

Muhammad 'Abduh's Adabî-Ijtima'î Pattern in Tafsir al-Manar

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Abstract

This article aims to examine in depth the style of interpretation of adabî-ijtima'î. Muhammad 'Abduh considered some books of tafsir at that time and earlier times to be arid and rigid, because many interpreters directed attention to linguistic technicalities without paying attention to social aspects and eventually moved away from the purpose of the Qur'an. 'Abduh gave a breakthrough to this problem by presenting the style of tafsir adabî-ijtima'î, which is a style of interpretation of the Quran whose presentation emphasizes the beauty of language (literature). At the same time, the description of the discussion is more directed at socio-cultural criticism and community improvement based on the *hidayah* of the Qur'an. This article is the result of library research using a descriptive-analytical approach. The *ijtima'î* style is a tafsir that emphasizes an in-depth study of social and socio-cultural conditions by finding social "pathologies" in a society, *mufassir* tries to dig up instructions or guidelines from the Qur'an to improve the social conditions of the community. This method aims to free the mind from the shackles of taqlid and improve the Arabic style.

Keywords: adabî, ijtima'î, 'Abduh, tafsir, social

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam corak penafsiran *adabî-ijtima'î*. Muhammad 'Abduh menilai beberapa kitab tafsir pada masa itu dan masa-masa sebelumnya gersang dan kaku, karena banyak penafsir yang mengarahkan perhatiannya pada teknis kebahasaan tanpa memperhatikan aspek-aspek sosial dan akhirnya menjauh dari tujuan Al-Qur'an. 'Abduh memberikan terobosan terhadap masalah ini dengan menghadirkan corak tafsir *adabî-ijtima'î*, yaitu corak penafsiran Al-Qur'an yang penyajiannya lebih mengedepankan keindahan bahasa (sastra). Pada saat yang sama, uraian pembahasannya lebih diarahkan pada kritik sosial budaya dan perbaikan masyarakat berdasarkan hidayah Al-Qur'an. Artikel ini merupakan hasil penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis. Corak *ijtima'î* adalah tafsir yang menekankan pada kajian mendalam terhadap kondisi sosial dan sosial budaya dengan menemukan "patologi" sosial dalam suatu masyarakat, *mufassir* berusaha menggali petunjuk atau pedoman dari Al-Qur'an untuk memperbaiki kondisi sosial masyarakat. Metode ini bertujuan untuk membebaskan akal dari belenggu taqlid dan memperbaiki gaya bahasa Arab.

Kata Kunci: adabî, ijtima'î, 'Abduh, tafsir, sosial

INTRODUCTION

Muhammad 'Abduh is widely recognized as one of Islam's most influential reformers. His reform ideas have had an impact not only on his own Egypt and the rest of the Arab world in the Middle East but also on nearly the whole Islamic world, including Indonesia.¹ Islamic reformers who emerged in the early 20th century to the present, such as Qosim Amin,² Thoha Husain,³ Ali Abdurraziq,⁴ Thantawi Jauhari,⁵ Mushthafa al-Maraghi,⁶ were students and figures who were influenced by Muhammad 'Abduh's Islamic renewal thought, either directly or indirectly.⁷

Similarly, the emergence of the renewal of Islamic thought in Indonesia, cannot be separated from the influence of Muhammad 'Abduh's Islamic renewal thought, which entered through al-'Urwah al-Wutsqâ magazine and al-Manâr magazine and his thoughts contained in Risâlah al-Tawhid and Tafsir al-Manâr.⁸ The idea of Islamic renewal was then raised and developed by figures and organizations explicitly or implicitly by claiming to be the bearers of the mission of Islamic renewal, such as Muhammadiyah, al-Irshad and others.⁹

So great was the influence of Muhammad 'Abduh's Islamic renewal thought, that for about a century after his death, various aspects of his renewal thought and activities both in the religious, educational, and political fields, have been interesting subjects of study and research both for scholars in the East and for orientalists in the West.

Some aspects of Muhammad 'Abduh's renewal thought that have received much attention from researchers include the fields of interpretation, thought, theology, and education. In the field of exegesis Muhammad 'Abduh is seen by al-Dzahabi as the forerunner and founder of the school of Tafsîr al-Adabî al-Ijtimâ'i,¹⁰ which is a style of interpretation of the Qur'an whose presentation emphasizes the beauty of language

¹ Harun Nasution, *Muhammad 'Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1987), 1.

² Syaiful Bahri, "Kontribusi Pemikiran Qasim Amin dalam Pembaruan Hukum Keluarga Islam." *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 6, no. 1 (2016): 15-28.

³ Wasid. "Dinamis-Rasionalis dalam Pemikiran Thaha Husain pada Problematika Peradaban Islam dan Barat." *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-agama* 3, no. 2 (2013).

⁴ Badarus Syamsi, "Pemikiran Ali Abdurraziq Tentang Hubungan Islam dan Negara." *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 14, no. 2 (2015): 325-342.

⁵ Muhammad Ali Fuadi, "Ayat-ayat Pertanian dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penafsiran Thantawi Jauhari dalam Kitab al-Jawâhir fî Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Karîm)." PhD diss., UIN Walisongo, 2016.

