

AMĪN AL-KHULĪ AND A NEW INTERPRETATION OF CONTEMPORARY ERA *Amīn al-Khulī dan Arah Baru Tafsir Abad Kontemporer*

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Abstract

The discourse on the study of interpretation is currently a polemic, so that it often creates ambiguous interpretations if it only relies on textual understanding which strictly bases the meaning of the text on a limited basis, so contextual interpretation is needed in an effort to understand the meaning of the text, both when the text is revealed, when the text is interpreted and when the text is being read applied. This study describes Amīn al-Khulī and the new interpretation of contemporary era and will answer three main issues, namely: what the portrait of Amīn al-Khulī's intellectual career and thoughts, what the hermeneutic literary method of Amīn al-Khulī and what the integration of the interpretation of the hermeneutic literary method of Amīn al-Khulī with the thematic method. This research is classified as a qualitative type of library research, where all of it refers to literature sourced from written materials. The results of this study found conclusions: first, Amīn al-Khulī was born from a family with a strong religious nuance, in addition to its intellectual, social and political activities are mostly devoted to writing and studying art and literature so as to produce works that can be enjoyed until the end now which looks at the aspect of his thinking at three main points, namely Arabic language and literature, criticism of the method of interpretation and the Qur'an as the great Arabic book, secondly, Amīn al-Khulī puts forward two methodological principles in studying the text literature through an objective understanding of his theoretical hermeneutics, namely the study of everything that is around the Qur'an (dirāsah mā hawla al-Qur'ān) and the study of the Koran itself (dirāsah fī Qur'ān nafsih), third, the thematic method in interpreting al-Qur'an would be better if it was integrated with the hermeneutic literary approach of Amīn al-Khulī with the theoretical pattern of Arabic literature which not only pays attention to the text but also considers the context.

Keywords: Amīn al-Khulī; New Interpretation; Contemporary Era; Hermeneutic

Introduction

The Qur'an which is believed to be the life guide for Muslims in various aspects of life must be able to be a solution to all kinds of problems, so an interpretation is needed that is able to see the contextualization of the reality that occurs in the community.¹ The commentator whose method is still being used is the reformer of the interpretation of the Qur'an in his time,

¹Muflih Fahmi Kaunain, "Tafsir Kontemporer sebagai Metode Pembaharuan Pemikiran Politik Islam", *Jurnal Revolusi* 1, no. 1 (Juni 2018), p. 41-42.

so it is not surprising that there is often controversy with the emergence of new interpretive methods, both in the past and in contemporary times.

Islamic studies, whose main source is the Qur'an, deserve an important position considering that internally, Islamic studies have high flexibility and absorption capacity, and are very accommodating to various novelties. Meanwhile, externally, the study of Islam, which is directly related to Islam as a religion, has been embraced by almost half of the world's population and inhabits all continents.

Abdul Mustaqim mapped the development of the epistemology of interpretation into three phases based on the results of the formulation of several theories, namely: *first*, the formative era with mystical reasoning, *second*, the affirmative era with its ideological reasoning, and *third*, the reformative era with its critical reasoning.² The reformative era, which is based on critical reasoning and has transformative aims, is a reflection of the tradition of contemporary interpretation.³

Contemporary Qur'anic interpretation discourses have been pioneered by many prominent Arab scientists such as Hasan Hanafi who offers a perspective interpretation approach model, Muhammad Syahrur offers an intertextual interpretation approach model, Fazlur Rahman offers a *double movement* interpretation approach model, Muhammad Arkoun offers a language circle interpretation approach model, thought and history,⁴ as well as Amīn al-Khūlī with the hermeneutic literary interpretation method as described in this study.

The object of the study of interpretation is very broad, but there are at least two main paradigms in interpreting interpretation:⁵ *first*, interpretation as a method, namely a way of understanding the meaning of the contents of the Koran from various aspects, so that understanding of the Koran becomes correct, *second*, interpretation as a product, namely interpretation as the result of the work, creation and initiative of the Mufasir for his response

²Abdul Mustaqim, *Pergeseran Epistemologi Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008), p. 33.

³Saifuddin dan Habib, "Kritik Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer (Studi atas Kritik Gamāl al-Banna terhadap Beberapa Pemikir al-Qur'an Kontemporer)", *Jurnal Analisis* 16, no. 1 (Juni 2016), p. 110.

⁴Nurmahni dan Irsyadunnas, "Rekonstruksi Tafsir al-Qur'an Kontemporer (Studi Analisis Sumber dan Metode Tafsir)", *Substantia: Jurnal Ar-Raniry* 22, no. 1 (April 2020), p. 21-36.

⁵Muhammad Aminullah, *Studi Al-Qur'an, Teori dan Metodologi* (Yogyakarta: Genta Press, 2015), p. 198.

to the presence of the Qur'an, so that interpretation is a dialectical product between the text, the reader and reality.

