

Counter-Extremes Against of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) in Tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī ma'āni al-Tanzīl*

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the shifting meaning of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an among contemporary mufasssirs. This study aims to analyze the verses in Tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* that talk about Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an and some mufasssir's views on the phenomenon of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an. The method used is library research with a descriptive-analytical approach and the use of thematic verses. The results of this study show two understandings. First, the view of the rejection of the practice of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an in tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī* the grounds that these activities can be used as a medium for Islamic propagation and preaching *Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* by Misbah Musthofa because it is considered to contain elements of *riya'*, materialism and deviation from spiritual values. Second, Buya Hamka's view that supports Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an on, as long as it maintains adab and does not ignore the main purpose of reciting the verses of Qur'an.

Keywords: Paradigm, Commercialism, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an, *Tafsir Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menitikberatkan pada pergeseran makna Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an diantara mufasssir kontemporer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis ayat-ayat di dalam tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* mengenai Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an dan beberapa pandangan mufasssir terhadap fenomena Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka (*library research*) dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis serta penggunaan ayat-ayat tematik. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan adanya dua pemahaman. Pertama, pandangan mengenai penolakan praktik Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an dalam tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* karya Misbah Musthofa karena dianggap mengandung unsur *riya'*, materialisme dan penyimpangan dari nilai spiritual. Kedua, pandangan Buya Hamka yang mendukung Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an dengan alasan kegiatan tersebut dapat dijadikan sebagai media syiar dan dakwah islam, selama tetap menjaga adab serta tidak mengabaikan tujuan utama dari pembacaan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci: Paradigma, Komersialisme, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an, *Tafsir Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*

INTRODUCTION

Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an has long been one of the important forums in grounding the Qur'an in the midst of Indonesian Muslim society. This event is not only a means to test the ability of recitation, tahfiz and tafsir, but also serves as a da'wah medium that unites Muslims in the spirit of loving His holy book. However, behind the glittering stage and the prestige that accompanied it, there was a sharp criticism from the scholars, one of which was from KH. Misbah Musthofa, who views a Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an activity, has shifted from its original purpose (Gusmian & Abdullah, 2023; Saihu, 2021; Syarif, 2024; Yuwafik et al., 2025). Through his tafsir work, *al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*, Misbah used the interpretation of the Qur'an as a medium to convey socio-religious criticism. In this context, Misbah's criticism is important to remind that MTQ should not only pursue aesthetic aspects, but also the moral and spiritual substance contained in Divine revelation (Ahmad, 2022; Kurniawan, 2020; Maymun, 2020; Subaidi et al., 2023). Thus, the interpretation was born out of Misbah's anxiety about the social conditions of the people in Indonesia. He emphasised that the beauty of reading must be in line with the practice of Qur'anic values in real life.

The criticism made by Misbah is not without basis. In recent decades, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an has often been associated with overly bureaucratic competitions, where a participant and a judge are trapped within rigid standards of judgment. Meanwhile, from the aspect of *tadabbur* (contemplation of meaning) and the practice of the values of the Qur'an is marginalised. This has the potential to distance the essence of the Qur'an as a guideline for life that must be lived, not just contested. As a result, the MTQ event is feared to emphasise more formality and aesthetic aspects than the transformative value of the teachings of the Qur'an (Ronaldi, 2022). The Prophet Muhammad said in a hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari that the best human being is the one who studies the Qur'an and teaches it, not just reading it beautifully and getting rewards in the form of gifts. Even more ironically, when Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an at the national and international levels is held with a large budget, while at the grassroots level, there are still many children who have difficulty accessing in-depth Qur'an education. If there is no serious reorientation, MTQ risks losing its spirit as a means of grounding Qur'anic values in people's lives.

Several previous studies have highlighted this problem. Research conducted by Nurhaliza Putri Ariani found that Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) has a positive impact on increasing participants' understanding of the discipline of the Qur'an. However, a negative effect was also found, namely the disruption of learning concentration for some students, which

has the potential to interfere with the effectiveness of their learning process (Ariani, 2022). Then, the research conducted by Alfi Julizun Azwar revealed that there was a fraud that occurred in the implementation of MTQ. This indication arises due to the lack of transparency in every assessment of the competition participants. Azwar tries to restore a fitrah of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an with the mission of rahmatan lil 'alamin, which can be collaborated in the fields of art, science and technology, culture and humanities, and theology and exploring all of these fields can give a fresh nuance and appearance in this annual event, so that finally there will be many parties who can enliven the vibrancy of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (Azwar, 2018). Therefore, the implementation of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an contains a paradox that is public in nature as well as triggering controversy in the interpretation of its meaning.

