast, and remain virtuous while enjoying the comforts at home than endure fear and deprivation on the battlefield. This perspective is based on Allah's word, saying:

Not equal are those believers remaining [at home]—other than the disabled—and the mujahideen, [who strive and fight] in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred those who strive hard with their wealth and their lives over those who remain [behind], by degrees. And to both Allah has promised the best [reward]. But Allah has preferred the mujahideen over those who remain [behind] with a great reward.

Do you think that you will be left [as you are] while Allah has not yet made evident those among you who strive [for His cause] and do not take other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as intimates? And Allah is Acquainted with what you do.³⁰

Hamka's argument gained significant strength from a Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudhri. This Hadith states that Allah provides a hundred levels for those who engage in *jihād*, with the distance between each level equaling the distance between heaven and

²⁵Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol 10, 65.

²⁶al-Anfāl 8:75.

²⁷Ibid., 74.

²⁸al-Hashr 59:10.

²⁹al-Ḥadīd 57:10.

³⁰al-Nisā' 4:93-94.

earth.³¹ The determination and resolve with which the believers face the enemy on the battlefield is evidence to measure the faith in their hearts and their actual submission to Allah. The Muslims' readiness to go to *jihād* is also a way to determine whether they are true believers or not and whether their intentions are pure.³²

“O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh upon them. And their refuge is Hell, and wretched is the destination.”³³

Hamka considers the meaning of the above verse in the context of military conflict and warfare. In the previous verse, the Muslims are ordered to end the rule of the polytheists, and in al-Tawbah 9:29, to oppose the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) until they pay the poll tax (*jizyah*) and submit to Muslim rule. In this verse, Allah commands the Muslims to fight the unbelievers and hypocrites who only pretended to be their allies, acted treacherously, and posed a serious threat to their security when under imminent attack from the enemy. Hamka argues that the *jihād* against those infidels is by the sword, however, the *jihād* against the polytheists is by the tongue.³⁴

Thus, *jihād* is not only limited to armed conflict, however, includes all necessary efforts to protect the welfare of the Muslim community and those under their protection. Hamka then discussed the following verse: “And those who strive for Us—We will surely guide them to Our ways. Moreover, indeed, Allah is with the doers of good”.³⁵

Commenting on this verse, he explained that here, the meaning of *jihād* connotes that one is hardworking and earnest, concentrates on efforts to spread Islam, and upholds the truth before referring to Ibn al-Jawzī's four types of *jihād*: against the infidels, against Satan, against the hypocrites, and one's base desires.³⁶ All these types of *jihād* result in benefits for the believers. Firstly, they derive worldly benefits by acquiring high achievements and life experiences. Secondly, they earn the favour of Allah and an honoured position in the hereafter.³⁷

Furthermore, Allah admonishes the believers not to falter in their faith and reject the call to *jihād*; if they do so, Allah promises to replace them with others who are worthy to serve His cause and sincere in their wish to earn His pleasure: “O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion—Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favour of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”³⁸

The phrase 'striving in the cause of Allah' (*al-jihād fī sabīl Allah*) identifies the ultimate intention of every *mujāhid*, which is to offer their love to Him and earn His love in return. True believers do not despair in the face of severe trials and lose their faith; instead, they persevere and submit to Allah's will. This love in their hearts motivates them to strive hard in order to uphold Allah's religion and give their utmost, even to the extent of sacrificing their own life.³⁹

The command of *jihād* in several verses relates to the sacrifice of one's resources and even one's life. There is no struggle without sacrifice, and the sacrifice is the measurement of one's sincerity in

³¹Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol. 5, 279.

³²Ibid., Vol. 10, 123.

³³al-Tawbah 9:73.

³⁴Ibid., Vol. 10, 283.

³⁵al-'Ankabūt 29:69.

³⁶Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol. 20, 148.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸al-Mā'idah 4:54.