Departing from this way of understanding the Qur'an, various methods were born in interpreting the Qur'an, including literary interpretation initiated and developed by Amīn al-Khūlī. In this way, he wants to confirm the ideal method of studying literary texts through two methodological principles, namely: *first*, the study of everything around the Qur'an (*dirāsah mā hawla al-Qur'ān*), *second*, the study of the al-Qur'an itself (*dirāsah fī Qur'ān nafsīh*).⁶

The contemporary period makes the interpretation of the Koran more oriented to the spirit of the Koran, namely *hudan li al-nās* and the concept of the Koran as a book of *shālih li kulli zamān wa makān* pioneered by Muhammad 'Abduh and his student, Rasyīd Ridā.⁷ One of the people who responded to this was Amīn al-Khūlī with his method of literary interpretation, so that his paradigm gave birth to many progressive thinkers, such as 'Āisyah bint al-Syathī, Ahmad Khalafallāh, Syukri 'Ayyad and Nashr Hāmid Abū Zaid. He has given renewal to the Qur'an through his motto *awwāl al-tajdīd qatl al-Qadīm fahman* that the beginning of renewal is to kill old understanding.

One of the discourses developed in the interpretation of the Qur'an, especially in the contemporary era, is the discourse on the interpretation of the Qur'an through a hermeneutical approach. The development of contemporary interpretation methodology is a historical necessity that cannot be avoided, even formulating a methodology is seen as an effort to develop interpretations in response to the challenges of the times.⁸

Contemporary interpretation products are accepted if they can provide concrete solutions to social problems faced by mankind, because the purpose of interpreting the Qur'an is not only to understand the verse but also to be practiced and become an alternative solution to the problems faced by Muslims.⁹ Truth is no longer only measured theoretically, but can be

⁶Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin (Yogyakarta: Adab Press, 2004), p. 64.

⁷Wali Ramadhani, "Amīn al-Khūlī dan Metode Tafsir Sastrawi atas al-Qur'an", *Jurnal At-Tibyan* 2, no. 1 (Juni 2017), p. 1-14.

⁸Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2012), p. 2.

⁹Nila Khoiru Amaliya, "Arah Metodologi Tafsir Kontemporer", *Jurnal Qalamuna* 10, no. 1 (Januari-Juni 2018), p. 75-99.

proven practically in the field by looking at the extent to which the product of interpretation is able to provide a solution to the social problems of Muslims.

See background above, the object of study in this study will discuss Amīn al-Khulī and the new direction of contemporary century interpretation by tracing and revealing portraits of intellectual careers and thoughts, hermeneutic literary methods, and the integration between the interpretation of Amīn al-Khulī's hermeneutic literature and thematic methods. Therefore, the author uses qualitative research, namely research that emphasizes the quality or the most important thing from a product or service in the form of events, phenomena or social phenomena which are the meaning behind events that can be used as valuable lessons for the development of theoretical concepts.¹⁰

This research is classified as a qualitative type of *library research*, where all of it refers to literature sourced from written materials such as books, journals, articles and documents that are library research. The data obtained will be processed and analyzed using an interpretation of science approach and historical science through qur'ani interpretation techniques and socio-historical interpretation techniques.

In the last stage, the data analysis method is used to select and sharpen the subject matter then projected in a conceptual form and investigates its content into a series of limited meanings. So for the effective work of this method, the researcher will use scientific reasoning with a pattern of thinking or inductive logic as a work analysis knife, which is to put forward statements that have a unique and limited scope to compose arguments that end with general statements.¹¹ From new direction of interpretation carried out by Amīn al-Khulī, the author feels it is very important to know it as an additional new understanding in addition to other methodologies in the study of interpretation, especially in the contemporary century.

Portrait of Amīn al-Khulī Intellectual Career and Thought

Amīn al-Khulī full name Amīn ibn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī' ibn Āmir ibn Ismā'īl ibn Yūsuf al-Khulī who was born in a family with a strong religious atmosphere in a small town in Egypt called Menoufya. He was born on May 1, 1895 to Ibrāhīm 'Abd al-Bāqī' and Fātimah

¹⁰Djam'am Satori dan Aan Komariah, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Cet. III; Bandung: Alfabeta, 2011), p. 22.

