

**QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION IN PESANTREN:
MECHANISMS AND AUTHORITY OF K.H. MAIMOEN ZUBAIR**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the mechanisms and authority underlying K.H. Maimun Zubair's interpretations as reflected in Tafsir Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn, a work documented by his student, Ismail Al-Ascholīy. Mbah Moen's interpretations are often perceived as deeply intertwined with contextual nuances, yet the factors influencing these interpretations and the processes involved in their formulation remain insufficiently examined. This research seeks to bridge this gap by uncovering the intricate processes behind his interpretative approach, particularly concerning contemporary themes. Employing qualitative methods with a literature-based analysis, the study reveals that multifaceted dimensions, including historical and psychological contexts shape Mbah Moen's interpretations. His engagement with a conducive intellectual environment fosters a contextual interpretative framework that aligns with modern phenomena. Furthermore, his interpretations are deeply rooted in the pesantren tradition, which significantly informs his intellectual orientation. Within this framework,

the authority of the Qur'an, historical narratives, and classical exegetical works remains pivotal. Nonetheless, Mbah Moen adeptly integrates modern perspectives into his interpretations, demonstrating a capacity to contextualize Qur'anic texts in ways that transcend conventional exegetical paradigms.

Keywords: *Quranic Interpretation, K.H. Maimun Zubair, Mechanism, Authority.*

Abstrak

Tulisan ini dimaksudkan untuk melihat mekanisme dan otoritas penafsiran K.H. Maimun Zubair dalam tafsir Safinah Kallā saya'lamūn yang ditulis oleh muridnya, Ismail Al-Ascholīy. Penafsiran Mbah Moen selalu dianggap sebagai produk pemikiran yang memiliki korelasi yang dekat dengan corak kontekstual. Hanya saja faktor apa dan bagaimana proses produksi pemikiran ini berada pada barisan paling luar dalam penelitian. Pada ruang kosong ini lah tulisan ini hadir untuk menampilkan proses panjang yang melatar belakangi penafsirannya dengan dikaitkan pada tema penafsiran yang aktual. Untuk merespon problem ini, penelitian ini dijalankan dengan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan. Tulisan ini menemukan bahwa ada banyak horison yang membangun penafsiran Mbah Moen, mulai dari sisi historis maupun psikologis. Pergumulan Mbah Moen dengan lingkungan yang harmonis membentuk pola-pola penafsiran yang kontekstual dengan lekat dengan fenomena-fenomena kekinian. Di sisi lain, penafsiran Mbah Moen juga dihadapkan pada horison pesantren yang membentuk pemikirannya. Sehingga dalam konteks ini, otoritas Al-Qur'an, riwayat dan ilmu tafsir klasik terus ikut berperan di dalamnya. Hanya saja kelihainnya dalam membaca teks Al-Qur'an berhasil ia transmisikan dalam konteks yang lebih jauh dari pada teks-teks tafsir yang selama ini ada. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan bagaimana ia mampu membaca (*worldview*) pandangan dunia modern dalam tafsirnya.

Kata Kunci: *Interpretasi al-Qur'an, K.H. Maimun Zubair, Mekanisme, Otoritas.*

Introduction

Interpretation, as a cognitive process, is always in active dialogue with the horizons that shape it,¹ such as experience, intellectuality, and the socio-historical context surrounding mufassir.² K.H. Maimun Zubair's interpretation is evident through his ability to combine the traditional horizon of Islamic boarding schools with reflections on contemporary phenomena, such as the issue of press control in the New Order era or banking transaction law. By using easy-to-understand language and

¹ Walid A. Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12, no. 1–2 (2010): 6–40, <https://doi.org/10.3366/E146535911000094X>.

² Saichul Anam, "Menelisik Metodologi Tafsir Kontemporer: Studi Atas Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn Fī Tafsīri Shaikhinā Maimūn Karya Ismail Al-Ascholīy," *Nun : Jurnal Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 10, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v10i1.447>.

cutting-edge objects,³ *Mbah* Moen retains his traditional authority through references to classical hadith and commentary, bringing the Qur'anic text closer to today's audience. This approach rejects the repetitiveness and dogmatism of pre-modern interpretation,⁴ by focusing on meanings relevant to the modern era, making its interpretation populist, acceptable, and understood by all walks of life without losing its traditional roots.

This approach is reflected in the book *Tafsir Safinah Kalla Saya'lamūn Fī Tafsīr ShaiK.H.inā Maimūn*, which is a transcript of the interpretation of K.H. Maimoen Zubair (1928-2019)⁵ by Ismail al-Ascholy⁶ on the study of ahadan.⁷ This work depicts *Mbah* Moen's profound reflection on the social, cultural, and political context surrounding him. For example, when *Mbah* Moen read Q.S Al-Nabā' verse 20, he tried to record the phenomenon of dredging mountains to remove the particles in them so that environmental damage occurred. Mountains created as pegs of the earth that should be guarded are increasingly depleted due to dredging or reclamation.⁸ This interpretation is a critical reflection made by *Mbah* Moen on the current phenomenon. This interpretation presents a dialectical interpretation between the Qur'an text and the interpreter's context through mechanisms relevant to the modern era. Although very contextual, this interpretation still maintains the authority of the Qur'an, the hadith, and the conceptual framework of *'ulūm al-qur'ān*.⁹ This shows the strong influence of pesantren science as the guardian of authentic classical literature. With this combination, *Mbah* Moen presented a significant interpretation for developing pesantren studies while answering the challenges of the times.

The mechanism of reading the text of the Qur'an carried out by *Mbah* Moen does not seem to have received more attention from researchers. This can be traced

³ Mun'im Sirry, "What's Modern about Modern Tafsīr?: A Closer Look at Hamka's Tafsīr Al-Azhar," in *The Qur'ān in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation*, 2016, 198–211, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315646350-19>.

⁴ Johanna Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsīr: Towards a Typology of Qur'an Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12, no. 1–2 (2010): 56–82, <https://doi.org/10.3366/E1465359110000963>.

⁵ Henceforth, it is written with *Mbah* Moen.

⁶ Muḥammad 'Ismā'il Al-Ascholī, *Tafsīr Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn Fī Tafsīri Shaikhinā Maimūn*, (Bangkalan: Nahḍah al-Turāth, 2023).

⁷ The ahadan study is a routine study of *Tafsīr Jalālain* taught by KH Maimun Zubair for the general public and senior students of the Al-Anwar Sarang Islamic Boarding School, Rembang.

⁸ Achmad Fuaddin, *Resepsi KH. Maemon Zubair Terhadap Tafsīr Al-Jalālain Dalam Ngaji Ahadan Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar, Sarang* (Tesis di Universitas Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2023).

