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## Interpreting Surah Al-Anfal Verse 26 through Hasan Hanafi's Critical-Emancipatory Hermeneutics: Reinterpreting Revelation for Social Justice

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### Abstract

In the face of growing social inequalities and marginalization in the modern Muslim world, Qur'anic interpretation is increasingly called upon to address real-world injustices. Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 highlights the early Muslims' experience of oppression, fear, and poverty, followed by divine empowerment. This verse offers a theological entry point for rethinking the Qur'an's role in social transformation. This study aims to reinterpret Al-Anfal:26 through the lens of Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics, which views revelation not merely as normative doctrine but as a call to action for liberation and justice. The research adopts Hanafi's three-stage hermeneutical method: (1) historical awareness—understanding the socio-political context of the verse; (2) eidetic analysis—extracting its essential ethical meaning; and (3) practical engagement—applying its message to contemporary struggles. The findings show that when interpreted through this framework, the verse becomes a powerful call for solidarity with the oppressed and for active resistance against systemic injustice. It encourages Muslims to see the Qur'an as a living, historical text that responds to human suffering with moral urgency. This study concludes that Surah Al-Anfal:26 provides not only historical insight but also a theological foundation for Islamic liberation theology. The research contributes to contemporary Qur'anic studies by demonstrating how contextual hermeneutics can make sacred texts more responsive to the ethical and political demands of the present.

**Keywords:** Al-Anfal 26, Critical Hermeneutics, Hasan Hanafi, Islamic Liberation Theology, Social Justice.

### Abstrak

Dalam menghadapi meningkatnya ketimpangan sosial dan marginalisasi di dunia Muslim modern, penafsiran Al-Qur'an semakin dituntut untuk merespons ketidakadilan nyata dalam kehidupan. Surah Al-Anfal ayat 26 menyoroti pengalaman kaum Muslim awal yang hidup dalam penindasan, ketakutan, dan kemiskinan, sebelum memperoleh kekuatan melalui pertolongan Ilahi. Ayat ini menawarkan pijakan teologis untuk meninjau kembali peran Al-Qur'an dalam transformasi sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menafsirkan ulang Al-Anfal:26 melalui pendekatan hermeneutika kritis-emansipatoris Hasan Hanafi, yang memandang wahyu bukan sekadar doktrin normatif, melainkan sebagai seruan untuk aksi pembebasan dan keadilan. Penelitian ini menggunakan tiga tahapan metode hermeneutika Hanafi: (1) kesadaran historis—memahami konteks sosial-politik ayat; (2) analisis eidetik—menggali makna etis yang esensial; dan (3) keterlibatan praksis—menerapkan pesan ayat dalam perjuangan kontemporer. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa melalui kerangka ini, ayat tersebut menjadi seruan kuat untuk bersolidaritas dengan kaum tertindas dan melawan

ketidakadilan struktural. Ayat ini mendorong umat Islam untuk memandang Al-Qur'an sebagai teks hidup yang merespons penderitaan manusia dengan urgensi moral. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Surah Al-Anfal:26 tidak hanya memberikan wawasan historis, tetapi juga dasar teologis bagi teologi pembebasan Islam. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam studi Al-Qur'an kontemporer dengan menunjukkan bahwa hermeneutika kontekstual dapat membuat teks-teks suci lebih tanggap terhadap tuntutan etis dan politis zaman kini.

**Kata Kunci:** Al-Anfal 26, Hermeneutika Kritis, Hasan Hanafi, Keadilan Sosial, Teologi Pembebasan Islam.

## Introduction

In recent decades, the discourse on Qur'anic interpretation has undergone significant intensification, reflecting the growing urgency to reassess the methodological foundations of Islamic exegesis in light of contemporary challenges. Traditional exegetical approaches, long considered authoritative, have increasingly come under critical scrutiny by contemporary Muslim scholars, who question the relevance of classical interpretations in addressing the dynamic needs of today's Muslim societies (Falah & Fariyah, 2015). This epistemological tension arises from observable gaps between inherited textual readings and the evolving socio-historical contexts, marked by inequality, oppression, and calls for justice. In response, demands have emerged for the formulation of more contextual and socially responsive interpretive methodologies, capable of engaging modernity without severing ties with foundational Islamic values.

