



## Epistemology of Feminist Theory: The Perspective of Amina Wadud

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze how Amina Wadud formulates a more equitable and inclusive paradigm of religious interpretation through an ethical and contextual approach and an intellectual movement that transforms religious interpretation toward a more equitable and just understanding. The method used is qualitative with a library research approach, relying on Wadud's main works, such as the Qur'an and Woman, as the primary source and supported by other academic literature. The study results show that Wadud's feminist epistemology encourages understanding the Qur'an as a dynamic text that transcends gender boundaries and promotes social transformation. The study's conclusion reveals that Wadud's approach critiques traditional interpretations and provides a new, more inclusive and fairer framework. The implications of this research highlight the importance of a feminist perspective in Islamic education curricula to introduce more progressive interpretations, which can lead to a more just and equitable understanding of religion for all individuals, regardless of gender.

### Kata Kunci

Pendidikan Gender;  
Islam, al-Qur'an;  
Hadis;  
Sejarah Pendidikan  
Perempuan

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Amina Wadud merumuskan paradigma penafsiran agama yang lebih adil dan inklusif melalui pendekatan etis dan kontekstual, serta sebagai gerakan intelektual yang mentransformasi penafsiran agama menuju pemahaman yang lebih setara dan adil. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan penelitian perpustakaan, yang mengandalkan karya utama Wadud, seperti *Qur'an and Woman*, sebagai sumber utama, dan didukung oleh literatur akademik lainnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi feminis Wadud mengajak pemahaman Al-Qur'an sebagai teks dinamis yang melampaui batas gender dan mendorong transformasi sosial. Kesimpulan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa pendekatan Wadud tidak hanya mengkritik tafsir tradisional, tetapi juga menyediakan kerangka kerja baru yang lebih inklusif dan adil. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan pentingnya perspektif feminis dalam kurikulum pendidikan Islam untuk memperkenalkan tafsir yang lebih progresif, yang dapat menghasilkan pemahaman agama yang lebih adil dan setara bagi semua individu, tanpa memandang gender.

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## INTRODUCTION

Feminist movements emerged as a continuation of the emancipation movement, with the distinction between the two movements lying in their struggles. Emancipation seeks to promote equal rights, referring to the process of general limitations or discrimination (Utomo & Kusuma, 2025), while feminism advocates explicitly for gender equality, emphasizing the systematic transformation of social, cultural, and political structures (Djilzaran Nurul Suhada, 2021). Feminism has developed into a central issue in contemporary Islamic thought. This movement has crossed geographical boundaries and is becoming a global issue that resonates in Indonesia and other parts of the world. Inequality is evident in various dimensions of life, from the economic sphere to the socio-political dynamics and the internal structure of households. The widespread reach of this movement reflects the complexity of gender injustice issues that remain deeply rooted in society. For instance, in Indonesia, R.A. Kartini fought for women's right to receive education equal to men's, as she saw Javanese women confined within a feudal system (Karlina & Hudaidah, 2020).

Feminism in Islam is not a singular movement that applies to all Muslim women; instead, it develops contextually according to social and historical conditions. The main issue raised is patriarchy, which is considered the root of discrimination against women in religious interpretations (Umniyyah et al., 2024). In contemporary Islamic thought, new approaches have emerged that challenge traditional patriarchal interpretations, one of which is through epistemology critical studies on how gender knowledge is constructed and inherited within Islamic tradition. The contemporary Islamic intellectual movement shows significant differences from previous thoughts in methods and conceptual approaches (Kamali, 2024). These new-generation thinkers are committed to developing a more comprehensive, consistent, and universal methodology for interpreting the Qur'an. They do not merely read sacred texts literally but consider the cultural and historical contexts in which these texts were revealed while also considering the context of the modern society that continues to evolve.

Amina Wadud, as a feminist Muslim scholar, presents a new perspective on understanding the Qur'an through a hermeneutic approach with a gender perspective (Miski et al., 2024). This is a response to the centuries-old dominance of patriarchal interpretations, where the voices and experiences of women have often been neglected in the process of interpreting religious texts. Wadud raises important epistemological questions about how religious knowledge is constructed, who holds the authority to interpret it, and how socio-historical contexts influence the understanding of the text. Wadud's epistemological approach not only questions conventional tafsir methodology but also offers a new framework for more inclusive and gender-just understanding. She emphasizes the importance of considering women's experiences and socio-cultural contexts in the interpretation process while challenging deeply ingrained gender assumptions in Islamic interpretive traditions. Wadud's efforts are significant in the context of the gender equality struggle in the Muslim world, where religious text interpretations are often used to uphold unjust social structures against women (Esack, 2015).

