The Meaning of Jilbāb and Khimār in Contextual Interpretation: Integrating Gadamer's Hermeneutics and *Ulūm al-Qur'ān*

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Keywords:	**Abstract**
Jilbāb; *Khimār*; Gadamer's Hermeneutics; *Ulūm al-Qur'ān*; fusion of horizons.	This article explores the contextual meaning of *jilbāb* and *khimār* in the Qur'an by integrating Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics and the classical framework of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (the sciences of Qur'anic interpretation). The study addresses the central problem of how verses on *jilbāb* (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59) and *khimār* (Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31) can be interpreted through the fusion of horizons between text and reader, especially in light of contemporary gender and modesty discourses. Using descriptive-analytical library research, this article draws from primary sources—the Qur'an and Gadamer's philosophical works—alongside secondary references on tafsir and hermeneutics. The findings reveal that *jilbāb* and *khimār* are best understood as protective-preventive measures rooted in both historical context and ethical intentions. Rather than prescribing fixed models of clothing, the Qur'anic injunctions emphasize dignity, modesty, and the social protection of women. By applying Gadamer's key concepts—effective history (Wirkungsgeschichte), pre-understanding (Vorverständnis), and fusion of horizons (Horizontverschmelzung)—the study demonstrates how traditional interpretations may evolve through dialog with present-day realities. This approach contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender, religious norms, and the role of interpretation in Islamic scholarship.
Kata Kunci:	**Abstrak**
Jilbāb; Khimār; Hermeneutika Gadamer; *Ulūm al-Qur'ān*; Fusi horizon.	Artikel ini mengkaji makna kontekstual *jilbāb* dan *khimār* dalam al-Qur'an melalui integrasi antara hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer dan kerangka klasik 'ulūm al-Qur'ān (ilmu-ilmu tafsir al-Qur'an). Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah bagaimana ayat-ayat tentang *jilbāb* (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59) dan *khimār* (Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31) dapat ditafsirkan melalui proses fusi cakrawala antara teks dan pembaca, khususnya dalam konteks wacana kontemporer tentang gender dan kesopanan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi pustaka deskriptif-analitis dengan mengacu pada sumber primer berupa al-Qur'an dan karya-karya Gadamer, serta sumber sekunder dari literatur tafsir dan hermeneutika. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *jilbāb* dan *khimār* secara substansial mengandung pesan protektif dan preventif yang bertujuan menjaga martabat perempuan. Alih-alih menunjuk bentuk pakaian tertentu, ayat-ayat tersebut menekankan nilai kesopanan dan perlindungan sosial. Dengan menerapkan konsep-konsep utama Gadamer—sejarah yang efektif (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), pra-pemahaman (*Vorverständnis*), dan fusi cakrawala (*Horizontverschmelzung*)—penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penafsiran tradisional dapat diperluas melalui dialog dengan realitas kekinian. Pendekatan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap diskursus tafsir yang kontekstual dan responsif terhadap dinamika sosial modern.

PENDAHULUAN

The meaning and practice of *jilbāb* and *khimār* in the Qur'anic discourse continues to raise critical questions in both scholarly and public debates. This is particularly evident in contrasting developments across countries: in Saudi Arabia, a country often associated with conservative interpretations of Islamic dress, recent reforms have allowed women greater autonomy over their clothing choices, including uncovering their heads.[1] In contrast, Muslim women in parts of Europe still face systemic discrimination for wearing religious attire such as the *ḥijāb*.[2] Meanwhile, Indonesia has experienced polemics related to forced veiling in educational settings, particularly when students are pressured to conform to dress codes that are not necessarily mandated by state or national religious regulations.[3] These contexts reveal that religious attire cannot be interpreted solely through textual or legal lenses, but must also account for cultural, political, and ethical considerations.

The *jilbāb* is commonly associated in Indonesia with a form of headscarf, often conflated with the *ḥijāb*, while the term *khimār* remains relatively obscure among the public. This conceptual overlap and lack of clarity prompt a need to re-examine the Qur'anic usage of these terms and how their meanings have been shaped by historical, social, and exegetical developments. The Qur'an itself refers explicitly to both: Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59 calls on believing women to draw their *jilbāb* over themselves,[4] while Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31 instructs them to draw their *khimār* over their chests.[5] However, these verses do not describe detailed models of clothing, leaving room for interpretive exploration.

This article seeks to interpret those verses through a philosophical hermeneutic lens, specifically the theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), while simultaneously integrating principles of classical Qur'anic interpretation known as *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Gadamerian hermeneutics is rooted in dialogical understanding—highlighting how meaning emerges from the interaction between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the reader. This process involves several key concepts: *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history), *Vorverständnis* (pre-understanding), *Horizontverschmelzung* (fusion of horizons), and *Anwendung* (application). These elements form a dynamic framework that can potentially

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[1] Norah Humus Alotaibi, Salihu Dasuki, and Efpraxia D. Zamani, "M-Government and Saudi Women's Empowerment: A Capability Approach Perspective," *Information Technology for Development*, January 13, 2025, 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2024.2439285.

[2] April Najjaj, "Feminisms and the Hijāb: Not Mutually Exclusive," *Social Sciences* 6, no. 3 (July 25, 2017): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6030080.

[3] A recent case in Indonesia is the shaving of hair that is still visible from outside the headscarf of a ninth-grade student at SMP Negeri 1 Sidodadi, Lamongan, East Java. Even those who wear a headscarf are still victims of bullying and discrimination, let alone those who do not wear a headscarf. There are still many cases in Indonesia. Lies Marcoes responded to the haircut case against dozens of students due to religious identity politics and power relations, which were then strengthened by discriminatory government regulations. Lies Marcoes Natsir, "Relasi Kuasa Dalam Kasus Pemaksaan Jilbab," Mubadalah.id Inspirasi Keadilan Relasi, 2023, Accessed September 3, 2023, https://mubadalah.id/relasi-kuasa-dalam-kasus-pemaksaan-jilbab/.

[4] Eko Zulfikar and Abdul Mustaqim, "Argumentation of Gender Equality in the Interpretation of Jilbab Verse by Amina Wadud's Perspective," *QOF* 8, no. 2 (October 29, 2024): 170, https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v8i2.2502.

[5] M. Quraish Shihab, *Jilbab: Pandangan Ulama Masa Lampau Dan Cendekiawan Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2006), 81–82.

enrich and challenge traditional methods of tafsir, especially in relation to gendered verses.[6]

In Islamic tradition, subjective interpretation (*tafsīr bi al-ra'y*) is often viewed with suspicion or even condemned outright, especially when it is believed to contravene prophetic guidance. Classical scholars frequently emphasized objectivity, neutrality, and textual fidelity in their interpretative methodologies.[7] However, Gadamer's framework invites us to see the act of understanding as historically situated and inevitably shaped by the interpreter's context.[8] This tension between classical caution and philosophical openness provides the space for a creative methodological synthesis explored in this study.

