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REORIENTING KHATAM AL-QUR'AN: FROM RITUAL CEREMONY TO SOCIAL TAFSIR REVITALIZATION IN MINANGKABAU

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the shifting orientation of the Khatam Al – Qur'an tradition in Minangkabau from a religious rite toward a socially performative ceremony, and to explore possibilities for its revitalization through a social tafsir perspective. Rooted in the Minangkabau maxim *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*, Khatam Al – Qur'an historically marked a child's completion of Qur'anic recitation and functioned as a medium of religious internalization. In contemporary practice, however, it has increasingly become a display of social prestige—often pejoratively labeled *Katam Ayam*—raising concerns about the erosion of its spiritual substance. Employing qualitative library-based research and drawing on the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* approach, this article situates the tradition within broader debates on the tension between spirituality and cultural performance in Muslim societies. The analysis demonstrates that Khatam Al – Qur'an embodies both continuity and rupture in the negotiation of religious meaning. The study argues that revitalization efforts must reorient the tradition toward *tadabbur* – centered engagement with the Qur'an, in line with the principle *al-muhafazah 'ala al-qadimi al-shalih wal-akhḍu bil-jadid al-ashlah*. Such reorientation can restore Khatam Al – Qur'an as a locus of Qur'anic literacy, moral education, and cultural resilience, harmonizing local wisdom with the Qur'an's universal ethical vision.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji pergeseran orientasi tradisi Khatam Al-Qur'an di Minangkabau dari ritus keagamaan menuju seremoni sosial yang bersifat performatif, serta menelaah kemungkinan revitalisasinya melalui perspektif tafsir sosial. Berakar pada falsafah *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*, Khatam Al-Qur'an pada mulanya berfungsi sebagai penanda religius atas selesainya pembelajaran membaca Al-Qur'an sekaligus sarana internalisasi nilai-nilai keislaman. Dalam praktik kontemporer, tradisi ini semakin bergeser menjadi ajang representasi prestise sosial—sering kali dikritik dengan istilah *Katam Ayam*—yang memunculkan kekhawatiran atas menurunnya dimensi spiritual dalam ritual komunal. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dan pendekatan *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i*, artikel ini menempatkan Khatam Al-Qur'an dalam perdebatan yang lebih luas mengenai ketegangan antara spiritualitas dan performativitas budaya dalam masyarakat Muslim. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini merefleksikan sekaligus kesinambungan dan keterputusan dalam negosiasi makna keagamaan. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa upaya revitalisasi perlu mengarahkan kembali Khatam Al-Qur'an pada praktik *tadabbur* Al-Qur'an, sejalan dengan prinsip *al-muhafazah 'ala al-qadimi al-shalih wal-akhḍu bil-jadid al-ashlah*, sehingga tradisi ini dapat dipulihkan sebagai wahana literasi Al-Qur'an, pendidikan moral, dan ketahanan budaya yang selaras dengan visi etis universal Al-Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

The separation between religion and custom in Minangkabau society is difficult to achieve. This is reflected in the emblem of the Minangkabau nagari, which combines both religion and custom, namely the adat hall and the mosque (Azra, 2003). It signifies the intertwining of religion and custom, in line with the core slogan of Minangkabau culture: "*Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah, syarak mangato, adat mamakai*"



(Custom is founded upon Islamic law, Islamic law is founded upon the Qur'an, Islamic law commands, and custom implements).

The slogan is embodied in the daily life of Minangkabau society particularly in one of the *alek nagari* (communal celebrations), namely the Khatam Al-Qur'an ceremony. This event reflects the argument of the secular modernist group, regarded as the last faction in the history of the *surau*, that:

"Kemajuan hanya bisa dicapai dengan menggali dan mengelaborasi Kembali gagasan—gagasan adat dan budaya Minangkabau, bukan meninggalkannya dan menggantikannya dengan gagasan Barat. (Progress can only be achieved by exploring and re—elaborating the ideas of Minangkabau customs and culture, not by abandoning them and replacing them with Western concepts)." (Mukarrom, 2023).