³⁹Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol. 6, 371.

the *jihād*. However, warfare is not restricted to armed combat, however, includes any form of confrontation and challenge of the status quo of the unbelievers, even ideologically, as stated in the following verse: “So do not obey the disbelievers and strive against them with the Qur’ān a great striving.”⁴⁰

The above verse concerns the continuing struggle to confront falsehood with the truth and the refusal to submit to anything other than Allah and His commandments. Given the social reality of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*) at the time of the Prophet (*SAW*), the Qur’ānic message in the revealed verses established the oneness of Allah, the seal of prophethood, and the path of righteousness.

In the early days of Islam, the challenges posed by the polytheists were significant because they were in the majority and power. Thus, those opposing the message of Islam and its followers not only used words but also physical coercion. The young Muslim community was first forced to migrate to Medina and only engaged in physical conflict with the Mekkans to defend themselves. Thus, Allah ordered the *muhājirūn* and *anṣār* to engage in armed *jihād* with their enemies to preserve the freedom of the Muslim community.⁴¹ Allah said: “Then, indeed your Lord, to those who emigrated after they had been compelled [to renounce their religion] and thereafter fought [for the cause of Allah] and were patient—Indeed, your Lord, after that, is Forgiving and Merciful.”⁴²

The above verse shows that Allah promises those who are willing to sacrifice their life in the way of Allah His forgiveness and mercy in the hereafter.⁴³ Here, *jihād* indicates an earnest struggle to maintain the faith under pressure and abuses through patience and exertion, and not necessarily through taking up arms.

3. Shihab’s Interpretation of the *Jihād* Verses in the *Tafsir al-Misbah*

M. Quraish Shihab, born in 1944, is a renowned Indonesian Islamic scholar widely regarded for his expertise in Qur’ānic exegesis, with his seminal work *Tafsir al-Misbah* being a testament to his intellectual rigor. Unlike Hamka, who lived through the colonial era in Indonesia, Shihab's scholarship flourished in the post-independence period, a context that profoundly influenced his approach to Islamic thought. While Hamka's work was shaped by the struggle for national identity and resistance against colonial oppression, Shihab's work responds to the complexities of a newly independent Indonesia, addressing challenges, such as religious pluralism, democratization, and globalization. His exegesis, rooted in a contextual and modern approach to Islamic texts, emphasizes a dynamic understanding of the Qur’ān that aligns with contemporary socio-political realities, distinguishing him from traditionalist interpretations.⁴⁴ In this regard, the author would focus on his interpretation of *jihād*. Shihab explained that the word *jihād* is derived from the root noun *jahd* meaning weariness or difficulty or *juhd* meaning ability. This is supported in the Qur’ān where *jihād* is described as a test of faith:⁴⁵ “Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet made evident those of you who fight in His cause and made evident those who are steadfast?”⁴⁶

Jihād is also closely related to patience because it involves hardships and requires perseverance, as detailed: “Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you

⁴⁰Ibid., Vol. 19, 30.

⁴¹Ibid., Vol. 14, 307.

⁴²al-Naḥl 16:110.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Sahiron Syamsuddin, “Differing Responses to Western Hermeneutics: A Comparative Critical Study of M. Quraish Shihab’s and Muḥammad ‘Imāra’s Thoughts,” *Al-Jamī’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 59, no. 2 (2021): 479–512, <https://doi.org/0.14421/ajis.2021.592.479-512>.

⁴⁵Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur’ān*, 501.

⁴⁶Al ‘Imrān 3:142.

as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, When is the help of Allah? Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.”⁴⁷

Jihād refers to the ability to invest one's resources and strength into achieving a specific goal. Hence, *jihād* requires sacrifice, and the *mujāhid* must give all he has in his attempt to accomplish it, leaving the outcome to God.⁴⁸ In other words, he must persist in his efforts until either his goal is achieved or he has nothing more to give.⁴⁹ This understanding of *jihād* as a form of passive resistance is emphasized in the verses revealed in Mecca before the *hijrah* when the Muslims were still a persecuted minority. On the other hand, the meaning of *jihād* shifted after the Muslims migrated to Medina, and the later verses speak of taking up arms and engaging in active warfare against the enemies of Islam.⁵⁰ This new emphasis is on confrontation, for instance, it is evident in the following verse: “Those who criticize the contributors among the believers concerning [their] charities and [criticize] the ones who find nothing [to spend] except their effort, so they ridicule them— Allah will ridicule them, and they will have a painful punishment.”⁵¹

