

THE DYNAMICS OF THE RECEPTION OF SURAH AL-MULK: AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION AND TRANSFORMATION IN ISLAMIC LITERATURE

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Abstract :

This research explores the reception, transmission, and transformation of surah al-Mulk in Islamic literature, from hadiths, tafsir, amaliyat, and contemporary works. This study uses the qualitative literature study method, with the application of Hans Robert's theory of Horizon of Expectations and Wolfgang Iser's theory of reception, to analyze the reader's interaction with the text. The findings of this study show that surah al-Mulk is not only seen as a rigid text, but a text that lives with various benefits, both spiritually and materially. The process of transmission occurs through three main patterns: literary quotations, sanad, and discursive traditions that adjust to the dynamics of society. This research shows that the reception of surah al-Mulk has evolved from informative to performative, where the meaning of al-Mulk will be reconstructed based on the spiritual and material needs of readers from various cross-generations.

Keywords: surah al-Mulk, reception, transmission, transformation, Islamic literature

Abstract :

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi resepsi, transmisi, dan transformasi surat al-Mulk dalam literatur keislaman, dari kitab hadis, tafsir, amaliyat, dan karya kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi Pustaka kualitatif, dengan penerapan teori Horizon of Expectations dari Hans Robert dan teori resepsi Wolfgang Iser, untuk menganalisis interaksi pembaca dengan teks. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa surat al-Mulk bukan hanya dipandang sebagai teks kaku, namun teks yang hidup dengan beragam manfaat, baik secara spiritual atau pun material. Proses transmisi terjadi melalui tiga pola utama: kutipan literatur, sanad, dan tradisi diskursif yang menyesuaikan dinamika masyarakat. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa resepsi surat al-Mulk telah berkembang dari informatif menjadi performatif, di mana makna al-Mulk akan direkonstruksi berdasarkan kebutuhan spiritual dan material pembaca dari berbagai lintas generasi.

Keywords: surat al-Mulk, resepsi, transmisi, transformasi, literatur keislaman

INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the Qur'an in text or context is a form of the reader's response to the author's text, which is three interconnected sides, where the three create a balance for a comprehensive understanding (Sifa' & Aziz, 2018). So it is not surprising that in Islamic literature, there are various interpretations with the characteristics of each author. This turns out to be possible for followers of Islam to not only read the Qur'an, but also to practice the content of the verses that have been read. (Khalafullah, 2002). This means that reading and understanding the Qur'an is always an activity that requires the actualization of what is obtained in the content of the Qur'an itself. (Fariati & Anwar, 2025).



The effort to understand the Qur'an will always go hand in hand with the dynamics of the times, which intersect with various traditions and cultures, in this case it can be understood that the Qur'an always motivates and provides breath for human life, in addition, the diversity of reception and actualization of the reading of the Qur'an can be called a reception (Khusna, 2021). Reception itself means the act of receiving, which is a form of reaction from the interaction of the reader or listener of the Qur'an, to form a productive or reproductive meaning in accordance with the main message of the verse, and the formation is also based on the personal awareness of each individual (Riyadi, 2014).

In Islamic literature, the reception of the Qur'an is found in the plural of verses, but in this study, we will focus on the reception of the recitation of surah al-Mulk. The messages contained in surah al-Mulk are strongly believed to be authentic, bringing goodness, benefits, and virtue to the readers and practitioners of the messages. Instead of just memorizing them, this turns out to trigger the motivation of Muslims to explore surah al-Mulk to be inserted in various activities. (Al Atsary, 2001, p. 6). The belief in the blessings in Surah al-Mulk is believed to provide ease in obtaining sustenance for daily living, which can always meet the wishes of its readers. (Siregar et al., 2021). The routine reading of surah al-Mulk can also be found in Islamic institutions, be it schools or madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools. This routine is intended to shape the character of students, so that they become individuals who are *istiqamah*, sincere, obedient, and enthusiastic in receiving education and living life. (Nasihah, 2022). In addition, some people among mothers accept surah al-Mulk for routine practices during pregnancy, with the aim that the womb is protected by Allah, safe until the time of childbirth arrives. (Maulida et al., 2021). These various actual receptions motivated the author to see how the transmission and transformation of surah al-Mulk in Islamic literature in the study of literature is transient.

