

## The Ambiguity of Living *Qur'an Studies* in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** *New clusters of Living Qur'an studies are finding a saturation point. This is because on campus the models of Living Qur'an studies revolve around the same themes, around khataman, sometimes only the place changes. On the other hand, the definition of the Living Qur'an itself is still not established. So that in the practice of Living Qur'an studies there is a lot of confusion, some mention Living Qur'an as a method, research approach, and even mention it as a concept of science. This article explains what is ambiguity in the study of Living Qur'an. This research is a literature study with interviews and documentation to obtain data. The result found is that Living Qur'an is a phenomenon so that it is open to study both with sociology and anthropology. And it is important for Living Qur'an scholars to pay attention to the study of ulumul Qur'an because that is what distinguishes it from the study of anthropology or pure sociology.*

**Keywords:** Ambiguous; Definition; *Living Qur'an*;

### Introduction

The study of *the Living Qur'an* is still not well established, for example, its epistemological and philological foundations, which according to Ahmad Rafiq (one of the initiators of *the idea of the Living Qur'an*) does not have a *suitable term* for both. In addition, there is also a misunderstanding among lecturers and students that *the Living Qur'an* is an anthropological study (and to a certain extent sociological *analysis* of the text of *the Qur'an*). In fact, Ahmad Rafiq himself, as an initiator of *the Living Qur'an*, hopes that *the Living Qur'an* will be a model for an integrated study of the text of the Qur'an and other texts that follow it.<sup>1</sup> However, in fact, the research of *the Living Qur'an* is far from hopeful, many of the Living Qur'an research is inclined towards sociological and anthropological research, and abandoning the Qur'an itself.

In addition, some campuses even include *the Living Qur'an* as an annual research theme for thesis writing. But unfortunately, the determination of the theme of *Living Qur'an* studies on these campuses is considered not very in line with the direction of the curriculum that has been designed, the courses studied, and several other aspects<sup>2</sup>. In addition, epistemologically, *living Qur'an research* does not have a solid basis. Even Ahmad Rafiq, M. Mansur and several figures in the study of *the Living Qur'an* have not provided a strong epistemological basis. So the form of *Living Qur'an* research in Indonesia is still unclear. This was admitted by Ahmad Rafiq through an interview with

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<sup>1</sup> Studi Tafsir, "Realita Kajian Studi Living Qur'an," [studitafsir.com](http://studitafsir.com), n.d., <https://studitafsir.com/2022/02/16/realita-kajian-studi-living-quran-interview-bersama-ahmad-rofiq/>. retrieved August 10, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> The IAT UIN Jambi Study Program had made the theme of writing a thesis in 2020, but in 2021 the study of the living Qur'an was in the momentum. Due to the lack of reading in students, there is also a lack of mastery of the living Qur'an by lecturers. (Interview with the Head of the Qur'an Study Program, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi on November 20, 2022).

Studi Tafsir uploaded via Instagram, he also admitted his anxiety to hear the mention of *the Living Qur'an* as a method or approach.<sup>3</sup>

Living *Qur'an research* to be implemented on campuses is not accompanied by the ability and understanding of qualified lecturers and human resources who understand the practice of *Living Qur'an* research. In addition, in terms of curriculum structure, IAT students also do not study the scientific tools needed in the study of *the Living Qur'an*. For example, sociological theories, anthropology, phenomenology, and other social theories.<sup>4</sup> The implementation of *Living Qur'an* research also seems to be in contrast to the scientific background that has been studied by IAT students so far. From semesters I to VI, they study the issue of *qawa'id tafsir, ulum Al-Qur'an*, tafsir books, and other sciences related to the study of tafsir. In the curriculum, there are no courses prepared as a tool to support *Living Qur'an* study research, except for *the Living Qur'an* course taught in semester VI. In fact, in *Living Qur'an research*, it is necessary to have the ability to read texts, and the ability to read phenomena.<sup>5</sup>

Scientific research on *the Living Qur'an* in Indonesia is generally related to two things, namely the methodology of *the Living Qur'an* and the application or application of *the Living Qur'an*. Regarding the methodology of the approach, several *Living Qur'an* activists provide epistemological foundations and examples of *Living Qur'an* research in researching traditions in societies related to the Qur'an. The theoretical research can be found in the writings of Ahmad Rafiq,<sup>6</sup> M. Mansur,<sup>7</sup> Hammam Faizin,<sup>8</sup> and Abdul Mustaqim<sup>9</sup>. In addition to the names mentioned, there is a book that can be said to be more complete in mapping the *Living Qur'an*, the book was written by Ahmad 'Ubaidi Hasbillah with the title *The Science of Living Quran-Hadith: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology*. This book makes the *Living Qur'an* a science by examining three aspects, namely, anthology, epistemology and axiology. Not only that, but it also includes *Living Hadith* in equal portions.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the implementation has been explored very much, one of which is from Ahmad Rafiq's dissertation entitled *The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: a case study of the place of the Qur'an in a non-Arabic speaking community*.<sup>11</sup> there is also a study of the *Living Qur'an* written by Rasidin, et al, which examines how the Qur'an forms a culture.<sup>12</sup>