Several contemporary scholars have contributed to this discourse. Siti Robikhah, for example, through her use of the *ma'nā cum maghzā* method, argues that the verses on *jilbāb* and *khimār* signify not just physical modesty but also non-physical, moral dimensions of decency—applicable to both women and men. However, she does not detail what these "non-physical" meanings entail.[9] Egi Taufik, meanwhile, applies the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* framework to emphasize that veiling should aim at achieving ethical objectives, such as dignity and public safety, rather than simply preserving formality.[10] Meanwhile, Zulfikar and Mustaqim discussed Amina Wadud's argument regarding gender equality in interpreting the Quranic verse on hijab (QS. al-Aḥzab [33]: 59) and emphasized the importance of protecting women from harm and safeguarding their rights.[11] On the other hand, Isom Mudin offers a critique of Amina Wadud's Gadamerian reading of gendered Qur'anic verses, warning that such interpretive liberty risks distorting the original textual intent and legitimizing overly individualistic readings.[12]

This article does not adopt Gadamerian hermeneutics uncritically. Instead, it attempts to develop a contextual and integrative interpretive model by combining Gadamer's philosophical concepts with relevant tools from Qur'anic sciences (*'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, such as *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), *al-'ibrah bi 'umūm al-lafẓi lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* (Legal considerations are derived from the generality of the wording, not

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[6] Moh. Alwy Amru Ghozali and Umi Kalsum, "Mempertimbangkan Hermeneutika Gadamer Sebagai Metode Tafsir (Telaah Terhadap Teori Asimilasi Horison)," *Dialogia* 18, no. 1 (2020): 211–13; Erdal Yılmaz, "The Fusion of Horizons: The Possibility of a Genuine Ethical Dialogue," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (July 3, 2022): 229–39, **https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2022.2086741**.

[7] This is what Az-Zarkasyī refers to as the science of tafsir, which is a set of sciences for understanding the Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in order to reveal its meaning, extracting its legal rulings, and studying its wisdom through Arabic grammar, syntax (naḥw), morphology (ṣarf), rhetoric (al-bayān), principles of Islamic jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh), recitations (al-qira'āt), the reasons for revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl), and the abrogating and abrogated verses (al-nāsikh al-mansūkh). See Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad bin 'Abdillāh Az-Zarkasyī, *Al-Burhān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Dar al-Hadis, 2006), 22.

[8] Ilyas Supena, "Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics on Religious Language and COVID-19," *Filosofija. Sociologija* 33, no. 3 (September 13, 2022): 312–13, **https://doi.org/10.6001/fil-soc.v33i3.4780**.

[9] Siti Robikhah, "Reinterpretasi Kata Jilbab Dan Khimar Dalam Al-Quran; Pendekatan Ma'na Cum Maghza Sahiron Syamsuddin," *Ijougs* 1, no. 1 (2020): 50–53.

[10] Egi Tanadi Taufik, "TWO FACES OF VEIL IN THE QUR'AN: Reinventing Makna Jilbab Dalam Al-Qur'an Perspektif Tafsir Maqāshidi Dan Hermeneutika Ma'nā Cum Maghzā," *Panagkaran, Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 3, no. 2 (2019): 213–25, **https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.2019.0302-05**.

[11] Zulfikar and Mustaqim, "Argumentation of Gender Equality in the Interpretation of Jilbab Verse by Amina Wadud's Perspective."

[12] Moh. Isom Mudin et al., "Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer: Studi Analisis Kritis Penafsiran Amina Wadud Tentang Ayat Kepemimpinan," *Intizar* 27, no. 2 (2021): 113–26.

from the specificity of the cause the revelation of the verse), and the *muṭlaq-muqayyad* principle (interpreting general commands considering specific restrictions). Through this interdisciplinary synthesis, the study aims to offer a nuanced reading of the *jilbāb* and *khimār* verses that is both faithful to the text and responsive to present-day realities.[13]

Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative library research approach with a descriptive-analytical character. The primary sources are the Qur'an and the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer, particularly Truth and Method, along with secondary sources from Islamic scholarship, gender studies, and philosophy. The research follows four main stages: (1) identifying the problem, especially the contested meaning of Qur'anic veiling; (2) collecting relevant theoretical and exegetical references; (3) reducing the data to isolate key ideas relevant to the research focus; and (4) conducting critical analysis to construct a fresh interpretive synthesis.

This article addresses an urgent contemporary issue: how to interpret verses on *jilbāb* and *khimār* in ways that are grounded in Qur'anic tradition yet open to contextual transformation. The Gadamerian approach offers the possibility of a dialogical hermeneutics that respects both the authority of the sacred text and the evolving experiences of Muslim communities worldwide. By situating the interpreter within both textual and historical horizons, the study opens space for interpretations that are not only faithful, but also functional in today's diverse sociopolitical realities.[14]

Gadamer and the Essence of His Hermeneutics

Hans-Georg Gadamer is a German philosopher who was born in Marsburg, Heseen, on February 11, 1990.[15] Gadamer stands as one of the central figures in twentieth-century philosophy who reconceptualized hermeneutics as an ontological process rather than a mere interpretive method. In his seminal work *Wahrheit und Methode* (Truth and Method),[16] Gadamer emphasizes that understanding is not a neutral or objective act but rather an

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[13] These three interpretive tools were chosen for their methodological accuracy and direct relevance to the interpretive complexity posed by Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59 and Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31. Rather than presenting a comprehensive taxonomy of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, this study adopts a focused and integrative strategy that prioritizes conceptual clarity over eclecticism. *Asbāb al-nuzūl* provides an irreplaceable historical foundation, enabling interpreters to place verses in their socio-political and legal context. Included in this is the rule of *al-'ibrah bi 'umūm al-lafẓi lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab*—ensuring that textual interaction remains rooted in norms while being responsive to contextual conditions. The *muṭlaq–muqayyad* principle facilitates a coherent reconciliation between the apparent legal tensions between the two texts, particularly regarding the scope of body covering and gender norms. Implicitly, the author also employs a *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach. This measured choice reflects a deliberate effort to synthesize Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics with the epistemological rigor of the Islamic exegetical tradition, ensuring both interpretive openness and methodological accountability.

[14] Alan Cahyadi et al., "Hermeneutika Hans Georg Gadamer Sebagai Pendekatan Kritis Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *At-Tarbiyah: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 2 (n.d.): 388, https://journal.staittd.ac.id/index.php/at/article/view/379; Marie Vigouroux and Richard B Hovey, "Gadamerian Hermeneutics and Feminist Thought: Exploring Preunderstandings to Uncover Experiences of Prejudice," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 23 (2024): 6, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241278954.