The reading of religious phenomena based on texts requires a flashback on the transmission and initial transformation side of the text; the process of the text is frozen, then develops, and adapts to changes with the dynamics of life, of course, through many processes. According to Irwan Abdullah, Transmission has three properties. First, analytical transformation. This property refers to the abstract qualities of the social side and the process of its revolution; this analytical process will be universal in terms of space and time. Second, it is historical. This process will present a specific period of time in which the unit of time has special characteristics in society. Third, it is practical that comes from the transformation of a series of policies that are conceptualized to build complex dynamics in society. (Abdullah, 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach in this study is based on a literature study with an analytical descriptive method, which aims to examine the process of receiving surah al-Mulk and its various meanings in Islamic literature. The theoretical framework used in this study is the literary reception theory, Horizon of Expectations from

Hans Robert Jauss. The use of this theory is appropriate for the reflection of knowledge, experience, and tradition from the emergence of Islam to the current contemporary period. Jauss emphasizes that the reception of the reading of the text does not always give the same meaning across generations. This happens because the dialogue between the text and the reader's dynamic horizon of expectation, from the informative to the performatative (Rusdi, 2023).

In addition to Jauss, this study also uses reception theory from Wolfgang Iser, which focuses on the interaction of readers and texts, namely, implicit readers and filling empty spaces in reading texts. Iser argues that texts will not get their portion in human life without the active participation of the reader to actualize the results of their reading (Salsabila & Nuha, 2024). In this study, surah al-Mulk is considered to have a variety of meanings that are actualized and received in various forms, be it hermeneutic or aesthetic reception related to certain socio-cultures and interests. This process of transformation from a written text to a living text shows that the recipient of information is not passive, but responds proactively based on the spiritual needs of each individual.

Then, the collected data was analyzed using the theory of transmission and transformation, to see how the spread and change of the function of the recitation of surah al-Mulk in the community. This analysis refers to three transmission patterns, namely excerpts from previous literature, *sanad*, and discursive traditions involving religious and cultural narratives. One of them is reflected in the writings of Sheikh Ali Jaber, who reconstructs the impirish experience by relating it to the hadith, which in practice undergoes functional adaptation. Therefore, by synergizing the theories of Jauss and Iser in this study, it provides a comprehensive picture that the transformation of Surah al-Mulk is not just a revelation, but has various functions in human life.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The majority of scholars agree that surah al-Mulk includes surah Makkiyah, which was revealed after surah al-Mukminun, before surah al-Haaqah. However, scholars differ on the number of verses; Hijaz scholars say 31 verses, while the number of scholars is 30 verses. (Saurah, 1978). Surah al-Mulk has many names: Surah Tabarak (The Holy One of Allah who rules all works), Surah al-Ma'inah or The Preventer, and Surah al-Munjiyah or The Saver (Al Adzi, 2002). The main purpose of this letter is to direct and teach people to see the signs of God's greatness in man and the universe, so that faith in Allah is always maintained. The contents of Surah al-Mulk explain the condition of those who deny Allah in the Hereafter; they will be thrown into the burning fire of Hell, and whoever listens to their cries will be horrified and cannot imagine the heat of the fire. As for the believers, they will be forgiven for all their wrongs and will be rewarded for the good deeds they have done. (Assyria, 1984).

The Virtues of Surah al-Mulk in Hadith Literature

In the book *Mausu'ah Fadhail Suwar wa Ayat al-Qur'an*, which is a book about thematic hadith in which it explains the virtues of the letter in the Qur'an with the narration of the hadith, in the part of surah al-Mulk it is explained that

this surah intercedes for its readers until it is forgiven by Allah for the sins committed by the reader, also this surah is a practice done by the Prophet, he reads it before going to bed.

The narration of intercession is written several times, first, Ishaq bin Rahwayh said: I said to Abi Usamah: I have narrated to you Shu'bah from Qatadah from 'Abbas al-Jusyami from Abi Hurairah from the Messenger of Allah-peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him said: Indeed, a letter in the Qur'an has thirty verses that can intercede for its reader until he is forgiven. namely, (*Tabaraka al ladzi bi yadihi al mulk*), "Glory be to Allah who rules over all kingdoms, and He is Almighty over all things", Usamah admitted it and said "Yes." Second, in another narration with the level of *marfu'*, it is written, From ibn Mas'ud said: A man was approached in his grave from the direction of his feet, and then said to his feet," ' There is no way for you to pass through me, for he stands to perform the prayer over me by reciting surah al-Mulk." Then it went to his body cavity. The cavity says, "There is no way for you through me, for he has contained the letter al-Mulk in me." Then came the fists. Then his tongue said, "There is no way for you to do it for me, he used to perform prayers by reciting Surah al-Mulk." Then Abdullah said, "He is a protector - with Allah's permission - from the punishment of the grave. In the Torah, it is surah al-Mulk. Then Abdullah bin said: (Back in the time of the Prophet, we gave the name of the letter "al-Maani'ah"), namely, with Allah's permission, avoiding the punishment of the grave (Thorhuny, 1994).