Jihād, according to Shihab, is more of a mindset than an activity. It may take many forms and is necessary to overcome great trials. Without the intense and persistent efforts exerted by the believers, the enemies of Islam would win, and Islam cannot be practiced on the communal level. On the individual level, *jihād* is also necessary to defend one's heart against the lower instincts of ego (*nafs*) and fortify the intellect ('*aql*) against ignorance. Allah said: “Have you made the providing of water for the pilgrim and the maintenance of *al-Masjid al-Haram* equal to [the deeds of] one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives in the cause of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoers.”⁵²

In the same surah, verse 24 reads: “Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”⁵³

Furthermore, *jihād* is a manifestation of virtue and one's character. When the believer is confronted with falsehood, he is obligated to reject it and affirm the truth, even if it means he must disobey and challenge those in authority including his own family.⁵⁴ As mentioned: “But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.”⁵⁵

⁴⁷al-Baqarah [2]: 214

⁴⁸M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Quran* (Exegesis of Al-Misbah: The Message, Impression, and Harmony of the Qur'an), Vol. 10 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 492.

⁴⁹Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 502.

⁵⁰Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Vol. 10, 444.

⁵¹al-Tawbah 9:79.

⁵²al-Tawbah 9:19.

⁵³al-Tawbah 9:24.

⁵⁴Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, 504.

⁵⁵Luqman 31:15.

Those who engage in honest *jihād* to overcome the opposition of disbelievers would receive guidance and help from Allah, as mentioned: “And those who strive for Us—We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.”⁵⁶

Finally, true *jihād* is only done for the sake of Allah and to gain His pleasure—not to acquire power, status, and wealth—and is intricately linked with intention. The Qur’ān repeatedly uses the phrase ‘in His way’ (*fi sabīlihi*) in connection with *jihād*, thus emphasizing the importance of its spiritual goal. Allah said: “And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you Muslims before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So, establish prayer and give alms and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector; and excellent is the Protector, and excellent is the Helper.”⁵⁷

Therefore, *jihād* has a purpose that goes beyond achieving certain outcomes in this world and does not allow feelings of hopelessness, surrender, and weariness. The believer’s motivation to engage in *jihād* is powered by his inner certainty and faith. However, *jihād* cannot be done without resources. As long as the goal is not yet achieved, and there is a capital, then the *jihād* continues.⁵⁸ The *mujāhid* must focus on earning the will of Allah and put everything else aside. *Jihād* is entered through the believer’s will to manifest his spiritual qualities that begin with awareness based on self-knowledge and volition. Like faith, *jihād* is voluntary and cannot be forced because the intention has to be pure.

4. Analysis of Hamka and Quraish Shihab’s Perspectives on *Jihād*

To rigorously analyze their exegeses on *jihād*, this study employed Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutic framework, which emphasizes the necessity to understand Qur’ānic interpretations through the historical and social context in which they were revealed.⁵⁹ This methodological approach is crucial when examining the interpretations provided by Hamka and Shihab, as both scholars rooted their understandings in the socio-political landscapes of their respective times. The historical context, including the political challenges and social dynamics of early Islamic society, plays a pivotal and weighty role in shaping their perspectives on *jihād*. This emphasis on historical context would enlighten the audience about the origins and evolution of *jihād*. We learn from Hamka's and Shihab's commentary that the concept of *jihād* should be approached through the textual evidence of the Qur’ānic verses. Furthermore, its proper understanding should be aligned with the moral ideals of the Qur’ān and fit into the Islamic ethical framework. Hence, such a broad understanding helps integrate *jihād* into daily life praxis.