In the context of a study whose discussion focuses on the existence of commercialism in a Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an, the perspective of tafsir *al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl* is still not widely discussed. Thus, this research is positioned as a complement to the existence of this void. This study will explore the verses that prohibit the commercialism or trade of religious values and the prohibition of participating in Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an activities to achieve worldly popularity. The study of Misbah's criticism is relevant to be studied for the present time because there is a shift in the orientation of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an from the medium of tadabbur Al-Qur'an to a competition and business event, which is a real phenomenon that requires serious attention from various parties. Moreover, amid the rise of sponsorship and large-scale publications, the value of simplicity and sincerity in reciting began to be replaced by material interests. In this case, the tafsir of *Al-Iklīl* is present not only as a critique of the text but also as a moral mirror for Muslim society. Therefore, this interpretation approach is expected to be able to encourage the reorientation of MTQ to return to its original spirit as a vehicle for fostering faith and morals.

METHOD

This research is a library research that focuses on collecting data from sources relevant to the theme being studied. The approach used is a thematic approach, with the first steps determining the chosen theme. Second, determine the verses that are relevant to the theme. Third, analyse the verse and its correlation with the theme. This approach is used to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the messages of the Qur'an, which correlate with the object of study. This research is also qualitative-descriptive, which aims to explain and explain the content of the meaning in the texts of interpretation. The data source of this research

consists of two parts, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data in this study are the verses of the Qur'an contained in the book of tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*, which is the main reference of the author. Meanwhile, secondary data includes various supporting literature such as Islamic books, scientific articles and journals relevant to the theme. The use of these two types of data is intended to build a complete and comprehensive framework of understanding of the theme being studied, and shows the relevance of interpretation to the scientific context of the contemporary era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Background of socio-religious criticism

KH. Misbah bin Zainal Musthofa, better known as KH. Misbah Musthofa was a charismatic scholar from Java who made a great contribution to the development of Islamic sciences, especially in the field of interpretation. He is widely known as the caretaker of the al Balagh Islamic Boarding School, which is located in Bangilan-Tuban Java, which is a pesantren that is a centre for religious learning and moral development for students from various parts of the region. KH. Misbah was born in 1917 on the north coast of Central Java, precisely in Kampung Sawahan-Gang Palem-Rembang. His family background comes from the pesantren and ulama environment, which formed the basis of his science and spirituality since childhood. His father, KH. Zainal Musthofa has been married three times. From his first marriage to Dakilah, he was blessed with two children, namely Zuhdi and Maskanah. From his second marriage with Khadijah, Mashadi was born, known as Bisri Musthofa. Meanwhile, from the third marriage with um Salamah, Misbah and Maksum were born. Misbah himself has the small name Masruh which is a name that was used until his youth, but after he performed the Hajj, the name Misbah which means "lamp" or "light" was chosen as his new identity which reflects his determination and commitment to become an enlightener of the ummah through knowledge, da'wah and written works, including Tafsir al-iklil which is famous until now (Hambari, 2020; Nisak, 2019).

During his lifetime, Misbah was not only known as a teacher in the pesantren environment, but also as a Muslim intellectual who was very productive in the world of writing. Beliau also wrote many Islamic books and translated various works of classical scholars (yellow book) into Javanese, so that Islamic teachings became easier to understand by the general public, especially among traditional students in the countryside. His works reflect the spirit of inclusive and grounded da'wah, bridging religious understanding between generations of

scholars and laymen. In addition, Misbah is also active in delivering religious lectures through recitation forums held in various places, both among Islamic boarding schools and open discussions with his peers, fellow scholars and intellectuals, namely to discuss contemporary issues that are developing in society, such as moral decadence, social inequality, and the influence of western culture. More than that, Misbah also showed his concern for public affairs through his work in the world of politics. He has joined various political parties, including the NU party, the Masyumi party and the Golkar party. His involvement in these various parties is not based on the ambition of power, but rather as a way to expand Islamic da'wah through structural channels (Nisak, 2019). Therefore, he actively discusses with fellow party cadres, especially about solutions to various problems that are being faced by the Indonesian people.