¹¹Amsal Bakhtiar, *Filsafat Ilmu Edisi Revisi* (Cet. IX; Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2012), p. 203.

bint 'Alī Āmir al-Khūlī, and Amīn al-Khūlī's grandfather from the mother's side is Sheikh 'Alī Āmir al-Khūlī who is known as al-Shibhi, who is an alumni of al-Azhar with a specialization in the field of qira'at.¹²

At the age of seven, Amīn al-Khūlī moved to Cairo and lived with his uncle and was taught religious education quite hard, and was required to memorize the Qur'an, study tajwid Thuhfah and Jazāriah, fiqh and nahwu, his grandfather also required to memorize the books of al-Syamsiah, al-Kanz, al-Jurūmiah and Matan Alfiah. Thanks to that upbringing, finally at the age of ten, he had managed to memorize the Qur'an, especially qira'at Hafsh in a span of 18 months.¹³

His extraordinary intelligence caught the attention of one of his teachers at Madrasah Usman Pasa, namely Shaykh Abd al-Rahmān Khalīfah and suggested that he continue his studies at *Madrasah al-Qadhā' al-Syar'ī*, an Academy of Law. In addition, to sharpen his intellectuality as well as channel his hobbies, he is active in organizations, one of which is the *Madrasah Ikhwān al-Shafā* organization with a concentration in the arts and literature and he managed to finish his school in 1920, then was assigned the task of teaching at the Law Academy of *Madrasah al-Qadhā' al-Syar'ī*.¹⁴

During the two years he stayed as priest of the Egyptian embassy in Rome, Amīn al-Khūlī studied Italian until he really mastered it, so with the language capital, he observed religious and cultural life as well as the works of European orientalist and since then he became acquainted with Western orientalist thoughts such as Luigi Renaldo, Celestino Sciaparty and others.¹⁵

In 1927, Amīn al-Khūlī moved to the University of Egypt and served in the Arabic Language Department at the Adab Faculty by pursuing a career from the bottom and starting his career as an ordinary teaching staff then becoming an assistant lecturer. His career

¹²M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Amīn al-Khūlī and Qur'anic Studies: An Analysis of The Literary Exegesis in Modern Egypt* (Netherlands: INIS, 1996), p. 6-11.

¹³M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Amīn al-Khūlī and Qur'anic Studies: An Analysis of The Literary Exegesis in Modern Egypt*, p. 13.

¹⁴M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Amīn al-Khūlī and Qur'anic Studies: An Analysis of The Literary Exegesis in Modern Egypt*, p. 15-16.

¹⁵M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Amīn al-Khūlī and Qur'anic Studies: An Analysis of The Literary Exegesis in Modern Egypt*, p. 49.

continued to climb in 1942, with his appointment as a permanent lecturer in the Arabic Literature department and serving as the person in charge of Islamic phase of Egyptian literature, then served as chairman of the Arabic language department, deputy dean and professor of al-Qur'an studies at Cairo University, Giza.¹⁶

His career in higher education began to fade in 1947, precisely after the conflict at the Adab Faculty which began when he was assigned as the promoter of the Doctoral dissertation of Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallāh. The long and sharp debate ended with the removal of the professorship title held by Amīn al-Khūlī, so that he subsequently pursued a career in government and became general director of the cultural center in Egypt, and he was entrusted with the chairmanship of a special group of Egyptian scholars who interested in studying Arabic literature.¹⁷

Later, he devoted more of his intellectual, social and political activities to writing and studying art and literature, although rarely to completion. He lived this activity until the end of his life at the age of 71 years, to be precise, on Wednesday, March 6, 1966,¹⁸ with great enthusiasm and responsibility to produce works that can be enjoyed by the general public to this day.

Amīn al-Khūlī's thoughts on the Qur'an succeeded in giving birth to an interesting new understanding from several other reviewers, but it cannot be separated from the influence of the thinkers of the previous era, which researchers divide into three important points, namely as follows.

a. Arabic language and literature

Amīn al-Khūlī's study of the Qur'an cannot be separated from his thoughts on Arabic language and literature¹⁹ which began with his efforts to deconstruct Arabic literary discourse

¹⁶Gamāl al-Banna, translated by Novriantoni Kahar, *Evolusi Tafsir: Dari Jaman Klasik Hingga Jaman Modern* (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2004), p. 197.

¹⁷Gamāl al-Banna, translated by Novriantoni Kahar, *Evolusi Tafsir: Dari Jaman Klasik Hingga Jaman Modern*, p. 198.

¹⁸Wali Ramadhani, "Amīn al-Khūlī dan Metode Tafsir Sastrawi atas al-Qur'an", *Jurnal At-Tibyan* 2, no. 1 (Januari-Juni 2017), p. 5.