A key approach that has gained traction in this effort is hermeneutics, which offers interpretive tools to bridge the textual heritage of Islam with contemporary socio-political realities. Historically, Qur'anic interpretation was often confined to normative-textual frameworks, which sometimes led to static meanings and, in some cases, the legitimization of hierarchical social structures (Haryono, 2021). However, modern hermeneutics challenges this rigidity by emphasizing interpretive fluidity and the role of the socio-historical subject. One of the most significant figures in this transformation is Hasan Hanafi, a progressive Egyptian thinker and philosopher trained at Cairo University and the Sorbonne. His work employs a critical-emancipatory hermeneutical model that engages the interpreter actively with the socio-political realities underlying the text (Rihlasyita, 2019).

In the broader field of Islamic hermeneutics, Hanafi is often positioned alongside prominent figures such as Mohammed Arkoun, Abid Al-Jabiri, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Fazlur Rahman (Fatih, 2019; Khiyaroh et al., 2022). While many of these scholars—such as Abu Zayd and Rahman—have emphasized the contextual nature of Qur'anic meaning (Fatih,

2023), Hanafi goes further by integrating the interpretive act with ideological struggle, aimed at liberating Muslims from epistemological domination, socio-political backwardness, and postcolonial oppression. His works, *Turats wa Tajdid* and *Introduction to the Science of Occidentalism*, emphasize shifting the epistemological center of Islamic thought from a fixation on the past toward a future-oriented, praxis-based framework (Hanafi, 1980, 2010a). This move constitutes a major epistemological shift in the Islamic interpretive tradition, aligning textual engagement with a drive for socio-political transformation (Septiana, 2022).

The problem formulation addressed in this article concerns the extent to which Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics provides a viable framework for interpreting Qur'anic verses in a way that responds to contemporary social injustices. The discussion centers on Surah al-Anfal verse 26, a verse that historically reflects the early Muslim community's experience of fear, poverty, and marginalization, but which also contains a liberatory message of divine empowerment (Hafidz, n.d.; Hanafi, 1991). While many previous interpretations treat this verse within its historical context, they often fall short in activating its emancipatory potential for current socio-political struggles.

Most existing tafsir literature tends to be either overly textual or limited to abstract theological reflections, making it insufficient in addressing the socio-political realities faced by contemporary Muslim communities. Many interpretations continue to preserve traditional readings without engaging critically with the structural injustices and forms of marginalization that persist today. In contrast, interpretations that treat the Qur'an as a source of inspiration for social transformation and emancipation remain underexplored (Fatih, 2019; Saputra et al., 2024). Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutical approach offers a response to this condition by promoting a dynamic and activist model of Qur'anic reading—one that does not stop at normative meaning but positions revelation as a theological resource for resisting oppression and advocating for social justice (Hermawan et al., 2021; Septiana, 2022).

This study lies in its critical application of Hanafi's emancipatory hermeneutics to a specific Qur'anic verse, namely Surah al-Anfal:26, and in demonstrating how this framework enables the reinterpretation of revelation as a tool for ideological liberation. While prior works have explored Hanafi's theoretical contributions, few have operationalized his method within a focused textual analysis of Qur'anic verses that speak directly to themes of oppression, resistance, and empowerment. By situating this analysis within the context of lived struggles—poverty, marginalization, and epistemic subjugation—this study contributes to updating the methodological discourse on Islamic hermeneutics.

Therefore, this study is to examine Surah al-Anfal verse 26 through the lens of Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics, with the aim of uncovering the verse's transformative potential in addressing structural injustices and social marginalization in contemporary Muslim contexts. Through this approach, the article seeks to contribute to a growing body of literature that reclaims the Qur'an as a source of social liberation and theological resistance.

## Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, with the specific type being library research, which focused on textual analysis and the interpretation of meaning within the context of contemporary Islamic discourse. The primary focus of the study was Surah Al-Anfal verse 26, which was analyzed using Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutical framework. This approach emphasized the active involvement of the interpreter (subject), a critical examination of the Qur'anic text, and an understanding of the social realities that underpinned the need for rereading religious texts. The data analyzed consisted of both primary and secondary sources, including Hasan Hanafi's seminal works such as *Turats wa Tajdid* and *Muqaddimah fi 'Ilm al-Istighrab*, as well as tafsir literature and contemporary scholarship related to Islamic hermeneutics.

The primary data sources in this study included the Qur'an—particularly Surah Al-Anfal:26—and Hasan Hanafi's original writings. Secondary sources comprised classical and modern tafsir texts, peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and other documents relevant to hermeneutics and the theme of social justice in Islam. Data collection was carried out through document analysis of these materials. The data analysis technique followed an interpretive method, consisting of three main stages: identifying the discursive structure of the verse, conducting a critical reading of its historical and sociological context, and integrating Hanafi's thought as an interpretive lens. The strength of this method lay in its capacity to uncover deep and contextually relevant meanings within the text. However, its main limitation was the inherent subjectivity of interpretation, which could vary depending on the background and perspective of the interpreter.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Hasan Hanafi's Hermeneutical Thought

#### 1. Brief Biography of Hasan Hanafi

Hasan Hanafi, whose full name was Hassan Hanafi Hassanaein, was born in Cairo on February 13, 1935. He began his education at Khalil Agha Secondary School and graduated in 1952. He then continued his studies in philosophy at Cairo University and obtained his bachelor's degree in 1956. He pursued advanced studies in France, enrolling in master's and doctoral programs at the Sorbonne University (Muhammad Yuslih, 2022; Syamsuddin, 2018). During his studies in France, Hanafi's thought experienced significant development, especially through the methodological training he received, both in formal lectures and through in-depth engagement with the works of Orientalists.

He completed his postgraduate studies and received his master's and doctoral degrees in 1966. His master's thesis was titled *Les Méthodes d'Exégèse, essai sur la science des Fondaments de la Compréhension, 'Ilm Usul al-Fiqh*, which can be translated as *Methods of Exegesis: An Attempt to Reconstruct the Science of Usul al-Fiqh*. His doctoral dissertation was titled *L'Exégèse de la Phénoménologie, L'état actuel de la méthode phénoménologique et son application au phénomène religieux*, meaning *Phenomenological Exegesis: The Current State of the Phenomenological Method and Its Application to Religious Phenomena* (Syarifuddin, 2012). Both works reflect Hanafi's intellectual effort to bridge the discipline of Usul al-Fiqh with the phenomenological approach developed by Edmund Husserl.

#### 2. Hasan Hanafi's Hermeneutics

Hasan Hanafi was born during a period when the world, including Muslim nations, was still shackled by colonialism. The colonialism at that time did not only involve physical conquest through political and economic domination but also took the form of intellectual hegemony, where Western discourse and culture began to replace local traditions, including in Islamic scholarly traditions. In addressing the problems of his era, Hanafi employed a critical approach that took into account the comprehensive dynamics of social, political, and academic contexts. He not only diagnosed the issues facing the ummah but also offered solutions (treatments) relevant to the historical and cultural contexts of the time (Elsherif, 2025; Maimun, 2024). According to him, Muslims must immediately rise from backwardness and re-emerge as key players in the development of world civilization.

Hasan Hanafi understood hermeneutics as a comprehensive approach that included historical critique, rational understanding of meaning, and the practical application of sacred

texts for social transformation. He divided it into three stages: text authentication (historical), interpretation of meaning (eidetic), and practical action, thereby uniting textual analysis and philosophical reflection within an emancipatory framework (Falah & Fariyah, 2015). With this approach, Hanafi integrated theoretical and practical aspects of hermeneutics, both as philological analysis (extrovert) and deep philosophical reflection (introvert).