This group seeks to apply one of the principles of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* in their argument: "*al-muhafazah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wal-akhidzu bil-jadid al-aslah*" (to preserve what is good from the past while adopting what is better from the present) (Mukarrom, 2023).

The current reality does not align with the argument put forward by the last group (the secular modernists) in the history of the *surau*. The Khatam Al-Qur'an is now considered to have undergone a shift in orientation—if not a degradation altogether. This has given rise to opposing arguments, leading to the perception that the event has become nothing more than a mere ceremony (Aziz, 2025).

This statement aligns with the writings of several academics. Gusnanda, in his journal article entitled "*Katam Kaji: Resepsi Al-Qur'an Masyarakat Pauh Kamang Mudiak Kabupaten Agam*", seeks to explain the symbolic meanings embedded in the Khatam Al-Qur'an ceremonies held in the *surau* of Kamang Mudiak, Agam Regency. Gusnanda also highlights the shift in meaning, where the practice is even interpreted as a show of prestige and festivity that burdens parents, while its educational value and religious responsibility continue to fade. Following this, the term "*Katam Ayam*" emerged as a critique, pointing out that many children who have celebrated have not yet gained a deep understanding of the Qur'an. As a result, this tradition is feared to perpetuate only a shallow symbolic culture without fostering genuine moral or intellectual transformation (Gusnanda, 2007).

Similarly, Ismail et al., in their journal article entitled "*Enkulturasi Budaya Unsur Petinggi Adat Minangkabau Tali Tigo Sapilin di Sumatera Barat*," examine how the process of Minangkabau cultural enculturation is carried out by the leadership of *Tali Tigo Sapilin* in West Sumatra, as well as the factors influencing it (including the practice of Khatam Al-Qur'an). Ismail and colleagues observe a functional shift in the Khatam Al-Qur'an—from a religious rite into part of the marriage custom laden with social burdens. The *khatam* is more focused on demonstrating the bride or groom's ability to recite the Qur'an before the *Ninik Mamak* and the community. This, however, raises the potential for the *khatam* is understood merely as a cultural practice and social symbol, rather than as a process of learning and internalizing the deeper values of the Qur'an (Ismail et al., 2023).

The author emphasizes the importance of developing a deep understanding of the essence and underlying elements behind the organization of the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration. This tradition has undeniably served as a medium for transmitting local wisdom while simultaneously strengthening Islamic values, in line with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's flagship program on culture-based religious literacy. Preserving this tradition, therefore, means safeguarding both cultural

and religious continuity. However, preserving it without renewal risks reducing the noble values it embodies. Hence, the revitalization of the Khatam al-Qur'an tradition is a form of concern to ensure that it does not merely remain a cultural ceremony, but instead becomes a meaningful practice that reflects the teachings of Islam *rahmatan lil-'alamin*.

The tradition of Khatam Al-Qur'an is a significant socio-religious practice among Muslims, particularly in Minangkabau culture. It is commonly observed as a ceremony marking the completion of Qur'anic recitation, involving children and the wider community. The shift from a deeply religious orientation to a more visible ceremonial form reflects the evolving cultural dynamics within this community.

First and foremost, it is important to understand how the tradition of Khatam Al-Qur'an functions within both social and religious contexts. Fathurrosyid et al., in their study on the Khataman Qur'an tradition in Madura, demonstrate that this practice serves not only as a ritual activity but also as a form of resilience and an expression of Islamic moderation within the community (Fathurrosyid et al., 2022). The contextualization of this tradition suggests that Khatam Al-Qur'an in Minangkabau may share similar characteristics, in which the practice is viewed not solely from a religious perspective but also through the social values that surround it.

The cultural meaning of Khatam Al-Qur'an is also elaborated by Arafat et al., who examined the tradition of Khataman Al-Qur'an within the Muhammadiyah community. They emphasized that Khatam Al-Qur'an is often held as a form of accommodation to local culture rather than merely as a puritan practice (Arafat et al., 2022). This finding highlights the importance of local cultural contexts in shaping how people engage with religious traditions, including the transformations in the practice of Khatam Al-Qur'an in Minangkabau.