⁶ Wisnawati Loeis, "Nilai-nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Tafsir Ahmad Musthafa Al-Maraghi: Studi Analisis terhadap Al- Qur'an Surat Al-Fil." *Turats (Jurnal Pemikiran dan Peradaban Islam)* 7, no. 1 (2011): 74-87.

⁷ Abdul Mazid Abdussalam al-Mustashib, *Visi dan Paradigma Tafsir Alquran Kontemporer*, trans. oleh M. Maghfur W (Bangil: al-'Izzah, 1997), 218-20.

⁸ Nasution, *Muhammad 'Abduh*, 1.

⁹ Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam Interpretasi untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 1991), h. 49.

¹⁰ Muhammad Husain al-Dzahabi, *al-Tafsîr wa al-Mufasirûn*, II (Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub al-Haditsah, 1976), 547-549.

(literature). At the same time, the description of the discussion is more directed at socio-cultural criticism and community improvement based on the hidayah of the Qur'an. Based on the description above, the author tries to explore more deeply about the interpretation style of Muhammad 'Abduh's creation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a comprehensive library research methodology to explore and analyze Muhammad 'Abduh's tafsir pattern as manifested in "Tafsir al-Manar." The research design is primarily qualitative, as it seeks to delve deep into the textual analysis of 'Abduh's tafsir to identify recurring themes, interpretative approaches, and the underlying philosophy that shaped his exegesis. The following steps outline the research methodology adopted for this study.

To begin with, the research involves an extensive review of the primary sources, focusing on 'Abduh's "Tafsir al-Manar" itself. The primary source analysis encompasses an in-depth examination of 'Abduh's commentaries on various Quranic verses, exploring his interpretations, linguistic analysis, historical context, and theological perspectives. Moreover, the study also investigates the secondary literature available in various libraries and academic databases, including critical works, commentaries, biographies, and scholarly articles related to Muhammad 'Abduh's life, his intellectual influences, and his tafsir methodology. This will help establish the historical and intellectual context within which 'Abduh's tafsir emerged and evolved.

In addition to textual analysis, this research employs content analysis to discern patterns and themes in 'Abduh's tafsir. The study systematically categorizes his interpretive methods, highlighting his emphasis on rationalism, socio-political context, and the influence of modernist thought in his exegesis. Moreover, the research investigates how 'Abduh's tafsir differs from traditional tafsir methods and examines the impact of his ideas on the broader field of Quranic exegesis in the Islamic world. This library-based research methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of Muhammad 'Abduh's tafsir pattern in "Tafsir al-Manar" and its significance within the context of Islamic scholarship and modernist thought.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tafsir al-Manar and Muhammad 'Abduh

Tafsir al-Manar is one of the books of Tafsir that is socially, culturally, and socially oriented (*Adabî-Ijtima'î*);

"a style of interpretation that emphasizes the explanation of Qur'anic verses in terms of editorial accuracy, then arranges the content of the verses in a beautiful redaction with the prominence of the main purpose of the descent of the Qur'an, which is to bring guidance in life, then weave the understanding of the verse with the laws of nature that apply in society and world development."

The main figure of this style of interpretation, as well as the one credited with laying the foundations was Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, which was later developed by his

disciple and friend, Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Ridha, and continued by other scholars, especially Muhammad Musthafa al-Maraghi.

Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh his full name is Muhammad bin 'Abduh bin Hasan Khairullah. He was born in the village of Mahallat Nashr in al-Buhairah County, Egypt in 1849 A.D. He came from a family that was not classified as wealthy, nor of noble descent. However, his father was known as a respectable person who liked to give help. Muhammad 'Abduh said: "People think that my father is the noblest man in my village. Furthermore, he I consider the noblest man in the world. Because at that time I thought that this world was nothing but the village of Mahallat Nashr. At that time, the officials who visited Mahallat Nashr village came and stayed at our house more often than at the village chief's house, even though the village chief was richer and had many houses and land. This created a deep impression upon me that honor and elevation were not determined by wealth or money. I also realized, from childhood, how firm my father was in his stance and determination and hard in his behavior toward his enemies. All that I imitated and took, except the violence."¹¹

Muhammad 'Abduh lived in a farming family in the countryside. All his siblings helped his father manage the agricultural business, except Muhammad 'Abduh who was assigned by his father to study science. This choice may just be a coincidence or it may also be because he is deeply loved by his father and mother. This is evidenced by his mother's impatient attitude when left by Muhammad 'Abduh to another village. Just two weeks after her disappearance, her mother had come to visit, and also with Muhammad 'Abduh married at a very young age in 1865, at that time she was only 16 years old.

Muhammad 'Abduh's Education

At first Muhammad 'Abduh was sent by his father to Masjid al-Ahmadi Thantha (about 80 Km from Cairo) to study the tajweed of the Qur'an. However, the teaching system there was so annoying that after two years (in 1864) there, Muhammad 'Abduh decided to return to his village and farm like his brothers and relatives. It was when she returned to this village that she was married.

