

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago**

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The Influence of Egyptian Reformists and its Impact on the Development of the Literature of Quranic Exegesis Manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago

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Abstract

The trend of writing Quranic exegesis manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago during the first part of the 20th century was very much influenced by the Islamic reformation in Egypt initiated by Syaykh Muhammad `Abduh, which was then expanded by his disciples such as Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida and Syaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi. Several reformation activities carried out by them had inspired local scholars; most of them were graduates of Al-Azhar University, to reform, specifically in the field of Quranic exegesis studies in that part of the world. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the extent of the influence of Egyptian reformists on the development of Quranic exegesis manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago; particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Keywords: Reformists; Tafsir al-Manar; Islah; translation activities; Mufassirs in Malaysia; Mufassirs in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

The trend of writing Tafsir (exegesis) manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago during the first part of the 20th century was very much influenced by the Islamic reformation in Egypt initiated by Syaykh Muhammad `Abduh (1849-1905) which was later expanded by his disciples such as Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida (1865M-1935), Syaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi (1881-1945) and other scholars with similar orientation. Several reformation activities conducted by them had inspired 'Islah-oriented' scholars in the Archipelago, whom most of them were graduates of Middle Eastern universities to reform, specifically in Tafsir studies so as to ensure that this discipline became more established, competitive and would be able to meet the needs of the Ummah. These efforts were carried out by well-known individuals such as Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (1869-1956), Syed Syaykh al-Hadi (1867-1934), Mustafa Abdul Rahman (1918-1968), Abu Bakar al-Ashaari (1904-1970) and other scholars from Malaysia. While in Indonesia, these efforts were accomplished by Hamka (1908-1981), A Hasan (1887-1958), Hasbi Siddiqi (1904-1975), Quraish Shihab (1944-now) and others. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the extent of the influence of Egyptian reformists on the writing of Tafsir manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago by focusing the discussion on the history of the transmission of Egyptian reformists' influence and the development that occurred to local scholars who were directly involved in the act of Tafsir writing.

2. Spread of Islamic Reformation Ideology to the Malay Archipelago

In the early 20th century, notions of reformation quickly expanded and spread to all corners of the world, eventually reaching the Malay Archipelago including Indonesia and Malaysia. The development of reformatory thoughts in Indonesia was facilitated by two important factors which are as discussed below.

Firstly through the print media which played a very influential role in expanding the ideas of Islamic reformation to the whole of Malay Archipelago. Thus, the publication of *al-Manar* [1] magazine which was laden with articles related to Islamic reformation, created ripples of awareness amongst the Muslim society that had previously been burdened by lack of improvement due to widespread ignorance as a result of the shackles of colonialism.

This magazine also sparked off the birth of other “Islah-oriented” magazines in the Archipelago, namely, *al-Imam* and *al-Huda* in Singapore, *al-Munir* in West Padang Sumatera [2], *al-Iqbal* in Java, *al-Mir’ah al-Muhammadiyah* in Yogyakarta, *al-Tazkhira al-Islamiah*, and *al-Irsyad* in Pekalongan.

Haji Abdullah Ahmad and Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah published the magazine “*al-Munir*” in West Padang Sumatera [2] in which its contents accommodated ideas originally found in *al-Urwah al-Wuthqa* [3] and *al-Manar* [4, 5]. This magazine was distributed to the whole of Sumatera, Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Malaya [6].

Whereas in Malaya, a magazine called *al-Imam* emerged and it appeared to be similar to the ideology of *al-Manar* [4] magazine. This situation happened due to the fact that many of the writers were among those who had been influenced by the trend of Islamic reformation in Egypt. The contents of *al-Imam* showed articles including that of the Tafsir of the Quran which had been translated from Arabic language, specifically from *al-Manar* magazine. In addition to that, Syaykh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin had a close relationship with Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida [7], the publisher of *al-Manar*. Through this relationship, ideas on Islamic reformation that were advocated by Egyptian reformists were absorbed and eventually diffused amongst the Muslim society in this region [8]. The process of this transmission took place drastically considering that *al-Imam* magazine which was published in Singapore had sale agents all over the place in the Malay region.

Meanwhile, Sayyid Syaykh al-Hadi along with his friends issued a newspaper called *Neracha* (1911), a *Tunas Melayu* magazine (1913), *al-Ikhwan* (1926) and *Saudara* [9]. The birth of these “Islah-oriented” magazines helped speed up the transmission process of Islamic reformation notions from the Middle East to the Muslim people in the Malay Archipelago region [10].