Amina Wadud is a critical thinker in re-evaluating the classical Qur'anic interpretive models believed to contain gender inequality. Through her book *Qur'an and Woman*, she reveals her intellectual unrest regarding the gender injustices that permeate her society. The primary focus of her work is to deconstruct and reorganize the Qur'anic interpretations that have been dominated by male perspectives, attempting to dismantle the interpretative constructions that place women in marginalized and disadvantaged positions compared to men. Wadud believes that gender imbalance is not only caused by religious teachings but is also influenced by various complex factors, including religious understanding, cultural constructions, societal beliefs, and various social dynamics that shape views on women. Wadud's approach aims to transform religious understanding, which has traditionally confined women to narrower roles, into a more equal and just interpretation (Rofii, 2022).

This is why this study is titled to examine Amina Wadud's feminist epistemology theory. Amina Wadud's theory is relevant to understanding feminism, offering a new perspective on the Qur'an through a gender-perspective hermeneutic approach. Thus, Amina Wadud's feminist epistemology

represents more than an academic methodology. She is a fundamental intellectual movement that deconstructs patriarchal domination structures, presenting an interpretative model that combines hermeneutics (the science of interpretation or text analysis) with principles of feminism that are more humane, inclusive, and just while opening up new spaces for dialogue in understanding spirituality and humanity. It is about women's empowerment and creating a social space where women can participate equally with men, both in religious and worldly aspects.

This study examines Amina Wadud's contribution to formulating a more just and inclusive paradigm of religious interpretation through ethical and contextual approaches. Using qualitative methods and a library research approach, this study focuses on Wadud's works, such as the Qur'an and Woman and supporting academic literature. The research findings are expected to reveal that Wadud's feminist epistemology not only introduces new methodologies in religious studies but also serves as an intellectual movement that drives social transformation through understanding the Qur'an as a dynamic text. This study aims to offer criticism of traditional interpretations, provide a new, more inclusive framework, and contribute to Islamic education curricula by introducing feminist perspectives in exegesis studies.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature review design (Library Research). This research aims to examine and analyze various sources of literature relevant to the topic discussed, particularly concerning Amina Wadud's thoughts in the context of gender studies and tafsir.

The data in this study are divided into two categories: primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary or first-hand data sources are directly related to the research subject. This study's primary data sources consist of books written directly by the studied figures, including the Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective (Zulpiana, Hamnah, 2024).

On the other hand, secondary data sources come from indirect sources relevant to the issue being discussed but are not the primary data sources for the discussion in this study. These secondary sources include books, articles, and previous studies conducted by other scholars regarding Amina Wadud's thoughts on this research.

The researcher employs various techniques to facilitate the research process. The data collection technique used is a literature study. A literature study is a research method that gathers various books, magazines, articles, and other sources relevant to the research issue and objectives (Azhar & Rohman, 2022). This process aims to obtain comprehensive data and information about the research topic.

In this study, the data analysis technique involves organizing the data, arranging the sequence, and categorizing the data into patterns, categories, and basic sequence units (Kurniasih et al., 2021). Several analysis techniques are performed by the researcher, namely: (1) Interpretive Technique. This technique is used to understand, explain, and reveal the implicit meanings within the subject of study. This approach allows the researcher to understand the text and context being analyzed better; (2) Analytical Technique. This technique refers to the method used to acquire scientific knowledge by detailing the object being studied. This approach involves distinguishing one concept from another to clarify the discussed concepts (Haryoko et al., 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. Biography of Amina Wadud