As explained earlier, the *jihād* of the Prophet (*SAW*) was divided into two distinctive periods: the Meccan period before the *hijrah* and the Medinan period. The Meccan period covers the beginning of revelation, which he received at forty and the following ten years. This period was marked by the Prophet's (*SAW*) peaceful propagation of the Islamic faith and his endurance of persecution from the Quraysh. The *jihād* of the early companions was limited to propagating the fundamentals of the Islamic faith and protecting the small Muslim community from the persecution

⁵⁶al-Rūm 30:69

⁵⁷al-Hajj 22:78

⁵⁸Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur’an*, 506.

⁵⁹Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur’ān: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2005); See, Barsihannor, M. Ilham, Andi Tri Saputra, and Abdul Syatar, “Abdullah Saeed's Construction of the Hierarchy of Values in the Qur’ān: A Philosophical Hermeneutic Perspective,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, No. 1 (2023): 119–132, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.09>.

of the Quraysh. The second period covers the time from the Prophet's (*SAW*) migration to Medina until he died eleven years later. This period was marked by defensive *jihād*, as the Muslim community faced external threats and had to defend their newly established state. Based on the periodization and the chronology of the verses, the meaning of *jihād* can be mapped as follows:⁶⁰

Table 2. Development of the Meaning of *Jihād* in Chronological Order (*Nuzūlī*)

No	<i>Tartīb al-Nuzūl</i>	Status of the Surah	Meaning of <i>Jihād</i>
1	Al-Furqān: 52	<i>Makkīyah</i>	<i>Da'wah</i> with the Qur'ān
2	Fātir: 42	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Earnest promise
3	Al-An'ām: 109	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Earnest promise
4	Luqmān: 15	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Giving all might and power
5	Al-Naḥl: 38	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Earnest promise
6	Al-Naḥl: 110	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Patience and perseverance
7	Al-'Ankabūt: 6	<i>Makkīyah</i>	To uphold the truth of Islam
8	Al-'Ankabūt: 8	<i>Makkīyah</i>	Parental pressure to their children
9	Al-'Ankabūt: 69	<i>Makkīyah</i>	To follow the way of the Prophet
10	Al-Baqarah: 218	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To defend the <i>muhājirīn</i>
11	Al-Anfāl: 72	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To sacrifice one's wealth and life to support Muslims
12	Al-Anfāl: 74	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To sacrifice one's wealth and life to uphold Islam
13	Al-Anfāl: 75	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To uphold Islam
13	Āl 'Imrān: 142	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight (<i>qitāl</i>) in the way of Allah
14	Al-Mumtaḥanah: 1	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight in the way of Allah against the infidels
15	Al-Nisā': 95	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight in the way of Allah with wealth and souls
16	Muḥammad: 31	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight (<i>qitāl</i>) to uphold Islam
17	Al-Nūr: 53	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight for the sake of Islam
18	Al-Ḥajj: 78	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war on the polytheists
19	Al-Ḥujurāt: 15	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war on the polytheists
20	Al-Taḥrīm: 9	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To challenge falsehood by sword, intellect, and tongue.
21	Al-Ṣaff: 11	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war using legitimate means
22	Al-Mā'idah: 54	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war on the apostates
23	Al-Mā'idah: 35	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight against the enemies from the disbelievers
24	Al-Mā'idah: 53	<i>Madanīyah</i>	Earnestness
25	Al-Tawbah: 16	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To fight the polytheists
26	Al-Tawbah: 19	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war in the way of Allah
27	Al-Tawbah: 20	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war on the polytheists
28	Al-Tawbah: 24	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war in the way of Allah
29	Al-Tawbah: 41	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war on the unbelievers
30	Al-Tawbah: 44	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To strive in the way of Allah
31	Al-Tawbah: 73	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war with swords and arms
32	Al-Tawbah: 79	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To give all might and power
33	Al-Tawbah: 81	<i>Madanīyah</i>	To wage war (<i>ghazw</i>)

⁶⁰Chronologically, the identification of the verses in this research refers to tafsir *nuzuli* by Muhammad Izzat Darwazah, *al-Tafsīr al-Hadīth* (Kairo: Dār al-Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1962).