In response to the decline of the Muslim ummah and the unchecked dominance of the West, Hasan Hanafi formulated the revolutionary movement "Islamic Left" (*al-Yasar al-Islami*) as an effort to revive Islamic civilization. This movement is based on three main pillars: spiritual awakening (tawhid), social transformation (Islamic revolution), and unity of the ummah. The first pillar emphasizes the importance of reviving classical Islamic intellectual heritage through a rational approach, which, according to Hanafi, is a prerequisite for civilizational advancement and a contextual solution to the problems of the ummah (Hanafi, 1980). The second pillar focuses on resisting Western cultural domination, which Hanafi believed could erode cultural identity, including Islamic culture. As a form of resistance, he proposed the concept of "Occidentalism" as an antithesis to "Orientalism" to reclaim scientific discourse long dominated by the West (Hanafi, 2010a). The third pillar emphasizes critical analysis of the actual conditions of the Muslim ummah. Hanafi criticized traditional methods that focused solely on texts (*nass*) without considering social dynamics. He offered a new approach that allows for the authentic expression of the socio-political conditions of the ummah (Hanafi, 2010a). According to him, oppression by global capitalism, imperialism, and Zionism has entrapped Muslims in restrictive structures and caused systemic poverty. Therefore, Islamic revival must begin with ideological awareness based on an emancipatory interpretation of the ummah's reality (Hanafi, 1984). This concept aims to dismantle the myth of Western civilizational superiority and to build an alternative discourse grounded in the Islamic worldview.

The idea of revolution in Hasan Hanafi's thought is not limited to political change but includes social transformation and the collective consciousness of Muslims. Revolution, in this sense, is a call to liberate oneself from both internal and external injustices (Hanafi, 1991). In *al-Turats wa al-Tajdid*, Hanafi also discussed how revolution in Islamic thought and practice could help Muslims become more relevant in the modern age (Hanafi, 1991). He emphasized the importance of reconstructing theology from a more anthropocentric (human-centered) perspective rather than a theocentric (God-centered) one, which can aid in addressing contemporary challenges.

Hasan Hanafi developed a critical-emancipatory hermeneutic by combining the Islamic tafsir tradition with Western critical theory, drawing inspiration from Marx and Habermas. He rejected literalist-textual readings that legitimize inequality, replacing them with historical-contextual interpretation that positions the interpreter as an ideological agent with historical consciousness and social responsibility to dismantle oppression (Shimogaki, 2012). Hanafi's hermeneutic process involves three dimensions: the subject (interpreter), the text (dynamic meaning), and the context (social-political realities such as colonialism and marginalization) (Muhammad Yuslih, 2022). Interpretation is seen as a project of liberation that promotes wealth redistribution, empowerment of the marginalized, and criticism of religious authoritarianism (Hanafi, 2010a).

In *al-Turats wa al-Tajdid*, Hasan Hanafi emphasized that faith (aqidah) must be manifested in concrete actions that uphold social, political, and economic justice, not merely personal belief (Hanafi, 2010b). He viewed Islam as a revolutionary value system that encourages practical social change, urging Muslims to shift from normative belief to concrete action. His ideas encompass the reinterpretation of creed, the utilization of Islam as an agent of change, and the integration of tradition with modernity, highlighting Islam's relevance in addressing contemporary challenges through the practice of religious values (Anam et al., 2024; Muhammad Yuslih, 2022). This approach emphasizes that Islam must be relevant to the times through the application of religious values in everyday life.

## B. Surah Al-Anfal Verse 26: Text and Meaning

Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 states:

وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مِّمَّنْ سَخَطْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَخَافُوا أَنْ يَخَطِّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَأَوْبِكُمْ وَأَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ٢٦

*"And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, fearing that people might abduct you, but He sheltered you, supported you with His help, and provided you with good things so that you might be grateful" (QS. Al-Anfal: 26) (Departemen Agama, 2002).*

Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 functions not only as a historical reminder but also as a trigger for the collective consciousness of Muslims regarding the social transformation that occurred due to divine assistance (Departemen Agama, 2002). This verse highlights the condition of early Muslims in Mecca, when they were a small group living in fear, oppression, and threat from various hostile forces—including the polytheist Quraysh, the Magians, and the Roman Empire. At that time, they had no power to defend themselves and were constantly anxious

about the possibility of attack or abduction (Hafidz, n.d.; Shihab, 2025; Wahbah az-Zuhaili, n.d.-a).