[15] F. Budi Hardiman, *Seni Memahami: Hermeneutika Dari Schleiermacher Sampai Derrida*, ed. Widiantoro (Sleman: PT Kanisius, 2015), 156.

[16] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode: Grundzuge Einer Philosophischen*, Cet. I (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960).

encounter shaped by history, language, and tradition. This approach is particularly relevant to contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, which seeks to engage with the text as a living discourse situated within evolving cultural and historical contexts.[17]

Although Gadamer's thinking was significantly influenced by Martin Heidegger—especially through concepts like Dasein and existential structures—he extended hermeneutics toward dialogical and linguistic dimensions. Unlike Heidegger's emphasis on being and existence, Gadamer centered the role of language as the medium through which understanding unfolds. This framework allows for the possibility of a dialogical interaction between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the reader.[18]

To operationalize Gadamer's hermeneutics, this section outlines four key components commonly referenced in hermeneutical theory: (1) effective historical consciousness (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), (2) pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*), (3) fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*), and (4) the role of language. Each of these will be discussed with reference to their implications for interpreting the Qur'anic verses on jilbāb and khimār, the primary focus of this study.

a. Language as an Ontological Medium

Gadamer posits that language is not merely a tool for communication but a medium of being. Human beings understand themselves and the world through language, which is embedded in historical and cultural traditions. Thus, understanding a text involves an ontological engagement with the meanings carried by both the text and the interpreter.[19]

In the interpretation of verses concerning *jilbāb* and *khimār*, this implies that the interpreter's linguistic and social context inevitably shapes how meanings are constructed. Gadamerian hermeneutics legitimizes a reading of terms like *jilbāb* that goes beyond literal or linguistic interpretation, incorporating sociological and historical dimensions. Language, in this view, is a reflective medium that enables dialogical understanding between the interpreter and the textual tradition.[20]

b. Effective History (*Wirkungsgeschichte*)

The awareness that all understanding is historically mediated is what Gadamer terms *Wirkungsgeschichte*. No interpretation begins from a neutral standpoint; every act of understanding is conditioned by the historical situation and interpretive traditions inherited by the interpreter.[21] For instance, the contemporary understanding of *jilbāb* in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb

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[17] Darren E. Dahl, "Giving, Showing, Saying: Jean-Luc Marion and Hans-Georg Gadamer on Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, and Revelation," *Religions* 14, no. 10 (October 1, 2023): 10, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101250.

[18] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Phylosophical Hermeneutik*, ed. David. E Linge (California: The University of California, 1977), 18–21; Andrew Fuyarchuk, "Gadamer's Linguistic Turn Revisited in Dialogue with Cheng's Onto-Generative Hermeneutics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 48, no. 3 (2021): 257, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/15406253-12340032.

[19] Fuyarchuk, "Gadamer's Linguistic Turn Revisited in Dialogue with Cheng's Onto-Generative Hermeneutics," 255–56.

[20] David W. Johnson, "Word as Image: Gadamer on the Unity of Word and Thing," *Continental Philosophy Review* 55, no. 1 (March 5, 2022): 101–18, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-021-09543-y.

[21] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Cet. III (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 1975), 301; Iñaki Xavier Larrauri Pertierra, "Gadamer's Historically Effected and Effective Consciousness," *Dialogue* 61, no. 2 (August 16, 2022): 266–70, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0012217322000178.

[33]: 59 is influenced not only by linguistic semantics but also by the historical development of gender norms, Islamic legal discourses, and sociopolitical movements. *Wirkungsgeschichte* challenges the notion of retrieving an original meaning from the text independent of its historical reception and evolution. It underscores the continuity between past interpretations and present understandings.[22]
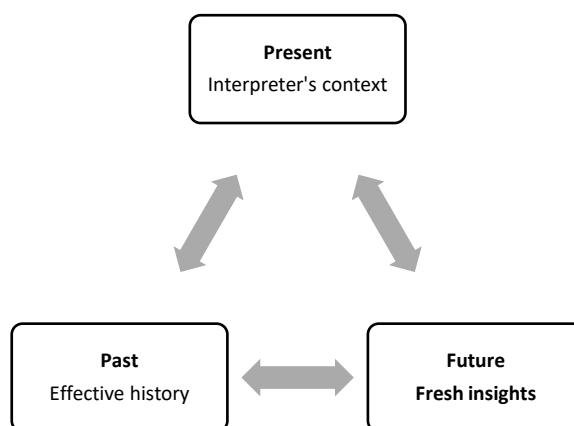

Figure 1"Hermeneutic Time Loop: Past–Present–Future in *Wirkungsgeschichte*"

c. Pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*)

Gadamer asserts that all interpretation is preceded by pre-understanding—implicit assumptions, values, and perspectives that the interpreter brings to the text. These are not necessarily distortions but preconditions for any meaningful engagement with a text.[23] In the realm of Qur'anic interpretation, pre-understanding may arise from an interpreter's educational background, religious affiliation, gender, or lived social experiences.[24] For example, an interpreter who has witnessed debates over the mandatory use of the veil in contemporary Muslim societies may approach the verses on *khimār* in Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31 with heightened sensitivity to issues of autonomy and gender equity. Acknowledging this pre-understanding does not invalidate the interpretation but enables a reflective stance that recognizes the interpreter's positionality.[25]

d. Fusion of Horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*)

The concept of fusion of horizons describes the productive interaction between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter. Gadamer maintains that understanding is not the reproduction of the author's intent but the emergence of new meaning through

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[22] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 177.

[23] Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode: Grundzuge Einer Philosophischen*, 278.

[24] Akhmad Aidil Fitra and Yousuf Aboujanah, "Gadamerian Hermeneutical Analysis of Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy's Interpretation of QS. Luqman (31):6 in the Context of Contemporary Entertainment Discourse," *Al-Karim: International Journal of Quranic and Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 30, 2025): 60, **https://doi.org/10.33367/al-karim.v3i1.6839**.