Secondly through students who graduated from the Middle East. The spread of Islah thinking in the Archipelago can be credited to students who received their education from personalities who advocated reformation in the Middle East, specifically students of Al-Azhar. These students then returned to their respective countries and expanded ideas on reformation to the local people.

Their return from the Middle East opened a new chapter in the life of the Muslim society in Indonesia which at that time was suffering from poverty, religious deviation from the truth and disunity due to colonialism. At this moment in time, Meccan graduates such as K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari (1857–1947), H. Abd al-Karim Amrullah and graduates from Al-Azhar University in Egypt like Syaikh Sookarti began spreading Islah ideas to the people. This includes establishing organizations such as “Sumatera Tawalib” in Sumatera and “Al-Irsyad,” which was led by Syaikh Sookarti. While in Yogyakarta, the “Muhammadiyah” organization was founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, in Majalengka “Pensyarikatan Ulama” was established by K.H. Abd al-Halim and finally, “Persatuan Islam” (PERSIS) in Bandung was launched by A. Hassan. Their initiative to set up these organizations caused the Islah movement to progress quickly in this region. This situation directly shaped the course of Tafsir studies which was based on the method of Islah and the famous Tafsir book, *Tafsir al-Manar* was made the reference for Tafsir studies in Sumatera Tawalib in Sumatera.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin who received his education from Al-Azhar and had close ties with Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida [11] became the pioneer to spread Islah reformation ideas in this part of the world. After returning from Egypt, he began his Islah activities in Singapore which at that time was the center of link ties between Indonesia and Malaysia. Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin along with his friends Syaykh Mohd Salim al-Kalali [12], Sayyid Syaykh al-Hadi and Haji Abbas Mohd Taha who had contacts from among the Middle Eastern scholars [4], published the magazine “*al-Imam*” to diffuse ideas on Islamic reformation as was happening in Egypt.

The movement of Islamic reformation in Malaysia continued to be in full force when local “Islah-oriented” individuals such as Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin and Sayyid Syaykh al-Hadi also gave their attention to educational aspects by establishing schools in Singapore to educate the Malay people so that they would be able to gain knowledge and receive proper schooling [8].

Apart from that, there were also Middle Eastern graduates studying in Mecca but all the same were also influenced by ideas of Islamic reformation widespread in Egypt such as Haji Mohd Yusuf bin Muhammad (1868–1933) who studied in Mecca for 20 years but had visited Egypt before. He was swayed by ideas about Islah through his readings of *al-Urwah al-Wuthqa* magazine, *Majalah al-Manar* and *Tafsir al-Manar*. He then transmitted these ideas to the Malay society at that time through *Majalah Pengasoh* which fought to upright the Islamic reformation in Malaysia.

The same applies to Hj. Wan Musa bin Hj. Abdul Samad who received his schooling in Mecca. He had never studied in Egypt but yet was influenced by the Islamic reformation trend started by Syaykh Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida through reading articles written by these two individuals [13].

3. "Islah-oriented" Mufassirs in Malaysia

"Islah-oriented" Mufassirs (Quranic interpreters) surfaced during the early part of the 20th century. This was due to a change in the educational scenario where Egypt emerged as the new preferred destination and center for learning Islamic revealed knowledge for Malay students. The prevalence of Malay students in Egypt was to obtain a deeper understanding of religious knowledge after finishing their studies in Mecca. Furthermore, the reason Egypt became the new preferred destination for seeking knowledge was due to the emergence of Al-Azhar University which was considered to be *Manar al-Ilm* (Tower of Knowledge) and *Ka'bah al-Ilm* (Kaa'ba of knowledge) for the Muslim world [14] and was regarded by Hurgronje as a prestigious institution for religious studies [15].

Pioneer students who came to Egypt took the initiative to write to the magazine *Neraca* so as to publish information about educational opportunities available in Al-Azhar. In addition to that, there were also promotions by Al-Azhar University itself which sent the Syaykh Al-Azhar (Director of Al-Azhar) to Malaya on October 1924 to explain the advantages of pursuing higher education in Al-Azhar to the Malay people as well as to give support to those who chose to study in the institution.

The return of graduates from the Middle East, namely Al-Azhar and Madrasah al-Da'wah wa al-Irsyad that was founded by Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida, caused the trend of Islamic reformation to slip into Malaysia and the Malay region. In fact, according to Peter Riddell, this institution provided the best archetypes for local reformists who worked to spread the ideas of Islamic reformation after returning to their homeland [16].