Amina Wadud, born Mary Tesley on September 25, 1952, in Bethesda, Maryland, USA (Junaedi et al., 2019), is an extraordinary Muslim feminist with a unique family background. Her father was a Methodist clergyman, while her mother was a descendant of North African Berber enslaved Muslims (Fish, 2020). Raised in a low-income family, she was one of eight siblings (five males and three females). Her spiritual journey reached a turning point on Thanksgiving Day in 1972 when she declared the

shahada and embraced Islam. Two years later, she changed her name to Amina Wadud Muhsin, with the name "Amina" taken from the name of the mother of the Prophet Muhammad and "Wadud," meaning 'loving.' With this name, she hoped to receive guidance from Allah, the Most Loving (Al-Wadud) (Zakiruddin & Sitorus, 2022). Her primary motivation for embracing Islam was her desire to escape the religious and social discrimination she had experienced as an African-American woman in America. She viewed Islam as a path toward equality and justice that had been difficult to attain (Azriel Muhammad, 2022).

Amina Wadud pursued an outstanding academic career, earning a Bachelor of Science (BS) from the University of Pennsylvania between 1970 and 1975. She then continued her graduate studies (MA) in Eastern Studies and earned a Ph.D. in Arabic Language and Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan in 1988. Her intellectual journey was not limited to academic degrees; during her time at the university, she deepened her knowledge by studying Arabic in Egypt. Specifically, she participated in a program at the American University in Cairo and later studied the Qur'an and tafsir at Cairo University. She also took philosophy courses at Al-Azhar University (Junaedi et al., 2019). Wadud's commitment to women's empowerment is evident from her involvement as one of the founders of the organization "Sisters in Islam" in Malaysia, which focuses on assisting victims of domestic violence justified by religious reasons (Arab & Air, 2024).

Amina Wadud, an African-American thinker focusing on Qur'anic interpretation and gender issues, began her intellectual journey by publishing her first book in 1992 titled *Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. This important work was followed by the publication of *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* in 2006 (Pokhrel, 2024). The book was first published in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1992, then translated into Indonesian (1994) and Turkish (1997). During her trip to South Africa in 1994, her book topped the bestseller list at the "al-Qalam" publisher and several Islamic magazines. In her academic career, Wadud taught the Qur'an at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1992. Then, from 1997 to 1998, she was a guest lecturer at the Harvard Divinity School's Women's Studies Program, further strengthening her reputation as a progressive Islamic thinker (Volume et al., 2025).

In 1975, Amina Wadud began her life journey in Libya, where she lived for two years. Her experience in Libya marked a crucial turning point in her thinking about gender struggle and Islamic identity. In her book *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, Wadud reveals that her time in Libya was a significant moment for developing critical ideas on defending the rights of women, who had long been marginalized in Islamic intellectual history. She began building networks for Muslim women in Libyan society through various organizations. As a young, poor, black, and Muslim woman, Wadud found a new perspective on the honour of Muslim women and accepted this idea without hesitation while developing thoughts that transcended the global paradigm of the status of Muslim women. Her controversial ideas often shocked and challenged the global community. She did not hesitate to criticize the opinions of most scholars and even dared to reconstruct the classical fiqh formulations that had long been considered sacred by Muslims. Wadud believes that certain classical religious understandings are no longer relevant to the context of modern times. However, Wadud acknowledges that she is an Islamic thinker, not a mujtahid in fiqh (Zulyadain et al., 2022).

Her primary focus was prioritizing women's rights and providing comprehensive social and financial protection. Her experience in Libya encouraged her to deconstruct conventional understandings of women's roles and status in Muslim society. After returning from Libya, she faced various challenges in her life. She was married several times and became a mother of five children, all of whom have Muslim names. After divorcing her first husband, she had to raise her two oldest children with limited income as a substitute teacher at the Philadelphia Public Schools and a private Islamic school (Muliyah et al., 2020). During this period, she received research funding on gender issues in Islam.

## 2. Epistemology and Feminism

Epistemology, derived from the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (study), is a branch of philosophy that discusses the origin, nature, character, and types of knowledge (Pajriani et al., 2023). This field focuses on theories that explore the nature of knowledge and examines various assumptions humans hold about it. In epistemology, various methods are used to acquire knowledge, including inductive, deductive, positivist, contemplative, and dialectical methods. The primary focus is to answer fundamental questions (Widianita, 2023). How do humans acquire knowledge? One can be considered knowledgeable if one can answer epistemological questions, reflecting humanity's desire to love and understand knowledge. The existence of epistemology is crucial to explain how knowledge is obtained through reason and the senses. The essence of epistemology is how humans acquire knowledge by answering and solving complex problems within this philosophical realm. Therefore, epistemology is not merely an abstract theory but a tool to understand how humans think and acquire understanding.