[25] Kristin Gjesdal, "Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Michael N. Forster and Kristin Gjesdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 358, **https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316888582.016**; Mats Alvesson and Jörgen Sandberg, "Pre-Understanding: An Interpretation-Enhancer and Horizon-Expander in Research," *Organization Studies* 43, no. 3 (March 25, 2022): 400, **https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840621994507**; Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, Cet. II (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawasea Press, 2017), 80–81.

dialogical engagement. This fusion does not imply a collapse of the past into the present but a dialogic synthesis wherein both horizons are transformed.[26]

Applied to the interpretation of *jilbāb* and *khimār*, this concept permits a reading that remains faithful to the Qur'anic text while also resonating with contemporary realities. It facilitates a hermeneutic space in which normative religious principles and evolving ethical sensibilities can coexist. The goal is not relativism, but a contextualization that respects both textual integrity and present-day relevance.[27]
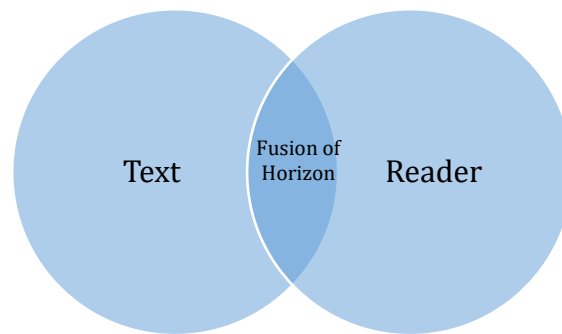

Figure 2. Fusion of Horizons between Text and Reader

This process encourages the interpreter to let the text speak in its own terms while also critically engaging with it from a contemporary standpoint. The result is a hermeneutic circle in which understanding is constantly negotiated and deepened, rather than fixed or finalized.

e. Relevance for Qur'anic Exegesis

Gadamer's hermeneutics offers significant contributions to Qur'anic studies, particularly in the integration of classical tafsir methodologies with philosophical reflection.[28] First, it legitimizes the interpreter's situatedness as a condition for, rather than an obstacle to, understanding. Second, it bridges the gap between textual fidelity and contextual responsiveness. Third, it opens a methodological space for combining tools from *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* with philosophical concepts like dialog and historicity.

Such an approach is neither strictly traditionalist nor wholly modernist. It resists the rigidity of literalism while avoiding the pitfalls of unbounded subjectivism. By acknowledging the historical embeddedness of both text and interpreter, Gadamerian hermeneutics encourages a balanced and reflective mode of interpretation. In the context of this study, Gadamer's hermeneutical principles will be employed to reexamine the meaning of *jilbāb* and *khimār* considering both classical Islamic frameworks and contemporary ethical concerns. The aim is to produce a reading that is both textually grounded and socially attuned—a dialogical engagement that allows the Qur'an to speak meaningfully in the present without detaching it from its foundational roots.

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[26] Matthew W. Knotts, "Readers, Texts, and The Fusion of Horizons: Theology and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Theologica* 4, no. 2 (2014): 242; Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*, ed. B.R. Watcherhauser (New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1986), 396.

[27] Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode: Grundzuge Einer Philosophischen*, 83.

[28] Fitra and Aboujanah, "Gadamerian Hermeneutical Analysis of Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy's Interpretation of QS. Luqman (31):6 in the Context of Contemporary Entertainment Discourse," 74.

Application of Gadamer's Hermeneutics on the Verse of Jilbāb and Khimār

This section presents the interpretive application of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics in conjunction with selected rules from the classical discipline of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*. The aim is to analyze the verses on *jilbāb* (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59) and *khimār* (Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31) through the lens of Gadamerian processes—especially the stages of horizon recognition, pre-understanding, and horizon fusion—while aligning the interpretation with the broader Islamic exegetical tradition.

According to Gadamer, the process of interpretation is dialogical and transformative. The text is not a static object but a dynamic interlocutor within a communicative event. The interpreter, shaped by effective historical consciousness (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), enters a dialog with the text, allowing meaning to emerge through the interaction of horizons.[29] Gadamer states:

> "...the information (meaning) 'born of the text' is not the original intended by the author. Rather, it is what he really intended. It signifies what the author would have meant to me had I been in the actual interlocutor.... the text must be followed according to its meaningfulness, not the literal meaning of the text."[30]

This view necessitates moving beyond literalism and instead treating the text as a phase toward understanding, shaped by both its own context and the interpreter's horizon. Based on Gadamer's explanation of 'application', the author tries to apply it to the verse about *jilbāb* (al-Ahzāb [33]: 59) and *khimār* (Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31).
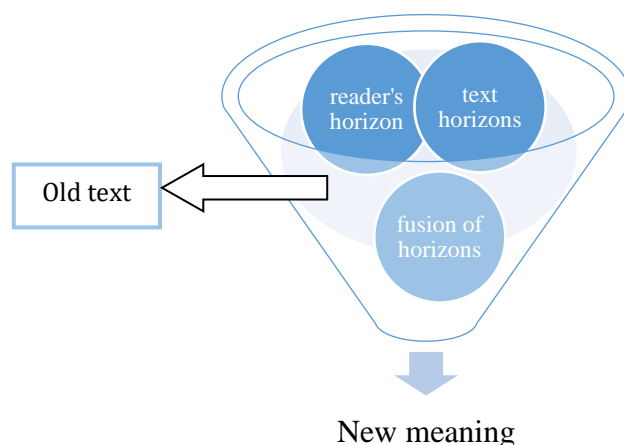

Figure 3. Diagram of Meaning Production in Gadamer's Hermeneutics

The present analysis takes up this interpretive challenge by closely examining the horizons of both text and reader. In doing so, it employs principles from 'ulūm al-Qur'ān such as contextualization (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), semantic analysis, and rules of generality and specification (*muṭlaq–muqayyad*), demonstrating that Gadamerian hermeneutics can meaningfully engage with Islamic exegetical methods.

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[29] Yılmaz, "The Fusion of Horizons: The Possibility of a Genuine Ethical Dialogue," 224.
[30] Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," 393.

a. Text Horizons

In Gadamerian terms, the text horizon represents the worldview embedded in the text, encompassing its semantic structure, historical context, and cultural assumptions. This horizon may be accessed through two modes of textual study derived from Islamic scholarship: *dirāsah mā fī al-nāṣṣ* (internal textual analysis) and *dirāsah mā ḥawla al-nāṣṣ* (contextual-historical study). Applying both perspectives to Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59 and Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31 reveals a layered understanding of *jilbāb* and *khimār*.

1. Linguistic and Semantic Dimensions

In Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59, the word *jilbāb* (plural: *jalābīb*) is derived from " جَلْبَبَ – يُجَلْبِبُ جَلْبَبَةٌ -" the meaning of "wearing *jilbāb*," which refers to a wide and loose garment.[31] Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-'Arab* states that *jilbāb* means a shawl or wide garment worn by women to cover the head, chest, and back.[32] According to Nasaruddin Umar, *jilbāb* comes from the word *jalaba*, which means "to gather" or "to carry," where at the time of the Prophet, *jilbāb* was an outer garment that covered the entire body of adult women.[33] From these various opinions, it can be concluded that jilbāb is a loose garment worn by women to cover the entire body from head to toe.