Even though he was married, his father still forced him to return to study. However, Muhammad 'Abduh was determined not to return. So, he fled to the village of Syibril Khit, where many of his paternal uncles lived. It was in this city that he met Shaykh Darwish Khidr, one of his uncles who had knowledge of the Qur'an and adhered to Sufism ash-Shadziliah. The uncle managed to change the views of the young man Muhammad 'Abduh, from someone who hated science to someone who liked it. In fact, "It did not pass five days and that time of meeting, except that what I had loved most like playing, joking, and boasting, had turned into the things I hated most." Thus, Muhammad 'Abduh recounted his experience.¹²

¹¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Rasionalitas al-Qur'an: Studi Kritis atas Tafsir al-Manar* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2008), 5

¹² Ibid.

From here, Muhammad 'Abduh returned to Masjid al-Ahmadi Thantha, and this time his interest and outlook for learning has been much different than when he first went there. One thing to note is that in this period, Muhammad 'Abduh was greatly influenced by the Sufistic ways and understandings instilled by Shaykh Darwish Khidr.

Upon his return from Thantha, Muhammad 'Abduh headed to Cairo to study at Al-Azhar, in February 1866. However, the teaching system at that time was not pleasing to his heart, because according to 'Abduh: "To the students only the opinions of the previous scholars were thrown without leading them to research, comparison, and assessment efforts." However, at this college, he had time to get acquainted with many lecturers he admired, including:

Shaykh Hasan al-Thawil, taught philosophical books written by Ibn Sina, logic written by Aristotle, and so on, even though these books were not taught in Al-Azhar at that time. Muhammad al-Basyumi was a man who devoted much attention to literature and language, not through the teaching of grammar, but through the subtlety of taste and the ability to practice it.

In 1871, Jamaluddin al-Afghani arrived in Egypt. His presence was welcomed by Muhammad 'Abduh by attending scientific meetings held by al-Afghani. The relationship between the two allowed Jamaluddin al-Afghani to shift Muhammad 'Abduh's tendency from Sufism – in the narrow sense and in the form of dress code and remembrance – to Sufism in another sense, namely the struggle for the improvement of the state of society and to guide them to progress and defend the teachings of Islam. This is done through understanding the teachings of the opponent and refuting them while studying the factors that make the Western world progress, to be applied in Islamic societies, as long as they are in line with Islamic principles.

After two years since his meeting with Jamaluddin al-Afghani, there was a significant change in 'Abduh's personality, and he began writing his books, such as *Risalah al-Waridah* (1873), followed by *Hasyiah 'Ala Sharh al-Dawwani li al-Aqa'id adh-Adhudhiyah* (1875). 'Abduh, who was 26 years old at the time, had written extensively on the schools of philosophy, kalam (theology), and Sufism, and criticized opinions he considered wrong.

In addition, 'Abduh also wrote updated articles in Cairo's *al-Ahram* newspaper. Through this medium, the echoes of the writing reached the ears of teachers at al-Azhar who largely disapproved of it. However, thanks to his scientific abilities and his defender, Shaykh Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Abbasi, who at that time occupied the post of "Shaykh al-Azhar", Muhammad 'Abduh was declared graduated by reaching the highest level in al-Azhar. At that time 'Abduh was at the age of 28 years (1877 AD).

After graduating from the level of *Alamiyah* (now *Lc.*), he devoted himself to al-Azhar by teaching *Manthiq* (logic) and the science of *al-Kalam* (theology), while at home he also taught the book *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq*, written by Ibn Miskawaih and the *History of the Civilizations of European Kingdoms*.¹³

¹³ *Ibid*, 6

In 1878, Muhammad 'Abduh was appointed lecturer of "History" at the Dar al-Ulum School (which later became a faculty) as well as Arabic at Madrasah al-Idarah wa al-Asun (School of Administration and Languages). In 1879, Jamaluddin al-Afghani was expelled by the Egyptian government at the instigation of the British who were then very influential in Egypt. Muhammad 'Abduh in the same year was dismissed from the latter two schools, and exiled to his birthplace, Mahallat Nashr (Egypt).

But with a cabinet change in 1880, 'Abduh was released again and given the task of heading the official government newspaper, al-Wtzaqa 'i al-Mishriyah. This newspaper, by Muhammad 'Abduh and his friends, former students of al-Afghani, was used as a medium to criticize the government and its officials who deviated or acted arbitrarily.

After the Urabi Revolution of 1882 (which ended in failure), Muhammad 'Abduh, then still the head of the al-Qa'i newspaper, became involved in the revolution, so the Egyptian government decided to exile him for three years by giving him the right to choose his place of exile. In the end, he chose Syria.¹⁴

In this country, Muhammad 'Abduh settled for a year. Then he caught up with his teacher Jamaluddin al-Afghani, who was then in Paris. From there they both published the newspaper al-'Urwah al-Wutsqa, which aimed to establish pan-Islam as well as oppose Western colonialism, especially the British. In 1884, Muhammad 'Abduh was sent by the newspaper to England to meet with the country's leaders sympathetic to the Egyptian people.