⁹ Often *Mbah* Moen presents the History to see the variants of meanings contained in the text of the Qur'an. The glossary of classical traditions is sometimes still seen in *Mbah* Moen's other works. In the book *Taujihāt al-Muslimīn fī al-Wahdah wa al-Ittiḥād wa al-Intizām fī hizbi al-Ittiḥād al-Ta'miīnīy*, When explaining what is meant by mandate in Q.S Akhḏāb verse 72, *Mbah* Moen brings a number of opinions and narrations related to the meaning of trust, such as the opinion of Ibn Abbas and the opinions of other scholars that *Mbah* Moen wrote by reciting Qāla Akharūn and Qāla Ākhar. See Ahmad Nailul Fauzi, "Pendekatan Teologis Ayat-Ayat Bencana Dalam Kitab Tatsunāmi Fī Bilādinā Indonesia Karya Kh. Maimoen Zubair" (Tesis di Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2022). 5.

from the academic studies of *Mbah* Moen, which are at least only divided into two typologies. The first tendency can be seen in the writings of Ahmad Fuaddin and Nailul Fauzi, who try to examine *Mbah* Moen's reception of the Tafsir Jalālain by highlighting the factors behind the difference in meaning between *Mbah* Moen and the Tafsir Jalālain. At the same time, Ahmad Nailul Fauzi explores the theology that underlies his interpretation.¹⁰ Second, research that highlights the concept and results of interpretation. Research with this tendency can be seen in the writings of Nova Saha Fasadena and Wardatul Jannah, who examine *Mbah* Moen's interpretation of Q.S. al-Isrā': 53 regarding communication with non-Muslims.¹¹ M. Asif and Fakih examined their thoughts on nationalism and tolerance in Indonesia.¹² In addition, Fatimah Zahra Anis¹³ and Saichul Anam¹⁴ analyzed the interpretation of disaster verses in the book *Tsunami fi bilādinā*, and Zamzami Qodri and Ahmad Zaidanil Kamil discussed eschatological interpretation in *Safinah Kalla Saya'lamūn*.¹⁵ Although a study of the patterns and results of K.H. Maimoen Zubair's interpretation has been carried out, attention to the reading mechanism that is the basis of his interpretation methodology is still limited. This opens up opportunities for more in-depth research to understand how pesantren traditions can combine classical interpretation with modern contexts through *Mbah* Moen's distinctive approach.

The unique interpretation and the intricacies of the locality of Indonesia color *Mbah* Moen's interpretation a lot. Such a pattern of interpretation is influenced by many things, ranging from scientific and socio-historical factors surrounding it to an audience's existence. *Mbah* Moen's socio-historical, cultural, political, audience and scientific contexts form a dialectic in a discursive context. Without paying attention to this context, one may fail to appreciate the role of the Qur'an and its impact on the lives of Muslims. So it is crucial to see how *Mbah* Moen is involved with the text of the Qur'an and its context to form a complete interpretation and how modern reality merges into its interpretation. How can the mechanism and authority of interpretation applied by *Mbah* Moen form a new understanding relevant to Muslims in the 21st century?"

¹⁰ Ahmad Nailul Fauzi, "Pendekatan Teologis Ayat-Ayat Bencana Dalam Kitab Tatsunāmi Fī Bilādinā Indonesia Karya Kh. Maimoen Zubair" (Tesis di Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2022).

¹¹ Yuni Fadlah, "Analisis Pemahaman Ayat-Ayat Musibah Perspektif KH.Maimun Zubair Dalam Kitab Sunami Fi Biladina Indusiya Ahuwa Adzabun Am Musibatun" (Tesis di Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2022).

¹² Zamzami Qodri and Ahmad Zaidanil Kamil, "KONTEKSTUALISASI ESKATOLOGIS DI ERA KONTEMPORER: Analisis Penafsiran Maimun Zubair Dalam Tafsir Safinah Kalla Saya ' Lamun Fi Tafsiri Shaykhina Maymun," *Tajdid* 22, no. 2 (2023).

¹³ Fatimah Zahra Anis, "Understanding Covid-19 From a Disaster Perspective Based on Kyai Haji Maimun Zubair ' s Tatsunami Manuscripts," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 2 (2021): 219–35, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v22i2.3043>.

¹⁴ Fuaddin, *Resepsi KH. Maemon Zubair Terhadap Tafsi'r Al-Jalālain Dalam Ngaji Ahadan Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar, Sarang*.

¹⁵ STAI AL-ANWAR, *Seminar Nasional Pustaka Festival 2024*, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II5_fijMt1A.

This research will be conducted using discursive and historical analysis methods to prove the above hypothesis. The discursive analysis method was chosen to examine how K.H. Maimoen Zubair's interpretation shapes religious and social discourse and how his interpretive authority is accepted and practiced among the pesantren community. This analysis will explore how his interpretation interacts with social, political, and cultural contexts. Meanwhile, historical methods are used to trace the social, political, and cultural backgrounds that shaped K.H. Maimoen Zubair's thinking and interpretation and how the changing times, especially in the 21st century, affect the mechanisms and authority of his interpretation. The data sources used in this study consist of two types, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source is obtained directly from the tafsir book *Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn Fi Tafsiiri SyaiK.H.inā Maimoen*, to get authentic and authentic data. Secondary data sources are obtained from literature and documents relevant to the theme of the study, including books and related academic studies, including books written by K.H. Maimoen Zubair himself.

The Historical Setting of K.H. Maimoen Zubair and His Tafsir Safinah

Mbah Moen's interpretation was widely encouraged by Ismial Al-Ascholiy, his student in the book *Tafsir Safinah Kallā Saya'lamun*.¹⁶ He is a young scholar who was born and until now lives in Bangkalan Regency, Madura. This tafsir is a transcript of the recitation of Jalālain tafsir at the Al-Anwar Sarang Islamic Boarding School, Rembang, which was nurtured by K.H. Maimoen Zubair (1928-2019). In other words, this interpretation is the interpretation of K.H. Maimoen Zubair, which then to him is also the tafsir of safinah is attributed to him. This tafsir is a study conducted every *Sunday* (Sunday) with a hypoallergenic audience, ranging from student groups to the general public. This means that at first, the tafsir safinah was in oral form because of its position as a routine study for the public. It's just that with the development of technology, this recitation is mediated in the form of a recording and partially aired on the Youtube platform and Instagram PP Al-Anwar Sarang.

K.H. Maimoen Zubair himself is a *kyai/ulama* figure and the caretaker of the Al-Anwar Islamic Boarding School. He is known for being a productive and adaptive *kyai* to various social dynamics. This is because he lives in a dynamic environment. This means that as a *kyai*, he is confined to pesantren activities and struggles a lot in various environments and contexts. This is shown from the predicate attached to him, such as a politician, because he was once active as a member of the MPRI, Mustasyar of the United Development Party (PPP), an activity because he participated in the structure of Nahdlatul Ulama', even until his death.¹⁷ This struggle is essential in forming religious ideologies and reading spiritual texts.

¹⁶ Al-Ascholi, *Tafsiir Safinah Kallā Saya'lamūn Fi Tafsiiri Shaikhinā Maimūn*.

¹⁷ Amirul Ulum, *Syaikhuna Wa Usratuhu* (Rembang: LP. Muhadhoroh PP. Al Anwar, 2014).

The most concrete evidence to prove this orientation is his interpretations of the Qur'anic text and his attitude towards the socio-religious phenomena and phenomena. His reading of Q.S Al-Nisā' verse 83. He brought the context to the New Order era, with the condition of the Indonesian press being fully controlled by the government. The news presented to the public cannot be objective and only supports the New Order government. This reception was born on 29 Safar 1415 or August 8, 1994, when *Mbah* Moen served as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (1987-1999) in the New Order era. The position held by *Mbah* Moen as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR) usually makes him aware of national issues. In the New Order era, the Indonesian press system is famous for adhering to an authoritarian system. The press in that era was only used as a mouthpiece for the government. In this context, *Mbah* Moen said that the believers who crowd the news are not responsible. You just look at the people who look for news here and there. The majority are irresponsible until now, and continue until the Day of Resurrection. *Mbah* Moen's interpretation is directly correlated with the suspension of the broadcasting license of the Tempo, Detik and Editor newspapers in 1994.¹⁸

His experience and intellect in reading the text of the Qur'an place his interpretation as a reflection of the context of tafsir production. This means that the current symptoms are condensed in their interpretation collectively. The production of meaning that he does is an effort to unravel the tangled threads of modern life. He elaborated on it comprehensively. Not only does it mean the meaning of the text, but the actualization is closely related to discursive patterns, both in the form of solutions and criticism. In the form of a solution, it is abstracted in his interpretation of Q.S Al-Shu'arā' verses 192-195,¹⁹ and the haram of banks in Q.S Al-Baqarah verses 245 and 275.²⁰ From this, it can be seen that *Mbah* Moen's projection of interpretation is to reform and provide solutions for the ummah based on the text of the Qur'an. *Mbah Moen's interpretation* is not only a criticism of the existing form of reality, as in his comments on the memorizer of the Qur'an, but also an attempt to provide a middle ground and a solution for the ummah as when explaining the law of translating the Qur'an and the law of pouring through banks. In relation to banks, *Mbah Moen* explicitly does not prohibit or allow absolute cooperation with banks.²¹ But in this theme, he tries to do a discursive analysis by saying:^v

“In the past, the scholars made a fatwa on the haram of joining the bank and reasoned in this verse. If this fatwa continues, how can we punish the reality that is happening today, where those who want to carry out the

¹⁸ Fuaddin, *Resepsi KH. Macmon Zubair Terhadap Tafsi'r Al-Jalālain Dalam Ngaji Ahadan Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar, Sarang*. 106.

