

Emha Ainun Nadjib's Qur'an Reception on the Maiyah Community

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Abstract

This study is aimed to depict Emha Ainun Nadjib's reception of the Qur'an in a religious forum, Maiyah. This research is important to be discussed because Maiyah is an effective forum for transforming religious knowledge, especially the study of the Qur'an to his followers. The researcher uses qualitative research using an anthropological approach. Then, sources of the data were obtained from observations at the Maiyah Islamic forum which was held once a month. The researcher was directly involved in the Maiyah forum to observe Cak Nun and his followers' reception of the Qur'an. Ahmad Rafiq's theory which divides the reception of the Qur'an into three: exegetical reception, aesthetic reception, and functional reception is used to frame the direction of this research. The results of this study are as follows. First, exegetically, Cak Nun and followers of The Maiyah Community perceive the Qur'an as a strategic method of understanding the Qur'an which is comprehended and fit to the general people. Second, aesthetically, the Qur'an in Maiyah is displayed in recitations of the Qur'an and written works of *mushaf tadabur* which are expressions of Islamic art. Third, functional reception is seen through spiritual and intellectual transformation for followers.

Keywords: *Maiyah Community; Emha Ainun Nadjib; Al-Qur'an; Reception of the Qur'an.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memotret resepsi al-Qur'an Emha Ainun Nadjib di dalam forum pengajiannya yaitu Maiyah. Penelitian ini penting untuk diangkat karena Maiyah merupakan wadah yang efektif untuk mentransformasi ilmu agama, khususnya kajian al-Qur'an kepada jemaahnya. Peneliti melakukan riset secara kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan antropologi. Sumber data diperoleh dari observasi kepada forum pengajian maiyah yang dilaksanakan setiap bulan sekali. Peneliti terlibat langsung pada forum Maiyah untuk menemukan resepsi Cak Nun dan jemaahnya terhadap al-Qur'an. Teori Ahmad Rafiq yang membagi resepsi al-Qur'an menjadi tiga yakni: resepsi eksegetis, resepsi estetis dan resepsi fungsional digunakan untuk membingkai arah penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian ini adalah pertama, secara eksegetis, Cak Nun dan jemaah Maiyah meresepsi al-Qur'an sebagai metode strategis memahami al-Qur'an yang mendalam dan layak dikonsumsi untuk kalangan awam. Kedua, secara estetis, al-Qur'an dalam Maiyah ditampilkan dalam tilawah al-Qur'an dan karya tertulis mushaf tadabur yang merupakan ekspresi dari seni Islam. Ketiga, resepsi fungsional disajikan melalui transformasi spiritual dan intelektual jemaahnya.

Kata kunci: *Komunitas Maiyah; Emha Ainun Nadjib; Al-Qur'an; Resepsi Al-Qur'an.*

INTRODUCTION

The current challenge faced by the Islamic community in contemporary Indonesia is studying Qur'an in society. This study is not only limited to focusing on the study of the Qur'an in a textual (text-oriented) manner but also broader, entering the cultural domain. This often happens because the Qur'an is positioned as an exclusive book, creating a distance between the Qur'an and humans.

Finally, Al-Qur'an is not as familiar as the main source in everyday life. This positioning can reduce the Qur'an's main function, which should be as the main reference (*al-marja' al-asāsi*) to respond to the contemporary realities in Indonesia.¹

Anyone can study Qur'an. One should not have to be a scholar or scientist who focuses on the field of the Qur'an and Islamic studies. Al-Qur'an with its miracles has not only attracted the attention of local researchers but also Western (orientalist) researchers². They conduct research using the community behavior and beliefs approach, which is also called the anthropological sociological approach in Al-Qur'an Studies. Among the orientalist who are interested in using this approach are Ingrid Mattson, Anna Gade, and Anne K. Rasmussen.

If Mattson describes cultural aspects involving verses of the Qur'an: starting from how it is memorized, written, taught, used as decorations (calligraphy and architecture), interpreted, and practiced by Muslims so that it is in the life cycle of Muslims³, then Gade measures how far the influence of the power of Qur'an is in everyday life, especially in moral transformation⁴. Meanwhile, Rasmussen's study focuses more on aspects of Islamic music, including recitations of the Qur'an (Qur'an recitation), tambourine music, and other music with Islamic nuances.⁵

Amid these developed and continued contemporary issues, a phenomenon emerges from a national figure in conveying the Qur'an amid millennial society through religious lectures. It is

¹ The focus and locus of the Qur'an study in Indonesia still focus on the textuality of the Qur'an and has not yet reached its reality. The study of Al-Qur'an studies in Indonesia cannot be separated from the two main books. They are *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm Al-Qurān* by Badr al-Din al-Zarkasyi (d. 794) and *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm Al-Qurān* by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911). Ichsan Emerald Alamsyah, "Focus and Locus of Qur'an Studies are still limited in textuality", article accessed on 1 November 2019, at 10.00 WIB from <https://republika.co.id/berita/q04gto349/fokus-dan-lokus-kajian-quran-masih-terbatas-tekstualitas>. Ulumul Quran is the science that discusses how to understand Divine revelation written in the Mushaf al-Qur'an which includes revelation concepts such as *asbab nuzul*, *nasikh mansukh*, *mushaf* of verses, interpretation of verses, and so on. Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qurān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, tth), p. 11.