In 1885, Muhammad 'Abduh left Paris for Beirut (Lebanon), and taught there while authoring the following books: (1) Risalah at-Tawhid (in theology); (2) Sharh Nahjul Balaghah (commentary on the collection of speeches and sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib); (3) Translating Jamaluddin al-Afghani's ar-Raddu 'Ala ad Dahriyyin (refutation of those who do not believe in the existence of God) from Persian; and (4) Sharh Maqamat Badi'az-Zaman al-Hamazani (the book concerning Arabic language and literature).

In Beirut, Muhammad 'Abduh's activities were not limited to composing and teaching, but together with several other religious leaders, he also founded an organization aimed at fostering inter-religious harmony. This organization has produced positive results, as evidenced by the publication of articles that highlight the teachings of Islam objectively in the mass media in England, even though at that time, it was rare to find similar things in the Western media.¹⁵

However, this organization and the activities of its members were judged by the Turkish authorities in Beirut to have political aims, so the ruler proposed to the Egyptian government to revoke Muhammad 'Abduh's exile sentence so that he immediately returned to Egypt. Thus, in 1888, Muhammad 'Abduh returned to his homeland and was given by the Egyptian government the task of being a judge in the Banha Regional Court. Although at that time Muhammad 'Abduh was very interested in teaching, the Egyptian government seemed to deliberately hinder, so that his thoughts that might conflict with the

¹⁴ Harun Nasution, *Muhammad 'Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah*, 7

¹⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Rasionalitas al-Qur'an: Studi Kritis atas Tafsir al-Manar*, 8

policies of the government at that time, could not be passed on to the sons and daughters of Egypt.

Several times Muhammad 'Abduh was transferred from one region to another in the same position, until finally he was assigned to the Abidin Court, Cairo, then in 1899 he was appointed Mufti of the kingdom of Egypt. In the same year Muhammad 'Abduh also served as a member of the Royal Egyptian Shura Council, the legislative section.

In 1905, Muhammad 'Abduh came up with the idea of establishing an Egyptian University. This idea received an enthusiastic response from the government and the community, as evidenced by the provision of a piece of land for this purpose. But unfortunately, this aspired university was only established after Muhammad 'Abduh passed away to Rahmatullah, and this university later became "Cairo University". On July 11, 1905, at the peak of his activities in fostering the people, Muhammad 'Abduh died in Cairo, Egypt. Those who mourn his passing are not only Muslims, but also mourn many non-Muslim figures.¹⁶

'Abduh's Growth Environment

Muhammad 'Abduh, as described in his life history at a glance above, was born, raised, even lived in a society that was being touched by fundamental developments in Europe. Sayyid Quthub gives a brief and precise description of this society, namely "a society that is frozen, rigid, tightly closed the doors of ijtihad, ignoring the role of reason in understanding the sharia of Allah or dispensing with the laws, because they have been satisfied with the work of their predecessors, also live in a period of ignorance of reason (jumud) and based on khurafat. Meanwhile, in Europe there lived a society that deified reason, especially after the astonishing scientific discoveries of the time, coupled with the sharp condemnation of the orientalisists against the teachings of Islam."

The state of society in Europe has actually shown the seeds of influence since the arrival of the French Expedition (Napoleon) to Egypt (1798). However, clearly, the influence began to be felt by Muhammad 'Abduh by the time he entered the gates of Al-Azhar, the educational institution that fostered and its scholars had divided into two groups, majority and minority. The first group adheres to the pattern of taqlid, which is to teach students that the opinions of scholars are only to be memorized, without leading them to research, comparison, and assessment efforts. The second group adheres to the *tajdid* (renewal) pattern, which emphasizes their descriptions of reasoning and developing taste.

'Abduh's introduction to Sufism and the encouragement he received from Dervish at a young age led him to study various fields of religious science. It's no surprise that 'Abduh's instincts, coupled with the Shaykh's encouragement, led him to join a minority group that was then led by Shaykh Muhammad al-Basyuni, a literature expert, and Shaykh Hasan al-Thawil, who had been teaching philosophy and logic long before Al-Azhar recognized him.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Then his meeting with Jamaluddin al-Afghani in 1869, changed 'Abduh's attitude which had only tended to the cultivation of taste and mastery of scientific ideas and theories, towards a practical attitude that made the owner in the middle of people's lives, striving based on their feelings and ideas to face challenges and overcome problems.

His meeting with al-Afghani made 'Abduh active in various social and political fields, which led him to live in Paris, master the French language, live the life of his people, and communicate with European thinkers of the time, especially Herbert Spencer. That is the outline of the environment and the life journey of Muhammad 'Abduh who set his sights on religious and community issues, especially in the two main issues as described below.

The Focus of Muhammad 'Abduh's Thought

There are two main issues on which Muhammad 'Abduh's thought focused, as he himself admits. First, to free the mind from the shackles of taqlid that hinder the development of religious knowledge as well as Salaf al-Ummah (scholars before the third century Hijri), before the split, namely understanding directly from its main source, namely the Qur'an. Second, improve the style of Arabic, both used in official conversations in government offices, as well as in writings in the mass media, translations or correspondence.

After closely examining Muhammad 'Abduh's writings and attitudes, many observers believe that there are several underlying objectives to his work. Specifically, 'Abduh sought to: (a) Clarify the rigid and outdated nature of Islamic teachings, and (b) Relate these teachings to modern life by adjusting their interpretation.