The semantic implications of *jilbāb* thus emphasize not only coverage but also concealment and modesty. The verse uses the imperative form of the verb *yudnīna* (from *danā–yudnī*), meaning "to bring close" or "to draw down," which, in this context, connotes the act of pulling the garment over the body. The construction *yudnīna 'alayhinna min jalābībihinna* suggests an intentional action of enshrouding the self with one's garment for the purpose of protection and social identification.[34]

In Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31, the term *khimār* (plural: *khumur*) derives from *khamara–yakhmuru*, which also means "to cover." The phrase *wal-yaḍribna bi-khumurihinna 'alā juyūbihinna* uses the verb *ḍaraba*, which commonly means "to strike" or "to cast," but in this construction, it denotes the act of letting the *khimār* hang or extend over the bosom (jayb).[35] As supported by classical lexicons, *khimār* refers to a head covering,[36] and the command to extend it over the chest signals a concern with concealing adornment (*zīnah*) that might provoke social or sexual attention.[37]

From a linguistic perspective, the Qur'an distinguishes the scope of these two garments: *khimār* pertains to the head and upper torso, while *jilbāb* encompasses the entire body. Moreover, the use of imperative structures in both verses (via *yudnīna* and *yaḍribna*) indicates normative force—yet the exact form and material of these garments remain unspecified, leaving room for contextual interpretation.

An often-overlooked aspect of these verses is their structural and semantic arrangement. In Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59, the phrase *zālika adnà an yu'rafna fa-lā yu'zain* ("that

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[31] Louis Ma'luf, *Al-Munjid Fi al-Lughah Wa al-'Alam* (Beirut: Dar al-Masyriq, 2002), 96.

[32] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar al-Shadir, n.d.), 272.

[33] Nasaruddin Umar, *Ketika Fikih Membela Perempuan* (Jakarta: PT Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 40.

[34] Umar Sidiq, "Diskursus Makna Jilbab Dalam Surat Al-Ahzab Ayat 59: Menurut Ibnu Kathir Dan M. Quraish Shihab," *Kodifikasia* 6, no. 1 (2012): 173.

[35] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-Arab*, 1261.

[36] Ma'luf, *Al-Munjid Fi al-Lughah Wa al-'Alam*, 195.

[37] LAA Bin Nafisah, "Muslim Female Clothing Practices: An Exploratory Study of Ancient and Modern Perceptions" (MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2015), 79, http://hdl.handle.net/2263/53436.

is more suitable so that they may be recognized and not harmed") provides a rationale for the directive. Recognition and protection form the intention of the command.[38] Meanwhile, in Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31, the command is embedded in a longer verse that includes multiple moral injunctions—lowering the gaze, guarding chastity, and so on—framing modesty within a broader ethical discourse.

By closely reading the text horizon in both linguistic and historical terms, a richer understanding of jilbāb and khimār emerges—one that resists reduction to uniform garments or culture-bound forms. Instead, these terms point to a dynamic interface between personal ethics, communal norms, and divine injunction.

2. Historical and Cultural Contexts

Engaging the dirāsah mā ḥawla al-nāṣṣ mode entails situating the verses within their socio-historical context. Veiling and body covering long preceded the advent of Islam, with evidence in Mesopotamian law codes such as the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1754 BCE), the Middle Assyrian Laws (c. 1075 BCE), and Hellenistic-Byzantine traditions.[39] In those civilizations, veils were class markers: aristocratic women veiled, while slaves and prostitutes were prohibited from doing so. Veiling thus conveyed social status and modesty within a patriarchal framework.[40]

With the emergence of Islam in the 7th century CE, these traditions were neither erased nor replicated wholesale; rather, they were reinterpreted within the emerging moral and theological framework of the Qur'an. The Medinan context—specifically the third to seventh years of Hijrah—was marked by warfare (e.g., the battles of Uhud and Khandaq), evolving public ethics, and complex social stratifications. It is within this atmosphere that the Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59 was revealed.[41]

Imam al-Suyūṭī cites two reports regarding the occasion of revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl) for Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59. The first relates to the earlier revelation of the ḥijāb command, which granted the Prophet's wife's private space. On one occasion, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb inadvertently saw Sawdah, one of the Prophet's wives, which prompted the revelation of this verse. The second account narrates that one night, a wife of the Prophet went out to fulfill a personal need and was harassed by a group of hypocrites (munāfiqūn), leading to the verse's revelation as a protective directive.[42] As for Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31, al-Suyūṭī also records two differing reports. The first states that while Muslim women were in a garden, Asmā' bint Martsad observed a woman whose clothing exposed some parts of her body and adorned jewelry, prompting Asmā' to reprimand her. The second account, as

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[38] Eko Zulfikar, Aftonur Rosyad, and Nur Afiyah, "Women's Aurat in the Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab Verse 59: Discourse Relevance of the Veil in the Indonesian Context," *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 18, no. 2 (July 22, 2022): 289, **https://doi.org/10.21009/JSQ.018.2.06**.

[39] Nasaruddin Umar, *Mendekati Tuhan Dengan Kualitas Feminis* (Jakarta: Quanta, 2014), 37.

[40] Leny Marinda, "Komodifikasi Jilbab Dalam Sejarah Peradaban Manusia," *An-Nisa': Jurnal Kajian Perempuan & Keislaman* 12, no. 2 (2019): 242.

[41] The situation in Medina became unsafe due to prolonged war. Meanwhile, the social classes of the Arab people at that time were still very strong. On the other hand, the clothing of women was almost identical between free women and slaves. This made it difficult to distinguish between them, leading to unpleasant behavior and harassment from men. M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, vol. X (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 533.

[42] Jalaluddin bin Abi Abdurrahman As-Suyuti, *Lubāb An-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb an-Nuzūl*, Cet. I (Beirut: Muassasah al-Kutub ats-Tsaqafiyyah, 2002), 214.

narrated by Ibn Jarīr, describes a woman wearing anklets that produced sound as she passed by a group of men, which led to the revelation of the verse as a corrective measure.[43]

In both cases, the emphasis is not on specific garment models but on the preservation of personal dignity and social decorum. Nasaruddin Umar, citing al-Asymawī, argues that the purpose of these directives is *ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ* (preservation of honor), a key objective within *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*.[44]

Layer	Content
Linguistic Meaning (*dirāsah mā fī al-nāṣṣ*)	*Yudnīna* (Q.S. 33:59): "to draw down" – refers to covering the whole body (*jilbāb*)
	Yaḍribna (Q.S. 24:31): "to cast/cover" – refers to extending the veil (*khimār*) over the chest
Historical Context (*dirāsah mā ḥawla al-nāṣṣ*)	Verses revealed in Medina
	Respond to issues of harassment, social stratification (e.g., distinction between free and enslaved women)
	Influenced by prior traditions (e.g., Assyrian, Byzantine)
Normative Reason (*ʿāmm lafẓ lā bikhūṣūṣi sabb*)	*Jilbāb* and *khimār* aim to preserve dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*)
	Emphasis on modesty, social recognition, and moral order
	Application prioritizes purpose over physical garment form

