

**REINTERPRETATION OF POLYGAMY VERSES  
IN HERMENEUTIC PERSPECTIVE OF HANS GEORGE GADAMER**

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DOI 10.32505/at-tibyan.v8i1.5064		
Submitted: 16-11-2022	Revised: 23-06-2023	Accepted: 23-06-2023

**Abstract**

Polygamy is an issue discussed and constantly studied, especially by understanding the Surah An-Nisa verse 3, where the textual meaning of polygamy opens up a wide opportunity for acts of violence to be experienced by wives, both psychologically and non-psychological. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the contextual meaning of polygamy by using Hans George Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, which is rich in contextual studies. The author employed a library research method with descriptions and interpretations to produce a consistent and comprehensive understanding. Through Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, the authors found that women in polygamous marriages do not mean that they are weak and deserve harsh treatment. Instead, they need to be protected and raised their dignity so that polygamy only applies to widows and orphans who cannot afford it.

**Keywords:** *Contextual; Hans George Gadamer; Hermeneutics; Polygamy*

## Abstrak

Poligami merupakan sebuah isu yang tiada hentinya dibahas dan dikaji, terlebih dengan memahami surat an-Nisa ayat 3 dimana pemaknaan ayat poligami secara tekstualitas membuka ruang lebar terjadinya beberapa kekerasan yang dialami oleh istri, baik itu kekerasan dalam bentuk psikologis maupun non psikologis. Untuk itu penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji bagaimana makna kontekstual poligami dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutika Hans George Gadamer yang kaya akan kajian kontekstual. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan dengan penjelasan deskripsi dan interpretasi sehingga menghasilkan pemahaman yang konsisten dan komprehensif. Melalui pendekatan hermeneutika Gadamer menghasilkan bahwa perempuan dalam ikatan pernikahan poligami tidak berarti dirinya lemah dan pantas mendapatkan perlakuan kasar, akan tetapi justru melindunginya dan martabatnya terangkat, sehingga poligami hanya berlaku kepada para janda dan yatim yang tidak mampu.

**Kata Kunci:** *Hans George Gadamer; Hermeneutika; Kontekstual; Poligami*

## Introduction

Polygamy is a term understood as part of the Sunnah of the Prophet. Some groups consider polygamy a matter of belief close to the Sunnah classification and should be obeyed. Others see polygamy as a Sunnah that is feared to disappear, even exaggerating that polygamy is a test of a woman's faith and the faith's strength is measured by the level of recognition of her husband's next wife.<sup>1</sup>

As understood by the community and Salaf, today's polygamy occurs due to several factors. One of the factors is the polygamy textual understanding contained in Surah an-Nisa verse 3. This understanding provides flexibility that leads to a harmful polygamy practice. There are many violence in polygamy, which are directly or indirectly felt by the first wife and other wives, such as abandonment without care and living support. Furthermore, there is also physical violence committed intentionally by adult against a woman<sup>2</sup>, psychological pressure, or divorce.<sup>3</sup>

Seeing this phenomenon, the authors intended to re-understand the meaning of polygamy contextual understanding to disclose to some people who only understand the sound of the text without paying attention to the elements surrounding it, whether the condition when the verse was revealed or the current conditions.<sup>4</sup> To carry out a contextual understanding (by taking into account the situation and conditions of

<sup>1</sup> Nur Ichwan, Moch. dan Syamsul Hadi, *Dekonstruksi Gender: Kritik Wacana Perempuan Dalam Islam, Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd*, h. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Badara and Jamiludin, "Representation of Indonesian Women Workers: A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Newspapers of Nationalist-Secular and Islamic Ideological Perspectives."

<sup>3</sup> Hikmah, "Fakta Poligami Sebagai Bentuk Kekerasan Pada Perempuan." 15.