No	<i>Tartīb al-Nuzūl</i>	Status of the Surah	Meaning of <i>Jihād</i>
34	Al-Tawbah: 86	<i>Madaniyah</i>	To go to war with the Prophet
35	Al-Tawbah: 88	<i>Madaniyah</i>	To wage war on the polytheists

Table above shows that the meaning of *jihād* developed over time, subject to the context. The early form of *jihād* was limited to calling the people of Mecca to Islam and confronting them with the truth of the Qur'ān. However, the need to defend their interests and resort to action intensified when they faced increasing abuse at the hands of the unbelievers and polytheists.⁶¹ In response, the early Muslim community, with their resilience and determination, emphasized the role of patience and endurance of hardships in the evolution of *jihād*. This endurance and patience played a significant role in the gradual change of the meaning of *jihād*, as it responded to the need to uphold Islam and ensure the survival of the early community of believers.

During the Medinan period, the concept of *jihād* developed further in response to the changing circumstances and challenges. For the first time, the Muslim community was commanded to offer active resistance to the attacks of the polytheists and take up arms in defence. This active role of the Muslim community in shaping the meaning of *jihād* in the cause of Allah, but through different means, is a testament to their agency and influence. Therefore, Hamka and Shihab argued that our present understanding of *jihād* should reflect the present circumstances by determining the right means to serve the same purpose in order to uphold Islam. *Jihād* in the present day can be in the form of socialization and internalization of enjoining good (*amr bi-l-ma'rūf*) and forbidding wrong (*nahy 'an al-munkar*) in all aspects of human life through available infrastructures.

4.1. Applying the Concept of *Jihād* to the Contemporary Context

Utilizing Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach to examine the interpretations of *jihād* by Hamka and Shihab sheds light on the complex nature of *jihād*, encompassing both armed resistance against oppression and peaceful endeavors aimed at social and moral reforms. Each scholar, shaped by their distinct historical and socio-political contexts, interprets *jihād* as an ethical and constructive pursuit that benefits society.⁶² Saeed's framework ensures that *jihād* is not misinterpreted or exploited as a rationale for violence; rather, it is seen as a call for Muslims to strive in the path of Allah through various means, whether through intellectual engagement, social justice initiatives or personal moral development.

According to the interpretations of Hamka and Shihab, *jihād* aims to uphold Islam, although the methods may vary depending on the context. When armed resistance is deemed necessary in a specific location and moment, *jihād* manifests as a call to arms. Conversely, it may express itself through passive resistance and educational efforts in other situations.

In various regions, such as Indonesia, where a pluralistic and democratic society exists, Muslims are afforded religious freedom. The permissible and appropriate form of *jihād* should align with peaceful propagation through the Qur'ān. In his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Shihab contends that armed *jihād* is justifiable only when the Muslim community is confronted with direct threats to its existence, such as military aggression or genocide. In the absence of such existential threats, violent *jihād* is considered unjustifiable.⁶³ Waging war on the infidels is not justified by the mere fact that they

⁶¹Asma Afsaruddin, *Jihad: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

⁶²M. A. S. Haleem, "Qur'ānic 'Jihād': A Linguistic and Contextual Analysis," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies*, October (2010), <https://doi.org/10.3366/E1465359110000999>.

⁶³Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'ān*, 518.

practice polytheism or are hesitant to embrace Islam; somewhat, their open hostility towards Muslims and acts of physical aggression resulting in the deaths of Muslims and religious persecution.⁶⁴