Table 1. Semantic-Historical Layers of Jilbāb and Khimār

b. Pre-understanding

In the framework of Gadamer's hermeneutics, pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) refers to the interpreter's prior knowledge, assumptions, and cultural predispositions that shape engagement with a text. This notion emphasizes that no interpretation begins in a vacuum; instead, it is historically and culturally conditioned. Effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) plays a key role in this regard, signaling the unconscious yet formative traditions that influence interpretive acts.[45]

In the context of interpreting the Qur'anic verses on *jilbāb* and *khimār*, readers bring a range of preconceptions rooted in religious upbringing, cultural norms, gender roles, and legal traditions. For example, individuals who emerge from pesantren-based or conservative Islamic educational backgrounds often begin with the belief that *jilbāb* refers to a long, loose outer garment that covers the female ʿawrah and serves as a symbol of religious identity. Likewise, *khimār* is typically understood as a head covering that is extended to cover the chest, based on the directive in Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31.[46] These assumptions are not arbitrary; they are shaped by centuries of legal and exegetical discourse, including positions from the

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[43] As-Suyuti, "Lubāb An-Nuqūl," 187.

[44] Umar, *Mendekati Tuhan Dengan Kualitas Feminis*, 44.

[45] Knotts, "Readers, Texts, and The Fusion of Horizons: Theology and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 236.

[46] Ayu Nurul Yuda Purwaningrum, Ahmad Mustofa, and Titis Rosowulan, "Berkerudung Dalam Al-Qur'an: Resepsi Moderat Santri Terhadap Qs. An-Nur: 31 Antara Kebebasan Individu Dan Perintah Agama," *JMPIS: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 5 (September 7, 2024): 2139, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.38035/jmpis.

four Sunni schools of law and commentary by classical scholars such as al-Ṭabarī[47] and al-Qurṭubī.[48] In classical Arabic culture, the *jilbāb* also served to signify a woman's free status in contrast to enslaved women and functioned as a form of public modesty and social distinction.[49]

However, Gadamer's framework encourages readers to reflect upon and critically engage with their pre-understandings. Such reflection initiates a dialogical process in which preconceptions are not simply discarded but are critically examined through their interaction with the text's horizon. This dialog is manifested through several methodological principles within *ʿulūm al-Qur'ān*, such as the comprehension of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, which entails understanding the socio-historical context of a verse's revelation; the application of the *muṭlaq–muqayyad* principle, which reconciles general commands with specific limitations found in other verses; and the implementation of the rule *al-ʿibrah bi ʿumūm al-lafẓi lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* ("the consideration lies in the generality of the wording, not the specificity of the cause"), which affirms that a verse's normative value transcends its immediate historical context. Together, these principles enable a balanced interpretation that honors both the historical rootedness and the universal ethical scope of the Qur'anic message.

For example, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59, which commands believing women to draw their *jilbāb* over themselves, is understood as a general command (*muṭlaq*), while Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31 introduces a more detailed instruction (*muqayyad*) by identifying parts of the body that may remain visible: *illā mā ẓahara minhā* ("except what is [ordinarily] visible"). This interpretive interplay allows for a richer reading in which historical preconceptions are broadened through textual engagement. While traditionally the principle of *muṭlaq–muqayyad* is applied within unified legal contexts,[50] in this study it serves as an analogical interpretive strategy to bridge the differing levels of specificity in the two verses concerning women's dress and public appearance.

In this context, the reader's horizon becomes a composite of inherited beliefs, contemporary influences, and critical inquiry. It reflects not merely personal opinion but a web of tradition, experience, and scholarly legacy. By acknowledging these influences, the reader becomes aware of the ways in which their interpretive stance is shaped—thus opening space for transformative understanding through what Gadamer calls the fusion of horizons.[51]

This reflective awareness is crucial when engaging with sensitive subjects like modesty, gender, and legal obligations. As such, the interpreter must recognize that

[47] Rohmansyah, "Critical Analysis on the Thoughts of Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari about Jilbab in the Quran Surah al-Aḥzab Verse 59," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 4, no. 2 (December 30, 2019): 127, **https://doi.org/10.18326/mlt.v4i2.117-136**.

[48] Syarifah Alawiyah, Budi Handrianto, and Imas Kania Rahman, "Adab Berpakaian Wanita Muslimah Sesuai Tuntunan Syariat Islam," Rayah Al-Islam 4, no. 2 (2020): 223, **https://doi.org/10.37274/rais.v4i02.338**; Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmiʿ Li Aḥkām al-Qur'Ān, 1st ed., vol. 15 (Beirut: ar-Risalah, 2006), 209–14.

[49] Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, X:533.

[50] Yusuf Olawale Uthman and Owa-Onire, "The Approach of Al-Zarkashi to The Roles of Mutlaq and Muqayyad in Understanding the Divine Revelation," *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama Sosisal Dan Budaya* 5, no. 1 (2021): 23–24, **https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v5i1.1839**.

[51] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutika: Teori Baru Mengenali Interpretasi*, ed. Musnur Hery and Damanhuri Muhammad (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), 252.

understanding is not merely about confirming prior convictions but involves the potential for expanding them. When filtered through both classical interpretive principles and Gadamerian insights, the initial assumptions surrounding *jilbāb* and *khimār* are not rejected but recontextualized, allowing for nuanced perspectives that consider both normative values and evolving social realities.

c. Fusion of Horizons and Applications (*Anwendung*)

The concept of fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) is central to Gadamer's hermeneutics. It refers to the dialogical interaction between the text's horizon and the interpreter's horizon, resulting in the emergence of new understanding. This fusion does not imply the subordination of one horizon to another but involves mutual transformation.

In the context of the verses on *jilbāb* and *khimār*, this process facilitates an interpretation that remains faithful to the Qur'anic text while also engaging with the social and ethical challenges of the contemporary world. Traditionally, many Muslim communities understand *jilbāb* and *khimār* in fixed, prescriptive terms—often associating the former with a full-body cloak and the latter with a headscarf that covers the chest. However, the Qur'an does not explicitly prescribe a garment style or material, and the emphasis in both verses lies more on moral and social functions: modesty, protection, and social distinction.[52]

Applying the *muṭlaq–muqayyad* rule, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb: 59 (general directive) should be read in tandem with Q.S. an-Nūr: 31 (specific instruction). Likewise, the principle *al-ʿibrah bi ʿumūm al-lafẓ lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* reminds interpreters that the broader meaning of the text is more decisive than the specific occasion of revelation.[53] This opens the possibility for reinterpretation grounded in enduring objectives (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*) such as preserving human dignity and preventing harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*).