Misbah's move from one political party to another was not based on political ambition or personal interests, but rather due to a disagreement with the policies and ideological attitudes of the party elite that were not in line with the principles of da'wah and Islamic values that he believed in. As a consistent scholar and adherent to holding principles, Misbah did not hesitate to take a firm stance that left the party when he felt that his existence no longer contributed to substantial da'wah. This firmness of attitude shows his integrity as a scholar who upholds the values of truth and honesty in every step. After deciding to retire from politics, Misbah fully turned his attention to the world of Islamic literacy. He believes that da'wah through writing is the purest medium, independent, and free from pragmatic interests, and has a wider and more sustainable reach. With this spirit, he became very productive in writing and translating the books of Salaf scholars into Javanese and Indonesian. His total works reach more than 200 titles, both in the form of original works and translations. The scientific fields he is involved in are very diverse, for example, the interpretation of the Qur'an, hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, kalam science, and other branches of Islamic science, making him one of the scholars of the archipelago whose contribution is very large in the development of Islamic literature in Indonesia (Maulana et al., 2021).

Tafsir *al-Iklil* is a monumental work that was born from Misbah's deep concern for the condition of Muslims who, according to his observations, are increasingly moving away from the noble values of the Qur'an. At that time, people's tendencies were more focused on worldly affairs such as wealth, position and social status, while ukhrawi aspects related to the hereafter and spirituality began to be marginalised. This phenomenon causes a void of values and moral degradation that is quite alarming. Responding to this situation, Misbah believes that da'wah can not only be done through the pulpit or orally, but also through written media that is able to

reach more people and cross the boundaries of time. This is the background for the preparation of Tafsir *al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*, a work of tafsir composed with communicative language, an easy-to-understand style, and a contextual approach according to the needs of the times. He hopes that this work will be able to hold for the ummah in understanding the Qur'an in its entirety, not only in terms of the text, but also in terms of its context and applicative value in daily life (Nafisah, 2023; Supriyanto, 2017). Through this interpretation, Misbah seeks to form Muslim personalities who are balanced between the orientation of the world and the hereafter, as well as resilient in facing the influence of foreign cultures. His idealism as a preacher was the main motivation in writing this tafsir, although it is undeniable that economic factors (*kasf al-ma'isyah*) were also secondary considerations that accompanied his creative process.

The naming of *al-Iklīl* is a form of spiritual expression of Misbah, which expresses his hope that this work will be able to become a *wasilah* (intermediary) for Muslims to refer back to the Qur'an as the main source of guidance in life. The term *al-Iklīl*, which etymologically means "crown", was chosen with a symbolic and profound meaning. In the context of science, *al-Iklīl* is interpreted as the "crown of knowledge" that overshadows and embellishes the understanding of divine revelation. In Javanese tradition, this term corresponds to the word "*kupluk*", or head covering, which symbolises honour and protection. By choosing this name, Misbah wants to affirm that the understanding of the Qur'an must be upheld, placed in an honourable position and be a crown for Muslims who yearn for the truth. The writing of this tafsir took a long time, namely eight years and began in 1977 and was completed in 1985. This process reflects Misbah's seriousness, perseverance and consistency in presenting a work that is deep but still communicative. Methodologically, this interpretation is prepared using Javanese written in *Pegon* script (*Arabic letters without harakat*), an approach that is commonly used in the world of traditional Islamic boarding schools. One of its main characteristics is the application of the *gandul* meaning method, where the translation of each word in the Qur'an verse is written diagonally under the Arabic text, making it easier for readers to understand the meaning of lafziyah of the verse directly and systematically (Maulana et al., 2021; Maymun, 2020).

Verses about MTQ's commercialism in the tafsir *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*

Misbah Mustafa is a thinker who often causes controversy through his ideas. One of his thoughts that attracted public attention was his critical view of the implementation of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ). Departing from this phenomenon, this study aims to analyse Misbah Mustafa's interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, which is the basis of his

argument in rejecting the practice of MTQ. In his commentary *al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl*, Misbah explains about MTQ and the prohibition of trading Allah's verses found in several verses of the Qur'an as follows:

1. Surah Al-An'am ayat 126

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

"Inilah jalan Tuhanmu yang lurus. Sungguh, Kami telah menjelaskan secara rinci ayat-ayat (Kami) kepada orang-orang yang mengambil pelajaran"