¹⁹ 'Ismāil, *Tafsi'r Safinah kallā saya'lamūn fi Tafsi'ri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 21-22.

²⁰ 'Ismāil, *Tafsi'r Safinah kallā saya'lamūn fi tafsi'ri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 23.

²¹ "... As for the bank law, in our opinion, it is not haram but we do not encourage people to join the bank."

hajj through the bank? This problem is *sunnatullāh* to his creatures as a secret for those who have reason and are willing to think. Because we already know that the hajj with the help of a bank is easier and cheaper than living alone without being affiliated with the bank. This situation is not the legitimacy of the ability to negotiate with the bank, nor vice versa. This means that it is good for those who do not want to go through the bank. Because if banks are banned, then it is as if all Hajj in our country are banned, and of course this is not something that a sensible person says.”

The same thing was also done by *Mbah* Moen when explaining the translation of the Qur'an, according to him:

“Ulama used to be around the 50s and many banned the translation of the Qur'an. But for this day and age, it is not appropriate for us to forbid it. Because this is included in what the Prophet Ibrahim said: *على العاقل أن يكون عارفا بزمانه مستقبلا في شأنه عارفا بربه*. Times will continue to change and the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic. The ancient scholars who forbade translation argued with one question: if the Qur'an is translated and understood also through translation, then why is the Qur'an revealed in Arabic? It's just that in our time now, the translation of the Qur'an has spread and filled the world. Man understands the sharia of Islam and becomes good in his religion with guidance from the translation of the Qur'an. Then if we forbid something that Allah has made the cause of guidance for humans, then this is impossible for a sensible person to do.”

The two interpretations above show a moderate attitude and a form of sympathy and concern for *Mbah* Moen's current phenomenon. The reality in question is the difference between responding to the translation of the Quran in the modern era and the law of muamalah through banks. The author also said that²² *Mbah* Moen is a kyai figure who is able to moderate religious knowledge.²³ This moderation is *ijtihad* from *Mbah* Moen so that Muslims can comfortably practice religion. This means that *Mbah* Moen's *interpretation* can bring a modern socio-religious context to his interpretation, which is *Mbah* Moen's effort to transform people's lives.

Other religious views can also be seen in some of the works he wrote. *Mbah* Moen's writing is closest to affirming the above argument by reading the book he wrote as response to the reality that emerged in *Tsunami fi Bilādinā Indonesia*, a book

²² Karl Mannheim, *Ideologi Dan Utopia: Menuungkap Kaitan Pikiran Dan Politik*, Terj. F. Budi Hardiman (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1991). 1:34:07 min.

²³ Classical literature whose notability comes from Arab Islam with a fundamentalist background can be grounded and synthesized with Javanese cultural culture (*Mbah* Moen's historical background) and then can be abstracted according to the current context.

he wrote in response to the tsunami disaster in Aceh in 2004.²⁴ Among the writings that show *Mbah* Moen's attitude and dynamism in social and religious activities is by reading the book *Nusūs al-AK.H.yār*. This book was written as an alternative and as an effort to calm the dispute between NU and Muhammadiyah regarding the determination of the beginning of Ramadan. Another part is to look at *Mbah* Moen's historical sequence as a politician. As a politics, he can embrace friends and opponents. This can be seen from the existence of *Mbah* Moen as a kyai and politician, making him a central figure and a reference for other politicians, even across parties. Politicians such as Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Megawati Soekarno Putri, Jusuf Kalla, Prabowo Subianto, and others appeared to come and go to visit him.²⁵ *Mbah* Moen's political attitude was then poured into the book *Taujihāt al-Muslimin*, which showed the importance of national values for every nation.²⁶

Interpretive Mechanism

Tafsir, as an idea and product of the development of Mufassir's thinking is logically impossible to avoid from the background situation and the paradigm believed by mufassir.²⁷ Tafsir, whose primary basis is the product of thinking activities, is connected by various essential intertwined and influencing elements. This influence starts from the scientific genealogy of mufassir, the social, cultural, and political space when the tafsir is written, the social context and ideology of the audience, as well as the socio-political situation played by the mufassir when reading the text of the Qur'an.²⁸ Gracia said a text is a historical entity born from a specific situation surrounding its author. Such interpretation runs straight with the socio-historical construction and reality that develops as a form of contribution and the active role of mufassir in the context surrounding it.²⁹

In this context, a mufassir is always present in certain situations that can color his reading and understanding of the text. Borrowing Gadamer's terminology, such a situation is better known as *Effective History*, which includes elements of tradition, culture, culture, and the mufassir experience it self.³⁰ In the context of *Mbah* Moen's interpretation, the socio-historical situation, culture, and life experience - are aspects

²⁴ Islah Gusmian, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an & Kekuasaan Di Indonesia: Peneguhan, Kontestasi, Dan Pertarungan Wacana* (Yogyakarta: Salwa, 2019).

²⁵ Amirul Ulum, *Syaikhuna Wa Usratuhu* (Rembang: LP. Muhadhoroh PP. Al Anwar, 2014). 107

²⁶ Sahiron Samsudin, *Hermenutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawasea Press, 2017).

²⁷ Karl Mannheim, *Ideologi Dan Utopia: Menguungkap Kaitan Pikiran Dan Politik*, Terj. F. Budi Hardiman (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1991).

²⁸ Dindin Moh. Saepudin, "Vernakularisasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia Abad Ke-20 : Studi Kasus Tafsir Berbahasa Sunda" (Disertasi Di Univeristas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2023). 21

²⁹ Massimo Campanini, *The Qur'an: Modern Muslim Interpretations*, Trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York: Routledge, 2011).

³⁰ Sahiron Samsudin, *Hermenutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawasea Press, 2017).

whose existence cannot be denied. This situation can be seen from some of *Mbah Moen's* interpretations, which are closely related to the socio-cultural context surrounding him. The initial understanding formed from this pattern is that *Mbah Moen* is an adaptive figure to various issues and evolving realities.

On various occasions, Mbah Moen made the socio-historical context - both micro/macro scale - as the object of his study. For example, the book *Tsunāmīy fī Bilādīnā Indūnesia am huwa 'Adzabun aw Muṣibatun*, which he wrote after the 2004 Aceh Tsunami. In this article, *Mbah Moen* tries to respond to the post-2004 Tsunami issue, which says that this disaster is a form of adzab from Allah. On another occasion, when there was a long debate between the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah groups about the difference between the beginning of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, *Mbah Moen* wrote the book *Nuṣūṣ al-AK.H.yar*, which contains arguments to be able to bridge these two groups. From here, the argument emerges that the historical-historical context is essential in shaping *Mbah Moen's* thought. Such a situation is intense because it is driven by *Mbah Moen's* responsiveness to various issues that develop around him.