This research is certainly different from the research that has been mentioned, if the previous research examined the theory and implementation of the research, then this study highlights the alignment between theory and implementation. This is certainly very necessary, in addition to the

<sup>3</sup> Tafsir, "Realita Kajian Studi Living Qur'an." retrieved August 10, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, "The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture," *Journal of Science Studies The Qur'an And Hadith* 22, no. 2 (July 30, 2021): 469–84, <https://doi.org/10.14421/QH.2021.2202-10>.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Rafiq in the Tafsir Study interview was uploaded on Instagram @studitafsir on February 16, 2022

<sup>6</sup> Rafiq, "The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture."

<sup>7</sup> M. Mansur, "Living Qur'an in the Historical Trajectory of Studies *The Qur'an*," in *Research Methods of Living Qur'an and Hadith* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Hamam Faizin, "Living Qur'an: Sebuah Tawaran," *Jawa Pos*, 2005; Hamam Faizin, "Kissing and Kissing *The Qur'an*: Study Development Efforts *The Qur'an* Through the Living Qur'an," *WATER* 4, no. 1 (2015): 23–40.

<sup>9</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, "Living Qur'an Research Methods: A Qualitative Research Model," in *Research Methods of Living Qur'an and Hadith* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Ahmad 'Ubaidi Hasbela, *The Science of Living Quran-Hadith: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology*, 1st ed. (Ciputat: Maktabah Darus-Sunnah, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, "The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an in a Non Arabic Speaking Community," 2014, <https://doi.org/10.34944/DSPACE/3421>.

<sup>12</sup> Rasidin Rasidin, Nurfadliyat Nurfadliyat, and Kusmana Kusmana, "Actualization of the Meaning of Cooperation (Living Al-Qur'an-Hadith in Koto Petai-Kerinci-Jambi Village)," *AL QUDS : Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 5, no. 2 (September 30, 2021): 489–512, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v5i2.2535>.

establishment of the implementation of *Living Qur'an* research, it is also a treasure of the study of the Qur'an itself.

This research is a qualitative research. Data collection is based on observation, documentation, and interviews. The researcher made in-depth observations by examining several studies related to *the Living Qur'an*, and conducting interviews with experts (who according to the researcher are the people who have the authority to explain the Living Qur'an), in addition to data in the form of documents, namely literature related to the Living Qur'an. Furthermore, the data found was analyzed in depth to answer the problems found.

## Discussion

### *Definition and Inspiration of Living Qur'an Studies*

Although *the Living Qur'an* is a Qur'an study that was born in Indonesia, it was precisely pioneered by Ahmad Rafiq and several other names. The inspiration of *the Living Qur'an* in several literature studies on *the Living Qur'an* in Indonesia have names including:

M. Mansur, according to him, *Living Qur'an* is a study or scientific research on various social events related to the presence or existence of the Qur'an in a certain Muslim community.<sup>13</sup>

Ahmad Rafiq explained that *the Living Qur'an* is a description of how people receive and react to the Qur'an, by receiving, responding, utilizing, or using it either as a text that contains a syntactic arrangement or as a mushaf that is written that has its own meaning or a collection of loose words that have a certain meaning.<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Rafiq when interviewed said that he himself did not name this study as the term *Living Qur'an*, the name of *the Living Qur'an* was found after a discussion.<sup>15</sup>

According to Inayah Rohmaniyah *Living Qur'an* is used to refer to a Muslim society that uses the Qur'an as a reference book in daily life, follows what is commanded in the Qur'an and stays away from what is forbidden. *The Living Qur'an* in this case is the Qur'an that lives and becomes the spirit for people's daily lives. In a broader sense, *the Living Qur'an* is the Qur'an or Islam that lives in society, which underlies, inspires or becomes the orientation of people's daily lives as they are understood. The study of *the Living Qur'an* in the context of the latter is thus closely related to the ontological problem of the Qur'an on the one hand and on the other hand cannot be separated from the sociological-anthropological problem. The ontology of the Qur'an or the essence of the Qur'an is important to be described and mapped so that the realm of *Living Qur'an* studies can be placed proportionately. When the Qur'an is ontologically understood solely as a divine revelation that has absolute truth and is untouched by the human world, then the study of *the Living Qur'an* does not find its urgency. On the other hand, the sociological and anthropological approach becomes a must when the Qur'an is ontologically understood in the realm of human understanding and manifests in the practice of people's daily lives.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> M. Mansur, "Living Qur'an in the Historical Trajectory of Studies *The Qur'an*."