The following is KH's interpretation. Misbah in the tafsir of *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl*

Opo kang siro gawe lan siro ajak iki Muhammad! iku dedalane pengeran niro, dedalan kang jejek tegese peraturan urip kang jejek. Ingsun wis nerang-nerangake ayat-ayat ing sun, ayat kang nerangake janjine Allah, ancamane Allah, ganjarane Allah, sikone Allah, lan larangane Allah, lain liyan-liyane, ing sun terangake marang wong-wong kang podo gelem ngalap pitutur. (Keterangan) mulane dikhususake marang lafadz ayat-ayate Allah. Yen wong iku ora gelem ngalap pitutur al-Qur'an. Al-Qur'an utowo ayat-ayate Allah nganggoni lan ora manfaati kanggo wong-wong mengkene iki. Senajan duweni titel pemimpin utowo ulama. Mandar al-Qur'an bakal ngelaknati wong-wong iku. Ing siji atsar didawuhake:

رَبُّ نَالٍ لِلْقُرْآنِ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَلْعَنُهُ

Pirang-pirang wong kang moco Qur'an nanging al-Qur'an ngelaknat tegese muring-muring terhadap wong-wong iku. Koyo ing dawuhe al-Qur'an:

أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

Iling-iling laknate Allah iku bakal temuju marang wong-wong kang dolim. kang aran dolim yaiku:

وَضَعُ الشَّيْءِ فِي غَيْرِ مَحَلِّهِ

tegese ndeleh utowo ngelakuake siji perkoro ono ing panggonan kang duduk panggonane, kang ora sakmestine. Al-Qur'an iku diturunake perlu diangen-angen artine nuli diamalake. Nanging al-Qur'an diwoco kanggo golek nama utowo duit utowo golek nomer siji, golek hadiah ono ing Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an. Akhire, kedudukane al-Qur'an meh ora bedo karo orkes lan gambus. Iki kabeh sangking polahe wong kang ngaku pemimpin utowo ulama (Musthofa, 1983).

2. Surah An-nisa' ayat 36

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ
الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنُبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

Sembahlah Allah dan janganlah kamu mempersekutukan-Nya dengan sesuatu apa pun. Berbuat baiklah kepada kedua orang tua, karib kerabat, anak-anak yatim, orang-orang miskin, tetangga dekat dan tetangga jauh, teman sejawat, ibnusabil, serta hamba sahaya yang kamu miliki. Sesungguhnya Allah tidak menyukai orang yang sombong lagi sangat membanggakan diri.

The following is KH's interpretation. Misbah in the tafsir of *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl*

He wong kang podo iman! Siro kabeh biso podo ngibadah marang Allah lan ojek podo nyekutuake opo ae marang Allah, lan siro kabeh biso podo bagusi wong tuo loro, lan bagusi famili, lan bocah-bocah yatim, lan wong-wong miskin, lan tonggo parek lan tonggo adoh, lan konco niro ing tingkah lelungan utowo konco dagang lan liyan-liyane, lan biso bagusi wong kang podo lelungan kang putus hubungan karo keluargane, lan biso bagusi budak-budak lan umat kang siro miliki, ojek podo gumedhe, Allah ta'ala iku ora demen karo wong kang gumedhe lan unggul-unggulan.

(Keterangan) kang aran ngibadah yaiku nindaake perintah Allah melulu keron ngagungake Allah ta'ala, syirik iku ono werno telu, kabeh telu iki haram. Nomer siji yaiku nekodake pengeran kang nyekutuni Allah ono ing kapengeranan, yaiku syirik kang gedhe yaiku syirik kang dilakoni kaum Jahiliyah yaiku syirik kang di kersaake dining Allah ono ing dawuhe:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Allah iku ora bakal ngapuro laku syirik lan kerso ngapuro duso sakliyan syirik marang kawulo kang dikersaake”