Furthermore, the social sciences have made significant contributions to the study of Khatam Al-Qur'an. Saifuddin and Nirwana note how the social sciences and humanities have influenced the understanding of the Qur'an and its exegesis in Indonesia, creating space for discussions on the social implications of religious practices (Saifuddin & Nirwana, 2024). This indicates that studies on Khatam Al-Qur'an should take sociological perspectives into account better to understand its shifting meaning from religiosity to ceremonial expression.

Within this framework, Fitriatunnisa and Rafdi explore the importance of tafsir methodologies in interpreting social and spiritual phenomena in the context of Islam, both in the past and in the present, showing that tafsir is not merely about reading the text but also about engaging with the layers of values that live within society (Fitriatunnisa & Rafdi, 2024). This is relevant to the methods employed in studies of Khatam Al-Qur'an, which are increasingly open to incorporating social approaches into religious practices.

On the other hand, it is important to consider the influence of modern practices and digital technology on the organization of Khatam Al-Qur'an. With growing community participation in this celebration, many elements that were previously religious in nature have been integrated into new social dimensions, creating fresh experiences for the younger generation born into the digital age. In this regard, Fatih notes that the methodological shifts among Qur'anic interpreters in Indonesia also include changes in how the Qur'an's message is conveyed through modern media (Fatih, 2020).

Existing research tends to focus on specific aspects of ritual practices or on exegetical texts. Still, there has not yet been an in-depth exploration of the dynamics of exchange between the ritual itself and the accompanying social experiences within the practice of Khatam Al-Qur'an. This study seeks to fill that gap by employing a social tafsir approach grounded in sociological and anthropological perspectives, aiming to gain

a clearer understanding of how this tradition interacts with broader social changes in the Minangkabau community.

The research method employed in this study is library research. This method was chosen because the study aims to collect and analyze information from various literary sources relevant to the theme of revitalizing the tradition of Khatam Al-Qur'an, as well as the shift from a religious orientation to a more ceremonial form. Library research refers to an approach that emphasizes the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information obtained from a variety of written sources, such as books, academic journals, and official documents. According to Dupont and Yakel, this type of research highlights the use of library resources to gather data and information related to the topic under investigation (Azkiya et al., 2023). Library research is an approach that emphasizes the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information from a variety of written sources, such as books, academic journals, and official documents. According to Dupont and Yakel, this type of research highlights the use of library resources to gather data and information on the topic under investigation.

The analysis aims to situate *Khatam Al-Qur'an* within the broader context of religious traditions and social change, and to provide a clearer picture of the challenges and dynamics involved. After data collection, the next step is to synthesize the information to construct a coherent, integrated understanding of the phenomenon of *Khatam Al-Qur'an*. This synthesis is carried out by developing critical reflections based on the collected data, in line with the study's main objective: to understand how *Khatam Al-Qur'an* adapts to changing times and how these transformations affect the meaning of religiosity within society.

Thus, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the revitalization of the *Khatam Al-Qur'an* tradition in Minangkabau and to investigate the factors influencing the shift in orientation from religiosity to ceremonial practice. This exploration is anticipated to make a significant contribution to the study of Islam, culture, and character education in the Indonesian context.

THE SHIFT IN ORIENTATION OF THE KHATAM AL-QUR'AN CELEBRATION

The findings of this study indicate that the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration, initially understood as a religious milestone marking a child's achievement in completing the recitation of the Qur'an, has shifted in orientation. In various *nagari*, particularly Agam and Padang Pariaman, this tradition is no longer centered on reinforcing religious values but has instead come to emphasize ceremonial aspects. Many families perceive the celebration as a social occasion for displaying economic status and family prestige, giving rise to a phenomenon known as "*Katam Ayam*," which has become the subject of critical scholarly inquiry (Syafwan, 2009).

Within Clifford Geertz's framework of symbolic anthropology, religion is understood as a system of cultural meanings that operates through symbols to shape how humans comprehend reality, organize emotions, and legitimize social order. Religious rituals, from this perspective, function not only as expressions of individual belief but also as public arenas in which religious values are presented, negotiated, and reinterpreted within specific social contexts. As social and economic structures transform, religious symbols are likewise susceptible to shifts in function—from instruments of internalizing

transcendental meaning to media for expressing outward identity and social order (Geertz, 1971).