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, "History *The Qur'an*: From Revelation to Reception (A Methodological Initial Search)," in *Islam, Tradition, and Civilization*, ed. Sahiran Siamsuddin (Qualified: Suka-Press, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ahmad Rafiq on November 24, 2022

<sup>16</sup> Inayah Rohmaniyah, "Living Quranic Studies: A Sociological Approach to the Empirical Social Dimension of the Quran," in *Potpourri: Sociology of Religion Theory, Methods and Realms of the Study of the Sociology of Religion* (Yogyakarta: Faculty of Ushuluddin & Islamic Thought, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta and Diandra Pustaka Indonesia, 2015), 73–96, [https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/36589/2/Nurus Sa'adah - Bunga Potpai Sociology Agama.pdf](https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/36589/2/Nurus%20Sa%27adah%20-%20Bunga%20Potpai%20Sociology%20Agama.pdf), 73.

According to Ahmad 'Ubaidi Hasballah *the Living Qur'an*, which consists of the word Living, according to him, has two meanings: First, the living. Second, turn on. Or the Arabic *al-hayy and iyya*. So that *the Living Qur'an* in Arabic is translated *Al-Qur'an al-hayy* or *iyya' Al-Qur'an*. which in Indonesian is "the living Qur'an" and "living the Qur'an", or in English, "*The living Al-Qur'an*" and "*Living the Qur'an*". Thus, *the Living Qur'an*, in the first term, emphasizes more on phenomenology than on textual aspects and their applications. While *Living Qur'an* in the second term, the study is more inclined to the study of strategies or techniques for practicing the Qur'an, or about the practice of practicing the Qur'an that has just been carried out later. Although *Living Qur'an* is two different terms "*The living Qur'an*" and "*Living the Qur'an*", "*The living Qur'an*" and "*Living the Qur'an*", these two terms cannot be separated. *The Qur'an al-hayy* can be stated as a study of *the Living Qur'an* if it is proven that there is a real process of *iyya' Al-Qur'an*, albeit in a simple way. Meanwhile, the product of *iyya' Al-Qur'an* will later become the object of study of *the Living Qur'an* which means *Al-Qur'anal-hayy*.

So, according to Ahmad 'Ubaidi Hasballah, the science of *the Living Qur'an* is the science of the Qur'an and living hadiths or the science of living the Qur'an and hadith, both materially-natural, practical-personal, and non-cognitive. It can also be defined as a science that studies the symptoms of the Qur'an and hadith in the midst of human life. Therefore, according to him, the phenomenon of verses and hadiths that are alive or alive, do not have the pretension to certify the truth of a practice, articulation, or the embodiment of a verse or hadith. So according to him, *the Living Qur'an* is "an effort to obtain solid and convincing knowledge from a culture, tradition, ritual, thought or behavior of life in society inspired by a verse of the Qur'an".

Meanwhile, according to Heddy Shri Ahimsa, a person who first used the term *Living Qur'an*, at least mapped out three meanings, *the Living Qur'an*. First, the expression can mean "Prophet Muhammad" in the true sense, namely the figure of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, because according to Muslims' beliefs the morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are the Qur'an. In the book, it is stated that the Prophet Muhammad PBUH has a good example. This is strengthened by a hadith from Siti Aisyah r.a., which says that the morals of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH are the Qur'an. This means that he always behaves and acts based on what is contained in the Qur'an. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the "living Qur'an" that manifests in the human figure.

Second, the expression can also refer to a society whose daily life uses the Qur'an as its reference book. They live by following what is commanded in the Qur'an and staying away from the things that are forbidden in it, so that the society is like the "living Qur'an," the Qur'an that manifests itself in their daily lives. We do not have a concrete example of such a society, and perhaps such a society has never existed, because in any Islamic society there are always forms of life, patterns of behavior, actions and activities that are not based on the Qur'an.

Third, the expression can also mean that the Qur'an is not just a book, but a "living book" whose manifestation in daily life is so pronounced and real, and varied, depending on the field of life. The manifestation of the Qur'an in economic activities, for example, will certainly be different from the manifestation of the Qur'an in political activities or in family life. Furthermore, the way to manifest the Qur'an in daily life is also very diverse, depending on the meaning given to the Qur'an itself as a collection of the Word of Allah SWT, the Word of God, which also cannot be separated from the human meaning of God Himself, about Allah SWT. In this sense, the Qur'an

can manifest in the midst of a society where not all citizens are Muslims, while its manifestation in the lives of Muslims is also very varied.<sup>17</sup>

To view *The Living Qur'an* or "the living Qur'an" anthropologically is to view this phenomenon as a socio-cultural phenomenon, that is, as a phenomenon in the form of patterns of behavior of individuals that arise from the basis of their understanding of the Qur'an. With this perspective, the phenomenon that then becomes the object of study is no longer the Qur'an as a book but the treatment of humans towards the Qur'an and how the patterns of behavior that are considered based on the understanding of the Qur'an are realized. The object of study here is how the various meanings of the Qur'an above are present, practiced and take place in human daily life.<sup>18</sup>

Mohammed Arkoun "The Qur'an itself actually presents historical stories with the intention of displaying the spirit and function of culture through the truth of religious language. What Arkoun is concerned with is actually not only a linguistic problem, but also an anthropological problem, namely the problem of the transition of prophetic kalam which is so open to every enlightening meaning towards discourse".