² A. Hanafi describes the Orientalists as a group of Western scholars who study the languages of the Eastern world and their literature and pay considerable attention to the religions of the Eastern world, history, customs, and sciences. Relations between the West and the East have started since the glory of the East when the East became a center of knowledge with a collection of valuable books. And at that time, Westerners learned from several scientists from the East to awaken them from the dark ages. Read Mannan Buchari, *Menyingkap Tabir Orientalisme*, (Jakarta: Amzah, 2006), p. 9.

³ His research is written in his work. Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2008).

⁴ Anna M. Gade, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2010)

⁵ Read her work in Anne K. Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). The emergence of these researchers was pioneered by Howard M. Federspiel, a political science professor at Ohio State University, United States, who in the 1950s published works in the form of the book *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Quran*. The book later became a reference for Western researchers interested in studying Islam in Southeast Asia. In general, Howard's research examines the literature on interpretation (*tafsir*), the science of *tafsir*, translations of the Qur'an, indexes of the Qur'an, and books related to the Qur'an. Even though his work is reasonably comprehensive, it did not escape criticism from Islah Gusmian who stated that all his studies were more oriented toward the popularity of literature. However, in terms of interpretation methodology, Howard's study has not made a significant contribution. Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi*, (Yogyakarta: LKis, 2013), p.9-10.

known that this figure is Emha Ainun Nadjib (hereinafter referred to as Cak Nun) who has a very strong appeal and easily attracts public attention. Through the Maiyah Taklim Council, he introduced Qur'an closer to the heart of social life to solve society's problems. Cak Nun has been known as a humanist, writer as well as a Muslim scientist. He is a multi-talented scholar and excels in various fields such as literature, politics, music, culture, and religion.

This study is even more interesting because the style of the Qur'anic thought presented by Cak Nun is different from other preachers in Indonesia. Cak Nun enriches Maiyah with cultural values, internalization of Islamic art, and a Sufistic paradigm. He felt that spiritual values (Sufism) in life needed to be re-functioned to make humans civilized and commendable individually and socially. He understands that the intellectual heritage of Islam in the form of Sufism covered with cultural nuances in Indonesia is an indicator of how deeply Islam and the Archipelago have been united since ancient times to create local wisdom as a way of life for the people. Thus, the Qur'an can accommodate its rich cultural background. In this way, a dialectic occurs between the Qur'an, as the holy book of Islam, and Indonesian culture.⁶ In another word, the interaction between the Qur'an in people's lives is intensively discussed in the study of the Living Qur'an.

The presence or existence of the Qur'an in a certain Muslim community has a certain impact and influence on community activities. The reception of the Qur'an captures the process of community interaction with it, which is not limited to the meaning of the text but places more emphasis on aspects of applying the texts of the Qur'an in everyday life.⁷ One form of reception/acceptance of the Qur'an by Cak Nun is shown in the form of religious lectures at the *Majelis Taklim Maiyah*.

In its development, the rise of the *Majelis Taklim* (Religious Community)⁸ in Indonesia cannot be separated from the increasing public appreciation for a better understanding of the

⁶The dialectics can be seen historically. Al-Qur'an studies in Indonesia have started since the beginning of the spread of Islam. Since long ago, this holy book has become a religious text used as a social activity by most people. The tradition of reciting the Qur'an has always been an important part of their religious behavior. It is used as a tool in social activities, memorizing traditions to compete at the international level. Abdullah Saeed, *The Quran: An Introduction*, (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2008), 84.

⁷The phenomenon of the Qur'an in Everyday Life is the functioning of the Qur'an in real life outside of its textual conditions. This phenomenon arises because of the practice of interpreting the Qur'an which does not refer to an understanding of its textual message but is based on the assumption that there is primacy (*jadilal*) of certain verses of the text of the Qur'an, for the practical interests of the people's daily life. See M. Mansur, *Living Quran dalam Lintasan Sejarah Studi Al-Qur'an*, in Sahiron Syamsuddin (editor), *Metode Penelitian Living Quran dan Hadis*, (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007), p. 5. In this study, Amin al-Khulli places it as *Dirāsāt Mā Haula al-Qur'an*, it is research that discusses outside the text of the Qur'an. Amin Al-Khulli, *Manāhij Tajdīd fi al-Nahw wa al-Balāgh wa al-Tafsīr wa al-Adab*, (Cairo: Daru al Ma'rifah, 1961), p. 234.

⁸Religious Community is one of the educational methods in early Islam which greatly contributed to the spread of religious doctrine. Jack Meacham, "Islam Is Essential for General Education." *The Journal of General Education*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2015, pp. 56–64. Uploaded from JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jgeneeduc.64.1.0056. The community is also interpreted as religious identity, cultural identity, and social stigma. Read Terrance G Carroll, "Islam

function of religion.⁹ Society does not only need things that are materialistic but also spiritualistic as a counterweight.¹⁰

Cak Nun is familiar with the Qur'an in his various da'wah forums. His lecture community named Maiyah is the core and starting point for studying the verses of the Qur'an. At the beginning of the emergence of the Maiyah forum, Cak Fuad (his older brother) played a role in explaining the textual reading of the verses of the Qur'an. The meaning of textual does not mean to interpret rigidly and narrowly but describes the treasures of interpretation from various works of *tafsir* to create comprehension. Then Cak Nun plays a role in facilitating a contextual interpretation of related verses and tries to integrate it with social, political, and economic realities in society and the state. For him, the verses of the Qur'an are a source of inspiration for his thoughts. It is quite evident that his thinking is influenced heavily by the Qur'an and socio-anthropology in the Indonesian context.