Historical and contemporary readings of this verse, especially in relation to classical and modern tafsir, demonstrate that Surah Al-Anfal should not be read as legitimizing violence, but rather as a moral guide that governs Muslim behavior in times of conflict with principles such as justice, compassion, and self-restraint (Hidayati, 2022). Thus, Al-Anfal verse 26 is not only a historical reminder but also a theological reflection that strengthens Islam's commitment to ethics in both conflict and peace.

This verse serves as a divine reminder to Muslims about their conditions during the early days of Islam, especially around the time of the migration from Mecca to Medina. At that point, they were few in number and socially and politically oppressed. They lived in fear of intimidation and persecution from the Quraysh polytheists (Tafsir Ibn Katsir Surat Al-Anfal Ayat 26, 2015). In such a situation, Allah commanded them to migrate to Medina, where they found safe refuge, support from the Anṣar, and various forms of divine favor such as security, collective strength, and lawful and abundant sustenance. Allah also sent His help directly through strategic victories such as the Battle of Badr, which solidified the political and spiritual position of the Muslims (Hafidz, n.d.; Malook, 2024; NUOnline, n.d.-a; Wahbah az-Zuhaili, n.d.-a).

This verse conveys a profound moral message: Muslims are called to remember their past struggles and suffering as a foundation for gratitude, continued struggle, and loyalty to the values of tawhid. Tahlili tafsir shows that this verse has an educational purpose, instilling historical consciousness and collective spirit, while wajiz tafsir emphasizes practical values such as gratitude and trust in God's protection. Both affirm that strength and victory are not instant results but the fruits of spiritual struggle, social solidarity, and obedience to divine teachings (Hafidz, n.d.; Shihab, 2025).

Moreover, this verse plays a crucial role in shaping Islamic ethics of war. Surah Al-Anfal as a whole provides a normative framework for Muslim conduct in times of conflict, including the management of war booty, treatment of enemies, and the fair and humane distribution of power (Bakkal, 2025). In this context, verse 26 serves as a reminder that power must not be a tool of domination but should be directed toward establishing justice and upholding humanitarian values. This message rejects narratives portraying Islam as a religion of violence and instead emphasizes the importance of self-control, compassion, and

recognition of the rights of others, even under extreme conditions such as war (Bakkal, 2025; Hafidz, n.d.).

From the perspective of Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics, this verse can be understood not only as contemplative revelation but also as transformative and liberating. The text unites the normative dimension of revelation with the historical responsibility of the Muslim community to build social justice (Shihab, 2025). Thus, in its spiritual, historical, and ethical dimensions, Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 demonstrates that the true strength of Muslims lies in historical consciousness, social solidarity, and commitment to divine values.

The urgency of Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 lies in its role as a historical and spiritual reminder that invites Muslims to reflect on their social transformation—from weakness and oppression to strength and dignity through divine assistance. This verse does not merely record history but also cultivates collective awareness of the importance of gratitude, solidarity, and justice as pillars of the ummah's resurgence. This message can be connected to the content of Surah An-Nisa verse 127, which discusses just treatment of the vulnerable, particularly women and orphans, who were often victims of social injustice. The verse affirms that Allah provides guidance on how people should treat the vulnerable and calls for social justice and protection of individual rights, especially for those powerless within the patriarchal structure of the time.

وَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَى النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُوهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَزَرَعُونَ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا

*“They request from you a legal ruling concerning women. Say, ‘Allah gives you a ruling about them, and [what has been] recited to you in the Book concerning the orphan girls to whom you do not give what is decreed for them—yet you desire to marry them—and [concerning] the oppressed among children, and that you maintain the rights of orphans with justice.’ And whatever good you do—indeed, Allah is ever Knowing of it.”* (Qur’an, An-Nisa:127) (Departemen Agama, 2002).

