

THE METHODOLOGY OF TUAN GURU NIK ABDUL AZIZ IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SURAH AL-IKHLAS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the methodology employed by Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz in his interpretation of *surah Al-Ikhlās*. Nik Abdul Aziz is widely known as "*Tuan Guru* or *Tok Guru*" (Master of Scholars) and is regarded as one of the most prominent Malaysian scholars (*ulama*) in the field of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*). Thus, his contribution is substantial and demand continual initiatives to preserve this scholarship. Concurrently, regarding an effort to retain this tradition, Alim Rabbani Media Sdn. Bhd has published a manuscript entitled *Projek Tafsir Al-Quran Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat*. The publication of the manuscript represents a continuation of the series of *Tafsir* publications that emerged in the 1990s. The transcription of the manuscript is derived from recorded audio of his Friday weekly lectures. The transcription is presented in the Kelantanese dialect to facilitate comprehension of the content by the reader. This study is a qualitative in nature by adopting deductive content analysis techniques. The analytical method is adopted to analyze Tuan Guru's methodology employed in the interpretation of *surah al-Ikhlās*. The findings show, Tuan Guru has adopted both methodologies of Qur'anic interpretation: 1) the interpretation based on tradition (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur*) in explaining the verses of the Qur'an by Qur'an, and the Qur'an by Sunnah; and 2) the interpretation based on rationality (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi*) in interpreting the Qur'anic verses with various examples, metaphors, and analogies to facilitate understanding among the audience especially among Malay Muslim community.

Keywords: Qur'anic exegesis, *surah al-Ikhlās*, Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tuan Guru Dato Haji Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat is one of the prominent scholars in Malay Archipelago. He is considered as a great administrator, and humble politician particularly in the state of Kelantan Darul Naim. He proved that a scholar also could be active in politics, not merely focusing on religious matters. Despite his intense responsibilities in managing state issues as Chief Minister, he consistently delivers his lectures on Qur'anic exegesis in the mosque near his house. Nevertheless, his scholarships have made substantial contributions to several disciplines, particularly in tafsir, religious education, and politics. Therefore, his contribution is indisputable and necessitates a continuous endeavor to preserve this heritage as to ensure the continuation of knowledge especially

among the Muslim community.

In this article, the researchers will discuss a brief contribution of Tuan Guru Haji Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat in multiple disciplines and his approaches in the interpretation of *surah al-Ikhlas*. The relevance of this surah lies in its regular consideration as it frequently reading and memories by the Muslim on a daily basis. Additionally, it is also known as سورة المَعْوَدَات (Verses of Refuge) or 3 Qul (قُلْ) which consists of *surah al-Ikhlas* (The Purity), *surah al-Falaq* (The Day Break), and *surah an-Nas* (The People) (Al-'Asqalani 1959, 62). According to Tuan Guru, these three chapters are also known as *ayat lazim* (common verses) among the Malays. This collection of chapters is referred to as 'Surah Qadam' or 'Surah Muqaddam', denoting the introductory chapter that is previously given to our children. The readable nature of surah al-Ikhlas facilitates efficient memorization. Therefore, this study will provide the entire interpretation of surah al-Ikhlas by Tuan Guru to his audience during his speech at a mosque.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopting a qualitative approach by employed a content analysis technique which is primarily to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from the study (Bengtsson, 2016). The data were collected primarily from a published manuscript of Tafsir Al-Quran Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat (Surah An-Nas, Surah Al-Falaq, dan Surah Al-Ikhlas). Thus, deductive method was adopted whereby the process involved data gathering from relevant studies, identifying themes, and ultimately generating findings based on pre-existing concept in exegesis. The data were further critically and analytically categorized into two methods of exegesis including the transmission exegesis (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur* and the rational exegesis (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ra'y*) as to address Tuan Guru's methodology in the interpretation of *surah al-Ikhlas*.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Contribution in multiple disciplines

Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat was born on 10th January 1931 in his village, Kampung Pulau Melaka, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. His father was Haji Nik Mat or Raja Muhammad bin Raja Banjar. Haji Nik Mat also known as Tuan Guru Haji Nik Mat *Alim* (referring to his extensive knowledge) and Tuan Guru Haji Nik Mat *Pongoh* (which means fierce in Kelantanese dialect) (Ismail, 2015). Tuan Guru Nik Mat dutifully educated the community to understand the truth of Islam in their lives (Wan Ji, 2010). This was due to the society of Kelantan which practiced a lot of superstitions basically from the Hindu-Buddhism influences (Mohd Aizat, 2011). Tuan Guru, a scholar, and teacher began his education in tawhid (faith), sharia (Islamic law), and Arabic language from his father, Tuan Guru Nik Mat. He studied at Pondok Tok Khurasan, a scholar from Bhafar, Pakistan, and later at Pondok Tok Guru Haji Abbas or Madrasah Ittifaqiah in Jertih, Terengganu. In 1952, he was accepted to study at Aligarh University, where he studied with scholars and leaders of famous Islamic movements in India and Pakistan (Ismail, 2015).

After studying abroad for almost 12 years, Tuan Guru returned to Kelantan in 1962 and became a teacher at several schools, including Sekolah Menengah Agama Tarbiyyah Mardiah and his father's school, Sekolah Menengah Agama Darul Anwar. He encouraged his students to venture

into sports, speech, and debate as preparation for society. In 1964, he became a teacher at Maahad Muhammadi in Kota Bharu. Tuan Guru was active in preaching activities, teaching in various villages, government offices, mosques, and schools. His dedication to educate the community spans all age groups, including young, middle-aged, and elderly individuals. He regularly delivered religious discourses at Pulau Melaka Mosque, alternating with his father. Tuan Guru embarked on his political career unexpectedly when he was selected as a prospective candidate for the Kelantan Hilir Parliamentary constituency in 1967. He joined Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) or The Malaysian Islamic Party and won the seat in the small election held in 1967. After a long journey in the political world, Tuan Guru was appointed Menteri Besar Kelantan (Chief Minister of Kelantan) in 1990. Despite receiving criticism from various sides, he tried to develop the state of Kelantan according to Islam as the way of life (Ismail, 2015).

3.2 Tafsir Al-Quran (Quranic exegesis book) of Tuan Guru

Tuan Guru's Tafsir Al-Quran, a Quranic exegesis book, was published by Pertubuhan Alim Rabbani (Pertubuhan Alim Rabbani, 2020). The team used several methods to compile and write the book, including identifying and transcribing the lecture audio of *surah al-Ikhlās*, editing, and compiling the transcription, and identifying Arabic quotes from Quranic verses, Prophet's hadiths, or scholar's sayings. The translation of Kelantan dialect pronunciation and the meaning of words were also done using the Kamus Dewan dictionary. The book's authenticity was also highlighted in footnotes.

In his interpretation of *surah al-Ikhlās*, Tuan Guru adopted two distinct approaches: transmitted exegesis (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur*) and rational exegesis (*al-Tafsir bi al-Ra'y*). Translation exegesis explains Quranic verses by referring to the Qur'an, Sunnah, or commentary, conversely rational exegesis relies on examples, opinions, and intellectual analysis. This approach incorporates the translation of verse meanings, understanding of the underlying messages (*hikmah*), exposition of Arabic grammatical principles, the implementation of Sufism, discourse on politics, and use of metaphors and analogies.

In conclusion, Tuan Guru's interpretation of the Quran involves various examples, metaphors, and analogies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Quran. His teachings serve as a powerful tool for understanding the Quran and its teachings. On this basis, future research should expand the study to other chapter of the Quran as to enhance the understanding of Quranic translation especially among Muslim community.

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