Cak Nun develops his study of the Qur'an with a contextual approach to the Maiyah community which is held regularly. He portraits, explores, and tries to provide solutions to every socio-cultural reality faced by society with the Qur'anic paradigm. The Maiyah community, which has grown and developed widely, faces different problems so Cak Nun has prepared various verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet to provide solutions to these problems.

Cak Nun's Living Qur'an practice can be seen in the Maiyah community which is still active today. This shows that for him, the Qur'an can be a partner, not only for expert interpreters (*tafsir's* expert) to produce books of exegesis but also for culturists. The Qur'an can still be consumed and

and Political Community in the Arab World.” International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 18, no. 2, 1986, pp. 185–204.

Uploaded by JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/163261. In Indonesia during the New Order, mainstream da'wah was understood as an "invitation" to Islamic piety. The ideal of religious pluralism among religious communities is part of the mainstream of Islamic da'wah. This approach emphasizes the value of the Qur'an in QS. Al-Hujurat: 13, which expresses the idea of “knowing one another” read Anna M Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice Learning, Emotion and the Recited Quran in Indonesia*, (USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), p. 16.

Accessed on JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27865428. Da'wah is the most important part in bringing the Qur'an to life in social life. Abdullah Saeed, *The Quran: An Introduction*, (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2008), p. 84. The transformation of religious values to society is very effective using da'wah media. Read on Kees Van Djik, “Dakwah and Indigenous Culture: The Dissemination of Islam” in *Bijdragen Tot De Taal, Land, En Volkenkunde*, vol. 154, number 2, 1998, p. 218–235. Accessed from JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27865428.

⁹ Through religion, life becomes understood well and more meaningful. Religion is natural in human beings since he was born. Khurshid Ahmad (et al). “Religion, State and Society.” *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2008, pp. 87–103. Accessed on JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/42909188. This shows that humans cannot be separated from religion. According to him, God created this fitrah because "religion" is a fundamental necessity of life. Religion revealed by Allah to humans emerged from an introduction and first human experience on earth. Three things are found here: truth, beauty, and goodness. The three words combined, are named sacred. So that the meaning of religion is the sanctity that is imprinted in one's soul. Religious people will continue to seek and find what is right, good, and beautiful. M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*, (Bandung: Mizan Publishers, 1999), p. 375-377. Read also Amsal Bakhtiar, *Filsafat Agama*, (Jakarta: Pt Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007), p. 2

¹⁰ Didin Hafidhuddin, *Dakwah Aktual*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 1998), p. 88.

preached to the general public. Al-Qur'an is not exclusive to a handful of intellectuals, but all elements of Indonesian society have long ago been practicing the Living Qur'an. The text of the Qur'an can be drawn to various cultures. Its content is always relevant to the problems faced in different environmental and cultural contexts. Cak Nun takes this position, where to gain an understanding of the Qur'an that is in accordance with the Indonesian cultural context, studies of geography, social psychology, and cultural issues must be explored.

Cak Nun wants the explanation of the Qur'an to be accepted by the wider community with its practical meaning, simple but relevant to everyday problems, so he included social-community nuances in his study of the Qur'an. The perception that the Qur'an is only for professional scholars must be changed to the Qur'an for ordinary people. So, the explanations given should not be complicated with intricate details and explanations. It is the same with Muhammad Abduh, a contemporary *mufassir* who prioritizes the Qur'an as a guideline for humans in general, without the limitations of intellectuals and lay people. In this way, the revelation of the Qur'an is on the right path; *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*.

To summarize, this research wants to convey a study of the reception of the Qur'an to Maiyah to learn what the congregation does with the values of the Qur'an. As Ahmad Rafiq describes three patterns of reception of the Qur'an: exegetical, aesthetic, and functional.¹¹

METHODS

Based on the background above, this research problem can be identified as: *first*, the reception of the Qur'an in Indonesian society. *Second*, Maiyah is a place for Cak Nun and his congregation to receive the Qur'an. So that the big formulation is how Cak Nun and the congregation of the *Majelis Taklim* Maiyah's reception of the Qur'an in the recitation. The significance of this research is to look at its exegetical, aesthetic, and functional reception. This theory was initiated by Ahmad Rafiq.

This research is qualitative research.¹² This is because the Maiyah community is a social phenomenon in contemporary Indonesian society. The researcher obtained primary data from recitation at the Maiyah Kenduri Cinta Community. Data was obtained from Cak Nun's activities during his lectures. He articulated his thoughts in the discourse on Al-Qur'an studies to the congregation. This study, which explores contemporary issues thematically, makes it easier for researchers to examine how Cak Nun conducts the *tadabur* (intellection) of the Qur'an (exegetical

¹¹ Ahmad Rafiq, "The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an in a Non-Arabic Speaking Community", (Dissertation: The Temple University Graduate Board, 2014), p. 147.