Farid Esack "For Muslims, the Qur'an is alive and has a personality like a human being. Esack gave an example, when his friend did not change his clothes in honor of "there was a copy of the Qur'an on the shelf in the room". In addition, Esack also gave an example of a verse from the Qur'an that is used as a talisman to protect the sore "devil's eye". Then some verses containing prayers were brought by the Prophet Noah, when he entered the ship which was attached to the layer".<sup>19</sup>

### ***The Study of the Living Qur'an in History***

The historical dynamics of Qur'an studies in Indonesia are inseparable from the history of the entry of Islam in Indonesia brought by traders. There are various differences of opinion on the year of the entry of Islam in Indonesia, but some experts say that Islam entered the archipelago in the 12th century.<sup>20</sup>

The entry of Islam into the archipelago became the first milestone in the history of the beginning of the study of the Qur'an or tafsir in Indonesia. The Qur'an as a holy book and as a source of Islamic teachings is certainly studied by many Muslims in various ways. Related to the above, several works have emerged that signal the beginning of the study of the Qur'an, especially tafsir in Indonesia. During this time, the study of the Qur'an was still in the realm of texts. Then the idea of giving rise *to the Science of Living Qur'an* as a forum for the development of the Ulumul Quran which discusses the reading of human interaction patterns with the Quran was tested and publicized in Indonesia, precisely at the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

It seems that the study of the Qur'an, which was born from the background of a purely scientific paradigm, was started by non-Muslim scholars of Qur'an studies. For them, there are

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<sup>17</sup> Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, "The Living *The Qur'an*: Some Anthropological Perspectives," *Walisono: Journal of Socio-Religious Research* 20, no. 1 (May 30, 2012): 235, <https://doi.org/10.21580/WS.20.1.198>.

<sup>18</sup> Ahimsa-Putra.

<sup>19</sup> Farid Esack, *Switch on The Qur'an: In Discourse and Behavior*, ed. Suharsono (Depok: Inisiasi Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Network of Middle Eastern and Archipelago Scholars of the XVII & XVIII Centuries* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013).

many interesting things around the Qur'an in the midst of the lives of Muslims who are involved in various social phenomena. For example, social phenomena related to the reading of the Qur'an in certain locations, the phenomenon of writing certain parts of the Qur'an in certain places, the beheading of units of the Qur'an which then become a treatment formula, prayers and so on that exist in certain Muslim societies, but not in other Muslim communities. The study model that makes the phenomenon that lives in the midst of Muslim society related to the Qur'an as the object of study, is basically nothing more than a social study with its diversity. Only because this social phenomenon arose due to the presence of the Qur'an, it was then initiated into the area of Qur'an study. In its development, this study is known as *the Living Qur'an* study.<sup>21</sup>

In 2005, the Indonesian Tafsir-Hadith Communication Forum (FKMTHI) held a congress at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. One of the series of congresses is a seminar with the theme "*Living Qur'an: The Qur'an in daily life*". The results of the seminar then yielded quite significant results. Several practitioners of the study of Qur'an sciences from other campuses in Indonesia immediately welcomed the term. Islah Gusmian from STAIN Surakarta also offers the same thing, with different terms. Islah Gusmian does not use the term *Living Qur'an*, even though he is actually responding to the new discourse called *the Living Qur'an*. Gusmian mapped the pattern of Indonesian Muslims' struggle with the Qur'an into six patterns, namely visual patterns such as calligraphy; material forms such as architecture; graphic accentuation such as Qur'anic poetry; sound art knitting such as *nagham* or MTQ and Qur'anic mantras such as *hizb*, wirid, and amulet.<sup>22</sup>