Considering these principles, the act of horizon fusion allows contemporary readers to discern new meanings within the text that resonate with modern ethical concerns. For example, the command *yudnīna ʿalayhinna min jalābībihinna* in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb: 59, while rooted in the need for public safety and recognition, can today be interpreted as a general exhortation toward modest conduct that affirms individual agency and social responsibility. Similarly, *yaḍribna bi-khumurihinna ʿalā juyūbihinna* in Q.S. an-Nūr: 31 emphasizes the covering of adornment to avoid unnecessary attention. In a modern context, this directive invites critical reflection on the meaning of *zīnah*, the public/private divide, and the cultural construction of modesty. Through such engagements, the interpreter does not discard the verse's relevance but deepens it through renewed understanding.

This dialogical method fosters a more inclusive interpretation that respects textual fidelity while also responding to diverse lived realities. In pluralistic societies, the *jilbāb* may serve various roles: as a symbol of piety, cultural identity, feminist agency, or even resistance against discrimination.[54] As Stannard argues, this plurality reflects a dialog between

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[52] Ahmad Masruri, "Pandangan Ulama Klasik Dan Kontemporer Tentang Jilbab," *Andragogi* 3, no. 3 (2021): 431–47.

[53] ʿAwāṭif Bint Amīn Yūsuf al-Basāṭī, " قاعدة: العبرة بعموم اللفظ لا بخصوص السبب (دراسة تطبيقية)," *مجلة كلية الشريعة والقانون بأسيوط* دورية علمية محكمة 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2021): 1212–15, https://doi.org/10.21608/jfsu.2021.142877.

[54] Nur Aini and Mia Siscawati, "To Become Indonesian Women, You Have to Wear Jilbab," 2023, 502–3, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-058-9_39.

tradition and modernity, wherein the symbolic functions of Islamic dress evolve without losing their ethical foundations.[55]

Moreover, Gadamer's concept of *Anwendung*—application—insists that understanding always involves practical enactment. Interpreters are not passive receivers but active participants who actualize meaning in real-world contexts. In this study, application entails articulating how Qur'anic principles on modesty can be expressed through diverse cultural aesthetics, legal norms, and social frameworks.

For instance, in Arabia, *jilbāb* might be associated with state-enforced dress codes, whereas in Indonesia it may express hybrid identities blending Islamic tradition and modern fashion. In European contexts, it may represent a right to religious expression in the face of restrictive secularism. These differing expressions underscore the dynamic interplay between form and function, showing that the ethical purpose of *jilbāb* and *khimār* is not confined to a single socio-cultural manifestation.[56] Ultimately, the fusion of horizons enables an interpretive approach that is at once grounded and adaptive. It bridges the gap between normative textual meaning and contemporary sociocultural conditions, ensuring that the Qur'an continues to speak meaningfully across time and space. This integrative method—combining Gadamer's hermeneutics with *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*—presents a robust model for engaging with Islamic texts in an era marked by rapid social transformation.

In summary, the interpretive process involving *jilbāb* and *khimār* is not merely about establishing dress codes but about cultivating an ethic of modesty, dignity, and social awareness. The dynamic interaction between classical guidance and contextual relevance opens a productive space for reflection and renewal, affirming the Qur'an's enduring significance in addressing both spiritual and social dimensions of human life.

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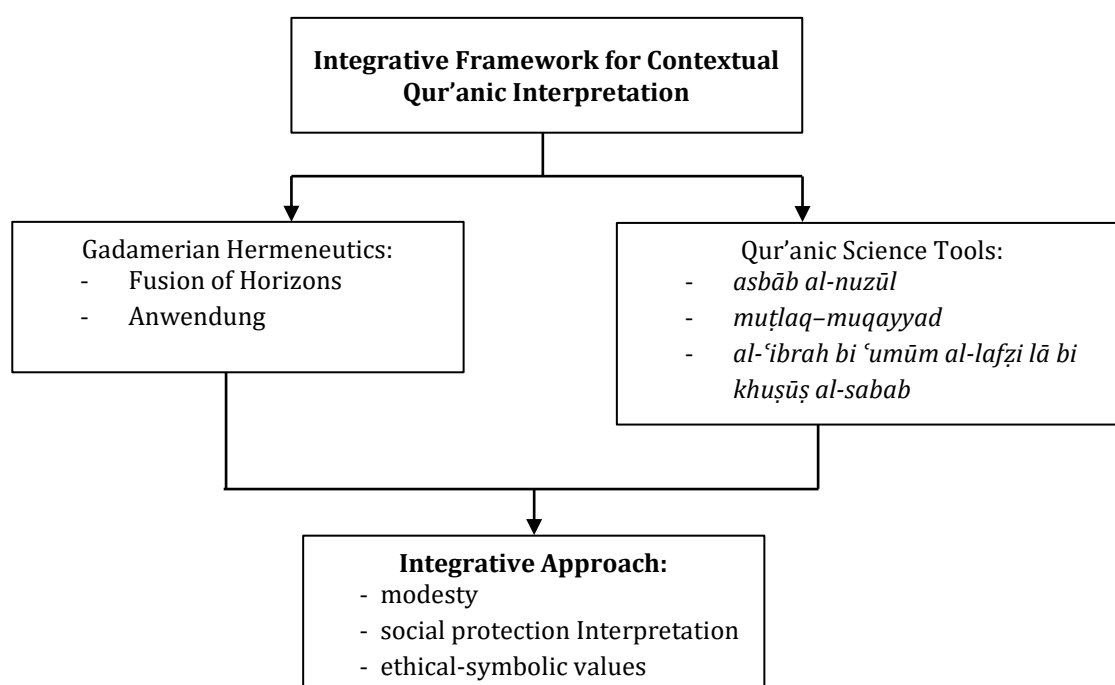
[55] Casey R. Stannard and Saiful Islam, "Meanings of Hijab from the Wearers' Perspective," in *Pivoting for the Pandemic* (Iowa State University Digital Press, 2020), 2, **https://doi.org/10.31274/itaa.11843**.