In thought, interpretation is a product built from a comprehensive framework, especially oral interpretation. The interpretation of *Mbah Moen* studied in this study was an oral interpretation at first, before being documented by Ismail in the form of a work of interpretation called *Safīnah Kallā Saya'lamūn fī Tafṣīri Syaikinā Maemūn*. At this level, the dynamics of interpretation is not only about the method of interpretation, the typology of interpretation, or the pattern but there is an element of articulation that should be considered. According to Andreas Georke, in the process of reciting tafsir, it is likely that a teacher is distracted by the state of the audience, namely his students.³¹ In this context, the recitation led by *Mbah Moen* has an audience from various elements, ranging from the students he fosters to the community in general. So, in many ways, *Mbah Moen* does replication articulations, namely, moving the main language to the recipient's local language to provide an easy-to-capture understanding.³²

It is not uncommon for *Mbah Moen* to use nearby devices as components that form his interpretation. The most plausible reason to support this argument is that looking at it from a sociological point of view, it is easy to see that the opinions of Muslims differ from country to country, and the Qur'an recognizes the needs of an ever-evolving society. For the mission of the Qur'an as a book of instruction to be achieved, the Qur'an must be conveyed in easy, understandable language and use the terminology closest to them. When explaining Q.S Al-Takwīr: 3,³³ and Al-Nabā':20,³⁴

³¹ Karen A. Bauer, "Room for Interpretation: Qur'ānic Exegesis and Gender" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2008).

³² Muḥammad Ḥusain Al-Dzahabīy, *Al-Tafṣīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1431). 126

³³ Al-Ascholī, *Tafṣīr Safīnah kallā saya'lamūn fī tafṣīri in Shaikhina Maimūn*, J.1, 77.

Mbah Moen highlighted current phenomena such as rock and sand mining that caused mountains to erode. The closest context to the meaning of “mountains run” is mountains that are dredged and transported by heavy vehicles, for example, trucks. Related to this, Rembang, the city where *Mbah* Moen lives, has several mines still operating today. In addition, the city of Rembang is a northern national route or known as the Pantura Line, which in daily life is constantly crossed by various large trucks, including trucks transporting mining products. From here, it appears that articulation as a process of information transfer of the Qur'an text is closely related to the audience factor and the geographical factor.

On the other hand, *Mbah* Moen also brings local context into his interpretation. When interpreting some verses from Q.S al-Nabā' and al-Takwīr. In general, these two surahs are understood by some mufassir as signs of the coming of the Day of Resurrection, *Mbah* Moen gives very different interpretations. After describing the linguistic aspect, *Mbah* Moen explained that these verses have happened correctly and can be seen as they are. Q.S al-Naba 19 “*wa futihat al-Samā' u fakanat Abwabā*” according to him is the beginning of the sign of the Day of Resurrection, that is, the gates of heaven are opened, and this will not only happen tomorrow when the apocalypse is near, but it has already happened now. Because these indicators lead us to find the truth about the existing phenomenon as signs that this era is near with the coming of the Day of Resurrection. For example, when he describes technological developments, such as commercial aviation, airports and airways, it can be associated with “*the opening of the doors of the sky*”.³⁵ The above description is a sign from this verse that the sky has been opened by the way of the doors in the airport as the entrance to the sky.

Another thing that needs to be highlighted from *Mbah* Moen's various interpretations is *Mbah* Moen's *anxiety and concern* over the issues around him. In this context, various socio-community contexts have not escaped the response from *Mbah* Moen. It is not new for *Mbah* Moen to explain and respond to multiple issues, and shifts in reality, both on a local scale of interpretation and on a national scale. For example, when interpreting Q.S Al-Fāṭir:32, *Mbah* Moen took a scope of the issue of memorizing the Qur'an. According to him, the dynamics of memorizing the Qur'an are currently undergoing a shift. This phenomenon becomes real when viewed from a larger scale that the purpose of memorizing the Qur'an used to be as a means to gain the legitimacy of experts in science and wisdom. However, according to him, many memorizers of the Quran do not understand its meaning, and many who understand the Quran but do not memorize it do not.³⁶ *Mbah* Moen's *portrait* here is clearly seen as a

³⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method, Terj. Ahmad Sahidah* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2020). J.1, 76.

³⁵ Al-Ascholī. J.1, 76

³⁶ Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad Ḍmām Aḥmad Bin Ḥanbal* (ttp: Maktabah al-Risalah, 2001). J.1, 4.

concern as well as a criticism of the phenomenon that occurs in the midst of Islamic society, especially in Indonesia.

Another example of *Mbah Moen's criticism and response* to socio-religious phenomena is his comments on the issue of the translation of the Qur'an and the law on the use of banks. According to him, the phenomenon of punishment for these two practices needs to be revisited. Various aspects need to be considered as a legitimacy for the practice that mushroomed its existence. Scientific and religious consequences are one of the things that *Mbah Moen* thinks needs to be revisited. When interpreting Q.S Al-Baqarah: 245,³⁷ 275³⁸ regarding riba which makes banks haram and Q.S Al-Shu'arā' verses 192-195 concerning the law of translating the Qur'an, *Mbah Moen* gave several arguments as legal considerations. According to him, if banks are banned, then what is the status of Indonesian pilgrims, do we dare to blame such practices with all the consequences? *Mbah Moen* also used this argument when criticizing those who banned translation. As is known that most Indonesian people do not master Arabic, on the other hand, the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic. According to *Mbah Moen*, the practice that occurs in the field is that many Indonesian people have good religion, life and worship because they read translations. If the translation of the Qur'an is forbidden, do we not consider the good of translating the Qur'an?³⁹

The description above shows that modern interpretation tends to reflect social changes and the dynamics of modern interpretation. As Massimo Campanini points out, the most original part of modern Qur'anic interpretation, leaving aside more traditionalist and conservative interpretations or stricter philosophical interpretations, has been directed to find the practical dimension of the Qur'an, namely its function in modifying the structure of social reality and revolutionizing human relations.⁴⁰ Modern interpretations of the Qur'an reflect social change and affirm the hermeneutical task of reinterpreting the Qur'an deeply embedded in the Islamic tradition, conceptualizing human history as a continuum of renewal, revival, and reform. Faced with the challenges of modernity, these modern mufassirs, including *Mbah Moen*, considered the reform project and rethought Islam as an urgent need. Meanwhile, *Mbah Moen* seeks to “*nativeize*” the meaning of the Qur'an to suit the experience and history that has developed in Indonesia.

Mbah Moen's interpretation reflects his involvement with the main question of interpretation, namely how to reconcile the text of the Qur'an with the historical, social, political, and intellectual context. Perhaps it is useful to think of this question in terms of what Hans Georg Gadamer calls the “*fusion of horizons*”. The word horizon is generally used to denote everything that can be seen from a particular position. For

³⁷ Al-Ascholī. J.1, 21

³⁸ Al-Ascholī. J.1, 22

³⁹ Bahguddin NS, الانتصار لمذاهب شيخنا *Indonesia Damai Meneladani Mbah Maemon* (ttp: Silatnas Himma, 2019). J.1, 24

⁴⁰ Massimo Campanini, *The Qur'an: Modern Muslim Interpretations*, Trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York: Routledge, 2011). 4.

Gadamer, horizon refers primarily to our position in the world, our perspective that must always be on a limited scope. Thus, the fusion of the textual horizon and the interpreting horizon can be understood in the sense that the interpreter seeks to bring his own understanding closer to the original environment of the text, and at the same time the text can be understood from a point of view closer to the interpreter. Gadamer developed an effective idea of history from this blend of horizons, as reflected in his famous statement, “understanding is essentially an event influenced by history”. Therefore, the act of understanding is no longer understood as the act of the interpreter alone, but rather as the result of a dialogical process between the interpreter and the interpreted text, and between the interpreter and his environment of pre-existing knowledge.⁴¹

Reviewing Religious Authority in Tafsir

Religious authority can be understood as the ability of a person or institution to exert influence and legitimacy in religious practice based on science, tradition, and social acceptance.⁴² Religious authority is not a static entity, but a dynamic process that involves negotiations between religious teachings, local contexts, and the needs of society.⁴³ Ulama as a central entity often acts as a mediator who connects Islamic values with local practices to shape the ethical life of the community.⁴⁴ This authority is also influenced by the ability of scholars to interpret religion in a way that is relevant to the challenges of the times. Thus, religious authorities have an element of flexibility that allows religious teachings to remain relevant. This concept emphasizes that religious authority comes not only from religious texts but also from the ability of scholars to understand and respond to social contexts.⁴⁵ This shows that authority rests not only on religious legitimacy but also on deep social connections.