<sup>4</sup> Nawas, "Teknik Interpretasi Tekstualitas Dan Kontekstualitas," h. 76.

modern society) of the verse, a complete, complex, and relevant understanding is needed along with the times. One method that is rich with contextual studies is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is a theory for understanding a text. Therefore, the authors reviewed the polygamous marriage system contained in the Qur'an Surah An-Nisā' verse 3 by analyzing the hermeneutic theory promoted by Hans George Gadamer. Polygamy understanding of Gadamer's hermeneutic approach will produce another meaning because the approach cannot be separated from the historical aspect with various kinds of interpretations, both classical and contemporary.

Several studies discuss related themes, including research written by Nur Khosiah, Reza Hilmy Luayyin, and David Prabowo with the title "Muhammad Abdurrahman and Muhammad Syahrur." They underlined that Abdurrahman allows polygamy in an emergency, which is a condition. In contrast, Syahrur allows polygamy on the condition that the qualifications of the second to the fourth wife are widows who have children.<sup>5</sup> Another article with the theme "Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Its Significance to the Interpretation of the Qur'an" was written by Muh. Hanif. In his research, Gadamer's hermeneutics is widely applied to interpret the Qur'an in a *bi al-ra'y* manner because interpretation is a productive result that involves the subjectivity of commentators and is influenced by historical reality and presumptions held by a commentator.<sup>6</sup> Sofyan AP Kau's research on "Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Its Relevance with Tafsir" states that there is no difference between hermeneutics and interpretation; both are methods for understanding a text to find the relevant meaning. The factor that distinguishes the two is the theological basis.<sup>7</sup> In this study, the authors examined certain verses to get meaning by using Gadamer's hermeneutics.

This study uses the library method with Gadamer's hermeneutical analysis, which is considered more capable of answering contemporary problems to help the authors to understand a text. The authors analyzed the data using content analysis techniques to obtain an accurate description based on the data obtained through the literature study. The results of this study stated that polygamy must be with women who are weak and have children, not with girls who are still capable of carrying out their activities. The results show that the purpose of polygamy is to help and benefit.

### **Hermeneutics by Hans-George Gadamer**

Hans-George Gadamer was born on February 11, 1900, in Germany and passed away in Heidelberg, Germany, on March 13, 2002.<sup>8</sup> Gadamer began college studies in 1918 at the University of Breslau and later transferred to the University of Marburg. He studied literature, cultural history, psychology, and philosophy. At these two

<sup>5</sup> Khosiah, Luayyin, and Prabowo, "Poligami Perspektif Muhammad Abdurrahman Dan Muhammad Syahrur."

<sup>6</sup> Hanif, "Hermeneutika Hans-George Gadamer Dan Signifikansnya Terhadap Al-Qur'an," h. 69.

<sup>7</sup> A.P. Kau, "Hermeneutika Gadamer Dan Relevansinya Dengan Tafsir."

<sup>8</sup> Gusmao, *Hans-George Gadamer: Penggagas Filsafat Hermeneutika Modern Yang Mengagungkan Tradisi*, h. 2.

universities, he first became acquainted with philosophy through figures such as Richard Hönigswald and Nicolai Hartmann. Gadamer was active with several students, such as Leo Strauss, Karl Löwith, Hannah Arendt, and Heidegger. Because of her familiarity with Heidegger to the point that she followed Heidegger to Marburg, Heidegger's influence gave thought to Gadamer's distinctiveness. It distanced him from the earlier neo-Kantian influences of Natorp and Hartmann. In 1922 Gadamer got his doctorate in philosophy with the dissertation title "*Das Wesen der Lust Nach den Platonischen Dialogen*" (*The Essence of Pleasure according to Plato's Dialogues*).<sup>9</sup>