During the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah), women, orphans, and the weak were often treated unjustly. They were deemed worthless and could be owned and treated as property. When the early verses of Surah An-Nisa (verses 1–36) were revealed and commanded the protection of their rights, the Arabs were shocked, as this contradicted their entrenched cultural norms. They then inquired and asked the Prophet Muhammad for clarification regarding these laws. As a response, verses 127–130 were revealed to answer their questions and to assert the protection of women, orphans, and the marginalized (Mansor et al., 2018).

In the customs of Jahiliyyah, a guardian (wali) could seize the wealth of an orphan under his care. If the orphan was beautiful, he would marry her to gain control over her wealth. Conversely, if she was not considered attractive, she would be prevented from marrying so that her property remained with the guardian (NUOnline, n.d.-b). A similar injustice occurred regarding inheritance: young children and women were excluded from receiving any share because only adult males who could fight in battle were considered eligible. Even widows could be inherited by their stepsons. Islam came to abolish these oppressive customs. Allah emphasized that women and orphans must be treated justly, granted their rights—including the right to choose a spouse and receive their lawful inheritance. They must be cared for, protected, and treated like one's own children. Every good or bad deed committed toward them is known by Allah and will be repaid accordingly.

People asked the Prophet Muhammad about laws concerning women, particularly regarding their rights. Allah answered directly through this verse. He clarified the issues concerning orphan girls whose rights were denied—such as their dowries and inheritance. Some guardians wished to marry these girls due to their beauty and wealth, but were unwilling to grant them their lawful rights. Allah also explained the obligation to protect weak children who are unable to defend themselves, including their inheritance and overall care (Wahbah az-Zuhaili, n.d.-b). Allah commanded that orphans be treated justly and that their rights be protected. Any form of good done toward them—whether granting rights or treating them with justice—is indeed known to Allah and will be justly rewarded.

When read integratively, these two verses—Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 and Surah An-Nisa verse 127—demonstrate that Islam places great emphasis on the protection of vulnerable groups in society, such as the weak, women, and orphans, and calls for them to be treated fairly, have their rights safeguarded, and their dignity elevated. Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 affirms recognition of the suffering of the early Muslims—those who were weak, impoverished, and oppressed—whom Allah then aided, strengthened, and granted a position of honor. This verse contains a message that social transformation and the empowerment of the oppressed are part of *sunnatullah*, a manifestation of His mercy toward His patient and devout servants. Meanwhile, Surah An-Nisa verse 127 demonstrates that the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups—especially women and orphans—must be concretely and justly regulated. This verse rejects the unjust practices of the Jahiliyyah era, such as the exploitation of orphans or the seizure of women's rights, replacing them with principles of justice, equality, and moral responsibility toward the vulnerable.

Thus, these two verses together offer an ethical and social framework that demands the realization of a just, inclusive society that protects the weak, as part of a broader mission of social justice. Islam not only establishes legal rulings but also instills spiritual and historical consciousness regarding the importance of defending the marginalized in order to build a dignified and civilized society.

### C. Interpretation of Surah Al-Anfal Verse 26 from the Hermeneutic Perspective of Hasan Hanafi

The interpretation of Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 through Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics opens a new horizon in understanding the Qur'an—not merely as a normative divine text, but as a transformative and liberating instrument. This verse, which historically refers to the early phase of the Muslim struggle in Mecca when they were oppressed, threatened, and lacked socio-political power, is not passively read by Hanafi as a distant historical narrative. Rather, it is treated as a historical reminder that must be actualized in present-day reality. Within his intellectual framework, Hanafi constructs a model of hermeneutics built on three levels of consciousness: historical, eidetic, and practical (Falah & Fariyah, 2015). These three stages serve as a methodological pathway to interpret the sacred text not merely as symbolic doctrine, but as an ideological force capable of generating a just and civilized society.