Muslims today must be acutely aware of these distinctions. Shihab addressed the obligation of *jihād* in response to confirmed human rights violations in foreign countries. For instance, if Muslim populations are attacked or killed in a neighboring country, it becomes permissible to assist them and join their armed struggle. This obligation is regarded as a collective responsibility (*farḍ kifāyah*). Hamka, who lived during the colonial era, also interpreted *jihād* as a means of resisting foreign occupation. Furthermore, both commentators concurred that *jihād* does not exclusively involve armed conflict; it can also be pursued through intellectual efforts, such as writing.⁶⁵ Both scholars were actively involved in this form of *jihād* as they challenged unjust and oppressive practices in their writing. Hamka resisted the tyranny of the colonial regime and dictatorial government, while Shihab saw his role in propagating Islam (*da'wah*) through religious dialogue.⁶⁶

In today's context, *jihād* is more appropriately understood as a sincere and intense effort. Hamka posited that *jihād* is fundamentally about hard work performed with unwavering commitment for the sake of Islam and to achieve beneficial outcomes.⁶⁷ In this regard, Muslims from various backgrounds may engage in *jihād*. For a worker, it involves a passion for their professional responsibilities, while for a student, it requires dedication to their studies. The results of their efforts would not only benefit themselves but also contribute positively to the broader context of the nation.⁶⁸

The concept of *jihād* remains relevant in the contemporary Muslim society. The foremost challenges facing the community include poverty, education, and development. Muslims are encouraged to exert themselves in the way of Allah by investing their resources, talents, and strengths. A crucial aspect of *jihād* involves guiding fellow Muslims, purifying their hearts, and shaping their character by the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Prophet (*SAW*). This form of *jihād*, referred to by al-Kaylān as educative *jihād* (*al-jihād al-tarbawī*), aims to elevate the human spirit from mere submission to base instincts and carnal desires, moving towards self-actualization. In other words, the actualization is oriented to human transformation from the lowest of the lowest (*asfala al-sāfilin*) to the most well-built and capable (*ahsan al-taqwīm*).⁶⁹

Jihād is a foundational teaching in Islam that plays a crucial role in the dynamics of Muslim life. It reflects an individual's piety and emerges from various cross-cultural influences and social diversity. Shihab explains that a scientist engages in *jihād* by expanding their knowledge and benefiting the community, a leader by exercising their power justly, a businessman through honesty, a wealthy individual by demonstrating generosity, and a teacher by dedicating themselves to education. Therefore, all members of society can take a role in social *jihād*, each according to their position and potential. Allah revealed in the Qur'ān: "Say, each works according to his manner, but your Lord is most knowing of who is guided best."⁷⁰

The concept of *jihād* is significant within Islamic thought and may serve as a catalyst for social movements aimed at addressing various economic, social, and political challenges. Rooted in the mission of Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) to promote love, mercy, justice, and peace, *jihād* should be

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Vol. 5, 655.

⁶⁶Ibid., Vol. 9, 496.

⁶⁷Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Vol. 20, 148.

⁶⁸Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Vol. 10, 444.

⁶⁹Mājid Irsān al-Kaylānī, *al-Ummah al-Muslimah: Maḥmūmuhā, Muqawwimātuhā, Ikhrājūhā* (The Muslim Ummah: Its Concept, Its Constituents, and Its Establishment) (Beirut: al-'Ashr al-Hadith, 1992), 65.

⁷⁰al-Isrā' 17: 84.

directed towards the practical realization of this mission through peaceful and constructive dialogue. It is only in the face of violent persecution and threats to life that the concept of *jihād* may be broadened to encompass physical warfare. However, this does not imply that *jihād* becomes irrelevant during peace and tranquility.

The above explanation suggests that Hamka and Shihab adopted a contextual approach to understand the multifaceted concept of *jihād*. Both Indonesian commentators emphasized the importance of exploring its moral essence—as described using Fazlur Rahman's term—as well as the significance (*maghzā*) defined by Nasr Hamid and the legal objective (*maqṣad*) outlined by al-Ṭālibī.⁷¹ A literal interpretation of the verses related to *jihād* is insufficient for a comprehensive understanding of the term. This approach restores *jihād* to its original meaning of sincere effort. As previously noted in the linguistic analysis, the interpretation of *jihād* transitioned from notions of patience and perseverance during the Meccan period to that of armed defense in the Medinan period. Saeed categorized the verses related to *jihād* as possessing instructional value, emphasizing that their meanings are closely tied to specific contexts, leading to varying degrees of universality and particularity. He identified three groups of modern commentators interpreting the ethico-legal verses from different vantage points: textualists, semi-textualists, and contextualists. This classification depends on the degree to which each commentator adheres to linguistic criteria for interpreting the text while also taking into account the socio-historical context of the Qur'ān.⁷²