Gadamer was a very prominent contemporary writer in the field of hermeneutics. Through his monumental work *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzuge einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Truth and Method: A Philosophical Hermeneutics in outline), he has established himself as a leading philosopher in philosophical hermeneutics. After going through the revision stages of the book, his book was translated into English with the title *Truth and Method*. This work, at the same time, served as an example of reproductive interpretation and productive interpretation models. Through this great work, Gadamer became one of the most famous historical hermeneutic thinkers of his time. New works have emerged that specifically discuss his book from various perspectives.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the above works, many of Gadamer's works have also been translated into English, including "*Reason in the Age of Science*," Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981, "*Hegel's Dialectic Five Hermeneutical Studies Translated and with an Introduction*" by P. Christopher Smith, New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1976. Thanks to these works, he was awarded a professorship.<sup>11</sup> in philosophy at Heidelberg in 1960.<sup>12</sup>

That year, the name Gadamer and hermeneutics became well-known among intellectuals. He proposed the title of his book "*Philosophical Hermeneutics*"; however, the term in the title was deemed inappropriate, so it was transferred to another.<sup>13</sup> Although Gadamer did not consider hermeneutics as a method, rather, it is not only a question of the methodology of interpretation but also an ontological interpretation, namely that understanding itself is the way of being, which is the way humans exist. For him, it is more of an effort to understand and interpret a text, both religious and other texts such as art and history.<sup>14</sup> He did not consider hermeneutics a method

<sup>9</sup> Hanif, "Hermeneutika Hans-George Gadamer Dan Signifikansnya Terhadap Al-Qur'an," h. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato, P. Christopher Smith, London: Yale University Press, 1980 and many others. A. A.P. Kau, "Hermeneutika Gadamer Dan Relevansnya Dengan Tafsir."

<sup>11</sup> Kushidayati, "Hermeneutika Gadamer Dalam Kajian Hukum," h. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Translation Revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall.

<sup>13</sup> Gadamer.

<sup>14</sup> Sumaryono, *Hermeneutika Sebuah Metode Filsafat*. 23, lihat juga Andrews, A. *Latin Dictionary, Founded on Andrews's edition of Frend's Latin Dictionary*. 849.

because the correct understanding leads to an ontological level, not a methodological one. Truth can be reached not through methods but dialectics by asking many questions. Thus, language becomes a very important medium for dialogues.<sup>15</sup>

There are four stages in understanding Gadamer's hermeneutics, first; awareness of being influenced by history (Wirkungsgeschichte), that is, when a text wants to be interpreted, one must be aware that he is affected by the hermeneutic situations and conditions that surround him, either in the form of culture or traditions or life experiences. Second; Pre-understanding (Vorverständnis/Pre-understanding) is a hermeneutic situation that affects the interpreter and will bring up a concept called pre-understanding. Third; fusion of horizon (Fusion of Horizon/Horizontverschmelzung), namely the interpreter must be aware that there are two horizons being pursued, namely the text horizon or knowledge horizon and the reader's horizon or understanding horizon, this must exist when understanding and interpreting texts. And fourth; application (Anwendung/Application), namely the interpreter must be able to apply the message of the text of the scriptures when the text is interpreted, so that the interpreter must be able to find meaningful sense as a text message as well as the interpreter must be able to obtain the objective meaning.<sup>16</sup>

Gadamer underlined that the most appropriate approach to finding facts from a text is not through a method as proposed by Schleiermacher.<sup>17</sup> Gadamer's effort is to free hermeneutics from the aesthetic and methodological barriers that imprisoned Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Therefore, at this point, hermeneutics is no longer seen as a technique or art but as an overall human capacity for understanding texts. Thus, Gadamer's hermeneutics is called a hermeneutics of a philosophical nature.<sup>18</sup> For Gadamer, to understand what is said by authors is to agree with the object, not obtained through seeking the author's psychological side and re-understanding his experiences as romantic hermeneutics does. This perspective is one of the advantages of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics because we will not be able to dig into the mental side of God.<sup>19</sup>

The author and historical context of a text are considered in the interpretive process, along with the interpreter's prejudices, such as tradition, practical importance, language, and culture. In the process of understanding a text, the interpreter's mind also places itself into re-generating the text's meaning. Thus, the process of understanding is a process of melting horizons. The act of understanding is a will that can give birth to a process of fusion between at least two horizons.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Murtaufiq, "Hermeneutika Dalam Tradisi Keilmuan Islam: Sebuah Tinjauan Kritis."