Although previously, in 1999, there was a thesis from the Department of Tafsir-Hadith, State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Antasari, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, written by Nurul Hidayah, with the title, "The Function of Verses of the Qur'an as Syifa' (Case Study on the South Kuin Community, North Banjar District, Banjarmasin Municipality). Although he studied *the Living Qur'an*, this thesis did not know the term *Living Qur'an at all*.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the term *Living Qur'an* as the name of a branch of science in the study of the Qur'an continues to be popularized. On November 8-9, 2006, a workshop was held to strengthen and popularize the name of the new science, at UIN Yogyakarta by the Department of Tafsir-Hadith, Faculty of Ushuluddin. The *Living Qur'an* and Hadith Methodology Workshop has even begun to penetrate into the realm of hadith studies. Not only that, to strengthen it into a science, the workshop not only discussed the name of the science and the study model that is still abstract, but also explored its methodological aspects. One year later, the results of the workshop were published into a book entitled *Living Qur'an and Hadith Research Methodology* written by seven lecturers of UIN Yogyakarta, namely M. Mansyur, Muhammad Chirzin, Muhammad Yusuf, Abdul Mustaqim, Suryadi, M. Alfatih Suryadilaga, and Nurun Najwah.<sup>24</sup>

In 2013, the Lentera Hati Ciputat Foundation, through its unit, the Center for *Qur'an* Studies (PSQ) founded by Prof. Dr. M. Quraish Shihab, MA, one of the mufassirs in Indonesia launched a program called "*Living Qur'an*". However, what is meant by "*Living Qur'an*" by PSQ is different from that initiated by UIN Yogyakarta. If the *Living Qur'an* initiated by UIN Yogyakarta is more passive, studying *the living Qur'an (Al-Qur'anal-hayy)*, then the PSQ version of *the Living Qur'an* is

<sup>21</sup> In the book of Isaiah, the name of the Lord is the name of the Lord. *Living Qur'an & Hadith Research Methodology* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Hasbillah, *The Science of Living Quran-Hadith: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology*, 150-151.

<sup>23</sup> Hasbillah. 150.

<sup>24</sup> Hasbillah, 151.

active, bringing the *Qur'an* to life in society (*ihya' al-Qur'ân*). This PSQ version of *the Living Qur'an* is the manifestation of one of the most monumental books of the late 1990s and early 2000s. The book is the work of Quraish Shihab, entitled "Grounding *the Qur'an*: The Function and Position of Revelation in Community Life," which was first published by Mizan Publisher in 1994. The book comes from more than sixty papers and lectures that have been delivered by the author in the period from 1975 to 1992.<sup>25</sup>

The *Living Qur'an* program reported by the Center for Qur'an Studies (PSQ) has a vision of grounding the Qur'an in the midst of a plural society. The Qur'an thus does not only function as a reading, but more than that it must be a value that must be a Muslim character. Living the Qur'an means not only being able to read the Qur'an or knowing its contents, but also applying it in daily life. The segmentation of the religious values and understanding program called *Living Qur'an* is for children aged 3-18 years. This is because *Living Qur'an (ihya' al-Qur'ân)* needs to be done as early as possible.<sup>26</sup>

Looking at the mission of the "*Living Qur'an*" program initiated by PSQ which wants to ground the Qur'an in the midst of a pluralistic society, it is clear that the mission of the program will certainly use a cultural approach as its implementation. The plurality that exists in Indonesia must be used as best as possible to revive and ground the values contained in the Qur'an. This plurality certainly reflects the diversity of earthing objects, the diversity of cultural containers and the diversity of approaches used to bring the values of the Qur'an to life. That is the meeting point between *the university version of the Living Qur'an* as initiated by UIN Yogyakarta and the *Living Qur'an* initiated by PSQ. Both complement each other in the *Living Qur'an* as a more mature science.<sup>27</sup>

Based on that, there are two meanings of *the Living Qur'an* that have begun to develop in Indonesia since 2013. First, it means the study of the culture of the Qur'an (*Al-Qur'anal-hayy*), or commonly known as the term *al-Qur'ân in Everyday Life*. While the second meaning is the cultivation (values and contents) of the Qur'an, or what in this book will be called the term *ihya' al-Qur'ân*.<sup>28</sup>

Since the *Living Qur'an Study* was initiated, until now there has not been a really complete book discussing the study of *the Living Qur'an*, even the one mentioned earlier. Only in 2019 was the book "The Science of *Living Qur'an*-Hadith: Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology" written by Ahmad Ubaidi Hasbillah. Which makes *the Living-Qur'an Study* of the Qur'an as a science.

Meanwhile, according to Ahmad Rafiq as a pioneer of *the Living Qur'an* when interviewed, he confirmed that *the Living Qur'an* is a phenomenon so that it is liquid to be studied. According to him, *the Living Qur'an* does not need to be standardized, let it flow and be approached with other sciences.

### ***Model-Model Studi Living Qur'an***

In the study of *the Living Qur'an*, there are two objects of study of *the Living Qur'an*, first, material objects. Both are formal objects. Philosophically, every discipline must have an object that is used as the object of study and science. There are material objects, and there are also non-material or formal objects. In philosophy, material objects are everything that exists and may exist. Whether it

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<sup>25</sup> Hasbillah, 154.