¹² Qualitative research describes research problems by exploring concepts or phenomena, so they are easy to understand. John W. Creswell, *Research Design Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Mixed*, p. 4.

and functional receptions) to answer growing problems. As for bibliographical primary data sources, the researcher obtained the data from the main books that embody the spectrum of Cak Nun's thoughts and his *tadabur* works, including "*Semesta Emba Ainun Nadjib*" by Sumasno Hadi, *Kitab Ketentraman Emba Ainun Nadjib* by Alfian M, Aprinus Salam and Wawan Susetya, *Jalan Sunyi* by Ian L. Betts, and *Mushaf al-Qur'an Tadabur Maiyah Padbangmbulan* by Ahmad Fuad Effendy and Muhammad Ainun Nadjib.

In order to collect various data from various sources, the researcher use triangulation methods including interviews, observation, and documentation, rather than relying only on one data source. The approach used is anthropology as a form of research in the field apart from the literature. Anthropology is used as an approach because the focus of the study is related to religion, culture, and society.

The basic framework of this research is the reception of the Qur'an. Reception is defined as text processing, ways of giving meaning to works so that they can respond to them. Reception can also mean receiving or enjoying literary works by readers.¹³

If this reception is applied to quranic studies, then the definition becomes a study of how readers respond to the holy verses of the Qur'an. The form of response also varies. There are times when it is the way people interpret the messages of their verses. It can also be displayed in people's efforts to apply their moral teachings or the way they read and recite their verses. It can be concluded that there is an association and interaction between readers and the Qur'an.

Also related to this reception theory, as stated by Ahmad Rafiq, is associating it with the object of the Qur'an. He provides an explanation of three patterns of reception of the Qur'an, exegetical, aesthetic, and functional reception.¹⁴ Exegetical reception is the act of receiving the Qur'an by the exegesis of the meaning of the Qur'an. It is an attempt to explain the meaning of several references to the Qur'an for the first generation to recite the Qur'an. Then, acceptance is manifested in the interpretation tradition as an effort to understand the Qur'an. Receptions in this form are more informative and seek to convey the contents of the message of the Qur'an.

The aesthetic reception is the act of receiving the Qur'an as an aesthetic entity. According to Navid Kermani, the Qur'an is a text that is full of meaning, has enormous energy when it is recited, and can influence its listeners. This is what he calls the aesthetic aspect. The musical recitation of the Qur'an is an aesthetic experience for an astonishing excursion of thought.¹⁵ As for

¹³ Emzir dan Saifur Rohman, *Teori dan Pengajaran Sastra*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2016), p. 194

¹⁴ Ahmad Rafiq, "*The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an in a Non-Arabic Speaking Community*", (Dissertation: The Temple University Graduate Board, 2014), p. 147.

¹⁵ M. Nur Kholish Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ, 2005), p. 70

Ahmad Rafiq, he saw that this reception was presented in an aesthetic form as well as the Qur'an which was written, read, or voiced.

The Qur'an is very possible to be perceived aesthetically. In Sayyid Qutb's words, *Mashurun bi Al-Qur'an* (bewitched by the beauty of the Qur'an) both in textual and contextual meaning. This was also experienced by Umar bin Khattab The Companion when he heard his brother reciting the Tāha chapter in the Qur'an.¹⁶

The action of this aesthetic reception can be displayed in two ways. First, accepting the Qur'an as an aesthetic entity where the reader can experience aesthetic value in its acceptance. Second, the reader achieves an aesthetic approach to accepting the Qur'an and realization. In these two points, the reader feels the aesthetic experience personally and emotionally. Sometimes this reception is expressed in a beautifully written work such as calligraphy or it can also be expressed in a reception that causes respect for the material object of the Qur'an. This cannot be denied because the Qur'an has the beauty of language and content. As well as the beauty when it is recited in a certain rhythm.

Functional reception includes practices carried out by the recipient in response to what is stated by the text (based on the practical ends of the reader, not the theory). Functional here means practical. This reception is used to show a performative function, that is, anything that is done. Its use could present normative goals or practices that encourage the establishment of an attitude or behavior. This functional reception can actually be seen at the time of the Prophet Muhammad when the Prophet or his companions recited the al-Fatihah as a way to heal people who were sick or bitten by animals. The Companions perceive what they saw to be practiced in social life.

Functional reception can also be interpreted as a study of the use of holy scriptures, both the use of its verses and the wisdom that influences moral-ethical changes. So it is more on the performative function, what is treated.¹⁷ The Qur'an itself has clearly stated itself as a guide (*hudan*), thus encouraging the establishment of an attitude or behavior.

Thus, from the reception process, an interaction between the Qur'an and the reader or listener is illustrated which in turn forms a meaning, either reproductive or productive. Such a concept in psychology is known as the stimulus-response theory.¹⁸ It is how readers and listeners of the Qur'an react in their daily lives, or when the recitation of the Qur'an is read so it drives the

¹⁶ Al-Baihaqi, *Dalail Al-Nubunnwah*, (Kairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1986), p. 199.

¹⁷ Ahmad Rafiq, "The Reception.....", p. 148.