<sup>16</sup> Huda, Hamid, and Misbah, "Konsep Wasathiyah M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah (Analisis Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer)," 206–8.

<sup>17</sup> Rahmatullah, "Menakar Hermeneutika Fusion of Horizon H.G Gadamer Dalam Pengembangan Tafsir Maqasid Al-Qur'an," h. 153–154.

<sup>18</sup> Hardiman, *Seni Memahami Hermeneutik Dari Schleiermacher Sampai Derrida*, h. 160.

<sup>19</sup> Gadamer, *Kebenaran Dan Metode*, h. 465.

<sup>20</sup> Murtaufiq, "Hermeneutika Dalam Tradisi Keilmuan Islam: Sebuah Tinjauan Kritis."

The theory of understanding the text developed by Gadamer is known as the historical effect. It is stated that four stages must be done when someone wants to understand a text. The first is an awareness of being influenced by history. Certain hermeneutical situations affect the interpreter's hermeneutical understanding, including traditions, culture, and life experiences. An interpreter must overcome his subjectivity when he interprets a text. The second is being influenced by certain hermeneutic situations that form a pre-understanding (prejudice) in an interpreter of the interpreted text. Pre-comprehension is the interpreter's initial position or prior knowledge to help understand the text. Pre-understanding must be open, critiqued, and rehabilitated. The third is the merging or assimilation of horizons. In the process of interpretation, one must be aware that there are two horizons of text knowledge: the horizon of understanding and the horizon of the reader. These two horizons are always present in the process of understanding and interpretation. The two horizons are communicated so that the tension between the two can be resolved. An interpreter must pay attention to the historical horizon (read: *asbābun nuzūl*)<sup>21</sup>, where the text appears. The fourth is the application. According to Gadamer, when someone reads a scripture, apart from the process of understanding and interpreting, there is one more thing that is required, which he calls the term application (*Anwendung*) of messages or teachings at the time when the biblical text was interpreted. The objective meaning of the text is understood. An interpreter must find meaningful sense as a message from the text beside its objective meaning.<sup>22</sup>

Pre-comprehension also plays a role in the understanding process so that an interpreter can carry out discussions with the text he is solving. Because without prejudice, one cannot understand the text perfectly. However, according to Gadamer, prejudice also does not preclude the possibility of being changed, analyzed, and criticized by the interpreter himself. This preconceived analysis can be considered as the perfection of pre-understanding. These steps are done to avoid misunderstanding the importance of the meaning of the text.<sup>23</sup> Then, the next step taken by Gadamer was to focus on two horizons, namely the text horizon and the interpreter horizon. The main job of the interpreter is to collaborate these two horizons so that all questions, imbalances, and tensions between the two can be handled and resolved. There are different hermeneutical horizons between the text and the interpreter. Therefore, it is possible if the horizon of the text and the interpreter are different. When the

<sup>21</sup> “O sons of my sisters, the orphan girl in this verse is under the responsibility of her guardian, where she is allied with her guardian in her property, and the guardian is attracted because of her wealth and beauty. Her guardian wants to marry her and does not act fairly in providing her with a living as if (she was married) and provided for by someone else. So they (the guardians of the orphans) are forbidden to marry them -- unless they are fair in providing for them and even give higher than their usual dowry -- and instead, they are ordered to marry women whom they accept and enjoy other than them. See Bakhtiar, “Poligami : Penafsiran Surat an Nisa’ Ayat 3.”

<sup>22</sup> Irsyadunnas, “Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Gender Ala Amina Wadud Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer.”