The first level is *historical consciousness*, which, in the context of Al-Anfal verse 26, affirms the background and authenticity of the revelation as part of the historical struggle of the Muslim community. Hanafi strongly rejects readings that divorce the text from its socio-historical context. He emphasizes the importance of historical critique to uncover the contextual meaning of the verse. In this regard, verse 26 narrates the situation of Muslims as a vulnerable minority, living in fear and under the oppression of the Quraysh polytheists, amid the socio-political instability of the time (Shihab, 2025; Wahbah az-Zuhaili, n.d.-a). This remembrance of the past serves to cultivate a collective awareness among Muslims that divine strength and assistance come only after real struggle and sacrifice.

The second level is *eidetic consciousness*, referring to the effort to grasp the rational essence and universal values embedded in the verse. Hanafi maintains that every sacred text possesses a meaningful structure that can be explained philosophically and contextually—not solely in symbolic or metaphysical terms. Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 conveys the message that the transition from oppression to empowerment is part of *sunnatullah*—a rational and divine law. Muslims are therefore required to foster solidarity, self-confidence, and loyalty to divine

values in order to achieve social empowerment (Hafidz, n.d.; Malook, 2024). God's assistance in this verse is not depicted as a miracle that descends unconditionally, but rather as the dialectical result of human effort intersecting with divine presence. Values such as gratitude, brotherhood, collective strength, and social empowerment represent the moral essence of the text that can be rationally uncovered. Thus, this verse becomes an ethical foundation for building Muslim awareness of their role as historical agents rather than passive recipients of fate.

The third and most crucial level in Hanafi's hermeneutics is *practical consciousness*, which emphasizes the enactment of the text in social life. From this perspective, Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 should be understood as a transformative energy that compels Muslims to liberate themselves from structural oppression and to establish a more just and humane society. Hanafi asserts that revelation must not only be read and interpreted but must be enacted (Hanafi, 2010b). This verse thus serves as a launchpad for constructing a liberation theology aligned with the oppressed, including women, children, and other marginalized communities. He advocates for a Qur'anic reading that is grounded in social realities and capable of mobilizing actual socio-political transformation. Just as the early Muslims escaped from oppression through *hijrah* and solidarity with the *Anṣar*, contemporary Muslims must also take inspiration from these values to confront economic injustice, cultural marginalization, and political domination (Bakkal, 2025; NUOnline, n.d.-a).

Therefore, interpreting Surah Al-Anfal verse 26 within Hasan Hanafi's emancipatory framework reveals that sacred texts are not static or ahistorical. Rather, they are mediums of change, born from historical realities and meant to be re-actualized with new contextual meanings. This verse is not merely a spiritual reflection, but a political and social strategy for building strength rooted in justice, not domination. The form of power portrayed in this verse is ethical—based on divine and humanistic values—rather than violent (Hidayati, 2022). As such, Hanafi's hermeneutics calls readers not to stop at theological interpretation but to engage the text as a tool for emancipation that responds meaningfully to the challenges of the age. His interpretation bridges the normative meaning of revelation with the ethical project of human liberation, thereby positioning the Qur'an not only as a source of law but also as a guide for the struggle toward a just, equitable, and dignified society.

Hasan Hanafi consistently develops a model of interpretation that sides with the oppressed and marginalized. He does not regard the Qur'an as a text to be read solely for individual spiritual benefit, but as a source of inspiration for collective social action.

Interpretation becomes a means of liberation, not merely contemplation. By linking the text to contemporary contexts, Hanafi positions the Qur'an as a historical project—not just a static document of revelation. Revelation, in his view, is dynamic, open to socio-political interpretation, and must be continuously actualized in various liberation movements.

Through his contextual-critical approach, Hanafi urges readers of the Qur'an to engage the text with historical and social awareness. He critiques classical interpretations that tend to be textualist and ahistorical for their failure to address the pressing issues of the Muslim ummah, such as ongoing structural oppression and systemic poverty. In Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutical framework, the appropriate response is not limited to moral exhortation but entails concrete action to transform unjust structures. This includes involvement in fair public policy, advocacy for the civil rights of vulnerable groups, and the creation of a more egalitarian economic-political system. Thus, the Qur'an becomes a living, active instrument of change capable of addressing the urgent challenges of contemporary society.