Angfri Afriansyah quoted the writings of Norshahril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani in *The New Santri*, revealing that modernization and digital technology have changed the landscape of religious authorities in Indonesia. Pesantren, previously the center of traditional authority, is now facing the challenge of new students who are more exposed to modern education and technology.⁴⁶ These modern students often bring new perspectives that challenge the authority of traditional scholars on various issues. This transformation has made religious authority increasingly fluid, no longer

⁴¹ Samsudin, *Hermenutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*. 81.

⁴² Moh Muhtador, “OTORITAS KEAGAMAAN PEREMPUAN (Studi Atas Fatwa-Fatwa Perempuan Di Pesantren Kauman Jekulo Kudus),” *Kafaah: Journal of Gender Studies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 39, <https://doi.org/10.15548/jk.v10i1.267>.

⁴³ Rumadi, “Islam Dan Otoritas Keagamaan,” *Walisono* 20 (2012): 25–54.

⁴⁴ Arafah, “KH Maimun Zubair Gagasan Dan Kiprahnya Dalam Politik Islam Di Indonesia.”

⁴⁵ Ahmad Khotim Muzakka, “Otoritas Keagamaan Dan Fatwa Personal Di Indonesia,” *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2018): 63–88, <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.63-88>.

⁴⁶ NUBA TV, *Liputan Khusus: Bedah Kitab Tafsir “Safinatu Kalla Saya’lamun” Muskercab I PCNU Bangkalan*, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbB6ODCf_LM.

fully centralized in traditional institutions such as Islamic boarding schools.⁴⁷ In this situation, scholars must adapt to a more dialogical and open approach to social change. They need to maintain authority through relevance and ability to answer contemporary issues. This shows that religious authority is rooted in tradition and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the times.

In *What is Religious Authority?*, Ismail Fajrie Alatas offers the perspective that religious authority is sourced not only from religious science but also from social relations, political structures, and cultural contexts. Alatas explained that religious authority is the ability to convince and move others based on socially and religiously recognized legitimacy. This authority often arises from the interaction between tradition and social change. For example, a scholar is respected not only for his knowledge, but also for his ability to bridge the needs of society with religious teachings. In this context, religious authority is dynamic and responsive to the needs of the people. This shows that religious authority is not only normative, but also practical.⁴⁸ Thus, religious authority involves a broader dimension than just texts or traditions.

The concept of authority can also be seen as a result of the ability to integrate traditional values with modern challenges. In the Indonesian context, ulama often play the role of a bridge between religious teachings and diverse local practices. This can be seen in how scholars in pesantren teach Islamic values while still maintaining relevance to the local context.⁴⁹ This process requires sensitivity to the needs of society and the ability to respond to contemporary issues. For example, issues such as the translation of the Qur'an, the law of the bank agrees, or natural disasters are often the arena in which religious authority is tested. In this situation, clerics who are able to provide practical solutions without abandoning religious values tend to gain greater legitimacy. Therefore, religious authority combines science, social context, and adaptability.

Religious authority is a complex phenomenon involving interactions between texts, traditions, and contexts. Based on the above reference, religious authority is not only static, but continues to evolve along with social changes. Understanding modern challenges and offering relevant solutions are important factors in maintaining this authority. In this case, scholars who successfully combine traditional legitimacy with modern adaptability tend to have greater influence. In other words, religious authority is not only about what is taught, but also how the teachings are delivered. This shows that religious authority is the result of a constant dialogue between tradition and

⁴⁷ Mutohharun Jinan, "New Media Dan Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 10, no. 1 (2012): 181–208.

⁴⁸ Mardian Sulistyati, "Otoritas Keislaman Di Indonesia: Sebuah Pembacaan Ulang," *Studia Islamika* 29, no. 1 (2022): 189–203, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v29i1.24649>.

⁴⁹ Ansari, "ISLAM NUSANTARA: KEANEKARAGAMAN BUDAYA DAN TRADISI," *Lisan Al-Hal* 18, no. 2 (2024): 226–47, <https://doi.org/10.35316/lisanalhal.v18i2.226-247>.

change. With this understanding, religious authorities can remain relevant in facing the challenges of the times.

The term authority includes both epistemic and sociological dimensions in interpretation. Epistemically, the term refers to the foundation of interpretation rooted in traditional sources such as the Qur'an, hadith, and classical interpretation.⁵⁰ Sociologically, this term considers the influence of the context of the mufassir environment and the acceptance of the community on the interpretation conveyed. Authority in tafsir has a close relationship with the concept of religious authority in that it reflects the ability of a mufassir to give legitimacy to their interpretation through mastery over religious traditions, social contexts, and societal needs.⁵¹ In the context of interpretation, authority comes not only from a deep knowledge of the Qur'an, hadith, and classical interpretation, but also from the ability of mufassir to interpret these sacred texts in an ever-changing social context. For example, the tafsir produced by K.H. Maimoen Zubair shows how a mufassir can build his authority through a deep mastery of religious science, while remaining sensitive to contemporary issues. Issues such as the environment, muamalah law, and the translation of the Qur'an become the terrain where modern mufassir plays a role in providing relevant interpretations for the people's daily lives.

In addition, authority in interpretation is also in line with religious authority which is dynamic and formed through social recognition of the ability of mufassir.⁵² In tafsir, authority is maintained not only by following the tradition of the text but also by the ability of the mufassir to interact with existing social and cultural challenges. In this case, tafsir is not only a way to understand religious texts, but also a means to respond to social changes that occur in society.⁵³ This requires mufassir not only to be the guardian of religious teachings, but also as a bridge between religious texts and the increasingly complex reality of life. Mufassir skills in negotiating with the existing social context are the main key in maintaining the relevance of interpretation in the midst of changing times.⁵⁴

Authority in interpretation also involves the aspect of negotiation, where a mufassir must be able to adapt his interpretation to local values without neglecting the

⁵⁰ Fajrina Margareth Viruliana and M Kholili, "Epistimologi Nalar Bayani Dan Burhani Serta Implementasinya Pada Pembelajaran Madrasah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Ilmi* 5, no. 2 (2022): 82, <https://doi.org/10.32529/al-ilm.v5i2.1952>.

⁵¹ Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsīr: Towards a Typology of Qur'an Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey."

⁵² Muslim Zainuddin, "Membaca Tafsir Hermeneutika Otoritas Khaled Abou El Fadl," *Dusturiyah: Jurnal Hukum Islam, Perundang-Undangan Dan Pranata Sosial* 9, no. 1 (2019): 20–37, <https://doi.org/10.22373/dusturiyah.v9i1.4754>.

⁵³ Rafiqul Huda Siregar, "Nalar Tafsir Emansipatoris Dalam Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah Ayat 168," *COMSERVA: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 12 (2024): 4995–5006, <https://doi.org/10.59141/comserva.v3i12.1299>.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Halif Asyraf Bahana, "The Relevance of Contextual Interpretation in Answering Socio-Community Problems in the 21st Century," *Morals: Journal of Islamic Religious Education and Philosophy* 1, no. 4 (2024): 135–42, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61132/akhlak.v1i4.105>.

substance of religious teachings. This process creates a dialogue between textual traditions and local practices that can enrich the people's understanding of the teachings of Islam. Authority in interpretation, as such, is not only a result of historical or traditional legitimacy, but is also the ability to provide new meanings that are in line with the needs and challenges of the times. Tafsir becomes more than just a tool of religious understanding; it also functions as an instrument to answer contemporary problems while maintaining the authenticity of Islamic teachings. Through this approach, the authority of interpretation can remain relevant and play an important role in guiding the ummah to face the challenges of the times.