<sup>26</sup> Hasbillah. 154

<sup>27</sup> Hasbillah. 154

<sup>28</sup> Hasbillah. 154-155

is the visible, or the invisible. Visible material objects are empirical objects, while invisible material objects are metaphysical objects whose existence in the realm of the mind and the "realm" of possibility. Empirical nature is an object that can be measured and usually occurs repeatedly. While metaphysical objects that include the realm of thought and are likely to be rational objects. Whether it exists or not, cannot be proven empirically through laboratory tests or observatories, but through sound thinking logic.<sup>29</sup>

To get a clearer picture of what a material object is, it can be understood through several examples of other scientific material objects. Sociology has a material object in the form of society. Anthropology has a material object in the form of cultural practices. The material object of Psychology is psychological symptoms. The material object of theology is God and His treatise. The material objects of astronomy are extraterrestrial objects or stars. While the material object of the science of faith is the expression of human belief. The object of historical science is past events. The material objects of linguistics are words, sounds, and symbols.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, the object of Qur'anic knowledge is Kalam Allah and Mushaf. Meanwhile, the material object of hadith science is the act of the Prophet's speech. Then, the question is, if *the Living Qur'an* and hadith are one of the branches of the discipline of *the Qur'an* and hadith, then what is the material object? From this, it can be explained that the material object of the knowledge of *Living Qur'an*-hadith is the embodiment of the Qur'an and hadith in its non-textual form. It can be in the form of images, multimedia, or cultural works, or in the form of thoughts that then take the form of human behavior and behavior. This is the difference between the science of the Qur'an and the conventional-normative science of hadith. If we read various literature on the science of the Qur'an and hadith, we hardly find a single *fann* or *nam'* or chapter that explains the form of the word of Allah and the words of the Prophet in a form that is not a text (*nashsh*). For example, calligraphy of the Qur'an and hadith is not enshrined in the science of the Qur'an and hadith. The existence of types of khat to describe Qur'an verses, for example, is not specifically regulated in the science of the Qur'an, even though it has an important role in conveying the message of meaning in an artistic way. For example, *the khat Tsuluts, Diwani, Riq'ab, Naskhi*, and others have different models and characters. Each has artistic and cultural values to express the message contained in the text of the Qur'an and hadith.<sup>31</sup>

For example, Ingrid Mattson in her book said that beyond all theological controversies, Muslims have the same belief that it is the kalam of God. Whatever their understanding of the phrase, Muslims agree that the Qur'an has a unique position. That is why the sound and writing of the Qur'an have a great influence on the thinking and life of the Muslim community. Oral and written traditions strengthen and fill each other to allow God's Word to permeate the hearts of believers.<sup>32</sup>

In the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula, important poems (on the walls of the Kaaba. After Islam came, the kalam of God was pronounced in the Ukaz market and then hung day and night in the holy city of Makkah. The Kaaba building is also covered with materials decorated with calligraphy of Qur'anic verses. Centuries later, when the Semites, Europeans, Asians, and Africans embraced Islam, their languages and countries were influenced by the language of the Qur'an. The

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<sup>29</sup> Hasbillah. 49.

<sup>30</sup> Hasbillah 49.

<sup>31</sup> Hasbillah. 50.

<sup>32</sup> Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of The Qur'an*, Terj. R.Cecep Lukman Yasin (Jakarta: Zaman, 2013), 213.



recitation of the Qur'an fills the atmosphere of the Islamic community: school children chant verses of the Qur'an following their teachers; loudspeakers sound the call to prayer from the mosque day and night; the worshippers gathered to recite the Qur'an in memory of the death of their brother; And the shopkeeper also listened to the reciters' readings for the visitors.<sup>33</sup> Not only that, the handwriting of Qur'anic verses in the form of calligraphy and carvings adorns mosques and residential houses. Elsewhere, verses of the Qur'an were printed on mass-produced calendars and on wall clocks. In various places, we find the writing of verses of the Qur'an which are used as protectors, sacred, and amulets."<sup>34</sup>

As Islam established its presence in Europe and Asia, most of the existing religious traditions on both continents (except for the Jews) depicted something sacred in the form of paintings. In fact, most of these traditions, including Christianity and Buddhism, have passed through the days of aniconism and iconoclasm. Islam's rejection of the paintings or 245 statues of God can be traced to the destruction of idols that filled the Kaaba when Makkah was conquered by the Muslims. When Makkah surrendered to the Prophet in 8/630, the city's inhabitants were willing to convert to Islam and make Muhammad a political and religious leader. Based on this authority, Muhammad cleansed the Kaaba of idols, just as his ancestor, Ibrahim, destroyed the idols of his people. Ibrahim once prayed that his descendants would no longer worship idols. However, even though Ibrahim had prayed to God, the Quraish filled the Kaaba with idols. It could be that they did it to support economic activity, as they gave the merchants space to place their own idols near the Kaaba. In that way, Makkah remained an important trading center. Muhammad's act of destroying the idols around the Kaaba reminds us of Jesus' crackdown on cleaning the temple of worship from foreign currency changers.<sup>35</sup>

The Kaaba has a special position in the spirituality and ritual activities of Muslims, namely as the center of the Hajj ritual and the direction of prayer. Another major mosque, the Prophet's mosque in Medina, became a major model for other mosques around the world. All mosques in the later period had an open prayer room and a rectangular shape complete with qibla directions on the walls. In the earliest period in Islamic history, mosques adopted various architectural features.