Furthermore, this verse is juxtaposed with surah as-Sajadah in terms of the practices done by the Prophet before going to sleep at night. It is also written in the virtue chapter of surah Sajadah, "from Jabir said: The Messenger of Allah will not sleep until he recites *Alif Lam Miim Tanzil* (as-Sajadah) and Tabarak." From these hadith, it can be seen that in the time of the Prophet and his companions after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), there was a reception of the Qur'an, -especially in the discussion of this surah al-Mulk- it is informatively known that the Prophet received surah al-Mulk and transmitted it to the companions and by the companions in the form of daily actions or practices (Thorhuny, 1994).

The Virtues of Surah al-Mulk in Tafsir Literature

Interpretation is a form of reception of how the text is received and responded to by the listener or reader. Regarding Surah al-Mulk, in the commentary, Ibn Kathir wrote its virtues. From Abu Hurairah narrated, Imam Ahmad said: narrated by Hajjaj bin Muhammad and Ibn Ja'far, both said, narrated by Syu'bah of Qatadah from 'Iyas al-Jusyami, from Abi Hurairah from the Messenger of Allah-peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him said, there is indeed a letter in which there is thirty verses that intercede for the reader, so that forgiveness is granted to him: "*Tabarak al ladzi bi yadihi al mulk*," The Holy One is Allah who rules (all) kingdoms, and He is Almighty over all things" (Al-Qurasyi, 1999).

The next virtue written by Ibn Kathir is the story of the ignorance of a companion when he pitched a tent over the grave, and the companion heard the

sound of reciting surah al-Mulk from the grave. Imam Turmidhi said, narrated to us, Muhammad bin Abdul Malik bin Abu Ashy Syawarib, has been narrated to us from Yahya bin 'Amru bin Malik an-Nukhri from his Father, from Abu al-Jauza' From Ibn Abbas said," Once upon a time, some of the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) set up a tent on top of a grave. But he did not know that it was a grave. Suddenly, from inside the tomb, someone was heard reading surah al-Mulk until finished, then he went to the Messenger of Allah and reported it, he said: O Messenger of Allah, I did not know that I had pitched a tent on the grave and I did not think that it was a grave, then someone read surah of Tabarak to the end, the Messenger of Allah then said, "He is a barrier, he is the savior who saves him from the torment of the grave." It is said that this hadith is the Gharib hadith (Al-Qurasyi, 1999; Saurah, 1978).

Furthermore, it is also written about the teaching and recitation of Surah al-Mulk in family education. The reading of this surah is a practice for parents in educating their offspring, as agreed by the adjoining hadith, "and I actually want this letter to be in every heart of my people." (Al-Qurasyi, 1999). Ali bin Nayif Al Syahud wrote in his book entitled *Al Madzhab fi Tafsir Surah al-Mulk*, that there is a hadith that is the basis for a person's performance to make al-Mulk a practice, namely a hadith from Ibn Shihab, from Hamid bin Abdurrahman bin 'Auf said: He actually reported that Surah al-Ikhlâs is actually one third of the Qur'an. And indeed *Tabarak al Ladzi bi Yadihi Al Mulk wa Huwa 'ala kulli syaiin qadir*, will defend its readers (Al Syahud, Tt).

The Virtues of Surah al-Mulk in the Book of Amaliyat

Ahmad al Dairaby wrote a book with the title *Mujarrabat al Dairaby al Kabir*, which contains the uses and secrets behind the verses of the Qur'an. What he has written in this book is sourced from notes from various books by scholars and is arranged in several chapters to make it easier for readers to study and study it. Dairaby said that Surah al-Mulk has a noble degree, which is famous for its blessings and virtues. Said from Anas, "Whoever recites Surah as-Sajadah and al-Mulk at night, then the reader seems to have obtained the virtue of the night of *Laylat al-Qadr*. From Imam Thawus ra, it is said that he never left the two letters, either when in the house or when traveling, and it was narrated, "whoever recites surah as-Sajadah and al-Mulk in the sunnah prayer of two rak'ahs, then continues by reciting '*ya daim, ya hayyu, ya fard, ya watr, ya qadim, ya ahad, ya shomad, shalli 'ala Muhammad wa ala ali muhammad*," then proceeds to ask Allah for what is his wish, then Allah will grant his request (Dairaby, tt).