3.1. First phase: Translation activities of "Islah-oriented" manuscripts

The trend of Islah in Egypt had created waves of Islah activities in the form of translating Islah-oriented manuscripts and books to Malay language, though this activity occurred on a small-scale where only certain surahs (Quranic chapters) were translated and then published in local Islah magazines which provided a special column for the Tafsir of Quran such as in the following magazines: *Al-Imam*, *Ikhwan*, *Qalam*, and *Pengasoh*. The first series of Quranic Tafsir to be published in *al-Imam* magazine was in edition No. 3, Vol. 3, 29th August 1908 which issued the translation of *Tafsir al-Manar* and this column began with the Tafsir of Surah al-Fatihah. Meanwhile, *al-Ikhwan* magazine periodically published the translation of *Tafsir Juz 'Amma* written by Syaykh Muhammad Abduh. *Qalam* magazine also kept to this approach by making available a column dedicated to Tafsir so as to make easy for the Muslim ummah to understand the contents of the Quran.

Islah-oriented Tafsir manuscripts continued to receive attention and were being translated to Malay language such as *Tafsir Juz Amma* and *Tafsir al-Fatihah*; both were the works of Syaykh Muhammad Abduh and were translated by Syed Syaykh al-Hadi. While *Tafsir al-Maraghi* by Syaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi was translated to Indonesian-Malay language by M. Thalib. Only much later on in the year 2001, it was republished in Malaysia using the Malaysian style of Malay language. These translated manuscripts can be commonly found among the local Muslim people.

The translation of *Tafsir al-Fatihah* by Syed Syaikh al-Hadi was published in the year 1928 and was 127 pages long [17]. It contained important interpretation and analysis of Surah al-Fatihah and was presented in a rational, logical, and catchy manner of writing that ignored the conventional style so that it would be easily understood by the general public. For that purpose, the editor also included in several local issues happening among the Malay people at that time such as the misuse of Quranic verses for healing purposes by making it a talisman to ward off Djinns and evil spirits.

The effort carried out by Syed Syaikh al-Hadi in translating Islah manuscripts was praised by Talib Samat. According to his observations, the emergence of Tafsir in the midst of the Malay society, which at that time was suffering from inner crisis due to the western local domination, had actually awakened both their souls and minds to the true teachings of Islam. In fact, the publication of this book also succeeded in opening the eyes and hearts of the Muslim ummah towards the greatness of Allah s.w.t in this world. All these issues being discussed indirectly awakened the Malay people to realize the lack of improvement that was burdening them and thus instilled the quality of bravery in the souls of the Muslim people to release themselves from this backwardness resulting from colonialism.

The translation of the biggest Islah-oriented Tafsir manuscript successfully done by Malaysian scholars was the translation of *Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Quran* by Yusuff Zaky Yacob under the title "*Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Quran- Di Bawah Bayangan al-Quran*" (Beneath the shadows of the Quran). The full translation for all 30 volumes was published for the first time early in the year 2000 by Pustaka Aman Press with the cooperation of YAPIEM. It was published in the form of a modern encyclopaedia and consisted of 17 volumes.

Apart from that, translation activities also include Islah-oriented manuscripts that were not related to Tafsir. For example, Sayyid Syaykh al-Hadi published a translated manuscript titled “*Agama Islam dan Akal*” (Islam and the Mind) [4] which was originally produced by Syaykh Muhammad Abduh, meanwhile Abdullah Basmeh and Jaafar Albar also published a translated manuscript called “*Wakil Rakyat dalam Islam*” (The people representatives in Islam) written by Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida. Another manuscript “*Al-Nida’ li al-Jins al-Latif*” was printed under the title “*Panggilan Islam Terhadap Wanita*” and “*al-Wahy al-Muhammadi*” was translated by Ismail bin Mohd Hassan under the name “*Wahyu Suci Kepada Junjungan Besar Nabi Muhammad s.a.w.*” All these translation efforts helped speed up the flow of the Islamic reformation to the Malay people of the Archipelago.

In addition to that, the translation of these Islah-oriented Tafsir manuscripts also further boosted the trend of Tafsir studies in Malaysia. Though in the form of a translation, it was still very beneficial as it provided a wider opportunity for the local people, especially those who were not fluent in Arabic language to interact with the Tafsir of the Quran as well as to understand its translated contents, parallel with contemporary needs. It is noteworthy that these translation activities also took place in Indonesia, and in fact were even more active there compared to the activities in Malaysia.

3.2. Second phase: Production of original manuscripts

Traditions refer to early Tafsir manuscripts that had been emulated by local scholars, namely Middle Eastern graduates who got influenced by the trend of Islamic reformation. This group made *Tafsir al-Manar* and other similarly oriented Tafsir manuscripts as the reference and guidance in understanding and interpreting Quranic verses. In fact, ideas of Islamic reformation found in these Tafsir books and manuscripts were exploited and expanded on by local scholars either through their writings or speeches.