¹⁸ The stimulus-response theory is the most basic model of communication. This theory is influenced by the discipline of psychology, especially the behavioristic school. The model describes the stimulus-response relationship. This theory shows communication as a very simple action-reaction process. Hidjanto Djamal, Andi Fachrudin, *Dasar-Dasar Penyiaran: Sejarah, Organisasi, Operasional dan Regulasi*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), p. 69.

energy that can deeply affect the heart and the state of the soul of the reader or listener.¹⁹ From the definition of reception and the Qur'an above, the reception of the Qur'an is how the Qur'an as a text is received by Muslims and how they react to the Qur'an.

This research cannot be separated from the previous studies, as written by Muhamad Ali Asri Faen in his work "*Metode Memahami al-Qur'an dan Realitas kehidupan Perspektif Emha Ainun Najib*" (Emha Ainun Najib's Perspective on Method of Understanding the Qur'an and the Reality of Life).²⁰ Faen revealed that the method used by Cak Nun to understand the Qur'an was the method of *tadabur* al-Qur'an, by bringing the meaning of the Qur'an into *majazī* meaning or hidden meaning. Faen also revealed that Cak Nun's *tadabur* method of understanding the Qur'an was not fully able to provide answers to society's problems, but Cak Nun tried to present questions as material for contemplation on the reality of people's lives so that they could become an alternative in reflecting into the reality of life.

The research conducted by Faen provides an overview of the *tadabur* al-Qur'an method used by Cak Nun. This confirms that Cak Nun deeply discussed the Qur'an in his Maiyah forum. Different from Faen who focuses on the reality of his life, the researcher intended to explore the perspective of the forms of reception of the Qur'an.

DISCUSSION

Before explaining the results of this research, it is necessary for the researcher to introduce Cak Nun and Maiyah and their paradigm toward the Qur'an to describe the landscape of thought and the background of the main character in this study.

Emha Ainun Nadjib's real name is Muhammad Ainun Nadjib. However, he is more popular with the nickname Emha which refers to his first name, namely Muhammad. The word Muhammad was shortened to M.H. which later changed to Emha. This nickname has been with him since his university days because he was often called "Em" or "M". Until now, this nickname is used in his books, namely Emha Ainun Nadjib.

People also often call him by the name Cak Nun. In Javanese culture, "Cak" is a nickname typical of the East Javanese people for an older brother. Cak Nun was born on Wednesday Legi, 27 May 1953 in Jombang, East Java. He is the fourth child of fifteen children from the couple Mr. Muhammad Abdul Latif and Mrs. Chalimah.

¹⁹ M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ, 2005), p. 70-71.

²⁰ Muhamad Ali Asri Faen, "*Metode Memahami al-Qur'an dan Realitas kehidupan Prespektif Emha Ainun Najib*", (Thesis; UIN Sunan Ampel, 2020)

Born from a middle-class family in Jombang, Cak Nun deeply absorbed the example of his parents. For him, his parents are important role models that influence his personality and thinking. His father, Latif, is a respected community figure because people often ask him for advice and thoughts on everyday social issues. He is a farmer and *Kiai*²¹ who owns a *surau*.²² Likewise, his mother, Chalimah, is a person who is respected in her surroundings because people tend to ask her to solve their problems.

Education from within his family determines the religious attitude of Cak Nun. Cak Nun's childhood was spent in Menturo village, Jombang. As a country boy, he learned a very valuable lesson, the simplicity, and wisdom of life. Cak Nun's attitude to life begins with his life experiences as a child. This experience became his guide in developing his social and cultural ideas. So that it is not surprising that Cak Nun always has pro-people ideas, fights for their lives, and understands the suffering that befalls them. Life from a small scope in his village teaches the meaning of human value. The struggle of the villagers who work every day to survive is considered a noble job, even though economically, they live mediocally.

Cak Nun does not hesitate to express social criticism if the power does not side with the people; persecutes humans and humanity or does not uphold legal justice. He lives and analyzes every event in social life into a national macro-idea because he has been directly in the lives of ordinary people for a long time. Jombang's environmental culture also influences the formation of his identity. Jombang community is very religious. Not only *pesantren*, Jombang is also one of the centers for Islamic madrasas in Indonesia such as TPA (Al-Qur'an Education Center) and *Madrasah Diniyah*.

Maiyah is a forum for articulating Cak Nun's thoughts to his congregation, Maiyah is a means for discussing various social, cultural, political, or religious issues critically. Maiyah is also Cak Nun's medium of preaching to study, understand and implement the values of the Qur'an and

²¹ *Kiai* is an honorary title for holders of religious authority. In the Persian region, the term is the same as the titles "Maulana", "Mullah", and "Shaykh". In Turkey, people used the terms Hoxha, Khawj, Hoca, Hoge, Hoja, Hodscha, Khoujah, Khoja. The word *Kiai* in Javanese is used for three different types of titles: 1. An honorary title for items that are considered sacred. For example, *Kiai Garuda Kencana* for the designation of the golden carriage at the Yogyakarta Palace, 2. An honorary title for elderly people, 3. A title given by the community to an expert in the Islamic religion who owns or becomes the leader of a *pesantren* and teaches classical Islamic books to santri (*students*). In this sense, he is also called a pious person. Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982), p.55. Likewise, Djamas said that *Kiai* is a term for a religious leader or a figure who leads an Islamic boarding school. Nurhayati Djamas, *Dinamika Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia Pasca Kemerdekaan*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafinda Persada, 2008), p.55. *Kiai* are also considered as people who know that Allah SWT is the one who has power over everything, so they feel afraid of committing immorality and always want to live up to Allah's verses. Hamdan Rasyid, *Bimbingan Ulama Kepada Ummat dan Umat*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Beta, 2007), p.18.