¹⁹The literary approach in interpretation arises due to the large number of non-Arabs who converted to Islam and the weakness of Arabs in the field of literature, so it is necessary to explain to him about the privileges and circumstances of the meaning of the content of the Qur'an. Istianah,

through his important work on literature and literary criticism, namely *al-Adab al-Mishri* and *Fann al-Qawl*. There are two methods of literary studies that are put forward as the most important points of the two books, namely: *first*, extrinsic criticism (*al-naqdu al-khārijī*) which is directed at source criticism, starting with paying attention to socio-geographical, religious-cultural, and social factors although politics as a holistic study of the external factors of the emergence of a work, and *second*, intrinsic criticism (*al-naqdu al-dākhilī*) which is directed at the literary text itself using directed linguistic analysis, so as to be able to capture the existing meaning.²⁰

This intrinsic critique of Arabic literature requires an analytical tool of *balāḡah* science which includes three aspects, namely *ma'āni* which deals with sentence structure analysis, *bayān* with regard to the expression of sentence forms and *badī'* which relates to the beauty of expression.²¹ Amīn al-Khūlī also shows a study of *balāḡah* from elements of language and literature, and examines the relationship between the two, then introduces its use to contemporary literary methods to find the relationship with tradition, between literary developments and language in general.

It aims to obtain more in-depth research on the influence of intellectual language and human culture, and it is hoped that literature can change the line of language progress. Amīn al-Khūlī emphasized that there is a close relationship between literature and the reform of the mind, because he tries to find the inter-relation of language and culture by looking at the influence of language on the growth of civilization.²²

Deep attention to *balāḡah* and Arab culture for social reform are factors that encourage Islamic intellectuals to pay attention to knowledge of language, literature and art which of course must be complemented by their own criticism, deconstruction and reconstruction which is active in a new discourse so that does not rely on external study factors on the work of foreign and Western intellectuals.

"Stilistika al-Qur'an: Pendekatan Sastra sebagai Analisis dalam Menginterpretasikan al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Hermeneutik* 8, no. 2 (Desember 2014), p. 381-382.

²⁰M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar* (Cet. II; Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2006), p. 8-9.

²¹M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 10.

²²Amīn al-Khūlī, *Fann al-Qawl* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr, 1947), p. 7.

b. Criticism of The Interpretation Method

The emergence of various works of interpretation with various tendencies behind the Mufasirs, ranging from intellectual, social, political and ideological backgrounds, influenced the results of these interpretations which in the end were far from the main goals and objectives and missions brought by the Qur'an.²³

Excessive attitude in explaining the meaning of the verse causes the commentators to deviate from the purpose of the Qur'an, causing the emergence of schools that ignore the true meaning of the Qur'an. The true interpretation is the interpretation that can bring the Mufasir to understand the true purpose of the word of Allah swt. so that its meaning can be realized as guidance and grace, but before arriving at this goal, it is hoped that other objectives must be met first, namely viewing the Qur'an as the greatest book of Arabic literature.²⁴

Amīn al-Khūlī also criticized the scientific interpretation or *'ilmī interpretation* which forces religious texts to always be in harmony with temporary and relative matters,²⁵ which causes some of them to not pay attention to the context and text and try to reduce everything form of knowledge from the texts of the Qur'an.²⁶ Therefore, these two things should be the most important things for an exegete when he wants to know the intended meaning of a text, so that if both are ignored, then an interpreter has placed the Qur'an not as a sacred religious text.

There are three reasons Amīn al-Khūlī in rejecting this interpretation model, namely: *first*, from the language aspect, scientific interpretation is not compatible with the meaning of the words of the Qur'an because its development does not explicitly intersect with scientific terminology, *second*, in terms of philology, language and literature, the Qur'an which was

²³Amīn al-Khūlī, *Fann al-Qawl*, p. 11.

²⁴Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 50-51.

²⁵An example of Amīn al-Khūlī's rejection of the scientific interpretation model is his review of two books written by Hanafi Ahmad, namely *Mukjizat al-Qur'an fi Washf al-Kā'ināt* and *Keajaiban al-Qur'an dalam Menggambarkan Alam Semesta*. His objections were from the weakness of the method applied by Hanafi Ahmad because there were no rules of the game in interpreting different from thematic methods, historical analysis and the context of the verse. Habibur Rahman, "Amīn al-Khūlī: Pendekatan Kritik Sastra terhadap al-Qur'an", *Jurnal al-Irfan* 1, no. 1 (Maret 2019), p. 109.

²⁶Muhammad Husain al-Žahabī, *Al-Ittijāhāt al-Munharifah fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm Dawāfi'uhā wa Daf'uhā* (Cet. III; t.t.: Maktabah Wahbah, 1986 M/1406 H), p. 92.

revealed to the Arab community as the target of revelation in the VII century, certainly does not contain information about natural knowledge that cannot be understood, seen from the accuracy of its meaning the message brought by the Qur'an, *third*, from the theological aspect, the Qur'an is a holy book containing religious moral messages and does not come into contact with cosmological theories, so that the Qur'an should not be forced to be harmonized with discoveries in scientific fields, such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, all of which are relative and temporary.²⁷

c. Al-Qur'an as The Greatest Book

Amīn al-Khūlī first of all places the Qur'an as the largest book of Arabic literature before the methodological step is taken so that someone who wants to understand the Koran proportionally must use the literary approach method as his main goal which will must be met before trying to achieve other goals.