Other observers consider that what Muhammad 'Abduh expressed, in essence, aims to "strengthen the spiritual mental aspects of Muslims by relieving anxiety relatively little when measured by the ability of this figure. These works are: Tafsir Juz 'Amma, which he composed to be the handle of the teachers of recitation in Morocco in 1321 AH, Tafsir Surah Wal 'Ashr, this work comes from lectures or studies he delivered in front of scholars and leaders of the Algerian community, Tafsir verses surah an-Nisa verses 77 and 87, al-Hajj verses 52, 53 and 54, and al-Ahzab verse 37. This work is intended to refute the negative response to Islam and its Prophet, Tafsir Al-Qur'an starts from al-Fatihah to verse 129 of surah al-Nisa' yang delivered at Al-Azhar Mosque, Cairo, from the beginning of Muharram 1317 AH to the middle of Muharram 1332 AH. Although the interpretation of these verses was not written directly by Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, it can be said to be the result of his work, because his student (Rashid Ridha) who wrote the tafsir lectures showed this article to 'Abduh who sometimes corrected it with the addition and subtraction of one or more sentences, before being disseminated in al Manar magazine.

From this, it is known that most of 'Abduh's exegetical works, at first were not in written form. This, according to Abd uh, is because "the description delivered orally will be

understood by about eighty percent of the listener, while the written work can only be understood by about twenty percent of the reader."¹⁸

The listener's view of the speaker helps the understanding, while the listener's state affects the speaker. "Therefore," said Muhammad 'Abduh, "I do not speak about the state of Islam in the presence of the scholars, because their minds are not directed at all, and therefore they do not know anything even though they have free time. When delivering tafsir lessons, I speak according to the circumstances of the audience, therefore I do not prepare myself by reading (a particular book) before delivering the lesson. I only open the book of tafsir if there is a *Gharib* (rare) aspect regarding *i'rab* or words. So, when there is a group of ignorant and discouraged people, I explain (the verses of the Qur'an) briefly. But if there are people in the audience who can denounce deep discussions and give serious attention, then God inspires me with many explanations."

'Abduh's Views on Tafsir and Interpretation

First; Muhammad 'Abduh considered the books of tafsir in his time and previous times to be nothing but the exposure of various opinions of scholars who differed from each other, and in the end moved away from the purpose of the Qur'an.

Some of these books of exegesis are so barren and rigid, that the interpreter only directs attention to the understanding of words or the position of the sentence in terms of *i'rab* and other explanations concerning the technical aspects of the language contained by the redaction of Qur'anic verses. Therefore, these books of exegesis tend to be a kind of practical exercise in the field of language, rather than actual books of exegesis. According to 'Abduh, Allah Almighty. People will not ask us about these things, nor will people need them, what they need are clues that can lead them to happiness in this world and the hereafter.

However, there are several books of tafsir that he excluded, namely Tafsir al-Zamakhshari. This interpretation is considered the best book for students and students, because of the accuracy of the editors and the literary aspects of the language it describes. The judgment was conveyed to Rashid Rida when he asked about the best interpretation. On another occasion, 'Abduh also mentioned the tafsir al-Thabari, Abu Muslim al-Asfahani, and al-Qurthubi, as reliable books among scholars, because their authors had broken free from the shackles of taqlid and tried to explain the teachings of Islam without involving themselves in disputes and disagreements that could lead to division, Thus they have participated in creating a scientific climate in the midst of their society.

Second; In the field of interpretation, 'Abduh underlined that the dialogue of the Qur'an with the *ummiyyin* (the unlettered) Arab community does not mean that its verses are directed to them alone, but are generally applicable to every age and generation. Therefore, it is the duty of every intelligent or ignorant person to understand the verses of the Qur'an according to their own abilities.

¹⁸ Dudung Abdullah, Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Abduh dalam Tafsir Al-Manar, *Jurnal Al-Daulah* 1, no. 1 (2012), 33-34

This way of thinking 'Abduh produced two main foundations regarding his understanding or interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, namely the role of reason and the role of social conditions.¹⁹

The Role of Reason

Muhammad 'Abduh argued that the Qur'anic method of expounding religious teachings was different from the method pursued by previous holy books, the Qur'an did not demand to take for granted what was conveyed, but presented problems and proved them by argumentation, even expounding the views of its opponents while proving their error. According to 'Abduh, there are religious problems that cannot be believed except through logical proof, as he also admitted that there are religious teachings that are difficult to understand with reason but not contrary to reason.

Thus, although revelation must be understood with reason, Muhammad 'Abduh still acknowledged the limitations of reason and the human need for the guidance of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), especially in many metaphysical matters or in some matters of worship.²⁰

The Role of Social Conditions

Religious teachings, according to 'Abduh, are generally divided into two parts, namely detailed and general. The detailed is a set of decrees of God and His Prophet that cannot undergo change or development, while the general are principles and rules that can change in elaboration and detail according to social conditions. From here, 'Abduh criticized the scholars of his time who required their people to follow the results of the understanding of previous scholars regardless of differences in social conditions. This, according to 'Abduh, "causes difficulties for the people, even encouraging them to ignore religious teachings."