²² *Surau* is a place (home) for Muslims to perform their worship (praying prayers, reciting the Qur'an and so on). Another term is *langgar*. Kbbi.web.id, accessed on November 5 2019, at 13.25 WIB.

the Islamic religion to answer the latest problems in the life of the nation and state in society. Cak Nun explained that Maiyah, which means togetherness, means: *first*, doing anything with God. *Second*, with anyone who wants to be together. Therefore, Maiyah can be interpreted as a commitment to nationalism, heterogeneity, pluralism wisdom, and no economic disparities.

Maiyah was initiated on 31 July 2001 on the eve of the 2001 MPR Special Session. At that time, at Cak Nun's residence, a workshop entitled "*Shalawat Maulid*" was held featuring Kiai Kanjeng. The event was intended to maintain togetherness among the common people who have been struggling to just live a useful life in this country. Cak Nun did not explicitly define what Maiyah is, but it can be concluded that Maiyah is a place for learning together.

Cak Nun and the Qur'an

According to Cak Nun, the Qur'an is a kind of "*pusaka*" (heirloom) or sacred heritage for mankind. The *pusaka* was borne directly from the holiness of God. Cak Nun's mention of the Qur'an as an heirloom shows his identity as someone who is engaged in the world of culture. He borrows cultural terminology to define this final scripture. *Pusaka* is a term used to refer to an object that is considered holy or sacred.²³ Al-Qur'an as an heirloom means that the existence of this book is trusted and grateful for its sanctity, its usefulness, and its origin, and it has a very special place in the heart. Once the position of the Qur'an is so important for Muslims, it is used as the main reference in establishing Islamic law regarding human life. The Prophet Muhammad had taught the Qur'an to his companions. The majority made it as memorization and life practice in everyday life. The same applies to all the people of the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an was entrusted so that it can guide people to the right path in accordance with Allah's commands and prohibitions. One of the pillars of faith for every Muslim is to believe in the Qur'an as the truth that comes from God.

According to Cak Nun, the Qur'an is the most perfect holy book for mankind. He termed it with whole and ripe coconuts. Before becoming a mature coconut, this fruit undergoes growth in several phases. This phase of coconut growth has termed the stage of God's revelation to the Prophets. Many celestial books (the holy book of "sky" scriptures that Allah sent down as prophetic treatises) on earth. Among them the Torah to the Prophet Musa, the Zabur to the prophet Dawud

²³ In the Indonesian context, objects that are considered sacred (heirloom) here are generally inherited objects passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors, such as in the palace environment. Usually shaped keris (*dagger*), spears, sticks, and so on. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pusaka>. accessed on March 7 2020, at 11.12 WIB. The heirlooms stored in the palace are believed to provide protection and protection against harm to their owners. Therefore, every effort is made to clean (bath) regularly with rituals as has been done for generations.

and the Bible to the Prophet Isa. And the Qur'an is the ultimate divine book. All these books are instructions for mankind according to the needs of the Prophet. As for the Qur'an, it is a miracle of all time.

Cak Nun termed the Torah as *bluluk* (coconut seeds/seeds), the Zabur book as *cengkir* (coconut seeds that have grown leaves), and the Bible as *degan* (young coconut). The final growth phase is the Qur'an as a whole and ripe coconut fruit. This description of Cak Nun is a sign that the heavenly books (Torah, Zabur, and Bible) have the same function as the Qur'an to provide true guidance to humans. The contents of all these books are contained in the Qur'an.

The main function of the Qur'an is guidance for humans. This is because most of this holy book contains ethics (morals) and laws that govern humans so that they can survive in living life in this world and in the hereafter. Similar to the commentary scholars, Cak Nun agrees with the general public about the function of the Qur'an. However, Cak Nun uses a cultural idiom to provide a deeper understanding, 'The Qur'an is the flame of a torch.

The term "torch" is something new because it is not found in several commentary works (*tafsir* works), including works by Indonesian *mufassir*. Even though the substance leads to a mutually agreed upon meaning, Cak Nun is more interested in borrowing the language of the people, with the hope that the Qur'an can become a companion for daily dialogue.

The torch is a traditional lighting device. Before the first electric lamp appeared in Batavia in 1897, the people of Nusantara used traditional tools for their lighting needs, such as torches, and *semprongan* (a kind of traditional torch). The torch is made of a piece of bamboo with a cloth or coconut fiber that has been dipped with kerosene as the wick. Usually, the torch is used to travel in the dark at night. The community is already familiar with this traditional tool. In the current era where electric lighting is common, Muslim communities still use torches in villages to celebrate certain events such as the *takbiran* night of Eid Al-Fitr celebrations, the *Khataman* Al-Qur'an procession, and the eve of the Hijrah New Year 1 Muharram.

Forms of Al-Qur'an Reception in Maiyah

Generally, this study uses Ahmad Rafiq's framework pattern of Al-Qur'an reception; exegetical reception, aesthetic reception, and functional reception, where these patterns are used to observe Emha Ainun Nadjib's study of the Qur'an on Maiyah anthropologically.