Arabic is an attribute and code for the Qur'an that God uses to convey His treatises so that the Arabicness of the Qur'an must be considered first before other things, especially for those who study it, both from different religions or different interests.²⁸ Religion and interests are not a problem as long as the sensitivity of Arabic is able to recognize the position and position of the Qur'an in Arabic without having to be based in the slightest on faith in religious characteristics or certain justifications for the faith in the book.²⁹

It is not religious interests that become the benchmark for interpretation of the Qur'an, but someone who wants to interpret the Qur'an can be more objective by viewing the Qur'an as the greatest book of Arabic literature and he predicts that this perspective will result in the same interpretation between Muslim and non-Muslim Mufasir.

The Qur'an describes various themes in it by not collecting one particular theme, so that the parts in it can meet which of course has its own wisdom and purpose. Therefore, Amīn al-Khūlī understands that the Qur'an must be interpreted based on the first theme by collecting certain verses that talk about one theme completely and the sequence of time of its revelation is known, *munāsabah* and the background that surrounds it, then examine the verses to be

²⁷M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 23.

²⁸M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 12.

²⁹Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 57.

interpreted and understood. According to him, through this method, the interpretation will be closer and more precise in determining its meaning.³⁰

Amīn al-Khūlī has sparked many theories in interpreting the Qur'an which is often used as a reference to date, one of which is *Manāhij Tajdīd fī al-Nahwu wa al-Balāgh wa al-Tafsīr wa al-Adab*, but he did not have time to write a complete book of interpretation of the Qur'an. However, he only had time to finish four volumes starting from the letter *shād* to the letter *fā* because he died before he could finish all of them.³¹

His great attention to literature and Arabic language in general led to his attention to the studies of the Qur'an, while Amīn al-Khūlī's writings on interpretations which were later published as books were *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Hayātihī Manhājūhu al-Yawma*. The discussion in this book describes issues of interpretation, from the early era to his era³² by fostering a culture of criticism of various scholarly works, especially in the field of Arabic literature,³³ because criticism becomes an intellectual spirit that is always accompanied by efforts to dismantle and renew.

Hermeneutic Literary Method In The Interpretation of Amīn Al-Khūlī

Amīn al-Khūlī departed from the main factor that must be considered before applying the hermeneutic and literary methods in interpretation, namely placing the Qur'an as the largest book of Arabic literature that must be carried out by anyone who wants to study it. To produce a perfect meaning in this literary study of the Qur'an, the next step is to group the verses of the Qur'an based on certain themes. Based on these factors, he put forward two methodological principles as an ideal method in studying literary texts, namely:³⁴ *first*, the study of everything that is around the Qur'an (*dirāsah mā hawla al-Qur'ān*), and *second*, the study of the Qur'an itself (*dirāsah fī Qur'ān nafsih*).

³⁰Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 62.

³¹Wali Ramadhani, "Amīn al-Khūlī dan Metode Tafsir Sastrawi atas al-Qur'an", *Jurnal At-Tibyan* 2, no. 1 (Januari-Juni 2017), p. 7.

³²Muhammad Aminullah, "Hermeneutika dan Linguistik Perspektif Metode Tafsir Amīn al-Khūlī", *Jurnal Institut Agama Islam Muhammadiyah Ranggo* 9, no. 2 (Juli-Desember 2016), p. 333.

³³M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 9.

³⁴Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 64.

The method of interpretation of Amīn al-Khūlī is known as the literary interpretation of the Qur'an or *al-Tafsīr al-Adabi li al-Qur'ān* with the aim of getting the message of the Qur'an in detail comprehensive and can be expected to avoid individual ideological pulls. Therefore, before the step of studying the Qur'an is taken, the Qur'an must be considered as a sacred literary text and of course through a literary approach or *al-manhaj al-adabī* method in order to understand the Qur'an proportionally.³⁵

His methodological principles are divided into two, namely: *first*, the study of the Qur'an or *dirāsah mā hawla al-Qur'ān* which is directed at the background of the emergence of the Koran, starting from the revelation process in the Qur'an span of time, then codified, read, written and spoke for the first time to the Arab community at that time so that technically, these studies are better known as *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*.³⁶ Thus, an exegete at this stage must first identify the aspects of human life carrying out their Arabic at that time as a tool that must be taken to understand the clear Arabic of the Qur'an.

Second, the next study to be carried out is a study of the Qur'an itself or *dirāsah fī Qur'ān nafsih* which begins by examining the vocabulary of the Koran in its singular form or *mufradāt* when it was initially revealed, its development, as well as their use in the Qur'an so that these words can be understood thoroughly. Tracking the development of the *mufradāt* is followed by a study of the structure of certain sentences and phrases with Arabic language science tools in order to be able to reveal the beauty of the structure of the text.³⁷ After going through these considerations, the next step is to determine the meaning of the language of the word so that it is known for the first time when heard by the Arabs related to the verses of the Qur'an.