Nomer loro, nekodake perkoro kang nyekutoni Allah ono ing perkoro penggawean, yaiku i'tiqadi wong kang disebut golongan qodariyah kang nekodake yen menungso iku biso nganaake siji penggawean tanpo ono penggaweane Allah, wong kang mengkene iki ugo disebut wong musyrik, miturut ulama ahli sunnah kabeh menungso ora biso gawe opo-opo. Kabeh kang kedadean iku digawe dining Allah ta'ala kabeh kang dadi isine langit bumi iki, menungso, syetan, malaikat, hewan lan opo bae rupane iku obah menenge naming dadi lalulintase takdire Allah. Kabeh ora biso opo-opo, nanging Allah kang moho agung gawe hukum عَادِي lan hukum عَقْلِي lan hukum شَرْعِي kang tetelune mesti lumaku, songko iku akeh wong kang bingung. Nomer telu, nyekutoake siji perkoro marang Allah ono ing perkoro ibadah yaiku kang diarani riya', yaiku ngelakoni perintahe Allah keron Allah lan keron liyane Allah, koyo moco Qur'an ing mimbar umum keron Allah lan keron supoyo oleh nomer siji, biso oleh macem-macam piala, kang lumaku ing musabaqah tilawatil Qur'an. Syirik utowo riya' kang mengkene iki yaiku kang diterangake haram ono ing hadits-hadits (Musthofa, 1983).

3. Surah Al-A'raf ayat 2

كُتِبَ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“(Inilah) Kitab yang diturunkan kepadamu (Nabi Muhammad), maka janganlah engkau sesak dada karenanya supaya dengan (kitab itu) engkau memberi peringatan, dan menjadi pelajaran bagi orang-orang yang beriman”.

The following is KH's interpretation. Misbah in the tafsir of *Al-Iklīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*

He Muhammad! kitab al-Qur'an iku kitab kang diturunake marang sliramu. Songko iku, siro ojo nganti rupek penggalih niro, keron wong Makkah ora percoyo kitab al-Qur'an iku diturunake marang sliramu supoyo siro meden-medeni penduduk bumi kanti al-Qur'an iki. Lan supoyo siro ngilingake wong-wong kang podo iman.

(Keterangan) Sangking iki ayat kito biso ngerti yen kang dadi sasaran dawuhe Al-Qur'an iku wong-wong kang isih podo kafir lan wong-wong kang wis podo iman. Karo-karone sasran dakwah iki wes dilakoni dining Rosulullah. Dadi wong-wong kang podo ngemban tugase Rosulullah ugo kudu nujuake dakwahe marang wong-wong kafir lan wong mukmin, nuli yen kito wis ngerti duduke temurune Qur'an yaiku kanggo

meden-medeni wong kafir, lan supoyo wong mukmin podo nompo pituture, dadi ora halal ngetoake Al-Qur'an saking kedudukane. Koyo moco Qur'an ing dalan-dalan perlu kang golek duit utowo kanggo rengengrengeng kang sekiro kang dadi maksute namung golek duit lan ngerungoake suoro kang bagus koyo nyanyian lan gambus. Kang mengkono iku setengah saking laku sasaran kang biso dadi sebabe temurune siksone Allah. Koyo mengkene keterangan ringkase tafsir Sohwi. Luwih-luwih ing zaman saiki tahun 1403 H yaiku moco Qur'an kang ono ing musabaqah tilawatil Qur'an. Mandar ing zaman saiki musabaqah tilawatil Qur'an kanggo golek duit nuli hasile kanggo bangun bangunan kanggo lapangan olahraga. Innalillahi. Poro wong kang ngaku ulama lan pemimpin akeh kang podo ora nganggep mungkar coro moco Qur'an kang mengkene, mandar podo bungah lan bangga semunu ugo qari' lan qariah (Musthofa, 1983).

Analysis of the interpretation of MTQ's commercialism in the tafsir of *Al-Iklil fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*

In interpreting Surah Al-An'am verse 126, Misbah Mustafa gives a pressure point to the following sentence:

لَقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

"Orang-orang yang menerima peringatan"

According to Misbah, a person who dreams and tries to understand the verses of the Qur'an will find guidance, benefits, and advice from the Qur'an itself. And vice versa, for a person who is reluctant to dream and understand the Qur'an, then that person will gain nothing, and it is the Qur'an that curses such people. In strengthening his opinion, Misbah quoted an atsar as follows:

"Banyak orang yang membaca al-Qur'an akan tetapi tidak mendapatkan pahala di dalamnya, justru al-Qur'an melaknat orang-orang yang membacanya".

Then quote the following verse fragment:

أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

"Ingatlah, laknat Allah (ditimpakan) atas orang-orang yang zalim" (QS. Hud: 18).