Then in the book *Al-Dzahab al-Abrâz fi Asrari Khawassi Kitabillah al-'Aziz*, the work of Imam al Ghazali, he writes, "I often convey to the disciples the peculiarities of the verses of the Qur'an which has been practiced by scholars, especially when facing difficulties. As it turns out, they can see the blessings of the Qur'an to release the difficulties they face." (Ghazali, tt). What is written in this book is an empirical observation from the scholars. The existence of this book has a noble purpose, namely, to provide benefits to Muslims.

The reception of surah al-Mulk can also be used as a form of *ruqyah*, and the treatment for *istihadhah* blood. In its editorial, it is written, Said Ibn Qutaybah

(Qotada): A woman from the Ansar circle realized that she was having menstruation, and her blood continued to flow without stopping, and she complained about what happened to her to the pious. Then the pious man wrote a note for her and asked her to hang the note. The verses he wrote were Qs. Hud, 11:44, and Qs. Al-Mulk, 67:30, which made the blood of *istihadhah* stop, and the woman was clean from bleeding (Ghazali, tt).

The Virtues of Surah al-Mulk in Contemporary Literature

Sheikh Ali Jaber, in his book entitled "*Amalan Ringan Paling Manakjubkan: 20 Kiat Menuju Kebahagiaan Hidup*," wrote about his personal experience of feeling the virtue of surah al-Mulk. Shaykh Ali Jaber wrote that he had made it a habit to recite Surah al-Mulk before going to bed, but before reading it, he first took ablution and performed the *witir* prayer. Until one night, he did not have time to read surah al-Mulk, then he dreamed, "*I saw myself in the grave. Very dark. Terrible. It feels extraordinarily scary. Until I couldn't imagine it at that time. But suddenly, when I was feeling scared and lonely, a light appeared in my own grave. Then I cried out, who are you who brought the light? He himself said the light said, 'I am surah al-Mulk!'*" With a lot of surprise, Shaykh Ali Jaber hurriedly woke up, took ablution, and read surah al-Mulk before going back to sleep (Jaber, 2021).

In contrast to the story of Sheikh Ali Jaber, it is told in the chapter "*Keajaiban Surat al-Mulk*" In the same book, a young man was abandoned by his mother to return to the realm of barzah, during the funeral procession and afterwards, the pilgrims who delivered and the deceased's child smelled the fragrance, so that the pilgrims looked at each other to find out who was the one who used the fragrance. However, there was no result, and they began to realize that the source of the fragrance came from a mound of soil that was still wet, and it was even said that the fragrance smoke was visible. The deceased's son said that there was an advantage that his mother had, namely, his routine practice that was carried out every day, which the deceased had left the day before to read Surah al-Mulk (Jaber, 2021).

Still with the virtue of reading surah al-Mulk, which was clearly felt by Zeza Hamzah, as a Muslim woman who was experiencing anxiety about work, she had protested to Allah because she did not get a job call. On the verge of being sad, he was advised to routinely recite the surah Yasin, al-Waqi'ah, and al-Mulk before participating in the job selection. At that time he registered as a presenter on a television station. Like a welcome dipper, Zeza got a casting call and was accepted. Zeza says, "*Alhamdulillah, my career has continued to progress since I started reading the letters of Yasin, al-Waqiah, and al-Mulk.*" (Syarbini & Jamhari, 2012).

Finally, in the title "*Sukses Bisnis Bermodal Bacaan Al-Qur'an*", this story came from Mrs. Leni, who at that time was receiving a guest from an old friend who offered to do business, with a total amount of 20 million. At first, Mrs. Leni was overwhelmed with doubts about doing business, due to her lack of experience in the world of buying and selling. With that much capital, Mrs. Leni tried her luck selling duck eggs and chickens. Sustenance is undeniable; the business he runs is growing rapidly, even reaping double profits from the initial

capital. Until finally, Mrs. Leni dared to expand her business by selling candlenuts, chicks, and gasoline, and all of them were able to develop. When asked what the secret to his success? Leni's mother replied, "I am doing business smoothly because I am helped by Allah. I have been reading the Qur'an for a long time. There are four surahs that I have revealed, Yasin, al-Mulk, ar-Rahman, and al-Waqiah. Every morning and evening I read surah al-Waqiah, every Maghrib I read surah ar-Rahman, every time before going to bed I read surah al-Mulk, and once a week I read surah Yasin, which is on the night of Jum'ad" (Syarbini & Jamhari, 2012).