After studying the meaning of the word in terms of language and its development, it is continued with a study of its meaning based on usage in the Qur'an. The words contained in the Qur'an are examined to consider their comprehensive use and apply in various periods of the revelation of the Qur'an as well as in various changing backgrounds. Even if it is not like

³⁵M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 11.

³⁶Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 67.

³⁷Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 71.

that, at least it is known that these different meanings are used in the Qur'an so that through this process, the Mufasir can produce an interpretation that matches the meaning in the verse where the word is located.³⁸

The seeds of thought in interpretation through a literary approach actually started at the time of the Prophet Muhammad based on data showing that he has given several interpretations that are closely related to the terminology of the Arabic literary discipline that developed later,³⁹ as seen when he interpreted QS al-Baqarah/2: 187.

... وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ...

The translation:

...Eat and drink until it becomes clear to you (the difference) between the white thread and the black thread, namely the dawn...⁴⁰

In the verse above there are words *majāz* or metaphors, namely the word *al-khaith al-abyadh* which is the white thread and *al-khaith al-aswad* which is the black thread, where when this verse came down, there was a friend named Ubay Ibn Hātim understood the verse for what it was, so he took the white and black thread at night while observing it continuously, but the difference was still not clear. Then the next day, he asked the Messenger of Allah for an explanation regarding the meaning of the verse, he explained that what is meant by the white thread is the arrival of dawn, while the black thread is the darkness of the night.⁴¹

Amīn al-Khūlī agreed that the Qur'an is a source of guidance, but placing it as a top priority without regard to the right tools to get that guidance is naivety. Therefore, he emphasized that the Qur'an must be made the largest book of Arabic literature by placing a semantic and linguistic analysis of the Qur'anic text in order to capture this guidance because the Qur'an has implications for the involvement of Arab culture and civilization as an inseparable part of revelation,⁴² one example is when he interprets QS al-Baqarah/2: 143.

³⁸Amīn al-Khūlī dan Nashr Hāmid Abū Zayd, translated by Khoiron Nahdiyyin, *Metode Tafsir Sastra*, p. 75.

³⁹M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 129.

⁴⁰Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: Terjemah Perkata Transliterasi Latin* (Jakarta: Cahaya Qur'an, 2017), p. 29.

⁴¹Muhammad Husain al-Žahabī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssirūn*, Volume I (Al-Qāhirah: t.p., 1979), p. 35.

⁴²M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*, p. 27.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ...

The translation:

And similarly We have made you (Muslims) a middle class so that you may be witnesses of (deeds) of mankind and that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be witnesses of (deeds) you...⁴³

Amīn al-Khulī pays special attention in this verse to the word *wasathan*, where the majority of the previous commentators gave the meaning of "*khiyar*" or "choice" to the word.⁴⁴ However, he gave a different review from the majority of commentators because *wasathan* was only mentioned once in the Qur'an, so he took steps to look for words that were almost the same and found them in the QS al-Isrā'/17: 29 and QS al-Furqān/25: 67 serves as *munāsabah*.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا (29)

The translation:

And do not make your hands shackled around your neck and do not (also) (you) extend it too much (very generously) or you will become reprehensible and regretful.⁴⁵

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا (67)

The translation:

And (including the servants of the Most Merciful God) those who, when they spend (wealth), they are not excessive, and are not (also) stingy, between the two naturally.⁴⁶

The literary analysis method used by Amīn al-Khulī led to the conclusion that the implication of the word *wasathan* is balance, harmony and *equilibrium* in the socio-cultural life of the Muslim community. The implication of *equilibrium* is the enforcement and recognition of individual rights and the statement of collective responsibility in Muslim societies.⁴⁷

⁴³Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: Terjemah Perkata Transliterasi Latin*, p. 22.

⁴⁴Muhammad bin Jarīr bin Yazīd bin Katsīr bin Gālib al-Āmalī Abū Ja'far al-Thabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Volume III (Cet. I; t.t.: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2000 M/1420 H), p. 141.

⁴⁵Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: Terjemah Perkata Transliterasi Latin*, p. 285.

⁴⁶Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: Terjemah Perkata Transliterasi Latin*, p. 365.

⁴⁷Amīn Al-Khulī, *Min Hudā al-Qur'ān al-Qadhāt al-Rasūl* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1959), p. 59.