The curse of the Qur'an is directed at the unrighteous. Dzolim is putting something in its proper place, whether it concerns size, time, or place. As well as the following hadith:

وضع الشيء في غير موضعه

"Meletakkan sesuatu bukan pada tempatnya"

According to Misbah, the purpose of the Qur'an revealed is to be infused with its meaning, to be dreamed up and then practiced, but the purpose of the Qur'an is inversely proportional to its original purpose, in fact the Qur'an is read to seek popularity, making money, to get the title of first place, and expecting prizes. As happened in the implementation of MTQ, and in the end, the position of the Qur'an is no different from the orchestra and the gamelan. For Misbah, the existence of MTQ behaviour that is not by his nature is caused by the actions

of people who claim to be leaders or scholars (Bachtiar, 2023). Thus, there needs to be awareness from leaders and scholars to restore MTQ to the spirit of Sharia and divine values.

Furthermore, in interpreting Surah an-Nisa verse 36, Misbah Mustafa gives an explanation in the tafsir *al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl* that shirk is divided into three types :

1. Shirk in terms of divinity, they, the ignorant at that time, considered that other gods had the right to be worshipped besides Allah; therefore, shirk in this case was included in the category of the largest group of shirk.
2. Shirk in terms of deeds, such as believing that a person can do an act at any time without the intervention of Allah. Misbah considers that such a person can be called a polytheist. In strengthening his opinion, Misbah also quoted the opinion of the scholars of the Sunnah who considered that all humans cannot do anything; all the deeds that have happened are with the permission of Allah, both in heaven and on earth.
3. Shirk in terms of doing acts of worship, or what is called *riya'*. In this third shift, Misbah touched on the issue of MTQ. Through the book of tafsir *al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl*, Misbah gives an example of one of the things that is included in the act of *riya'* is the event of the Qur'an competition, in this case, the implementation of MTQ (Musthofa, 1983). This is explained by Misbah in a piece of Qur'anic verse which reads:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

"Sesungguhnya Allah tidak menyukai orang yang sombong lagi sangat membanggakan diri".

According to Misbah, the implementation of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) contains elements of *riya'* which can lead to the act of shirk khafi (hidden shirk), so that it is legally considered haram. He is of the view that the essence of reading the Qur'an is a form of worship that should be done with sincerity, solely hoping for the pleasure of Allah SWT. However, in the practice of MTQ, the reading of the Qur'an is often used as a competition event oriented towards praise, popularity, and the acquisition of material prizes such as trophies or championships. This is what Misbah thinks is very dangerous for the purity of the intention of a reciter (reciter of the Qur'an). *Riya'* itself is defined as doing a charity, both worshipful and non-worship, to be seen and praised by others (Zulfikar, 2018). In the context of MTQ, reading the Qur'an in public is no longer associated with da'wah or tadabbur, but to gain social recognition. Misbah considers that this kind of behaviour pollutes the spiritual value of the Qur'an itself and can erode the sincerity of worship. Therefore, he strongly criticised

competitions such as MTQ because it was feared that it could turn the intention of worship into a place to seek prestige. Instead, Misbah recommends that the recitation of the Qur'an be carried out in more private spaces or an atmosphere of recitation full of sincerity, to maintain the purity of intentions and avoid the trap of hypocrisy of worship.

In interpreting the Qur'an surah al-A'raf verse 2, Misbah emphasised that the Qur'an was revealed with a very noble purpose, namely as a warning for the infidels and as advice and guidance for the believers. According to him, the target of the Qur'anic da'wah includes two main groups: first, those who deny the truth (*kuffar*) and those who have accepted faith (*mu'minin*). In Misbah's view, the Qur'an is not just read or listened to beautifully. However, it must be used as a guideline for life that is understood, taught and practised in daily life. Therefore, he was very concerned about the phenomenon of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), which in his time had shifted from its original essence. He assessed that MTQ has been held as a place to seek material profits, even prizes and awards from the competition, which are used to build luxury buildings. According to him, this has removed the Qur'an from its essential function and position, namely as a guide that forms morals and faith, not as a tool of worldly interests. Misbah views such practices as a form of deviance or health that can invite the wrath and curse of Allah (Musthofa, 1983). Therefore, he has a strong determination to restore the position of the Qur'an to its proper place as a revelation that must be respected, used as a source of knowledge and practised in life, not just read to achieve popularity or world gain.