[56] Sharon Todd, "The 'Veiling' Question: On the Demand for Visibility in Communicative Encounters in Education," *Philosophy of Education* 66 (2010): 350, https://doi.org/10.47925/2010.349.
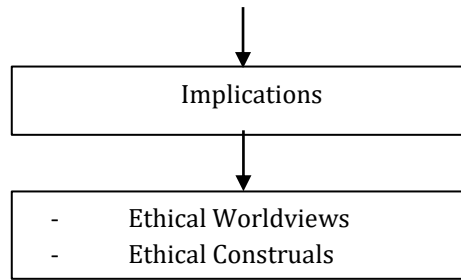
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Diagram 1. Ethical Horizons of *Jilbāb* and *Khimār*

Critique of Gadamerian Hermeneutics in the Context of Qur'anic Exegesis

While Gadamer's hermeneutics offers a valuable framework for dialogical interpretation and contextual understanding, its application in the context of Qur'anic exegesis warrants critical scrutiny. Islamic interpretive traditions, rooted in the preservation of divine revelation and the pursuit of objective meaning, have long maintained reservations regarding subjectivity and personal bias in interpreting sacred texts. This is reflected in prophetic warnings such as, "Whoever interprets the Qur'an based on his own opinion (*bi al-ra'y*), let him take his place in Hellfire."[57] It illustrates the deep-seated concern within Islamic tradition over subjective misappropriation of divine meaning.

A primary point of tension arises when considering whether the interpreter's horizon can override the textual horizon. In Gadamerian terms, the fusion of horizons entails mutual transformation. However, in Qur'anic studies, the primacy of the divine word often resists this equivalence. Classical scholars such as al-Ṭabarī,[58] al-Zarkasyī,[59] and al-Suyūṭī[60] emphasized that the Qur'an possesses an intrinsic clarity (bayān) and that its interpretation must align with linguistic, legal, and theological parameters established by the Prophet and early generations.

From this perspective, the risk posed by Gadamer's model is the potential relativization of sacred meaning. If the reader's pre-understanding dominates, the divine message may be absorbed into subjective and historically contingent frameworks. Critics argue that this leads to an erosion of the Qur'an's transcendent and prescriptive authority.[61] For example, while pre-understanding can illuminate one's engagement with the text, it must not subvert foundational meanings explicitly conveyed in the Qur'anic discourse.

Nonetheless, contemporary Muslim thinkers have attempted to mediate between traditional exegesis and philosophical hermeneutics. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, for instance, employed a hermeneutic model that recognized the socio-historical embeddedness of both text and reader. He emphasized that the Qur'an must be treated as a dynamic discourse,

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[57] Alena Kulinich, "'Personal Opinion' in Qur'ānic Exegesis: Medieval Debates and Interpretations of al-Tafsīr Bi-l-Ra'y," *Der Islam* 99, no. 2 (October 6, 2022): 476–513, https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2022-0024.

[58] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd ibn Kaśīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āyi al-Qur'ān*, I, vol. I (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, 1994), 5–43.

[59] Az-Zarkasyī, *Al-Burhān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 33; Uthman and Owa-Onire, "The Approach of Al-Zarkashi to The Roles of Mutlaq and Muqayyad in Understanding the Divine Revelation," 19.

[60] Jalāl al-dīn Abdu al-Rahmān bin Abū Bakr Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. I (Saudi Arabia: al-Mamlakah al-Arabiah al-Su'udiah, n.d.), 95–101.

[61] Moh Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir: Syarat, Ketentuan, dan Aturan yang Patut Anda Ketahui dalam Memahami Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an*, Cet. III (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2015), 387.

contextualized within its revelation milieu and read in dialogue with contemporary ethical consciousness.[62] Similarly, M. Quraish Shihab accepts interpretive plurality but insists that any contemporary reading must not contravene the Qur'an's universal moral core. He views the interpreter's horizon as a lens—not a lawgiver.[63]

Considering these tensions, any attempt to apply Gadamerian hermeneutics to the Qur'an must be qualified. It must prioritize the balance between contextual sensitivity and textual fidelity. The horizon of the reader must be open, critical, and ethically responsible, but it cannot claim epistemic superiority over the Qur'anic text. Instead, the dialog between horizons should serve as a method for uncovering layers of meaning while preserving the sanctity and coherence of the divine message.

Thus, a productive engagement between Gadamerian philosophy and Islamic exegesis requires a methodological framework that honors both the integrity of revelation and the evolving realities of the reader. This balance may be achieved by anchoring interpretation in established *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* while drawing on hermeneutic insights to enhance contextual awareness. The result is a hermeneutics of responsibility—one that resists both literalist rigidity and subjective libertinism, seeking instead a reflective, principled, and dialogical approach to understanding the Qur'an in a plural and dynamic world.

Conclusion

This study explored the meanings of *jilbāb* and *khimār* through a dialogical approach that integrates Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics with classical tools of 'ulūm al-Qur'ān. Anchored in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 59 and Q.S. an-Nūr [24]: 31, the analysis demonstrated that both garments, while linguistically and historically rooted, are not defined by rigid form but by their protective and ethical function. Gadamer's key concepts—*Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history), *Vorverständnis* (pre-understanding), *Horizontverschmelzung* (fusion of horizons), and *Anwendung* (application)—were employed to reconstruct meanings that resonate with contemporary realities while remaining faithful to the Qur'anic message.

By supplementing Gadamerian hermeneutics with established interpretive tools from *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*—notably *asbāb al-nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation), the *muṭlaq–muqayyad* principle (harmonizing general and specific commands), and the rule *al-'ibrah bi 'umūm al-lafẓi lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab* (giving priority to the generality of the wording over the specificity of context)—this study proposes an interdisciplinary model for contextual Qur'anic interpretation. The findings suggest that *jilbāb* and *khimār* should not be reduced to fixed dress codes but understood as ethical-symbolic expressions of modesty, dignity, and social protection. This integrative approach empowers contemporary Muslim readers to engage these verses meaningfully within modern socio-cultural realities, while maintaining continuity with the classical interpretive tradition.

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[62] Michal Moch, "Critique of Nasẖ in Contemporary Qur'ānic Hermeneutics Using the Example of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd's Works," *Religions* 13, no. 2 (February 21, 2022): 187, **https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020187**.

[63] Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir: Syarat, Ketentuan, dan Aturan yang Patut Anda Ketahui dalam Memahami Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an*, 312.

Nonetheless, the application of Gadamerian hermeneutics to the Qur'an is not without limitations. A key concern lies in the potential for excessive subjectivism—an issue that classical scholars warned against through their critique of *tafsīr bi al-ra'y* (interpretation based solely on personal opinion). The prophetic hadith warning against unauthorized interpretation underscores the sanctity and stability of Qur'anic meaning. However, scholars such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and M. Quraish Shihab have shown that contemporary interpretive engagement, if grounded in ethical responsibility and textual awareness, can enrich rather than dilute the discourse.

Scholars should continue to examine the intersections of hermeneutic theory and Islamic exegesis, especially on issues where textual norms intersect with evolving societal values. Further research on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and hermeneutic ethics could help address contemporary challenges in gender, identity, and religious expression. Pedagogically, Islamic educational institutions should cultivate interpretive frameworks that are critical yet reverent, inclusive yet anchored in tradition. Such approaches can ensure that the Qur'an remains a source of guidance that is both timeless and timely.

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