The analysis he uses belongs to the hermeneutic literary method with the most basic assumption, namely the plurality of understandings surrounding the search for the meaning of the text, between subjective or objective meanings that give rise to three forms of hermeneutic relationships, namely, the relationship between the initiator and the text, the relationship between the reader and the initiator and the relationship between the reader and the text.⁴⁸ Amīn al-Khūlī belongs to objective understanding, it can be seen from his criticism of interpretation that leads to ideological or subjective interests, and the relationship that is built to understand the text is the relationship between the reader and the text.

Hermeneutics is basically an interpretive method that departs from language analysis and then proceeds to context analysis and draws the meaning obtained into the situation and conditions when the understanding and interpretation is carried out. Thus, the text of the Qur'an is really present in the midst of society, then it is understood, interpreted, translated and dialogued with the dynamics of its historical reality.⁴⁹ There are three forms of relationship between the reader and the text, namely: theoretical, philosophical, and critical,⁵⁰ while the hermeneutics of Amīn al-Khūlī can be classified in the first theory.

In semantic studies, vocabulary is seen from a methodological standpoint, there are two kinds, namely *first*, a diachronic view by analyzing and observing language developments over time and historical in nature so that some of these word groups can stop growing and begin to be no longer used by language-speaking communities within a certain period of time certain, *second*, synchronic view as an analysis that does not involve the historicity of the object by looking at it at a certain time and in a stable condition. Synchronic analysis takes into account the state of the language system, therefore it is a must to study the language system as it is used today regardless of the developments and changes that have resulted in the system.⁵¹

The literary method developed by Amīn al-Khūlī as the two semantic analyzes above can be classified as diachronic analysis, as seen from the steps he took in analyzing the

⁴⁸Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi Uloom al-Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuhan di Balik Fenomena Budaya* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), p. 182.

⁴⁹Fahruddin Faiz, *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an: Tema-tema Kontroversial* (Cet. V; Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2011), p. 15.

⁵⁰Fahruddin Faiz, *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an: Tema-tema Kontroversial*, p. 7.

⁵¹Ahmad Zaki Mubarak, *Pendekatan Strukturalisme Linguistik dalam Tafsir al-Qur'an Kontemporer ala M. Syahrur* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2007), p. 81.

vocabulary of the Qur'an, including: *first*, analysis of word development before al-Qur'an came down or during the jahiliyyah period, *second*, during the revelation of the Qur'an, and *third*, after the revelation of the Qur'an. The analysis of the study of meaning based on its use in the Qur'an can be classified as a stylistic study, namely the science that investigates the use of language in a literary work.⁵²

The hermeneutic literary method offered by Amīn al-Khūlī becomes something very interesting in contemporary interpretive discourse, because the pattern of interpretation on the one hand reveals human methodological assumptions because it does not only pay attention to the text, but also pays attention to the existence of the surrounding context the text, both in the psychological context and in the social context. Thus, it is very likely that the meaning produced is in accordance with the intent of the text so that it makes the Qur'an truly a book of guidance.

Integration of the interpretation of Amīn al-Khūlī's hermeneutical literary method and thematic method

The dynamics of the interpretation of the Qur'an have never stagnated since the holy book was revealed to the prophet Muhammad with the various types of interpretation that have been offered by classical to modern commentators, even exegetical activities will not reach the final point as long as the human mind still exists within itself. Dissatisfaction with the principles, approaches and results of one's interpretation is evidence of this⁵³ so that interpretation always opens the possibility of the birth of new discourses, one of which is the integration of the interpretation of the hermeneutic literary method of Amīn al-Khūlī with thematic methods. This thematic interpretation method is interesting to develop because it has several advantages and privileges, namely:

- a. *First*, the thematic method tries to understand the verses of the Qur'an as a whole, not partial verses of verses so that it is possible to gain an understanding of the themes in the Qur'an in full.⁵⁴

⁵²Syihabuddin Qalyubi, *Stilistika al-Qur'an: Pengantar Orientasi Studi al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Titian Ilahi press, 1997), p. 29.

⁵³Abdul Mustaqim dan Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Studi al-Qur'an Kontemporer: Wacana Baru Berbagai Metodologi Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002), p. 131.

⁵⁴Abdul Mustaqim, *Madzahibut Tafsir: Peta Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an Periode Klasik hingga Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2005), p. 84.