Muslims have renounced their religion, because the attention has been only on the redaction of the verses (*nash*), without regard to the spirit of the verses themselves. 'Abduh said, that is why he proposed to the scholars "that they gather themselves in the forum of one organization, in which they can discuss religious matters and seek the '*illat* (motive) of each decree, so that a law established according to a certain condition, should be explained. If the conditions change, then the decree may also change." In understanding the verses of the Qur'an, especially those concerning the verses of the law, this foundation was never ignored.

Through the two things mentioned above, 'Abduh tried for his goal, which was to make the nature of Islamic teachings mummified according to his views and connect these teachings with today's life. His style of interpretation of the verses of the Al-Qur'an is clearly colored by these views.

The Adabî-Ijtima'î Style in Muhammad 'Abduh's Interpretation

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

The word pattern in the Indonesian dictionary has several meanings. Among them refers to the shape of flowers or images on cloth (batik, songket), pattern also refers to various colors in basic colors, and also refers to certain characteristics (understanding, type, shape).²¹ The word pattern in the Tradition of 'Ulûm al-Tafsîr, the word pattern explains the word al-lawn in Arabic which means color. al-Zahabî also used this term in his book al-Tafsîr wa al-Mufasssirûn.²²

There are various methods and styles of interpretation of the Qur'an. Dr. Abd al-Hay al-Farmawi divides the methods known so far into four, namely analytical, comparative, global, and thematic (topic setting). The analysis method has various patterns, one of which is the *adabî-ijtima'î* (social culture) style. This style focuses on its editorial, then arranges its content in a beautiful editorial with the prominence of aspects of the Qur'anic instructions for life, and relates the understanding of these verses to the laws of nature or norms that apply in society and world development without using disciplinary terms, except within the limits of what is urgently needed.

Muhammad Hussein al-Zahabî put forward various characteristics of 'Abduh's interpretation, then extensively supplemented by Abdullah Mahmud Shahatah, so that the whole equal, according to him, reached nine basic principles. Interpretive style is defined as the tendency or norm of the reviewer. It is driven by education, circumstances, and beliefs. Thus, if the mufasssir is a linguist, he will use the linguistic-analytical method (or lughawî style) to interpret the verses of the Qur'an. If the interpreter is an expert in a scientific field, then the explanation tends to use a more scientific approach commonly called a scientific model, etc. However, the above conclusions are not intended to result in the understanding that the mufasssir has expertise in only one branch of science since interpreting the Qur'an requires a large number of scientific and methodological devices and requirements.

Adabî interpretation is a must for translators to do first, as the Qur'an is in Arabic. Knowledge of Arabic language and literature is an absolute must. The Adabî model or pattern is a study based or focused on elaboration related to vocabulary and linguistic structure with the help of linguistic and literary scientific groups. This scholarly group includes *şarf*, *naḥw*, *lughah* and *balaghah*. This tool serves to analyze the meaning and scope, the suitability of one word to another, and the relationship of one word to another.

While the *ijtima'î* style is an interpretation that emphasizes an in-depth study of social and socio-cultural conditions. Interpreters examine the development and diversity of social conditions in terms of their economic, intellectual, religious, and political conditions. After finding a social "pathology" in a society, mufasssir tries to dig up instructions or guidelines from the Qur'an to improve the social condition of that community. In this case, the mufasssir must be competent in the field of sociology and history.²³

The above two styles, in the process of developing explanatory methodology research, have either merged into one or merged into the *adabî-ijtima'î* style. Thus, the

²¹ Tim Penyusun KBBI, 2005, 220.

²² al-Dzahabi, *Tafsir wal Mufasssirun*, 57.

²³ Ibid., 42.

Adabî-Ijtima'î style is a style of interpretation based on the study of the meanings and verses of the Qur'an in terms of linguistics and literature, then afterward focuses on the study of the social conditions of society. This study explores the form of guidance from the Qur'an to overcome and heal various problems in society.

Mufassir, by means of Adabî-Ijtima'î, studied and sought solutions to the problems of the Ummah. He will continue to investigate the meaning of Qur'anic verses, which he believes can be a healer and solution to social problems or phenomena that occur and grow in the midst of society.²⁴

There is a difference at the starting point between the Adabî-Ijtima'î style of interpretation and other interpretations. When classical interpretation deviates from the text of the Qur'an, the consequences of its interpretation become increasingly problematic. However, in the Adabî-Ijtima'î method, the initial effort is to analyze the difficulties that develop and then look for solutions under the guidance of the Qur'an. From the explanation of each of the definitions above, the author concludes that the interpretation of the Adabî-Ijtima'î style is the interpretation of the Qur'an as a whole and thoroughly and touches all aspects contained in the verses of the Qur'an based on the dominance of the ability to think (*ijtihad*) mufassir which emphasizes literary values and raises social issues or themes.²⁵

'Abduh Views each surah as a unity of harmonious verses. From this view, 'Abduh established a harmonious relationship between one verse and another verse in one surah. According to 'Abduh, the meaning of a word or sentence should be closely related to the purpose of the surah as a whole, for example, *والفجر و ليال العشر* (For the sake of dawn and night).