First, *tadabur* al-Qur'an is an exegetical reception. Basically, the most prominent feature of Maiyah is that Cak Nun embodies the values of the Qur'an orally using the lecture/recitation model.

The practice of the Qur'an in the lectures at the Maiyah forum is very clear because it makes the Qur'an the basic foundation and primary reference for observing contemporary issues.²⁴

The method used to understand the Qur'an for ordinary people is called *tadabur*. Cak Nun led the Maiyah congregation to contemplate, think, and reflect on the verses they read and heard, especially during the recitation. The Maiyah congregation received Cak Nun's *tadabur* as a strong encouragement to see every societal problem by relying on the Qur'an. The congregation felt that Cak Nun's meditation made it easier for them to connect the contents of the Qur'an with social phenomena.

Tadabur is a popular classic term that is also associated with efforts to explore the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. It's just that epistemologically the term *tadabur* is not as popular as the science of interpretation in the field of classical to modern Qur'anic studies. The term *tadabur* science is still very rare to find. However, in the last few decades, there has been a temporary impression that *tadabur* is considered a scientific theory because it already has its own methodological structure framework.

Tafsir and *tadabur* are something different. Even so, according to Khalid bin Uthman al-Sabt, interpretation and *tadabur* have a *mulāzimah* or correlative relationship. This is because to know God's intentions from His words contained in the Qur'an, *tadabur* is needed. Likewise, one needs to understand the meaning of the pronunciation, which is obtained from the science of *tafsir* (interpretation).²⁵

Abdul Ghani Sarhan also emphasized that there is an ancient relationship between *tadabur* and *tafsir* which cannot be separated. *Tadabur* is an intermediary while interpretation is the goal.²⁶ Although very close, there is a visible difference between the two, in terms of the object, the object of *tafsir* is the Qur'an while the object of *tadabur* is the Qur'an which is read, heard, and written.²⁷ It is the same with Abd Al-Rahman Habannakah who stated that *tadabur* is the most important part of understanding the Qur'an. *Tadabur* does not merely think about the words and verses of the Qur'an. More than that, *tadabur* is a comprehensive thinking activity to reach the final meaning of the words of the Qur'an.²⁸

²⁴ Interview with Cak Helmi as the chief editor of caknun.com, on June 2 2020, at 12.25 WIB

²⁵ Khalid bin Uthman as-Sabt, *Al-Khulasah fi Tadabbur al-Qur'an* dan *Al-Qawa'id wa al-Ushul wa Tatbiqat Tadabbur al-Qur'an*, (Riyadh: Markaz Li Tadabbur wa al-Istishrat, 2016), p. 15.

²⁶ Abdul Ghani Sarhan, *al-Tadabbur Haqiqatub wa Alaqatub bi Mustalabat al-Ta'il wa al-Istinbat wa al-Fahm wa al-Tafsir*, (Riyadh: Markaz Li al-Tadabbur wa al-Istishrat, 2013), p. 252.

²⁷ Ghani Sarhan, *al-Tadabbur Haqiqatub*....., p. 242

²⁸ Khalid bin Uthman as-Sabt, *Al-Khulasah fi Tadabbur*, p. 20

According to his congregation, through this *tadabur*, Cak Nun brought an understanding of the Qur'an in a simple language. Understanding the value of the Qur'an becomes easier because of its contextualization of the latest phenomena. This phenomenon is certainly very related to Cak Nun's background as a humanist who interacts a lot with ordinary and lower-class people. If the academic world requires the use of a scientific language style, the Cak Nun lecture model is different. The language model that he uses directly bridges the gap between the speaker and his congregation. So that the contextual understanding of the Qur'an can be enjoyed and understood by the congregation in a pleasant way.

Second, Cak Nun's *Tadabur* the Qur'an was received by the Maiyah congregation in the form of recitations of the Qur'an and the works of *Tadabur's Mushaf*. This pattern is referred to as an aesthetic reception. *First*, in written form, Cak Nun's works which are a collection of some of his *tadabur* results, so that the congregation can also gain knowledge from the verses of the recitation of these works. The publication of the Qur'an *Mushaf* encourages the enthusiasm of the congregation to adapt to the Al-Qur'an, and then embody the values or meaningful messages from the Al-Qur'an in their own lives.

Cak Nun has a new work, collaborating with Cak Fuad who is one of the *Marja' Maiyah* closely related to Al-Qur'an *Tadabur*. This work is named *Al-Qur'an Tadabur Maiyah Padhangmbulan*. This work helps the Maiyah congregation to see the results of Cak Nun's preaching in writing, even though not all verses of the Qur'an are recited. This *mushaf* work proves that Cak Nun has been closely interacting with the Qur'an by studying it seriously. Even so, he does not neglect his main goal of studying the Qur'an, that the Qur'an becomes an inclusive book so that it can be accessed by ordinary people. If in general this holy book could only be accessed in the form of recitation, Cak Nun introduced a strategic step so that people understand that the answers to human problems are in the holy book of the Qur'an.

Not only through spoken da'wah, but the Maiyah congregation also received the thoughts of Cak Nun's Qur'an through writing. In fact, there are many essays, articles, and poems that Cak Nun created, and the majority are of religious themes. However, it does not specifically discuss certain verses or surah from the Qur'an. Meanwhile, the latest work on *Tadabur* Maiyah's Qur'an's *Mushaf* specifically examines certain verses.