Mbah Moen's Interpretive Authority

In this context, I would like to emphasize that although primary sources such as the Qur'an, the hadiths of the Prophet, and earlier commentaries have an important role in modern tafsir, the opinions of modern mufassirs themselves and their concern for time and place carry greater weight in their tafsir. Tafsir is a product of its own time and place. Each tafsir in one way or another reflects its context, because an interpreter brings with it its own content, which is influenced by customs, language, and other cultural factors. Tafsir Safinah is a good example of the extent to which he brings his local context into his interpretation. Therefore, it is not true that modern tafsir does not offer anything new, as if the views of the interpreters have not changed throughout history. As Karen A. Bauer has successfully shown, the subjective and time-bound elements of interpretation are precisely the factors that make them most relevant to the interpreter's own environment, and thus fulfill the main purpose of interpretation. In his study of the four key verses in the Qur'an describing the nature of women and the relationship between the two sexes, Bauer questioned the general view that the Qur'an, earlier commentaries, and prophetic sayings had determined the pre-modern interpretation of the Qur'an. They may refer to earlier tafsir-tafsirs, but they often develop their own interpretations to make the Qur'an relevant to their time and place. their time and place⁵⁵

Mbah Moen's interpretation of the Qur'anic text certainly does not come from a vacuum. There are so many sciences and experiences as a result of his struggle with the literature that forms his science. This horizon then became the locus of the method as well as the source of *Mbah Moen's* interpretation. One of these horizons can be seen from the use of certain verses as explanations of other verses (*tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an*). In this context, he interprets the verses of the Qur'an with other verses that have the same context. *Mbah Moen's* method is likely based on his scientific background *on turath* (yellow books/classical interpretations). In the *tourath*, especially the classical and intermediate interpretations, many provide a wide space for

⁵⁵ Karen A. Bauer, "Room for Interpretation: Qur'anic Exegesis and Gender" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2008). 32.

history, such as the tafsir al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH/923 AD)⁵⁶ and the tafsir of Ibn Kathīr (d. 744 AH/1373 AD)⁵⁷ and language analysis such as the tafsir al-Kasyāf li ZamaK.H.syarī (d.1143 AD). In this context, as Gadamer said, an interpreter is always in a certain hermeneutic situation that can affect him in terms of culture, culture, geopolitics, and the mufassir's life experience.⁵⁸

A comprehensive reading of *Mbah Moen's interpretation* will show that his model of interpretation of *the Qur'an bi Al-Qur'an* is quite visible. Such a model can be seen in several interpretations. *Mbah Moen's* interpretation of Q.S Al-Baqarah [2]: 239 is one example of this model. *Mbah Moen's* emphasis on this verse is on the recitation of *rukbanā*. According to him, the manifestation of the morphem *rukbanānānā* in the present context is the vehicle (*marākib*). Vehicles in their definition are divided into vehicles that need support (*rijlun*) and those that do not. *Mbah Moen's* explanation of the vehicle that needs this support is then clarified and strengthened by Q.S Al-Naḥl verse 8, that Allah created Horses, Mules, and Donkeys to be used as mounts or vehicles. The context in this verse is that both Horses, Mules, and Horses as land vehicles have supports or legs (*rijlun*).⁵⁹

The association between verses in the Qur'an leads to an understanding that the Qur'an explains itself in some places. Even so, it is not easy to detect it. Because according to *Mbah Moen*, most humans do not know in detail this situation. But most people only know the Qur'an in a global way. This conclusion raised by *Mbah Moen* reflects the pronunciation of *fā Minhum Ḍālimun fī Nafsihi*.⁶⁰ In contrast to this description, *Mbah Moen* as a pesantren scholar is not included in this category. This is evident from the way he reads the Quran, which makes the verses in the Quran interconnected and does not stand alone. At this time, the most tangible and perceptible context is his reading of Q.S Al-Takwīr verse 4 "*the camels that are left behind*". The camel is one of the vehicles widely used in Arabic when the Qur'an was revealed. In this verse, the camel is an example that Allah gave as a gathering of animals that used to be vehicles and jewelry. As time progressed, these animals began to be abandoned and replaced with more modern vehicles. The point of contact in this section is that the camel as a symbol of the vehicle has begun to disappear, as well as other animals collected in Q.S Al-Naḥl verse 8, "*The horse, the mule, and the donkey of Allah created as a vehicle and jewelry*".⁶¹ This means that the association of Q.S Al-Takwir verse 4 and Al-Naḥl verse 8 makes the Qur'an sound more comprehensive. In this section, it appears that *Mbah Moen* is able to read and connect the verses of the Qur'an as a related unit.

⁵⁶ Muḥammad Ḥusain Al-Dzahabīy, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1431). Juz.1, 149.

⁵⁷ Al-Dzahabīy, Muḥammad Ḥusain Al-Dzahabīy, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn*, Juz.1, 174.

⁵⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method, Terj. Ahmad Sahidah*. Cet.III, 363.

⁵⁹ 'Ismāil, *Tafsīr Safīnah kallā saya'lamūn fī Tafsīri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 14.

⁶⁰ 'Ismāil, *Tafsīr Safīnah kallā saya'lamūn fī Tafsīri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 41.

⁶¹ 'Ismāil, *Tafsīr Safīnah kallā saya'lamūn fī Tafsīri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 78

The interpretation model as above includes many of *Mbah Moen* in interpreting the Qur'an. In the book *Tsunamīy fi Balādinā Indunīsīyā am Huwa 'Adzabun aw Muṣibatun*, *Mbah Moen* interprets many verses with other relevant verses. Such a model can be seen when he explains the function of *the Sam'iyah*⁶² verse as a verse that Allah sent down to give a warning. *Mbah Moen's* explanation of this morpheme departs from Q.S Al-Isrā': 59, which in his view is a warning and reminder for those who want to think (*Ūlū al-AlBāb*). To explain this verse, *Mbah Moen* presents several other verses that have relevance to Q.S al-Isrā':59, namely Q.S al-Zumar: 16⁶³ and Q.S Āli 'Imrān:7. Morpheme that needs to be highlighted in this verse is the pronunciation of *Ūlū al-Bāb* (those who are willing to think). This means that these *Sam'iyah* verses cannot be felt by those who do not understand and are willing to feel the presence of the Qur'an, but they are even more and more intrinsic.⁶⁴

The second method *Mbah Moen* uses to interpret the Qur'an is to cite narrations to reveal the meaning of the Qur'anic text. This makes it clear that the aspect of tafsir *bi al-Ma'thūr* is quite enveloping his model of interpretation. This method was implemented when he interpreted Q.S al-Syūra: 30 and Q.S al-Nisā': 79. These two verses are used to explain the origin of disasters or natural disasters as a representation of *Kauniyah* verses. He explained that the *kauniyah* verse, in this context is a natural disaster or calamity, sometimes in the form of punishment and sometimes grace if attributed to righteous people. This is because if a disaster or calamity is inflicted on the righteous people, it will actually increase faith and justification for the verses of Allah, including the *verses of sam'iyah*. To explain this, *Mbah Moen* quoted the narration of um Salamah narrated by Imām Aḥmad,⁶⁵

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: “ إِذَا ظَهَرَتْ
الْمَعَاصِي فِي أُمَّتِي، عَمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ “. فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَمَا فِيهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَنْاسٌ صَالِحُونَ؟!
قَالَ: “ بَلَى “. قَالَتْ: فَكَيْفَ يَصْنَعُ أَوْلِيكَ؟ قَالَ: ” يُصِيبُهُمْ مَا أَصَابَ النَّاسَ، ثُمَّ يَصْبِرُونَ إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَانٍ”⁶⁶

⁶² *Mbah Moen* divides verses into two types, namely *Mariyah* verses and *Sam'iyah* verses. *Mar'iyah* verses are verses that are written and become part of the Qur'an, while *Sam'iyah* verses are verses that can be seen with the human senses, namely Allah's creations such as mountains, seas, and so on. (See books and so on. (See book *Tsunamīy fi Balādinā Indunīsīyā*, 3)

⁶³ The **fear** of Allah is also *ubada' ya'ad fataqun*

⁶⁴ Maimun, *Tsunami fi Bilādinā Indonesia am 'adzabun aw muṣibatun*, 3-4.