The Reason for Misbah Musthofa's Rejecting the MTQ Reception in Tafsir *Al-Iklil* and Other Mufassir's Responses About MTQ

Based on the three verses of the Qur'an that have been explained above, it seems that Misbah Mustafa strongly disapproves of the existence of a Qur'an reading competition in the MTQ event. Misbah does not mind the recitation of the Qur'an, because reading the Qur'an itself is highly recommended and is a noble act that is worth worship for its readers. However, what is at issue is the implementation of MTQ, which has material elements that are considered contrary to the teachings of Islam itself. Because at that time, Misbah considered that the implementation of MTQ was no longer used as a form of Islamic teaching, but was used as an activity that was rich in materialistic interests or only used as a means of competition (Bachtiar, 2023). Thus, Misbah said that the implementation of MTQ activities is haram.

Opinions about MTQ activities were also expressed by several other mufassir in Indonesia. Each mufassir has different arguments regarding the phenomenon of MTQ activities. The first Mufassir, Buya Hamka, has the full name H. Abd. Malik Karim Amrullah who is from

Minangkabau, West Sumatra. Buya Hamka is one of the mufassir who agrees with the implementation of MTQ activities. For Hamka, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an is not included in the act of *bid'ah*, so it is not prohibited. When MTQ aims to develop Islamic arts such as music, calligraphy, and carving, it is allowed. He views that MTQ can be an effective means of *da'wah* or *syiar* amid modern society and MTQ activities have aesthetic value in the recitation of the Qur'an is not a reprehensible act, as long as it does not violate the manners and the main purpose of reading, namely *tadabbur* and appreciation of the meaning in the Qur'an. Therefore, MTQ can be understood as a form of actualisation of the people's love for the Qur'an, which can strengthen spiritual bonds and divine revelation (Azwar, 2018).

Then the second mufassir is Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy. Hasbi is a well-known mufassir in Indonesia and comes from Lhokseumawe, North Aceh. Hasbi is one of the scholars who disagree with MTQ's activities. He is of the view that competing in the Qur'an in MTQ activities accompanied by songs with worldly intentions is included in the act of *bid'ah idhāfiyyah* and considers that no evidence or verse of the Qur'an allows *kalamullah* to be used as a reading of the competition, both in terms of the Qur'an and hadith. For Hasbi, MTQ contains several negative elements, including planting *ujub* seeds for reciters and reciters, pursuing a victory as the main goal and instilling competition between regions. In the framework of Hasbi's textual and normative interpretation, he emphasises the spiritual essence of the Qur'an only as a guide to life, not as an object of performance (Ariani, 2022). Therefore, Hasbi views MTQ as a form of deviation from the purpose of the noble value of the Qur'an, especially if its implementation obscures the values of sincerity, solemnity and manners towards *kalamullah*.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of reorienting the activities of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an to remain in line with the noble values of the Qur'an which are spiritual, not just ritualistic or materialistic. In the context of tafsir *Al-Iklīl* by KH Misbah Musthofa, tafsir is not only a means of understanding the text, but also an instrument of social and moral criticism of religious practices that are considered to deviate from the essential values of Islam. Differences in views between mufassirs show the dynamics of Islamic thought in responding to contemporary religious phenomena, which in turn encourages the need for critical evaluation of forms of religious expression in order to remain in the frame of sincerity and true devotion to God. The presence of local interpretations such as *Al-Iklīl* is proof that religious criticism can be born from the roots of the down-to-earth *pesantren* tradition. Thus, reaffirming the

spiritual spirit of MTQ is a common task in order to maintain the sacredness of the Qur'an from the banality of popular culture.

Based on the analysis of KH. Misbah Musthofa on the commercialism of MTQ in tafsir *al-Iklil fi Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*, this research opens up opportunities to develop further studies. For example, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on the socio-cultural impact of MTQ on changes in the spiritual value of the Qur'an in society. This study can test the validity of Misbah's criticism empirically through a sociological approach to religion or anthropology, to see if the MTQ competition really shifts the meaning of sacredness or actually becomes an effective medium for learning motivation. Then, a comparison of classical and contemporary interpretations of MTQ activities. This study focuses on comparing the views of tafsir al-Iklil with tafsir al-Manar or tafsir Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an about the commercialisation of religious activities, which is a practice that is in line with the values of monotheism (oneness of Allah) and sincerity (sincerity) in worship and community life.

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