Etymologically, the term feminism is derived from the word *femme*, which means woman (in singular form) and aims to fight for women's rights (in plural form) as a social group (Fitriawati et al., 2014). Feminism is a viewpoint that seeks to protect and advocate for the rights of women as part of a social group. In this context, it is important to distinguish between "male" and "female," which refer to biological and natural differences, and "masculine" and "feminine," which refer to psychological and cultural differences. The terms "masculine" and "feminine" are also related to the concept of gender, which refers to the social roles associated with specific sexes, such as "he" and "she." Fundamentally, feminism aims to empower women, making them active subjects in various fields by utilizing women's experiences and unique perspectives, regardless of the dominance of patriarchal culture that tends to centre on male perspectives.

Feminism is an ideology that has spread to various parts of the world, including Indonesia and has significantly influenced various areas of life, including literature. However, some still view feminism as a movement of women resisting male dominance (Yumna & Maksum, 2024). This movement is often seen as an effort by women to oppose what is considered their natural or inherent role and to resist social norms that have shaped gender roles in society. Some even see feminism as a rejection of the institution of the family, which has traditionally been considered the central place for women. However, feminism aims to fight for women's rights, eliminate gender inequality, and create space for women to choose the roles they desire in both private and public life without being constrained by prejudice or discrimination.

Feminism originated from Egyptian intellectuals who studied in Europe. The popular feminist discourse in Europe was adopted by them after returning from Europe and developed under the term *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* (liberation of women) (Lubis et al., 2020). The patriarchal structure in the *Jahiliyyah* period was dismantled by Islam, which granted women rights that had not been given previously. The Prophet also instructed Muslims to perform *aqiqah* for the birth of daughters, just as for sons. In the time of the Prophet, an ideal relationship between men and women was created, where they were truly equal. Modern feminism then focuses on women's struggle for equality, dignity, and freedom, both in domestic life within families and in public life in society (Maulid, 2022). Feminists strive to create a just society with equal rights between men and women. Therefore, being a feminist is not limited to women; men can also be feminists, as long as they have awareness and concern to fight against injustice and oppression towards women, both in the family and in society. Roded notes that "equal treatment between men and women has led them to achieve accomplishments just as men have" (Pipit Muliayah et al., 2020).

Based on this, Amina Wadud sees that the initial spirit of Islam has been forgotten. She wants to revive the true spirit of gender justice in Islam, which had already begun with the Prophet Muhammad but was buried under patriarchal interpretations afterwards. She believes that the value of equality already exists in the sacred texts and only needs to be reinterpreted with a fair and inclusive perspective. Therefore, Amina Wadud presents her views on feminism with a hermeneutic approach because she

wants to bring Islam back to its true spirit of justice. She sees that Islamic teachings have brought liberation for women, and the feminist struggle can and must be conducted from within the values of Islam, not just from the outside.

## Discussion

### 1. The Concept of Feminism in Amina Wadud's View

Amina Wadud developed a unique and revolutionary concept of Islamic feminism to transform religious understanding from a female perspective. Her primary focus is to dismantle the patriarchal structure in religious interpretations and present a reading of the Qur'an that provides equal space for women. In her concept, feminism is not merely a resistance movement but a systematic effort to reconstruct the theological understanding that has been gender-biased. Wadud believes that religious texts inherently carry the spirit of equality, which conventional interpretations dominated by men obstruct. She advocates for a rereading of the Qur'an that positions women as dignified subjects, not subordinated objects. The deconstruction method developed by Wadud is critically hermeneutical. She proposes a contextual reading approach that considers the socio-historical dimension of the emergence of the text to restore the universal message of justice in the Qur'an by freeing the text from discriminatory and imbalanced interpretations (Uswatun Hasanah Harahap, 2024). Wadud's concept of feminism is not only theoretical but also practically transformative. She emphasizes the importance of women as intellectual agents who can read, understand, and interpret religious texts independently.