⁶⁵ Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal* (ttp: Maktabah al-Risalah, 2001). Juz. 44, 216.

⁶⁶ From Umi Salamah, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), she said: “I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: When sinfulness becomes widespread among my people, then Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, will spread His punishment among them. I then asked, O Messenger of Allah, will there not be any righteous people on that day? The Prophet replied, Yes. I asked: How will Allah deal with them? The Prophet answered: Allah will still inflict punishment upon them similar to what He inflicts upon those who commit sins. However, Allah will grant forgiveness and pleasure to the righteous.

The use of historical reports in *Mbah* Moen's interpretation is also employed to explore the various meanings contained within the Qur'anic text. Classical tradition glossaries are sometimes still visible in other works of *Mbah* Moen. In the book *Taujīhat al-Muslimīn fī al-Wahdah wa al-Ittiḥād wa al-Intizām fī ḥizbi al-Ittiḥād al-Ta'mīnīy*, when explaining the meaning of amanah in Q.S. Al-Ahzāb [33]: 72, *Mbah* Moen presents various opinions and historical reports related to the meaning of amanah, such as the opinions of Ibn Abbas and other scholars' views which *Mbah* Moen writes using the phrases *Qāla AK.H.arūn* and *Qāla ĀK.H.ar*. However, *Mbah* Moen does not let readers get trapped in the ambiguity of the meaning of amanah. After mentioning several possible meanings from scholars, he provides one meaning that he has chosen or perhaps a meaning derived from synthesizing these various opinions. *Mbah* Moen defines amanah as the protection of everything that should be safeguarded, including rights, obligations, boundaries, and things that are both material and immaterial, whether for Allah or for human beings.⁶⁷

Mbah Moen said that the interpretation of the Qur'an text must be dynamic. The interpretation of the Qur'an must continue to be able to keep up with the times, shifts in reality and be able to answer contemporary problems. The role of religious leaders or kiai as representatives of interpreters of the Qur'an text must understand and understand the development of the times.⁶⁸ *Mbah* Moen's idea seems to be based on a phrase that is often conveyed that "*wa 'alā al-'ūqil an yakūna baṣīran bizamānihi muqbilan 'alā sya'nihi ḥāfiẓan li lisānihi*" (one should have the insight to adapt to the times, focus on the goal and keep the word).⁶⁹ So, it can be seen from *Mbah* Moen's various works in responding to the changing times that his thinking is not only limited to classical science but also responsive to the development of modern science and the changing times. This context then became the typology of *Mbah* Moen's interpretation which includes at least two patterns, namely *Mbah* Moen is consistently involved in the dialogue between the text and the context, and uses the text to understand the current time.

The contextual interpretation model carried out by *Mbah* Moen can be found in some of his explanations of the Qur'anic text. The actualization of *Mbah* Moen's meaning can be seen when unraveling Q. S Al-Anbiyā' verse 31 which reads, وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِي أَنْ تُمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا رَعْنَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ⁷⁰ Basically, this verse generally provides information about the function of the existence of the mountain as a

⁶⁷ Maimun Zubair, *Taujīhat Al-Muslimīn Fī Al-Wahdah Wa Al-Ittiḥād Wa Al-Intizām Fī Hizbi Al-Ittiḥād Al-Ta'mīnīy* (Sarang: Lajnah Ta'li' wa al-Nasyr, n.d.). 5.

⁶⁸ Pancen jamane wes rubah, ru? rubah. Iki wes rubah, rubah kabeh, dadi piro wae wes rubah. Tapi segala apapun iku menafsiri. Mulane kyai iku kudu ngerti perkembangan yang sekarang. Tafsir yo kudu mok cocokno." (Aziz Bahtiar Sofyan, "Nationalism According to KH Maimun Zubair in Ahadan Recitation" (Thesis at Al-Anwar High School, Sarang, Rembang, 2020). 52.

⁶⁹ NS, الانتصار لمذاهب شيخنا Indonesia Damai Meneladani Mbah Maemon. 6.

⁷⁰ And We have made on the earth strong mountains so that they may not shake with them, and We have also made there wide roads for them to be guided.

support pillar for the earth so that the earth does not move.⁷¹ The contextualization carried out by *Mbah* Moen here is that the existence of mountains that should be the buffer of the earth began to be destroyed and hollowed out to be used as tunnels, as happened in Mecca and other parts of the world, including in Indonesia. In addition, the phenomenon of dredging the earth to take certain particles, such as stones and sand by some mines for sale is also a factor in the destruction of the earth.⁷²

Another contextualization carried out by *Mbah* Moen is reflected in his interpretation of Q.S Al-Shu'arā' verse 195⁷³ which speaks of the descent of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad in clear Arabic. In this verse, *Mbah* Moen explained the struggle of translating the Qur'an in Indonesia, which was banned in the early 50s. *Mbah* Moen gave a sense if the Qur'an is translated and then can be understood through the translation, so that people are able to be good because it is impossible for a sensible person to forbid the translation of the Qur'an. This is because a sensible person must be able to know his times, because times are constantly changing and the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic.⁷⁴ The same thing was also done by *Mbah* Moen when the Tsunami tragedy occurred in Aceh in 2004, *Mbah* Moen directly saw the situation in Aceh at that time. After a while, an essay by *Mbah* Moen related to the Aceh Tsunami appeared that discussed it from the perspective of the Qur'an and disaster theology entitled *Tsūnāmī fi Bilādīnā Indunīsā A huwa 'Adzāb aw Muṣībah*.⁷⁵

Such an interpretation model is one of the most prominent methods in his interpretation pattern. For example, when explaining Q.S al-Quraish:1-2, (١) لِإِنْفِ قُرَيْشٍ (٢) هِ الْفَهْمِ رَحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ he took the story of the Quraish as a model. Where in the era of the Prophet, the livelihood of the Quraish was trading. This is because the Quraish do not have the natural resources that can be managed to meet their needs, considering that the land of Arabia consists mostly of barren and arid deserts. However, geographically Arabia is a very strategic country because it is in the middle of a part of the world which at that time became a meeting of major trade routes. On land, the route is passed by India to Iraq, Iran, the Mediterranean Sea, and vice versa. At sea, the path passes through the Arabian Gulf and around the Peninsula to the Red Sea. In winter, the Quraish traveled to Yemen to trade, this is because in Makkah at that time it was cold, so the Quraish looked for a place to trade with a hot climate. By knowing the weaknesses and strengths of their nation, the Quraish are able to organize planned actions, so that they are able to provide maximum results without providing great risks.⁷⁶ *Mbah* Moen continued, if the Indonesian nation is able to know its identity,

⁷¹ Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr Al-Jalālain* (Ttp: Maktabah al-Salām, n.d.). Juz.1, 290

⁷² Ppalanwarsarang, *Hati-Hati Gunung Dijual Bumi Bergoncang! Syaikhina KH.Maimoen Zubair -Ppalanwarsarang*. (accessed on 04 February 2024)

⁷³ بِلِسَانِ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ

⁷⁴ 'Ismāil, *Tafsīr Safīnah kallā saya'lamūn fi Tafsīri Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 24

⁷⁵ Maimun, *Tsunami fi Bilādīnā Indonesia am is 'adzabun aw muṣibatun*.