The publication of the Qur'an *Mushaf* was driven by the spirit of *tadabur*, and huge hopes that the Maiyah congregation loves the Al-Qur'an more and can embody the values or meaningful messages from the Qur'an in their own lives. This work was officially launched on July 7th, 2021, in Malang through live broadcasts on YouTube and the official website caknun.com due to the Covid-

19 pandemic. Even though it is relatively new, this work has been considered since the beginning of the establishment of the *padangmbulan* interpretation study (study of *tafsir*) in 1992. In a period of about 30 years, the articulation of Cak Fuad and Cak Nun's thoughts as *marja'* Maiyah was only contained in spoken *da'wah*. Therefore, the publication of this work is regarded as a deep gratitude after taking so long to write a work of *tadabur* which is a new breakthrough in the field of *tafsir* works in Indonesia. As stated by Cak Fuad in his speech, this work could be published with the help of Allah. In a short time, there were publishers offering cooperation to publish in large numbers. The choice of the word "*tadabur*" to name this work does not mean that this work abandons the discipline of interpretation altogether. The collaboration of these two authors spans two disciplines at once. Cak Nun tends to focus on his *tadabur* area, takes values and lessons from the Qur'an, and contextualizes verses according to the needs of his congregation, while references to the science of *tafsir* are provided by Cak Fuad.

Second, acceptance in the form of recitations of the Qur'an. The Maiyah congregation's aesthetic reception of Cak Nun's *tadabur* in Maiyah is in the form of a rhythmic Qur'an. Another word is the recitation of the Qur'an. Cak Nun considers the importance of reciting the Qur'an with beautiful tones and rhythms, so that the congregation can perceive its psychological influence. Reading the Qur'an beautifully is a strong component to create a calm atmosphere. That way, the Maiyah followers can feel the effect of the verses of the Qur'an being recited.

At the Maiyah Islamic lecture, before doing the verse recitation, Cak Nun recited the verses of the Qur'an according to the theme of the time with Javanese rhythms. The congregation seemed to enjoy his distinctive beautiful voice. In the evening, (Cak Nun was present at 23.00 WIB), the reading of recitations of the Qur'an became a beautiful presentation marking the formal start of the Maiyah forum.

According to Helmi and Fauzan, they and the other Maiyah congregation feel the spiritual power of Cak Nun more than the *Qari'* in reading the Qur'an. Even though Cak Nun does not have a standard *Qira'at* rhythm, he puts forward the aspect of feeling and depth of understanding so that his congregation can feel it and their hearts are thrilled. Even some of the congregation felt it to tears.

Third, Cak Nun's Qur'an's *tadabur* was received by the Maiyah congregation in the form of intellectual and spiritual transformation. The reception pattern is classified as functional. The intellectual transformation obtained by the Maiyah congregation is manifested in the construction of paradigms such as humanist thinking in dealing with local culture as well as a critical attitude towards certain phenomena. This transformation process is carried out with the term *sinau bareng*

(learn together). Meanwhile, the spiritual transformation received by the Maiyah congregation is a change in attitude, behavior, and ethics in society. Cak Nun's Tadabur al-Qur'an in Maiyah has had a significant impact on the formation and change in the attitude of life of his congregation and the community. Many spiritual values in Maiyah are implemented in the *salawat* to the Prophet, and *ziker* which are also values taken from the Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are three patterns in the reception of the Qur'an at the Maiyah forum. These three findings are important in Cak Nun's study of the Qur'an. *First*, Cak Nun's *tadabur* al-Qur'an was received by the Maiyah congregation as a method for understanding the Qur'an to make it easier for ordinary people to learn from the Qur'an. *Tadabur* al-Qur'an in Maiyah is an effort to practice the contents of the Qur'an. *Tadabur* Cak Nun whose concept is more about giving impact individually, namely in the form of ideas, ideas that can lead his congregation to carry out contemplative activities and apply their contents to the lives of their respective congregations.

Second, Cak Nun's *Tadabur* al-Qur'an was received by the Maiyah congregation in the form of recitations of the Qur'an and the works of *Mushaf Tadabur*. The written Qur'an occupies an important position in the Living Qur'an. One of them is printing the Qur'an with various methods. Some of them print the Qur'an supported by a translation. There is also the printing of the Qur'an accompanied by *tajwid* guidelines and so on. As for *Tadabur* Maiyah's *Mushaf*, it can add to the collection of Living Qur'an studies in its efforts to write the result of in-depth contemplation of the verses of the Qur'an. The tradition of reciting the Qur'an with recitations has been made part of a social phenomenon in Indonesia. Many official religious forums or recitations or other community activities such as *walimah* (weddings), *kebitan*, *akikah*, pilgrimage celebrations, and events on Islamic holidays such as the grand recitation of *Maulud Nabi*, *Isra' Mi'raj*, Islamic New Year (Hijriah) and *Nisfu Sya'ban* is always opened with the recitation of the Qur'an (*Tilawah* al-Qur'an).

Third, Cak Nun's *tadabur* al-Qur'an was received by the Maiyah congregation in the form of intellectual and spiritual transformation. The intellectual transformation obtained by the Maiyah congregation is manifested in the construction of paradigms such as humanist thinking in dealing with local culture as well as a critical attitude towards certain phenomena.

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