- b. *Second*, the thematic method can be directly practical and beneficial to the community because it can easily choose certain themes to be studied. This method is not only directly beneficial in providing solutions to community problems, but is also more efficient because it excludes verses that are not related or irrelevant to the object being studied.⁵⁵
- c. *Third*, the thematic method will lead directly to the main problem without having to bother, such as the analytical method (*tahlīlī*) which is still often trapped in linguistic or fiqh studies, especially in the present era which requires a fast and precise solution. M. Quraish Shihab quotes the words of Ahmad Sayyid al-Kummī that the thematic method is an interpretive method that can lead to finding answers to problems quickly because it immediately dives into the topic of discussion and is precise because the verses that are interpreted are related verses with the subject matter.⁵⁶
- d. *Fourth*, this thematic method is relevant to the demands of modern times which require the formulation of laws that are universal, sourced directly from the Qur'an for all Islamic countries so that they are able to get out of the entanglement of sects or schools that have confined them so far.⁵⁷

It must be admitted that the treasures of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* as a set of methodologies for interpreting and interpreting the Koran have high sophistication as evidenced by the birth of many works of interpretation with various methods and produce a variety of interpretations, ranging from analytical methods to thematic methods, interpretations that are esoteric to exoteric. This evidence shows how *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* as a comprehensive and holistic scientific discipline so that a perception arises that the scientific discipline is sufficient and does not require other methods, especially from non-Muslims who incidentally do not believe in the sanctity of the Qur'an.⁵⁸

However, looking at the basic assumptions of Amīn al-Khūlī's hermeneutics above, namely attention to not only the text but also the context, in fact some of the tools and variables

⁵⁵' Abd al-Hayyi al-Farmāwī, *Al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudhū'ī* (Al-Qāhirah: Al-Hadhārah al-'Arabiyyah, 1977), p. 68-70.

⁵⁶M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'ān: Tafsīr Tematik atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2007), p. xii.

⁵⁷Mushtafā Muslim, *Mabāhith fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudhū'ī* (Damaskus: Dār al-Qalam, 1989), p. 30-33.

⁵⁸Nasaruddin Umar, "Menimbang Hermeneutika sebagai Manhaj Tafsir", *Jurnal Studi al-Qur'ān* 1, no. 1 (Januari 2006), p. 46.

of classical *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* have shown their orientation towards that direction. Themes such as *nāsikh mansūkh*, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, and *makkī madanī* show attention to the differences in context that affect meaning. Therefore, the claim that *the 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* is still adequate to process the dimensions of meaning to the Koran must be recognized as having relevance.⁵⁹

One of the biggest obsessions of Amīn al-Khūlī is by putting forward the principles of interpretation which is called the methodology of literary interpretation or *al-manhaj al-adabī li al-tafsīr*. The principles include: *first*, an in-depth study of the character of the Arabian Peninsula, history, language and culture before Islam, *second*, knowledge of the Koran as a book, *third*, thematic classification of the Koran, *fourth*, the classification of verses and suras of the Qur'an according to their historical chronology, *fifth*, a study of the themes to be interpreted, starting from vocabulary to a series of sentences with special attention to psychological and social aspects related to their content.⁶⁰

The work applied by Amīn al-Khūlī in interpreting verses, both in searching for individual words of the Qur'an and in other stages of the literary method, it is clear that his method is in line with the thematic method or *al-tafsīr al-maudhū'ī*. Thus, the steps taken in interpreting the Qur'an will produce a very good product if the hermeneutic literary approach method of Amīn al-Khūlī which is theoretical in Arabic literature is integrated with the thematic methods above in order to avoid the view of objectivity and excessive subjectivity, so that the great adigium of the Qur'an, namely *shālihun li kulli zamān wa makān* can be achieved.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Amīn al-Khūlī's intellectual, social and political activities after going through a very long scientific process, then he devoted more of his time to writing and studying art and literature until he produced works that were can be enjoyed until now although not yet had time to write a complete interpretation. As for the renewal of thought carried out by Amīn al-Khūlī, the writer can categorize it through three

⁵⁹Fahruddin Faiz, *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an: Tema-tema Kontroversial*, p. 18-19.

⁶⁰Gamāl al-Banna, *Evolusi Tafsir: Dari Jaman Klasik Hingga Jaman Modern*, diterjemah oleh Novriantoni Kahar, p. 198-199.

main points, namely Arabic language and literature, criticism of the interpretation method and the Qur'an as the great book in Arabic.

Of all the problems that concern and concern Amīn al-Khūlī that the writer has described above, he offers a method of interpretation known as the hermeneutical literary interpretation method of the Qur'an or *al-Tafsīr al-Adabī li al-Qur'ān*. This method is intended to be able to avoid individual-ideological interests with the aim of getting the message of the Qur'an as a whole in accordance with the purpose of the Qur'an itself. He put forward two methodological principles as ideal methods in studying literary texts, namely: *first*, the study of everything that is around the Qur'an or *dirāsah mā hawla al-Qur'ān*, and *second*, study of the Qur'an itself or *dirāsah fī Qur'ān nafsih*.

The application of thematic methods in interpreting the Qur'an will be better if it is integrated with the hermeneutical literary approach of Amīn al-Khūlī which has the theoretical character of Arabic literature to be able to minimize and avoid excessive objectivity and subjectivity views as well as the purpose of the Qur'an as *shālihun li kulli zamān wa makān* can be achieved.

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