Spirituality becomes an important dimension in her concept. Wadud does not view feminism as a movement that erodes religion but as an effort to return to an inclusive and just spirituality. She believes the Qur'an essentially carries the mission of equality and respect for human dignity, regardless of gender differences. On the epistemological level, Wadud proposes a model of reading that places the context and spirit of justice above the literal text. Wadud encourages dynamic interpretations responsive to social changes while still adhering to the fundamental principles of justice in the Qur'an. Consequently, Wadud's feminism is an intellectual and spiritual project to create equal spaces in religious and social practices.

Wadud's concept of feminism also emphasizes the importance of women's agency in religious interpretation. She encourages Muslim women to develop their understanding of religion, actively participate in religious discussions, and have authority in interpreting texts. This aligns with the concept of "gender jihad" that she introduced, which views the struggle for gender equality as an integral part of the spiritual struggle in Islam (Selvira, 2024). In practical terms, Wadud advocates reforming Islamic family law, focusing on gender equality. She analyzes Islamic family law by considering gender equality principles and reevaluates issues such as marriage, divorce, and leadership within the family from a more equitable perspective.

In her study, Amina Wadud reveals the inequality in interpreting verses related to women and the products of fiqh. She also explains how the functional relationship between men and women, influenced by patriarchal culture, affects the interpretation process. In her efforts to analyze and understand verses concerning women, Wadud emphasizes the importance of considering the verses' historical context (asbabun nuzul) to achieve a more accurate and comprehensive understanding. This led Amina Wadud to develop a discourse on deconstructing women's roles for several important reasons.

Four reasons motivate Amina to develop the discourse of deconstructing women's roles. First is the phenomenon of the marginalization of women in social life. Second, the interpretation of women in the Qur'an conveyed by male scholars (mufassir), which is influenced by their personal experiences and social backgrounds, often places women in marginalized positions in society, which is seen as unjust. Third, the interpretative model used by mofussil affects fiqh products, terminologies, and the unjust treatment of women. This often occurs because many verses are interpreted in ways that do not reflect the universal principles of Islam and do not align with the concepts of justice and equality between men and women. Therefore, Amina Wadud pays close attention to terminology and how an object is defined.

Fourth, Amina Wadud is disturbed by the challenges in studying and teaching Muslim women's studies, which is reflected in her experience researching and teaching in academia in the United States.

In her book *Qur'an and Woman*, Amina Wadud begins her discussion by criticizing the existing interpretations of women in Islam, which tend to use a normative approach. She categorizes these interpretations into three categories: traditional, reactive, and holistic (Alfarisi & Arwani, 2024). According to Amina, traditional interpretation offers a particular interpretation influenced by the interests and abilities of the mufassir, whether in law, mysticism, grammar, rhetoric, or history. The methodology is atomistic, meaning the interpretation is done separately, verse by verse, without grouping similar verses into specific themes. Amina emphasizes that this traditional tafsir was written exclusively by men, so only the experiences and perspectives of men are represented, while women's experiences, visions, and needs tend to be neglected or adjusted to male views. The second category is reactive interpretation, a response from modern thinkers to the various challenges faced by women who are seen as stemming from the Qur'an. Feminist and rationalist ideas often influence this interpretation but lack a deep analysis of the Qur'an. As a result, although the spirit of this interpretation aims at liberation, its connection to the Qur'an as an ideological and theological source is not visible. The last category is holistic interpretation, which combines various methods of interpretation while considering the social, moral, economic, political, anthropological, and sociological contexts. This approach seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'anic verses by considering various aspects of life.

Amina Wadud's thinking is heavily influenced by Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutic approach, known as the double movement. In his book *Islam and Modernity*, Fazlur Rahman explains that "the Qur'an was revealed in a specific context in terms of time and history, both in general and particular situations." Although the Qur'anic verses have a specific context, their message is universal and not limited by space and time when revealed. Therefore, the reader of the Qur'an must understand the implications of each verse expression to produce an interpretation that is relevant and accurate, including in issues concerning women in the modern era. According to Amina Wadud, this method is the best approach to understanding the Qur'an, and she adopts it in her works. Amina criticizes that one of the things to address in reading is language, prioritizing the text, the reader, and the cultural context in which the text is read. According to Amina Wadud, the reader's experience and background greatly influence their perspective and conclusions in interpreting texts, causing individualism or relativity in interpretation, regardless of whether it is good or bad (Noor, 2024).