In light of this study's findings, the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration may thus be read as a religious practice that has transformed from a meaning-centered ritual into a representational, performance-oriented ritual. The shift in orientation from the reinforcement of religious values toward ceremonial emphasis reflects what Geertz conceptualizes as the culturalization of religion, namely, a process in which religious meaning becomes increasingly attached to symbols and social performances (Geertz, 1972). The phenomenon of "*Katam Ayam*," therefore, does not merely indicate a deviation in practice but rather signifies a change in how the community understands the ritual itself—from a spiritual milestone to an arena for the representation of status and prestige within the social space of the *nagari*.

CHALLENGES AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

Contemporary realities reveal a serious challenge in maintaining a balance between the religious and cultural dimensions of the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration. This tradition risks being reduced to a mere ceremony if corrective measures are not taken. Revitalization may be pursued through a social exegesis approach, which emphasizes that *khatam* should not be understood merely as the completion of reading the sacred text, but also as a starting point for understanding and practicing the teachings of the Qur'an in everyday life. This approach is consistent with the principle of *al-muḥafazah 'al al-qadīm al-ṣalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadīd al-aṣlah*, which remains highly relevant in the modern context (Suyuti, 2007).

From the perspective of social exegesis, the Qur'an is understood not only as a normative text to be read and completed, but also as an ethical discourse that engages with social realities. Thinkers such as M. Dawam Rahardjo (Rahardjo, 2005) and Farid Esack (Esack, 1997) argue that Qur'anic interpretation must begin with concrete social problems, so that Qur'anic messages can function as a foundation for social transformation. Within this framework, religious practices—including the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration—are evaluated not merely in terms of their ritual completeness, but in relation to the extent to which they encourage the internalization of Qur'anic values in social life, such as moral responsibility, justice, and social piety. Accordingly, *khatam* is positioned not as the end point of one's relationship with the Qur'an, but as the starting point of ethical engagement with its teachings.

Revitalizing the Khatam Al-Qur'an through social exegesis thus entails shifting the orientation of ritual meaning from symbolic ceremony toward meaningful social praxis. In line with Quraish Shihab's view that the Qur'an must be "grounded" so that its message remains alive within society, social exegesis serves as an instrument for reintegrating Qur'anic meaning into established cultural traditions (M. Q. Shihab, 1992). Consequently, the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration is preserved as a religio-cultural heritage (*al-qadīm al-ṣalih*), while being endowed with renewed interpretive content that is more responsive to contemporary social challenges (*al-jadīd al-aṣlah*). Such revitalization does not negate local culture but rather reorients it to align with the ethical and transformative objectives of the Qur'an in social life.

KHATAM AS A MANIFESTATION OF ISLAM AS *RAHMATAN LIL-'ALAMIN*

The revitalization of the Khatam Al-Qur'an celebration ultimately seeks to ensure that this tradition does not remain confined to a merely ceremonial level, but genuinely embodies Islam as *rahmatan lil-'alamīn* (a mercy for all creation). Its symbolic beauty, the sense of social togetherness it fosters, and the religious values it contains need to be redirected toward the noble ideals of the Qur'an—namely, the formation of Muslims who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and capable of making positive contributions to social life (Rahman, 1982).

The concept of Islam as *rahmatan lil-'alamīn* is rooted in the universal vision of the Qur'an, which presents Islam not merely as a system of ritual practices but as a source of ethical values that bring benefit and well-being to all beings. The verse "*Wa ma arsalnaka illa rahmatan lil-'alamīn*" (Qur'an 21:107) is understood by both classical and contemporary exegetes as an affirmation that the prophetic mission of the Prophet Muhammad encompasses spiritual, social, and humanitarian dimensions in an integrated manner (Al-Tabarī, 2001).

From this perspective, Islam seeks to uphold justice, safeguard human dignity, and establish a social order grounded in compassion and moral responsibility. Consequently, every religious practice—including the celebration of Khatam Al-Qur'an, should be oriented not only toward affirming religious identity but also toward generating tangible ethical impacts in social life, such as strengthening solidarity, fostering care for others, and reinforcing commitment to universal human values (M. Q. Shihab, 1996). In this way, the revitalization of Khatam Al-Qur'an through a social exegesis approach becomes part of a broader effort to ground the principle of *rahmatan lil-'alamīn*, ensuring that the teachings of the Qur'an remain truly alive and possess transformative power within contemporary society (Esack, 1997).