The word *layalin 'ashr* (al-Fajr: 2) for example, cannot be separated from the word *wa al-fajr* (al-Fajr: 1). 'Abduh explains that the word *al-fajr* here, is not accompanied by one particular trait, so it must be understood in general. The Qur'an, according to 'Abduh, "if it is intended to describe a certain day or time, then that day and time are called by their nature or characteristics, such as *Yaum al-Qiyamah*, *al-Yaum al Mau'ud*, *Lailah al-Qadr*, and so on.

However, if the day and time are not determined by their nature or characteristics, then what is meant is time in general. "Well, the word *al-fajr* here is not accompanied by any particular trait, so it means general, happening every day. It means that the dawn is the dawn when the light of day incarnates in the midst of the darkness of the night, a light that then disturbs the darkness."

Thus, for the sake of harmony between the first and second verses, *layalin 'ashr* must be interpreted with nights that are compatible with the meaning contained by the word *al-fajr*, namely the ten nights that occur every month, in which the light of the moon disturbs the darkness of the night. Thus, there is a harmony between the two, that is, each light disturbs the darkness, although the first disturbs it until there is even light. and the second is disturbing but finally, there is even darkness. On the basis of this compatibility, 'Abduh

²⁴ Ibid., 42.

²⁵ Rosihon Anwar. *Pengantar Ulumul Qur'an*. (Bandung: CV. Pustaka Setia, 2009). 201.

rejected the opinions of scholars who interpreted the words al-fajr and layalin 'asyr with a certain dawn such as the beginning of the Hijri year or 10 Dhu al-Hijjah and others.

Then 'Abduh saw that the verses of the Qur'an were general. These characteristics are central to the view that the pointers of the Qur'anic verses are continuous, not limited by a time nor addressed to specific people. Although this is in line with the rules of Tafsir which reads: العبرة بعموم اللفظ لا بخصوص السبب whose meaning is "understanding the meaning of a verse based on its general redaction, not on the specific cause of its descent," 'Abduh greatly expanded the meaning of this rule, so that as long as a verse is judged to be general, then this generality is stated, although sometimes contrary to the rules of language. For example, surah al-Lail verses 15-18:

﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ لَا يَصُلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى

The words ashqa and atqa in these two verses, by 'Abduh are considered to include all people at all times, as long as he has these qualities. So the word al ashqa is not addressed to Umayyad ibn Khalaf, as indicated by the cause of his descent, but it includes sinners, even though he has the title "believer," which because of the weakness of his faith caused him to commit sins that a believer would not commit. On the contrary, the word al-atqa agreed upon by the scholar sabab an-nuzul, addressed to Abu Bakr ash-Shiddiq, by 'Abduh is stated to include all the Believers who are istiqamah, even those who have committed certain sins. This opinion is different from the opinion of scholars who state that the rule cannot be applied to specific verses that come down to certain people, if the redaction is not general.

And 'Abduh is also of the view that the Qur'an is the source of the Akidah and the Law. He explained what is meant by this characteristic as follows:

"I want the Qur'an to be the source on which all religious schools and views are based, rather than that they become the subject and verses of the Qur'an to be used as support for them."

From this, 'Abduh states that the earlier Islamic thinkers (mujtahid) were instrumental in their efforts, but that does not mean that we should put their opinions before the instructions we understand from the verses of the Qur'an.

In addition, 'Abduh also gave a significant portion to the widespread use of reason in understanding the Qur'an. According to 'Abduh revelation and reason could not possibly contradict, so he used reason extensively to understand (interpret) the verses of the Qur'an. His interpretation of the creed or sharia reflects this characteristic. Example when interpreting surah al-Baqarah verse 255: لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم. The conclusion that, the meaning of no god but Him, is that there is no in this form the owner of actual power over the soul (except Him) so that the soul is compelled to exalt and submit to Him, and to believe that in the grasp of His power is the bestowal of virtue or the avoidance of evil.

The History of the Emergence and Development of the Adabî Ijtima'î Style

The Adabî-Ijtima'î style is categorized as a contemporary style of interpretation. This pattern arose at a time when the instructions (hidayah) of the Qur'ân were felt further and less relevant. As a result, the creation of this kind of interpretation is considered capable of

solving and treating societal problems.²⁶ Without questioning the social virtues (muġtamâ') of traditional tafsir books, it cannot be denied that the style of adabî-ijtima'î that began to emerge and gave efficacy and impact on society was this pioneering school of interpretation of Muhammad 'Abduh.

Muhammad 'Abduh's school of exegesis taught and transmitted interpretations of the Qur'an using new approaches and styles. He did things differently from conventional interpreters, and he even criticized many classical exegesis. He claimed that the early stages of the books of exegesis were very obsessive towards certain schools and groups of mufassir. Many of them also include the ill-selected accounts of Isrâ'iliyyat, as well as the weak and maudû' narrations. Classical exegesis is also considered excessive in including the study of language, rather than adopting it only when needed sa. This distances the Qur'an from society and makes it more difficult to understand and more difficult to put into practice its meaning.²⁷

Thus, around the end of the XIII century AD, Muhammad 'Abduh pioneered the creation of the adabî-ijtima'î style in the realm of interpretation. The manhaj pioneered by 'Abduh was then continued by his student, Muhammad Rashid Rida (d: 1935 AD), who wrote the book Tafsir al-Manar. After this era, Muhammad Mustafa al-Maraghi (d: 1945 CE) produced the book Tafsir al-Maraghi, which was heavily inspired by the manhaj used by 'Abduh and Rashid Rida. According to records (Ali Iyazi, 1994: 152), a social tafsir, namely the work of Sayyid Qutb Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an, was published in 1952. (d: 1965 AD).