In addition, what Mattson wrote was *The Glory of the Qur'an*: When written on a building or hung on the wall the verses of the Qur'an are usually placed in a high position. symbolizes the height of God's Kalam compared to human words. The majesty that is reflected in the exalted position and conversely, the consecration depicted in the condescending position, is probably a universal assumption, This is in accordance with the anthropocentric perspective, because if the human being grows strong and mature, he will rise and the surface of the earth until finally it grows higher and experienced the Sufis in various traditions also show that the most appropriate place to attain the enlightenment of the soul is at the top of the hill. The Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad in a cave on a hill; The prophet Moses spoke to God on Mount Sinai, the resurrection of Jesus took place on a hill; Syrian Christian priests in the late classical century stood on high pillars to await the presence of God, and Buddhists climbed the steps of temples such as those found in Borobudur temple, and their highest level symbolized liberation from worldly desires.

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<sup>33</sup> Ingrid Mattson, 214.

<sup>34</sup> Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of The Qur'an*, Terj. R.Cecep Lukman Yasin, 214.

<sup>35</sup> Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of The Qur'an*, Terj. R.Cecep Lukman Yasin, 215.

Most people, when trying to get clues, will look at the stars, the moon, and the sun. It is an effective method and practiced in many communities.<sup>36</sup>

The Living *Qur'an model* mentioned by Farid Esack, for example; the first experience of interacting with the Qur'an begins with learning the letters one by one, the word then continues with learning the alphatihah, and jumps to short letters, namely juz 30. Not only learning to memorize but also being internalized in an inner rhythm, this process is maintained throughout life.<sup>37</sup>Indirectly, this applies the way of learning the Qur'an, which starts from the easy.

In addition, yes also gave an example when she wanted to cook, her mother started by reading certain verses of the Qur'an to ensure that more people could enjoy the food, or reciting verses of the Qur'an memorized when meeting dogs with the intention of avoiding the possibility of bad intentions. *The Qur'an* is a central miracle of Islam and the miracle of these divine words is actualized continuously, not in visual or material form but verbally in reading, its phrases are repeated in recitation in mosques, in school teaching and memorization and in prayer. The book provides the basis for the study of Islamic theology and law. At a popular level his texts can be considered amulets, and the environment in which he has given a religious force to the art of Muslim calligraphy.<sup>38</sup>

Some campuses even include *the Living Qur'an* as an annual research theme for thesis writing. But unfortunately, the determination of the theme of *the study of the Living Qur'an* on campuses is considered not very in line with the direction of the curriculum that has been designed, the courses studied, and several other aspects. In addition, epistemologically, living *Qur'an research* does not have a solid basis. Even Ahmad Rafiq, M. Mansur and several figures in the study of *the Living Qur'an* have not provided a strong epistemological basis. So the form of Living *Qur'an* research in Indonesia is still unclear. This was admitted by Ahmad Rafiq through an interview with Studi Tafsir uploaded via Instagram, he also admitted his anxiety to hear the mention of *the Living Qur'an* as a method or approach.<sup>39</sup>

Also published in studitafsir.com, another historical accident occurred when scholars of Islamic studies and the Qur'an tried to respond to the trend of living *Qur'an studies*. The historical accident that the author refers to is the phenomenon of divorce and epistemological fracture (*la coupure épistémologique*) in the sense of theoretical discontinuity of the "original" concept of *the Living Qur'an* that the authors of Metopen LQH understood in 2007. New clusters of *Living Qur'an studies* can be read as an epistemological, methodological and/or ideological response to research trends that have been fond of giving rise to new and heretical terms such as Javanese Islam, wekasan Wednesday, occultism, magical culture, mamakiah tradition, Qur'an poetry, and putih fasting.<sup>40</sup>

### ***The Meeting Point Between the Study of the Qur'an, Antrology or Sociology***

From the description above, starting from the debate on the definition of *the Living Qur'an*, then the epistimological foundation, and the lack of adequate references in the study of *the Living Qur'an* makes the study of *the Living Qur'an* look like an anthropological or sociological study, even

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<sup>36</sup> Ingrid Mattson, 224.

<sup>37</sup> Esack, *Switch on Al-Qur'an: In Discourse and Behavior*, 02.