MAINTAINING THE BALANCE BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Over time, Islam has spread to all corners of the world, traversing various socio-cultural spaces. As a result, the dialectic between local cultures and Islamic teachings has become inevitable, giving rise to diverse social phenomena concerning how Muslims respond to Islamic teachings in their religious lives. One such phenomenon is the reception of the Qur'an within cultural contexts.

According to Dt. Kayo, the tradition of *Katam Kaji* in Jorong Pauh originated from the *surau*-based education in the area. Before the 2000s, there were many *surau* (Islamic study centers) that served as the main hubs of religious education for the local community. In its early period, *surau* education in the Pauh area focused on teaching children to read and study the Qur'an, as well as nurturing their moral character. The main book used as a learning aid was *Juz 'Amma*. Once a child was able to read this book fluently, they were then allowed to advance to a higher level, which involved reading the Qur'an itself (Gusnanda, 2019).

This tradition was pioneered by a local scholar, Kari Sampono, in 1947. Before that, Kari Sampono had studied Islamic sciences at Ampek Angkek Candung in Agam Regency. Upon returning from his studies, he began teaching and became a religious instructor for the children in Pauh at that time. After three years of teaching, in 1950, he took the initiative to hold a celebration marking the completion of his students' Qur'anic studies,

symbolizing that they had gained sufficient religious knowledge to serve their community and uphold the message of Islam in society. The idea community leaders of Pauh well received the idea. Consequently, the *ninik mamak* (traditional elders), *cadiak pandai* (intellectuals), and *alim ulama* (religious scholars) gathered to discuss it. They agreed to organize the event, considering it beneficial for strengthening the religious life of the Pauh community, especially in nurturing the younger generation. At that time, similar events had already been held in other regions, such as Ampek Angkek Candung in Pasaman and several other areas in Agam Regency. This became the background for the Pauh community leaders' decision to establish the *Katam Kaji* tradition.

In 1950, the first *Katam Kaji* ceremony was held at Surau Balau. The following year, in 1951, the second *Katam Kaji* took place. At that time, not many participated in the tradition. Besides the limited number of students, Indonesia's newly independent socio-political situation and the strict criteria set by the teacher for students eligible to join the *Katam Kaji* were also contributing factors. In 1952, the *Katam Kaji* was held for the third time. From the first to the third event, the celebration continued at Surau Balau, where Mukhtar Kari Sampono taught. In the following period, the *Katam Kaji* celebration began to be held alternately in several other *surau*. During this era, the term *surau* gradually shifted in usage to *mushalla* and *masjid*. In 1955, Bardas Samnil Tuangku Ibrahim sought to change this custom by encouraging the community to hold *Katam Kaji* independently in each *mushalla* or *masjid*.

Tuangku Ibrahim also explained that in 1960, the first *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* (MDA) was established at *Mushalla Taqwa Tanjuang*. Its founders were prominent figures of Muhammadiyah in Jorong Pauh, one of whom was Tuangku Ibrahim himself. The establishment of this MDA brought about significant changes and introduced a new character to the development of *Katam Kaji* in Pauh. The Qur'an learning process for children, which had previously followed the *surau* system (a traditionalist educational model), shifted to the *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* system (a modernist educational model) initiated by Muhammadiyah leaders in Pauh (Gusnanda, 2019).

One aspect that changed during in the *Katam Kaji* ceremony in Jorong Pauh, according to Mukhtar Dt. Mangguang was its form of implementation. Initially, the *Katam Kaji* celebration featured a parade around the village, accompanied by rhythmic chants of praises to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the beat of the *rabano* (traditional drum). However, this form of celebration eventually came to be seen as outdated. Therefore, Tuangku Ibrahim believed that such practices needed reform and renewal. Together with his colleagues from Muhammadiyah, he modernized the *Katam Kaji* ceremony by replacing the *rabano* accompaniment with a marching band.