<sup>23</sup> Taufiqotuzzahro, “Pembacaan Hermeneutika Hadis Tentang Perintah Istri Bersujud Kepada Suami: Perspektif Hans George Gadamer,” h. 53.; Gadamer, *Kebenaran Dan Metode*.

interpreter is given a text from the past, the way the interpreter must take it is how he can trace the historical setting of the text.<sup>24</sup>

After exploring and finding objective meaning, the two horizons can be fused on one side. This state of fusion is what Gamader calls the search for new meanings in the interpretation system.<sup>25</sup> Gadamer explained that the meaning that must be applied in the interpreter period is not the objective meaning of the text but a meaning that is more than just the objective meaning obtained through fusion. The message contained in the objective meaning must be realized in the interpreter's life. The next task of the interpreter is to apply this objective meaning to the present. Furthermore, the political, economic, socio-cultural, and other conditions between the time the text appeared and the interpreter's lifetime were very different. Thus, the process of interpreting a text is expected to reveal the objective meaning of the text and then apply it based on the conditions of the community around the interpreter.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Interpretation of Polygamy Verses Based on Gadamer's Hermeneutics**

Polygamy has several types. Polygyny is where a man marries several wives, and polyandry is where a woman marries several men. Furthermore, group marriage is the marriage of several men with several women who can have intercourse with each other.<sup>27</sup> There is also the term exogamy which means marriage to someone outside the group. This term refers to a man seeking a wife outside his clan. There is also Endogamy, namely marrying members of other clans, ethnicities, or tribes. This term is used in the practice of marriage which is limited to members of a group or ethnic group according to customary determination.<sup>28</sup> In Islam, polygamy or *ta'adad al-zawjat* is more often defined as the marriage of a man with several women whose boundaries are still disputed. Still, the majority of Ulama agree on the limit of four women. This perception is based on the Qur'an Surah an-Nisa verse 3:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَا تُفْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَمَّى فَإِنْ كِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَى وَثُلَّتْ وَرِبْعَةٌ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُمْ فَذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَلَا تَعْلُوُا

Translation: "If you fear you might fail to give orphan women their 'due' rights 'if you were to marry them', then marry other women of your choice—two, three, or four. But if you are afraid you will fail to maintain justice, then

<sup>24</sup> Ihsannudin, "Hak Kebebasan Beragama (Analisis Hadis Perang Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer)," h. 405.; Gadamer, *Kebenaran Dan Metode*.

<sup>25</sup> Mulyawan, "Pembacaan Makna Maaf Dalam Hadis Menghalalkan Tinjauan Hermeneutika Gadamer," h. 44.

<sup>26</sup> Gadamer, *Kebenaran Dan Metode*; Ihsannudin, "Hak Kebebasan Beragama (Analisis Hadis Perang Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer)," 406.

<sup>27</sup> Hunt, *Sosiologi. Terj. Aminuddin Ram Dan Tita Sobari*.

<sup>28</sup> Aini and Abdurrahman, "RASIONALITAS PERINTAH AYAT POLIGAMI: Kajian Pemikiran Tafsir Muhammad Abdurrahman."

‘content yourselves with’ one or those ‘bondwomen’ in your possession. This way, you are less likely to commit injustice.” (Surat an-Nisā’ [4]: 3)

In that verse, most classical commentators agree with this opinion, as al-Qurtubi and al-Tabari interpret Surah an-Nisa verse 3 as the permissibility of polygamy.<sup>29</sup> Modern commentators, such as Muhammad Abdurrahman<sup>30</sup> and Ibn' Ashur,<sup>31</sup> support the reasons for the permissibility of polygamy. They believe polygamy can help increase the number of Muslims and help women get a partner because the number of women is more than men. The permissibility of polygamy is also one of the reasons for avoiding adultery<sup>32</sup> and minimizing divorce. However, there are still differences of opinion about the limit on the number of wives that can be polygamous.<sup>33</sup>