<sup>38</sup> Esack, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Tafsir, "Realita Kajian Studi Living Qur'an." retrieved August 10, 2022).

<sup>40</sup> Egi Tanandi Taufik, "Living Qur'an: Bid'ah and Historical Accidents in the Study of *Al-Qur'an*," studitafsir.com, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://studitafsir.com/2022/12/13/living-quran-bidah-dan-kecelakaan-sejarah-dalam-studi-al-quran/>).

though in the study of *the Living Qur'an* using these two tools, but not absolutely anthropological or sociological studies, this can be seen in the thesis research mentioned in the discussion. In fact, the study of *the Living Qur'an* is part of the study of the Qur'an. In terms of the scientific tools used, namely social sciences, the research tends to be more heavy on social science research, or only descriptive, without showing the study part of the Qur'an, namely using the Qur'anic ulumul.

While the *Living Qur'an research model* seems monotonous, the theme is around the reading of the Qur'an, so that when calling *the Living Qur'an* nothing but what is depicted is what is read, even though *the Living Qur'an* has a wide scope. In addition, the social science approach used in *Living Qur'an* research is sometimes not implemented appropriately or sometimes too dominating the research, so it looks like social research. While the side of transmission and transformation is often ignored by *Living Qur'an* researchers, even though there is a place in the study of the Qur'an, how knowledge acts from one person to another, so that researchers should know the transformation from early times. Therefore, it can be seen that the genealogy of a tradition inspired by the Qur'an can be seen.

References used in the study of *the Living Qur'an*, for example, in the thesis studied, there is no reference that intersects with *the Living Qur'an*, in fact, the figures mentioned above as people who contribute to defining *the Living Qur'an*. This is due to the lack of mature references regarding *the Living Qur'an*. However, in the midst of the *Living Qur'an debate*, the researcher agrees with Ahmad Rafiq's question, that *the Living Qur'an* is a phenomenon so that it is liquid to be studied, in fact Ahmad Rafiq himself does not agree if *the Living Qur'an* becomes a standard, established, or used as a science, method, or approach.

However, the study of *the Living Qur'an* is not only purely or absolutely a study of social phenomena but it is also a study of the Qur'an, so sometimes it is not seen where the study of the Qur'an, whether it is only because of studying the phenomenon of the Qur'an in society and then it is called the study of the Qur'an, of course also raises the question, what is the difference with social studies or anthropology or others. In essence, this is also the concern of Ahmad Rafiq as a pioneer of the study of *the Living Qur'an*.

When asked, what is the role of the Qur'an in the study of *the Living Qur'an*? in explaining the transmission and transformation of a tradition, there is actually the importance of the Qur'an. In line with that, Ubaidi also explained that *the Living Qur'an* must still be a study of the Qur'an and must still dominate or at least equal the portion with socio-cultural studies<sup>41</sup>. *The Living Qur'an* is not *basic* research, but rather *advanced research*, meaning that those who study *the Living Qur'an* at least master the Qur'an, so that they can find out how the tradition is carried out or interpreted from time to time. This transmission system is similar to the sanad in the study of hadith, but it does not mean that it is also connected to each other.

Similar to this, Uba'di said that whatever is considered sacred by individuals and society, then it must have that transformative power. The advice of an elder or ancestor can have *transformative* power when it is believed to be sacred. As a community that believes in the sacredness of the Qur'an, it must have various distinctive ways to treat and use the Qur'an. In fact, in their

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<sup>41</sup> Living Qur'an is not research research that is an escape because it cannot read English or Arabic texts, as according to Ahmad Rafiq, living Qur'an is complex research because it requires Qur'an and social sciences. (Interview with the Head of the Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta on November 23, 2022)

environment there must also be a lot of practices, behaviors, traditions, and cultures that are transformed from the Qur'an and hadith. Previously, a transformative culture did not exist, but because of an understanding of a verse or hadith, it was held. Previously a tradition was not like its current state; It is still colored by spiritual rituals or other religious beliefs, for example. However, after the practitioners of the tradition believed in the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet, the tradition that had been firmly rooted and sacred changed; modified, or completely changed, or replaced, recreated, or even eliminated altogether, due to an understanding of the Qur'an and hadith.

## Conclusion

*The Living Qur'an* is a phenomenon so it is liquid to study. *The Living Qur'an* is not a method, nor an approach. Nevertheless, *the Living Qur'an* is not only purely or absolutely the study of social phenomena but it is also the study of *the Qur'an*. What distinguishes the study of anthropology or sociology in general from *the Living Qur'an* lies in the *ulumul Qur'an*, namely in the explanation of transmission and transformation. A Living Qur'an researcher must be able to trace and explain the transmission and transformation of the practice of the verses studied. So that he can find out how the tradition is carried out or interpreted from time to time.

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