According to Amina Wadud, after the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim generation faced different situations and conditions and still needs to apply the Qur'anic statements practically, considering their primary meaning. Based on this view, Amina believes that the Qur'an must continuously be reinterpreted to remain relevant to human life (Abdullah et al., 2025). In discussing the position of women, Amina highlights the importance of an egalitarian spirit. She does not view patriarchy as a solution to replace patriarchy, which has long been considered the source of the oppression of women. Instead, Amina desires the realization of justice and collaboration between men and women in large arenas like the state and society and smaller environments like the family.

## 2. Epistemology of Feminism According to Amina Wadud

Amina Wadud's epistemology of feminism is a radical and transformative intellectual approach to understanding religious knowledge, particularly in the context of Islam. Her gender equality concept, based on *tawhid* (the oneness of Allah), forms the foundation of her feminism. She believes that since all humans are creatures of Allah, there is no reason for gender discrimination. Wadud developed an epistemological framework that challenges the patriarchal structure of knowledge that has long dominated religious text interpretations. The core of her thought is the reconstruction of the understanding of the Qur'an, which places women as equal subjects, not just objects of interpretation. In her epistemology, Wadud emphasizes the importance of reading and interpreting the Qur'an

holistically, not in a fragmented manner. She develops a tafsir methodology that considers the historical, linguistic, and worldview contexts of the Qur'an as a whole.

Wadud's epistemological method is both deconstructive and transformative (Wadud, 2021). She emphasizes the importance of contextuality in understanding texts, meaning that every interpretation must consider the socio-historical context when the text is revealed. This approach allows for more dynamic and responsive readings of social changes while still adhering to the substantive principles of justice in the Qur'an. Wadud's epistemology also stresses the importance of "ethical reading" of the text. In the framework of ethical reading, Wadud emphasizes several fundamental principles. First, every interpretation must be tested against the principle of universal justice; if an interpretation results in injustice or discrimination, it must be reconsidered. Second, understanding the historical context becomes crucial, as many Qur'anic verses were revealed in a specific social context, and the ethical principle behind the verse is more important than its literal application. The holistic approach is an essential characteristic of Wadud's ethical reading. Contemporary relevance also becomes an important consideration, where interpretation must address the challenges and needs of modern society while still holding to the Qur'anic principles. Through "ethical reading," Wadud critiques tafsirs that contain gender, racial, or cultural bias, encouraging a rereading of religious texts with a higher ethical consciousness. Wadud's contribution to ethical reading is significant not only in gender studies and Islam but also in developing a more progressive and humanistic tafsir methodology.

Wadud's epistemological critique focuses on the established interpretation practices that have long been dominated by male perspectives (Rachmadie et al., 2025). She demonstrates how the construction of religious knowledge has perpetuated structural injustices against women. Through her rereading, Wadud intends to return the spirit of equality and justice that exists within the spirit of the Qur'an, but has been obscured by patriarchal interpretations. Wadud critically observes the patriarchal system that has influenced traditional Islamic interpretations. She argues that many interpretations considered "Islamic" are products of patriarchal culture, not the actual teachings of the Qur'an. In her epistemology, Wadud incorporates women's experiences as valid sources of knowledge in understanding religious texts, arguing that women's life experiences must be considered in interpreting the Qur'an and forming Islamic law.

Methodologically, Wadud uses a critical hermeneutic approach that positions the reader as an active agent in the meaning-making process, not just a passive recipient of existing interpretations. She believes that women have the intellectual capacity to read, understand, and interpret religious texts autonomously, without always depending on traditional interpretations dominated by men. Wadud's concept of human beings as Khalifah (stewards) in her view, the Qur'an affirms that both men and women are created as Khalifah or representatives of Allah on Earth, meaning both have the same responsibilities and capacities in managing life. In another example, the Qur'an contains verses that affirm the principles of gender equality, such as Q.S. al-Dhāriyāt [51]:56 and Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:13. Wadud's hermeneutic methodology also considers three important aspects: the context when the text was written, the grammatical composition of the text, and the worldview of the text as a whole. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the position of women in Islam.