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī first voiced another opinion that contradicts the practice of polygamy.<sup>34</sup> Al-Zamakhshari then followed the criticism of polygamy to modern-contemporary scholars, including Wahbah Zuhaili.<sup>35</sup> and M. Quraish Shihab.<sup>36</sup> The opposition does not mean they are against the concept as a whole. Still, their opinion is more inclined to try to burden the permissibility of polygamy with the conditions that must be met.<sup>37</sup> Another figure who also burdens polygamy is Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. He argues in the verse that the condition for polygamy can only be done with widows with children.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, 77

<sup>30</sup> Abdurrahman, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Hakim*, 340., Lihat Sam'un, ““Poligami Dalam Perspektif Muhammad 'Abduh.””

<sup>31</sup> 'Asyur, *Al-Tahrir Wa al-Tanwir*. 223-224

<sup>32</sup> Mujahid, *Tafsir Mujahid*. 266

<sup>33</sup> Moqsith, ““Tafsir Atas Poligami Dalam Al-Qur'an.””

<sup>34</sup> Fakhr al-Din al-Razi requires fair terms. Fair means fair to orphans; if you are afraid, you cannot do justice to orphans. This shows that fairness is a matter that is required in the care of orphans. In addition, al-Razi added that the justice mentioned above is fair in speech, deed, and all matters related to it so that the justice addressed by the verse covers all aspects and fairness requirements, while the answer to that sentence is *finkihu ma tabalakum min al-nisa'*. Al-Razi intends to explain that the hadith narrated by 'Urwah about the words of the Prophet to 'Aisha regarding the possibility that if a man is attracted to an orphaned *shaliyah* woman and intends to marry her, but he is afraid of being unfair, that person should look for a woman who is not orphans to marry. See.. Al-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*. 485.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Zuhaili explained that this verse has a theme limit regarding marrying a woman who is not an orphan who is someone's responsibility or being fair to wives. If you cannot do justice, it is better to have only one wife. He also explains the meaning of "al-Khauf" in this verse is to understand and feel that he will do wrong by marrying an orphan by not giving him a dowry or eating his wealth, so do not marry the orphan and marry another woman, two, three or four, but do not exceed that number. That is, marrying numbers two, three, and four is something that may not be obligatory. See. Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir Fi al-'Aqidah Wa al-Shari'ah Wa al-Manhaj*. 234-235.

<sup>36</sup> Quraish Shihab said that the Qur'an does not command polygamy at all. Polygamy is only allowed under certain conditions and with conditions that must be met. Among them is the willingness between the two partners, not only from one party. However, according to him, what often happens now is polygamy with the excuse of fulfilling sexual needs so as not to fall into adultery. However, polygamy's purpose is to benefit religion and society. See. Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. 326., Lihat juga Shihab, *Islam Yang Disalahpahami*. 169.

<sup>37</sup> Tsurayya, ““Poligami Dalam Perspektif Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī Dan Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir.””

The authors borrow Gadamer's hermeneutics in the interpretation cycle that readers and texts must continue to carry out discourse. Between the two, there should be no intimidation, either by the interpreter horizon to the text horizon or vice versa. This cycle will birth other meanings that are more meaningful and useful for Muslims. Another meaning alluded to in Gadamer's hermeneutic term is meaningful sense. The meaning captured through this interpretation cycle can be expected to become more actual, complete, and comprehensive. This significance will later be applied in wider life.<sup>38</sup> The text horizon includes all the dimensions in the text area. Gadamer's main focus is the history of the text itself, why it was created, and the social conditions surrounding it.