Analysis of Transmission and Transformation of the Practice of Reading Surah al-Mulk

The fragmentation of information in this stage is intertwined with one axis of praxis; it shows that there is a variety of knowledge and reception models from the early days of Islam to the generations that followed. Ahmad Rafiq divided the transmission process into three. *First*, transmission patterns in the form of quotations or references to previous literatures, but sometimes between books, and others do not necessarily include the transmission history or the source specifically. (Rafiq, 2021). For example, in the narration of the hadith of the virtue of al-Mulk in the book *Mausu'ah Fadhail Suwar wa Ayat al-Qur'an*, it is said that the hadith was issued by Ibn Rahwayh in his musnad in the category *harful Ba'* no. 25, then Imam Nasai in chapter *Fi al Yaum wa Laila* on *harful Ba'* no. 27, by Ibn Habban in chapter 2/113. In the books of Musnad, everything goes through the path of Qatadah, then it is divided into two paths of sanad, namely Syu'bah and 'Imran al-Qattan (Thorhuny, 1994).

As explained earlier about the transmission of the first pattern, sometimes the same hadith will not necessarily be similar in listing the sanad in full. This is also the case with Shaykh Ali Jaber's book "*Amalan Ringan Paling Menakjubkan*," which does not include sanad at all, only mentions the intercession of al-Mulk to the reader. However, this transmission will be different when referring to the hadith literature, because most of the surah al-Mulk is written in sanad and shows the complete difference in the transmission route.

Second, the transmission pattern is created based on the relationship between teacher and student, then manifested in transmission with the sanad. Ingrid Mattson calls it a sacred genealogy. (Rafiq, 2021). The transmission of transformation with this second pattern still survives to this day, from the various literature presented, there are several similar cases, regarding routine reading before going to bed and reading that is used as a practice so that it is inherent in the hearts of the Prophet's people, an ideal or hope that has become hereditary with similar time specifications, namely reading it before going to bed. As has been done by Sheikh Ali Jaber, Mrs. Lina, and scholars from various generations.

The third pattern is in the form of discursive traditions. Its practices can be observed in various generations in a society. What needs to be underlined in this third pattern is that the transmission process does not always replicate directly from previous practices. This transmission process is also influenced by the intersection with people's lives involving various elements such as texts,

cultural narratives, religions, or practices that have been established in society. It should also be remembered that this third pattern not only accepts the form of practice, but also includes its discourse. So it is natural that the practices found are not in accordance with the main text source or previous practices (Rafiq, 2021). In this study, it can be seen in the reception recorded in the book *Al-Dzahab al-Abraz fi Asrari Khawassi Kitabillah al-'Aziz*, where Hujjatul Islam Imam Ghazali has written a practice outside of most hadith texts, using some verses of al-Mulk as a medium of medicine written to heal women who are experiencing *istifadhah* hemorrhage. Then, in the case of Zeza Hamzah, who was accepted to get a job, the two almost had similar ideas, using al-Mulk as a medium to get the desired result.

All transmission patterns that the author describes have been inserted in the form of a transformation. Knowledge and practices are not only passed down from one generation to the next, but will always continue. Every memory and experience that is tried to be narrated will continuously be constructed according to agents who carry different interests. If it is possible to borrow Derrida's thought, every meaning in a sign will depend on the traces left behind. So every narrative of virtue will be captured and interpreted according to the understanding of the person who reads the text.

CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of Islamic literature from the classical to contemporary periods, it can be concluded that the reception of surah al-Mulk occurred dynamically, transforming from a frozen text to a living text in the midst of people's lives. In hadith and tafsir literature, al-Mulk is explained informatively as an intercessor, forgiveness of sins, and protection from punishment; these virtues are based on the practice of the Prophet. However, in the literature of amaliyat and some contemporary works, the reception shifted more practical and performative one. Surah al-Mulk is used as a medium of treatment, a means of obtaining the blessings of life, and a solution regarding career and business success. The empirical experience of figures such as Sheikh Ali Jaber strengthens the belief of the people that al-Mulk has active power, not just reading, but providing help in the spiritual and material dimensions.

The transformation of the function of surah al-Mulk is possible through three transmission patterns, namely: quotations from previous literature, the chain of genealogy of teachers-students, and discursive traditions involving tradition and culture. With the theory of Horizon of Expectations and the reader-text interaction, it can be seen that the reception of the letter al-Mulk is never singular and static, but is always reconstructed by the reader, and adapted to the needs and dynamics of the times. The existence of blank space in the text still allows cross-generational readers to perceive it in a new form. Thus, the transmission of surah al-Mulk is not merely a replication of past practices, but a continuous process that establishes the authority of the sacred text with the expectation of the lives of its practitioners.

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