In her hermeneutic methodology, Wadud uses a three-dimensional approach: syntax (grammar), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (context). Wadud analyzes how language structure, word meaning, and the historical-social context interact to shape the understanding of gender in the Qur'an. Additionally, Wadud develops the concept of a "tawhidic paradigm" in her epistemology, viewing gender equality as a manifestation of the principle of tawhid. This paradigm emphasizes that gender discrimination contradicts the concept of the oneness of Allah, which is the core of the Qur'an's teachings. This approach provides a strong theological foundation for the gender equality struggle.

Amina Wadud's feminist epistemology is essentially a comprehensive effort to transform religious perspectives that have long been gender-biased. Through epistemological critique, deconstruction of traditional interpretations, and reconstruction of understanding, she presents a new perspective that



places women as equal subjects in religious and social discourses. Her contribution to feminist epistemology is highly significant in developing contemporary Islamic thought. Her approach opens the way for a new understanding of the position of women in Islam and encourages reform in the interpretation of religious texts. Her methodology helps develop a more inclusive and gender-just understanding of Islam, providing a strong theoretical foundation for the struggle for gender equality in the context of Islam.

### 3. Critique of Traditional Tafsir

Wadud shows that classical tafsir largely ignores women's experiences due to the dominance of male mufasssil. She highlights the need to include women's experiences in shaping a more representative and just religious understanding. Furthermore, Wadud asserts that many traditional tafsirs are built on a patriarchal paradigm that does not consider gender equality as a fundamental principle. Classical mufasssir tends to position women as subordinate, both in the social context, family law, and religious roles. This has implications for the emergence of fiqh products and social norms that discriminate against women, such as restrictions on access to education, leadership, or even freedom of expression in the public domain.

Wadud's critique challenges the authority of classical mufasssir and paves the way for reform in tafsir methodology. She emphasizes that religious authority should be open to women and that women's experiences and perspectives hold the same epistemological validity. She rejects the idea that only men can legitimately understand and convey religious teachings. In many cases, the imbalance in tafsir stems from the lack of female representation in Islamic scholarly discourse. Therefore, the reform proposed by Wadud is not cosmetic but targets the epistemological roots of the religious practice itself.

The holistic approach proposed by Wadud combines linguistic and contextual aspects and includes moral and ethical aspects as the main criteria for the validity of tafsir. Thus, tafsir should be logical or textual and meet universal ethical standards favouring justice, equality, and humanity. This distinguishes Wadud's approach from many traditional thinkers: she dares to place ethics at the centre of religious text readings.

## CONCLUSION

Amina Wadud's feminist epistemology theory emphasizes that the feminist epistemological approach developed by Amina Wadud is an important contribution to religious and social discourse, particularly in the context of Islam. Wadud challenges traditional gender-biased interpretations and proposes the need to reread the Qur'an, considering the continuously evolving social and historical contexts. In her thinking, she views gender equality and social justice as fundamental principles that must be applied in interpreting religious texts. The hermeneutic approach she advocates enables women to become agents in interpreting and meaning-making the Qur'an and not merely objects in religious narratives. By emphasizing the importance of gender perspective in religious studies, Wadud supports the creation of a more just social relationship, both at the macro (society) and micro (family) levels. Through her critique and deconstruction of the patriarchal structure in understanding religious texts and promoting inclusive dialogue within the Muslim community, her ideas have inspired the feminist movement in the Muslim world, supporting efforts for gender equality in various cultural and social contexts worldwide. Overall, Wadud introduces a new paradigm that can significantly change contemporary Islamic thought, making the struggle for gender equality an integral part of understanding religion and spirituality. Wadud's approach critiques traditional interpretations and provides a new, more inclusive and just framework. With a gender equality principle based on tawhid, Wadud supports reforms in religious understanding that align with the struggle for social justice.

For further research, Amina Wadud's ideas must be expanded in practical implementation in Muslim societies, especially in Indonesia. Comparative studies between Wadud's approach and other Islamic feminist thinkers such as Fatima Mernissi, Asma Barlas, or Ziba Mir-Hosseini can enrich

intellectual resources and broaden the scope of Islamic feminism discourse. Additionally, integrating these ideas into formal Islamic education could be an important strategy in mainstreaming gender justice values in religious life. This writing is expected to provide a comprehensive view of Amina Wadud's thought and its relevance to the struggle for gender justice in Islam.

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