Surah An-Nisā' [4]: 3 was revealed in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Hijriyah after the Uhud war, which claimed many victims. It is not surprising that this letter contains many problems regarding the wives and orphans left behind by their husbands and fathers who died in the battle. In this verse, there is also the word “*fankihū*” <sup>i</sup> which is an appeal/command, but the call is a way out of the problem at that time and is not an endless or permanent call.<sup>39</sup> In this case, it is also important to pay attention to the situation of women at that time. Women were bought and sold. At that time, women were under the complete control of their partners. They have no inheritance rights. Women were the biological needs and luxury of men. Before marriage, a woman was in the control of her father, and after marriage, the control shifted to the husband. This power is like the ability to persecute, sell, and even expel women. This kind of polygamy was very basic and continued at that time.<sup>40</sup> Women involved in pre-Islamic polygamous marriages were placed in a marginalized or discriminatory position.

However, women's history slowly began to change at the time of the Prophet. Women were not only seen as a wife, companion, and complement to men's lives. Women were also seen as human beings with the same rights and obligations as men. The Prophet started a new tradition in viewing and positioning women. Allah predestined the Prophet to be blessed with a daughter. The Prophet proudly and without shame carried her in front of the crowd. Since the beginning, the Prophet had instilled the principle of equality between men and women. There was no difference between men and women in obedience before Allah. This discourse was completely new and sounded very strange in the ears of the Arabs at that time, who demeaned the position of women. Gradually, there was assimilation between Allah's revelation and the Arab culture at that time. Among the changes were the rules regarding the restriction of polygamy. This goal was none other than to elevate the position of

<sup>38</sup> Irsyadunnas, “Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Gender Ala Amina Wadud Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer,” h. 140.

<sup>39</sup> Faisol, “Poligami Dalam Berbagai Perspektif,” h. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Mu’awwanah, “Hermeneutika Hans-George Gadamer Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Hadits (Keterlibatan Malaikat Dalam Hubungan Seksual),” h. 291-292.

women to a higher degree.<sup>41</sup> a recent report of Pew Research Center, stating that polygamy—both polygyny and polyandry— is rare throughout most of the modern world nowadays. Even though in some Asian and Middle Eastern countries, polygamy, especially polygyny, is permitted but not practiced broadly.<sup>42</sup>

The polygamy practiced by the Prophet<sup>43</sup> two years after Khadijah passed. He married Sauda bint Zam'ah who was elderly at the time. The Prophet then married Aisha, and after that, the Prophet successively married Hafsa bint Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Umm Salamah, Umm Habibah, Zainab bint Jahsh, Zainab bint Khuzaimah, Juwairiyah bint Harith, Shafiyyah bint Huyay, Rayhanah bint Zaid, and the last Maimunah bint Harith which occurred in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of hijriyah. If traced one by one, the motives of the Prophet's marriage were *da'wah* or Islamic spreading, not biological needs.<sup>44</sup> Through social examination, the moral impetus behind the Prophet's polygamy was security guarantees for Muslim women from the dangers of the Quraysh at that time and the release of slave status for women. The Prophet practiced polygamy in extraordinary circumstances, namely sacrifices to protect Muslim women from attacks and the wrath of infidels.<sup>45</sup>

Looking at the interpreter's horizon, which describes the current situation, women's positions are frequently cornered and viewed as something that is not very useful to appear in public. The impact of the male-centric culture made women generally ignored and often cornered with negative proclamations. As a result, what the general public sees in the public sphere is a relationship that is not commensurate with the dominance of men in superior positions.<sup>46</sup> However, nowadays, women are changing rapidly. Not only do women need to be good partners and great mothers, but women have found their opportunities openly. The data innovation that is currently developing seems to be inseparable from the presence of women. Many positions in that men are involved are currently being transferred and engaged by women. It happens not only in developed countries but also in non-industrialized and newly industrialized countries.<sup>47</sup> In many countries, successful women occupy positions of office. Not only that but family matters are also carried out together between couples. Now, women can play a role like men in caring for the family. Both of them can now support their livelihood. Even though the women are not working, they will remain

<sup>41</sup> Adinugraha, Maulana, and Sartika, "Kewenangan Dan Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Gender: Suatu Analisis Tinjauan Historis," h. 49.