#### **D. The Contribution of Hasan Hanafi's Interpretive Perspective to the Development of Islamic Social Movements**

The hermeneutics of liberation proposed by Hasan Hanafi offers an interpretive model that emphasizes the integration of social justice values into everyday life. This approach has had a significant impact on the direction and orientation of Islamic social movements. Within the framework of critical and emancipatory interpretation, revelation is viewed not merely as a normative text serving individual ritual purposes, but as a transformative resource capable of driving social change toward greater justice and humanity. Hanafi advocates for the reinterpretation of revelation by taking into account the socio-political dimensions of the Muslim community, linking sacred teachings to the real conditions faced by contemporary Muslim societies, particularly in the context of structural inequalities in economic, political, and social spheres.

One of the key implications of this approach is the reinterpretation of revelation as a moral foundation for public policy that promotes distributive justice. This reimagining of divine guidance compels both the state and society to take sides with vulnerable groups through concrete measures such as wealth redistribution and the dismantling of oppressive economic systems. In the broader context of resistance against colonialism and global hegemony, Hanafi's interpretation also awakens Islamic consciousness to the importance of liberation from external domination, which contributes to the perpetuation of global inequalities.

Moreover, Hanafi pays special attention to the empowerment of marginalized groups, including women and minorities. In his hermeneutical method, the interpretation of religion does not stop at spiritual contemplation, but must function as a driving force for advocating the rights of the oppressed. This aligns closely with the spirit of Islamic feminism, which demands gender equality, as well as with anti-discrimination movements that seek to combat injustice based on ethnicity, race, or other social identities.

Furthermore, Hanafi's mode of interpretation provides a foundation for building a civil society oriented toward the values of justice, equality, and solidarity. The transformation he envisions is not limited to the moral or religious dimensions of the individual, but extends to the broader social and political structures. Thus, in Hanafi's view, revelation becomes a tool of emancipation—capable of liberating not only individuals in their personal realms but also society as a whole in its structural and institutional aspects. His interpretive model opens the way for a more progressive and responsive understanding of religion—one that speaks meaningfully to real-world issues and offers relevant answers to the various forms of injustice experienced by contemporary societies.

## Conclusion

The symbolic interpretation of Surah Al-Anfal verse 26, when approached through Hasan Hanafi's critical-emancipatory hermeneutics, reveals the Qur'an not only as a divine-normative text but also as a transformative discourse that actively engages with history and social reality. This verse, which recalls the early struggles of the Muslim community under oppression and fear, serves not merely as a passive historical narrative, but as a living reminder of the ongoing need for solidarity, resistance, and ethical empowerment in the face of structural injustice.

By employing Hanafi's triadic hermeneutic method—comprising historical, eidetic, and practical consciousness—this study demonstrates that Islamic revelation holds the potential to guide collective social action. Historically, it reaffirms the authenticity of divine aid following sacrifice and struggle. Eidetically, it rationalizes the message of transition from marginalization to empowerment as part of a universal moral order. Practically, it calls for the realization of justice and liberation through concrete engagement in political, economic, and cultural reform.

The integration of Surah An-Nisa verse 127 further reinforces the Qur'an's moral concern for vulnerable groups—especially women, orphans, and the socially weak—highlighting the ethical imperative to protect their rights and dignity. Together, these verses

articulate a coherent ethical framework that demands the construction of a just, inclusive, and humane society based on divine values and social responsibility.

Hasan Hanafi's interpretive contribution thus extends beyond theological discourse; it shapes an activist theology that seeks to transform the Qur'an into a liberating force for marginalized communities. His thought inspires a renewed commitment to reading the Qur'an contextually, aligning religious interpretation with the real struggles of contemporary Muslim societies. In this way, Hanafi's hermeneutics not only reconnects revelation with reality, but also repositions the Qur'an as an active agent of social justice and civilizational renewal.

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