⁷⁶ MATIN, *NGAJI BERSAMA KH. MAIMOEN ZUBAIR DALAM RANGKA HARLAH PPSB KE-21 (TAHUN 2019)*. (accessed on 04 February 2024)

both in terms of its shortcomings and advantages, then Indonesia will become a developed and religious country.⁷⁷

Mbah Moen is not only known for his flexibility in conveying history, both the history of Islam, the Arabs, and the history of the Indonesian Nation, he is also known for *his kyai* who often rhetoric with language. For example, in analyzing Q.S al-Nabā' verse 19;⁷⁸ *wa Futihat al-Samā' u Fakānat Abwābā*. Here the word *futihat* is *fi'il māzī* which means past or has happened, which means “*opened*”. Meanwhile, in the previous verse, the arrangement of the verse uses *Fi'il Muḏāri'*, namely *Fata'tūnā Afwajā* which means it has not happened or will happen. So that the context of surah al-Nabā' verses 18-19, which basically talks about the Day of Resurrection later, can be drawn to the current context. Before humans will come in droves on the Day of Resurrection (Q.S Al-Nabā' verse 18), preceded by the opening of the gates of heaven. This conclusion is drawn from the linguistic analysis used by *Mbah* Moen, and if drawn on the pattern of the work of tafsir, it is called linguistic tafsir (*al-Tafsīr Lughawī*). Another example of language analysis carried out by *Mbah* Moen is when studying the words *Rijālan*,⁷⁹ *Rakiba*,⁸⁰ and *Ḍāmirun*⁸¹ in several other verses.

Mbah Moen's *interpretation* in some places sometimes differs from the interpretation of previous scholars, but in general he still adheres to the standard concepts of *'Ulūm al-Qur'an*. The argument he builds here is that a person will not be able to understand the Qur'an if he cannot read the Qur'an upside down. This definition is indeed a little confusing, but if understood and traced, what is called *Mbah* Moen is included in the study of *taqzīm wa ta'K.H.īr*. This concept can be seen when he explains Q.S Hūd verse 71, *وَإِذَا رَأَتْهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكْتُمْ فَبَشِّرْهُمَا بِاسْحَاقَ* according to which this verse cannot be understood if translated in a literal text. Because if translated textually, the translation constructed is “*His wife stands up, then smiles. Then we brought him the good news about (the birth).*” Even though logically they should have been given good news first and then smiled and laughed. So this definition is called *the inverted Qur'an by Mbah Moen or the concept of taqzīm wa ta'K.H.īr*.⁸²

The same model of interpretation can also be found in *Mbah Moen's understanding* of Q.S Al-Takwīr:1-9. This verse describes the great signs that will come at the time of the Day of Resurrection. These great signs are represented in verses 1-9 of Q.S At-Takwīr. The signs of the coming of the Day of Resurrection according to this surah begin with the Sun being so great rolled up easily, and its light

⁷⁷ Recording of the recitation of Ahadan K.H. Maimun Zubair Q.S. al-Qurays: 1-2.

⁷⁸ 'Ismā'il, *Tafsīr Safinah kallā sayalāmūn fī tafsi'ri in Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 76-77.

⁷⁹ 'Ismā'il, *Tafsīr Safinah kallā sayalāmūn fī tafsi'ri in Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 14.

⁸⁰ 'Ismā'il, *Tafsīr Safinah kallā sayalāmūn fī tafsi'ri in Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 15.

⁸¹ 'Ismā'il, *Tafsīr Safinah kallā sayalāmūn fī tafsi'ri in Shaikhina Maimūn*, Juz.1, 17.

⁸² TV, *Liputan Khusus Bedah Kitab Tafsir "Safinatu Kalla Saya'lamun"* Muskercab I PCNU Bangkalan. (accessed on 04 February 2024)

beginning to go out,⁸³ and the next signs according to the order of the verses. In contrast to this understanding, *Mbah Moen* explained that the order of the doomsday signs is different from the order of the verses. According to him, the beginning of the sign of the apocalypse begins with Q.S at-takwir verses 8-9, and the signs of the apocalypse end with the first verse in this letter, إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ.⁸⁴ *Mbah Moen's interpretation* of this verse is based on the historical context of Mecca and the period before Muhammad was sent to be a prophet and messenger. Where the early civilization of the Arabs was to kill female fetuses, and it began to be questioned or questioned why these fetuses were killed during the prophetic era. According to *Mbah Moen*, *this situation* is a representation of Q.S al-Takwīr 8-9 as an early sign of the coming of the Day of Resurrection.

This description shows that *Mbah Moen's interpretation* makes the knowledge of the Qur'an and tafsir the main basis. His struggle with classical literature displays the dialectic of classical traditions in the study of the Qur'an and tafsir. This typology can be seen from how *Mbah Moen* gave rise to the science of *ta'dīm wa ta'K.H.ir* (the locus of balaghah science), interpreting the Qur'an with the Qur'an, the Qur'an with history, and the use of a historical approach in his interpretation. This shows that the context of the pesantren that surrounds *Mbah Moen*, makes him not consider the classical Qur'an science obsolete, in fact he can understand the text of the Qur'an more interesting and logical. This means that *Mbah Moen's* interpretation is not only based on reason (*ra'yu*), but also uses other verses, history, and the sciences of the Qur'an as a means of interpretation. This argument reinforces and supports that the mufassir title that is widely held on him, both by the community in general and his students, can be given. Because in addition to being progressive and responsive to socio-religious symptoms, standard studies related to Qur'an science are also maintained.

Conclusion

K.H. Maimoen Zubair, a famous scholar in Indonesia, has a unique method in interpreting the Qur'an. His interpretation is known for combining contextual tones with contemporary phenomena, especially in the pesantren environment. His interpretation is often influenced by his historical, psychological, and social background. He succeeded in transmitting the text of the Qur'an in a more modern context as demonstrated by his ability to relate the modern worldview to the sacred texts. *Mbah Moen* in interpreting the Qur'an uses a contextual approach, where he considers the current social, cultural, and political conditions in his interpretation. This can be seen in his various reflections on existing socio-cultural phenomena, such as the suppression of the press in the New Order era. His interpretation also shows a

⁸³ See in Tafsīr Al-Baghawī, Juz. 5, page 214, that on the Day of Resurrection the sun, moon, and stars will be folded in the sea. Then Allah sent the Wind to destroy it so that it became Fire.

⁸⁴ 'Ismā'il, *Tafsīr Safinah kallā saya'lamūn fī tafsīri in Shaikhina Maimūn.*, Juz. 1, 79.

moderate and flexible attitude towards contemporary issues, such as the law of muamalah with banks and the translation of the Qur'an. He did not take an extreme position, but rather a moderate approach that took into account the social realities and progress of the times. On the other hand, although his interpretation is contextual, K.H. Maimoen still retains the authority of history and classical concepts. This is influenced by his strong scientific background in the classical literature of Islamic boarding schools.

This research also contributes to the development of modern interpretation studies, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools. K.H. Maimoen Zubair has succeeded in combining the tradition of classical interpretation with contemporary reality through a contextual approach that is relevant to modern society. His interpretation model is inspiring in dealing with issues such as the environment, social justice, and how to practice religion well, as well as enriching the literature of archipelago interpretation and emphasizing the importance of moderation in interpretation. This research opens up opportunities for further exploration, such as the application of K.H. Maimoen Zubair's interpretation in the pesantren curriculum for the younger generation. Comparative studies with other modern scholars and thematic research on social, political, or cultural issues in their interpretation can broaden the understanding of their contributions. In addition, the study of the authority of the tafsir book is an interesting and important research locus to be carried out in order to position the publication of this tafsir book.

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