The Strength and Weakness of Adabî Ijtima'î Pattern

The virtue of the adabî-ijtima'î approach, as explained in the previous section, lies in simplifying the principles of the teachings of the Qur'an for the sake of the reconstruction of Muslims. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings or negative aspects of this kind of interpretation, one of which is the lack of freedom of reason (hurriyat al-'aql) in interpreting the words of the Qur'an.²⁸ This sometimes gives the idea that Qur'anic instructions are forced to reinforce the mufassir's findings on social pathology, in order for Qur'anic instructions to fit the problem. It even asserts that the instructions of the Qur'an must be in accordance with the circumstances. The mufassir of this style is also not willing to take the hadiths of aĥad as a foundation especially in the matter of creed, even though their quality is valid.

Examples of Adabî-Ijtima'î Tafsir

Tafsir juz 'amma is an example of Muhammad 'Abduh's famous tafsir Adabî-Ijtima'î, which he completed in 1321 AH. In this tafsir, 'Abduh attempted to explain the content of the Qur'an concisely and concisely, with little disagreement in aĥkâm and grammar.

²⁶ al-Dzahabi, Tafsir, 232.

²⁷ Abdul Mun'im al-Namr, 'Ilm al-Tafsir Kayfa Nasha'a wa Tathawwaraha. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Mishry, 1985). 130.

²⁸ al-Dzahabi, Tafsir, 234.

Tafsir al-Manar, another work by 'Abduh in the style of Adabi-Ijtima'i, was compiled with Muhammad Rashid Rida. This book was created in 1318 AH as a consequence of Muhammad 'Abduh's writings in the magazine al-Manar, which was later reworked, completed, and tashih-kan Muhammad 'Abduh and then recorded by Rashid Rida.²⁹

An example of this can be found in the following interpretation of Sura al-Baqarah 275 concerning the essential transgressions that cause transgressors to spend eternity in hell:

وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ [البقرة: 275]

" The one who returns (takes riba), then that person is the inhabitant of hell; They remain in it."

This verse is then interpreted to be:³⁰

هُم فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ أَي وَمَنْ عَادَ إِلَى مَا كَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنَ الرِّبَا الْمُحَرَّمِ بَعْدَ تَحْرِيمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ الْبُعْدَاءُ عَنِ الْإِتْعَاطِ بِمَوْعِظَةِ رَبِّهِمْ الَّتِي لَا يَنْهَاهُمْ إِلَّا عَمَّا يَضُرُّ بِهِمْ فِي أَفْرَادِهِمْ أَوْ جَمْعِهِمْ هُمْ أَهْلُ النَّارِ الَّذِينَ يُلَازِمُونَهَا كَمَا يُلَازِمُ الصَّاحِبُ صَاحِبَهُ فَيَكُونُونَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا.

According to the above understanding, a person who continues to eat the fruits of usury after knowing the haram prohibition that has been established will spend eternity in hell. Because Allah opposes usury, they can avoid things that are harmful to their personal lives and society.

وَقَدْ أَوَّلَ الْخُلُودَ الْمُفَسَّرُونَ لِتَتَّفِقَ الْآيَةُ مَعَ الْمُقَرَّرِ فِي الْعُقَايِدِ وَالْفَقْهِ مَنْ كَوَّنَ الْمَعَاصِي لَا تُوجِبُ الْخُلُودَ فِي النَّارِ.³¹

In the following explanation, he states that the phrase "al-khulûd" in the verse was considered by the classical mufassir to be in accordance with the agreed requirements in matters of creed and jurisprudence regarding the existence of sinners or grave transgressions that did not cause the transgressors to remain forever in hell.

CONCLUSION

Tafsir style adabi-ijtima'i is a comprehensive and complete interpretation of the Qur'an whose source of interpretation is dominated by reason (ra'yu) with a focus on literature and language aspects and prioritizing efforts to unravel humanist and social values contained in the verses of the Qur'an. The style of adabi ijtima'i is expected to be able to display the sides of fame and guidance to the people, as well as answer various modern-contemporary social problems that are being faced by the people, so that the concept of hudâ li al-nâs can be realized and felt in real terms by the community. Muhammad 'Abduh was the pioneer of this style of interpretation. This pattern was then continued and developed by his student, Rashid Rida. And examples of books that apply the style of interpretation of adabi-ijtima'i one of them is Tafsir al-Manar.

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²⁹ Ayazi, al-Mufasssirun, 666-667.

³⁰ Muhammad Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar, Mesir: al-Hai'ah al-Mishriyah, 1990. 82.

³¹ Ibid., 83

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