The establishment of MDA Muhammadiyah Pauh marked the beginning of a shift in the practice of *Katam Kaji* among the Pauh community. In its subsequent development, the *Katam Kaji* celebration began to be held centrally. In 1980, MDA Muhammadiyah Ranting Pauh and MDA *Mushalla Taqwa Tanjung* merged to organize the event. Since then, the *Katam Kaji* celebration has been held at in a single location, namely at MDA Muhammadiyah Ranting Pauh. Since the merger of MDA *Mushalla Taqwa Tanjung* into the celebration, the *Katam Kaji* has been held 35 times to date.

In the modern era, the *Katam Kaji* tradition has undergone various dialectical changes. This tradition appears to be gradually losing its philosophical essence and core values. Mukhtar Dt. Mangguang expressed that the current *Katam Kaji* is more

appropriately referred to as *Katam Ayam*. The reason is that today's *Katam Kaji* has lost its original purpose—acquiring knowledge of the Qur'an. People now regard it merely as a formal ceremony. From the event, they seek personal gains such as money and gifts. In contrast, during its early period, the tradition aimed to ensure that participating children possessed sufficient understanding of religious teachings. Another goal was to instill in them the awareness that the title and social status they received from the *Katam Kaji* carried a more profound meaning—an entrusted responsibility to be upheld and practiced within the community.

The shift in the orientation of the Khatam Al—Qur'an celebration from a religious milestone to a social ceremony illustrates the widening gap between the spiritual essence of Islamic tradition and the cultural practices of contemporary society. Initially, Khatam Al—Qur'an was positioned as a symbol of religious achievement. A child's success in completing the recitation of the Qur'an also marked their bond with divine revelation. However, over time, this tradition has tended to shift into a social event laden with prestige and economic status. The phenomenon of *Katam Ayam* in Minangkabau serves as a vivid reflection of how religious practice can be reduced to a social spectacle (Gusnanda, 2007).

Viewed from a broader perspective, this phenomenon parallels the discourse on Islamic art. Just as Islamic art can only be fully understood within the framework of revelation, as an outpouring of Islam's inner dimension, so too does the tradition of Khatam Al—Qur'an derive its spiritual meaning only when it remains connected to the substance of revelation. As many thinkers remind us, Islamic art is not born merely from human creativity but from its closeness to its primary sources: the Qur'an and the blessings of prophethood (Nasr, 1987). The loss of this connection with revelation reduces Islamic art to mere worldly aesthetic expression; a similar condition is now evident in the celebration of Khatam, which has transformed into a ceremony dominated by lavish display (Gusnanda, 2007).

This comparison reveals a common pattern: when Islamic traditions are uprooted from their spiritual foundations, their transcendent function weakens and is replaced by a profane one (Hodgson, 1977). If Islamic art serves as a benchmark of religiosity in the realm of aesthetics, then Khatam Al—Qur'an ought to serve as a benchmark of piety in the sphere of Qur'anic education. Yet contemporary realities demonstrate the opposite. Family honor, social prestige, and displays of wealth often overshadow the spiritual engagement with the Qur'an itself (Gusnanda, 2007). Thus, this discussion underscores that the crisis of meaning in the Khatam Al—Qur'an celebration is not an isolated case, but part of a broader problem within Islamic tradition: how to maintain a balance between the spiritual and cultural dimensions. Just as Islamic art can endure only so long as it remains closely tied to revelation, the tradition of Khatam Al—Qur'an will retain its profound relevance only if it remains connected to its original functions: instilling religious values, fostering moral education, and strengthening the human bond with the Qur'an as a divine source.

THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL EXEGESIS INTO THE KHATAM TRADITION

The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of *tadabbur* as a bridge between the sacred text and real life. As explained in the Qur'an, Surah Muhammad [47]:24, Surah al—Nisā' [4]:82, and Surah Ṣad [38]:29.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَفْقَاهُمْ

"Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" Q.S. Muhammad [47]:24

Q.S. Muhammad [47]:24 criticizes those who recite the Qur'an without reflecting on its meaning, leaving their hearts locked; the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (*Tafsir Kemenag*) interprets this as a symptom of spiritual dryness (RI, 2011), while *Tafsir Al-Azhar* highlights that *tadabbur* softens the heart and cultivates awareness (HAMKA, 1983).