<sup>42</sup> Qurtuby, "BETWEEN POLYGYNY AND MONOGAMY Marriage in Saudi Arabia and Beyond," 36.

<sup>43</sup> See. Al-'Aziz, *Ummahat Al-Mukminin Zawjat Rasul Allah*. 2., Lihat juga Al-Wahab, *Ta'adud al-Zawjat Bayn al-Nazriyah Wa al-Tatbiq*. 110., Al-Wahab, *Ta'addud Nisa' al-Anbiya'*. 51-53.

<sup>44</sup> Yanto, Nur Hotimah, "Status Poligami Dalam Reinterpretasi," h. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Syahriza, "Analisis Teks Hadits Tentang Poligami Dan Implikasinya," h. 146.

<sup>46</sup> Maulina, "Pembungkaman Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Teks Pemberitaan Syariat Islam," h. 121-122.

<sup>47</sup> Lubis, "Gerakan Feminisme Dalam Era Postmodernisme Abad 21," h. 73.

optimistic and ready to care for their families and children without being paid a penny.<sup>48</sup>

After we know how the two horizons describe each of their different horizons, we must move towards the fusion of the two horizons to reveal the meaningful sense. The social conditions that cover the text are in line with the reasons why the text was revealed. The language used following the practice at that time. The text was revealed as an answer to solve the problems experienced by men at that time. Polygamy was recommended to avoid separation or damage in family relationships, upholding women's status because women's function at that time was less dominant than men, who were fully responsible for their families.

The guideline for marriage in Islam is *sakinah mawaddah warrahmah*, so if someone cannot realize all three of them from every polygamous marriage, then it is better to marry only one person. However, it is also necessary to understand that all women are not the same, some could get a higher education, and some can explore themselves further so that with their talents, they can get a good life. However, there are also the opposite due to gender equality since, in general, women and men are not equal. Gender as a concept is to identify differences between men and women in terms of socio-cultural influences.<sup>49</sup> Women and men are one soul with two different bodies, with different organs in each body. Therefore, women cannot lift heavier loads than men. Women and men are not two different beings but also not completely equal. Women and men are not enemies but partners for life forever because both are brought into the world not to rule or persecute. Rather, they need and fulfill each other to create a friendly family, the ability to be careful in decision making, and mature in their views.<sup>50</sup>

There is currently very little room for polygamy, considering that today's women are in a period of emancipation. Therefore, polygamy is only the last and most difficult door to open among the many doors that must be passed to help uphold the status of women. Women in polygamous marriages do not show that they are weak. In fact, by doing so, women become in a better position. Therefore, the conditions in a polygamous marriage are not easy for men to fulfill. Even though polygamy became an emergency rule, polygamy was still given strict requirements at that time. Therefore, the regulation and implementation of polygamy among the people should refer to the ideal of the Qur'an.<sup>51</sup>

However, in reality, the practice of polygamy is just the opposite. Polygamy is still mostly done to young women, and some are underage. This action is not justified based on the interpretation of Hans George Gadamer's hermeneutics.

<sup>48</sup> Mu'awwanah, "Hermeneutika Hans-George Gadamer Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Hadits (Keterlibatan Malaikat Dalam Hubungan Seksual)."

<sup>49</sup> Muttaqin, "WOMEN'S IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL ISLAM AGE: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias," 356.

<sup>50</sup> Arif, "Peran Ganda Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Feminisme Muslim Indonesia," h. 121-122.

<sup>51</sup> Bunyamin, "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Poligami Dalam al-Qur'an."

## Conclusion

Polygamy interpretation using Gadamer's interpretation model will mean that women's position in polygamous marriages is noble. However, women who are allowed to be polygamous are women who are weak and have children with the aim of elevating their status. It is not allowed for polygamous marriages with capable young women. This is a contextual interpretation that gives birth to meanings that are relevant to the times so that, in practice, polygamy no longer causes great harm to women.

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