The first group of commentators adopts a literalist approach to the text, asserting that the meaning of the Qur'ān is definitive and final, requiring no further examination of the socio-historical context in which it was revealed. For instance, the reasons that allowed Muslim men to have four wives in the 7th century Arabia are deemed irrelevant; what is important is that, both then and now, Muslim men are permitted to have up to four wives. Consequently, many adherents of this textualist perspective can be found within the traditionalist or Salafī camp.⁷³ The second group of commentators, known as semi-textualists, aligns with the first group's emphasis on literal interpretation and disregard for socio-historical context. However, they also address the significance of ethico-legal verses in contemporary scholarship. Typically, these scholars support neo-revivalist movements, such as Ikhwan al-Muslimin in Egypt and Jamaat-e Islami in the subcontinent.⁷⁴

As the name contextualists suggests, the last group of commentators, the interpretation of Qur'ānic verses, considers their socio-historical context. Scholars examine the text through the lens of its specific political, social, historical, cultural, and economic circumstances, considering the various aspects of its application. This approach grants modern Muslim scholars greater flexibility in distinguishing between religious injunctions' fixed and adaptable elements. Saeed regards Fazlur Rahman as a quintessential contextualist and neo-modernist thinker, with scholars who share similar perspectives often categorized as progressives or liberals.⁷⁵

The earlier analysis of the two commentaries on the *jihād* verses indicates that Hamka and Shihab are representatives of contextualist scholarship, embodying modern Indonesian thought. They contended that the *jihād* verses can only be accurately interpreted by considering their time's religious, social, political, and economic climate. These crucial factors must be considered when applying the concept of *jihād* in a contemporary context, both in Indonesia and beyond. In contrast, a literal interpretation would undermine their intended meaning and misrepresent their original message.

⁷¹Muḥammad al-Ṭālibī, *ʿIyāl Allāh* (The Dependents of Allah) (Tunis: Saras li al-Nashr, 1992).

⁷²Ibid., 3.

⁷³Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān*, 3.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, applying Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach to Hamka's and Shihab's interpretations of *jihad* helps to reveal the multifaceted nature of *jihad*, from armed resistance in the face of oppression to peaceful efforts for social and moral reforms. Both scholars, through their respective historical and socio-political contexts, interpret *jihad* as an ethical and constructive endeavor that serves the greater good of society, engaging us in our moral responsibilities. Saeed's approach ensures that *jihad* is not misunderstood or misused as a justification for violence but rather as a call for Muslims to strive in the way of Allah in whatever capacity they can, whether through intellectual efforts, social justice, or personal moral reforms. Based on the analysis, this research concluded that the *jihad* verses from the Medinan period cannot be readily implemented in peaceful regions, such as Indonesia. However, the *jihad* verses from the Meccan period have universal values that apply to the current context and should be implemented.

5.1. Limitations

This study is limited in scope as it primarily examines the interpretations of *jihad* by two scholars, Hamka and Shihab, whose perspectives are influenced by their unique historical and socio-political contexts. While their viewpoints provide valuable insights, they do not represent the full spectrum of interpretations within the broader Muslim intellectual tradition. The diversity of thought on *jihad* across various scholars and regions is not fully addressed, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the research mainly focused on textual analysis and did not explore how these interpretations are applied in various Muslim communities, which may differ significantly across cultural and geopolitical contexts.

Authors' Contribution

Abu Bakar: conceptualization; investigation; formal analysis; writing – original draft. **Fikri Mahzumi:** methodology; resources; writing – review & editing. **Mukhammad Zamzami:** supervision; writing – review & editing.

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