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوْجِدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

"Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies." Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]:82

Similarly, Q.S An-Nisa': 82 underscores the consistency and authenticity of the Qur'an, thus situating *tadabbur* not only as spiritual contemplation but also as a rational process to affirm the truth of revelation (Q. Shihab, 2002).

كَتَبْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ بُشِّرَىٰ لِيَدَبَّرُوا أَنْتُمْ بِأَلْبَابٍ

"This is' a blessed Book which We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful." Q.S. Ṣād [38]:29

Q.S. Ṣād [38]:29 further stresses the primary purpose of the Qur'an's revelation: that its contents be reflected upon and practiced, as exemplified by Ibn Mas'ūd's method of fully understanding ten verses before moving on to the next (Al-Ṭabarī, 2001). Accordingly, *tadabbur* has, from the beginning, been a Qur'anic praxis demanding actualization.

To address the tension between ritual and substance, a social – exegetical approach can serve as an instrument for revitalizing the tradition of Khatam Al-Qur'an. This approach positions the Qur'an not merely as a normative text, but also as a source of values that constantly interact with socio – cultural realities (Saeed, 2006). Within this framework, *Khatam* is not limited to the technical achievement of completing the recitation of the *mushaf*, but rather becomes a gateway to *tadabbur* that is contextualized with society's challenges. Strategies may include reorienting the curriculum of Qur'anic learning so that after completing Khatam, students are guided toward thematic *tadabbur*; strengthening the reflective dimension of the Khatam ceremony through collective study of selected verses; and contextualizing Qur'anic values to address contemporary issues such as moral education, social harmony, and environmental sustainability.

The integration of social exegesis into the tradition of *Khatam* demonstrates that *tafsir* can function as a *living exegesis* (Saeed, 2006), a dynamic understanding of the Qur'an that is deeply rooted in the cultural practices of society. Theoretically, this expands the horizon of *tafsir* as a form of social praxis rather than merely an academic discourse (Esack, 1997). Practically, the revitalization of *Khatam* through *tadabbur* strengthens Qur'anic literacy, cultivates critical awareness, and nurtures a generation that is not only proficient in recitation but also mature in reflection and application. Thus, *Khatam al-Qur'an* becomes an integrative force that harmonizes local traditions with the universal vision of the Qur'an while simultaneously responding to contemporary challenges through the actualization of social exegesis (Esack, 1997).

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the shift in the orientation of the *Khatam Al-Qur'an* celebration from a religious dimension to a social ceremony reflects a crisis of meaning in contemporary society's religious practices. Phenomena such as *Katam Ayam* in Minangkabau illustrate how a tradition that originally served as a medium for the internalization of Qur'anic values has increasingly been reduced to a socio-economic spectacle. This raises a serious challenge for the sustainability of Islamic traditions in maintaining their connection to the essence of revelation.

To address this problem, the integration of social exegesis through the principle of *tadabbur* as emphasized in Q.S Muhammad: 24 An – Nisa': 82 and Shad: 29, becomes a crucial approach in revitalizing the *Khatam Al-Qur'an* tradition. *Tadabbur* is not only understood as spiritual reflection but also as a social praxis that bridges the revealed text with the realities of life. Thus, *Khatam Al-Qur'an* does not merely signify the technical completion of reading, but evolves into a reflective and transformative moment that reaffirms the authenticity of revelation while addressing contemporary social challenges.

Theoretically, this study broadens the horizon of *tafsir* as *living exegesis*—a living understanding of the Qur'an that is embedded within culture and social practice. Practically, the revitalization of *Khatam* through the approach of social exegesis has the potential to strengthen Qur'anic literacy, nurture critical awareness, and cultivate a Muslim generation that is not only proficient in recitation but also mature in internalizing and practicing its values. In this way, the tradition of *Khatam Al-Qur'an* can once again serve as a manifestation of Islam of Islam rahmatan lil – 'alamin harmonizing local wisdom with the universal vision of the Qur'an.

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