The above statement can be proven when local Tafsir scholars such as Mustafa Abdul Rahman Mahmud, through his book *Tafsir al-Quran al-Hakim*, made *Tafsir al-Manar* and *Tafsir al-Maraghi* as the source of reference whether directly or indirectly [18]. For example, in regard to the situation of people who hear the recitation of al-Quran as stated in Surah Al-A’raf:204, basing his opinion on the opinion of Hassan al-Basri, Mustafa Abdul Rahman said that when the Quran is recited, whether in prayer or out of prayer, it is compulsory for others to be silent and listen to this recitation [19]. His opinion did not differ much from that of the author of *Tafsir al-Manar*. Furthermore, he also referred to *Tafsir al-Maraghi* and others of similar direction.

Several other discoveries also proved that Mustafa Abdul Rahman was swayed by the ideology of *Tafsir al-Manar*. This is hardly surprising, considering the educational background of Mustafa Abdul Rahman, as he himself was an ex-student of Maahad Il Ihyia Assyarif which was known as an Islah-oriented school [20]. Mustafa Abdul Rahman was also a disciple of Abu Bakar Al-Baqir, the founder of Hizbul Muslimin, who was also very much influenced by the thinking of reformists from the Middle East [21]. These circumstances caused the author of *Tafsir al-Quran al-Hakim* to receive outside influence namely from Syaykh Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida through *Tafsir al-Manar* and other works widespread in the Malay region at that time. All these factors could have an impact on Mustafa Abdul Rahman’s thinking, so much that several of his analyses and interpretations were seen to have similar characteristics with *Tafsir al-Manar*.

The same situation applies to Haji Yusuf Rawa as seen in his work, *Tafsir al-Rawi*, which was first published in the year 1950 [22] and Syeikh Abu Bakar Asha’ari who wrote the Tafsir manuscript called *Intisari Tafsir Juzuk ‘Amma*. The latter too received heavy Islah influence after spending 7 long years from 1925 to 1932 [23] studying in Al-Azhar University, Egypt. The length of his education there was during the final stages of Rashid Rida’s era and he may have had been hit by the sparks of this reformation.

In addition to that, another book titled “*Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman*” written by Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih which was edited by the former Mufti of Kelantan Mohd Noor Hj. Ibrahim, also listed *Tafsir al-Manar* and *Tafsir al-Maraghi* as sources of reference. Furthermore, the usage of *Tafsir al-Manar* and other similarly oriented Tafsirs as the reference materials directly shaped the course and style of *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman* to a certain extent. Moreover it is noteworthy that the trend of Islah experienced growth among the local Muslim people through this particular Tafsir manuscript considering that it received very promising support from the Muslim society in Malaysia.

4. “Islah-oriented” Mufassirs in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Islamic reformation ideology was being propagated by well-known local individuals who were influenced by it such as Syaykh Muhammad Djamil Djambek [24] who was educated in Mecca and was an

acquaintance of Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (1869–1956). Syaykh Muhammad Djamil Djambek had contributed a lot to the Muhammadiyah and Sumatera Thawalib movements [24] in his lifetime. The same goes for Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah [10] who was actively engaged in Islah-oriented movements and activities which included criticizing the proponents of the ancient customs and traditions of Minangkabau. The Islamic reformation movement which he was keenly involved in was called Thawalib [25] and was located in Sumatra.

During its first stage, the movement was solely focused on the educational aspects; however, later on it finally gave birth to an Islamic political party called *Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia* (Association of Muslims of Indonesia) [10]. After that, several other organizations also appeared and these organizations played a very important role in creating awareness about Islam among the people, among them were *Muhammadiyah*, *Sarekat Islam*, *Pertubuhan al-Islah* (al-Islah organization), *Pertubuhan al-Irsyad* (al-Irsyad organization) and *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic organization, the acronym for it is “Persis”). The latter brought to surface the competency of A. Hasan [10], who was regarded as one of the most influential Islah personalities in Indonesia.

The Islamic movements mentioned above especially Muhammadiyah, which was founded by Kiyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan [5] in the year 1912, and Persatuan Islam (Persis) fought for a wider Islamic reformation trend. It was also against *bid'ah* (innovations) and *khurafat* (superstitions), in addition to criticizing those who advocated customs and traditions as well as encouraging a new form of thinking among the Muslim people by stressing on the importance of *ijtihad* (interpretation). What's more, these organizations also urged the Muslim people of the Malay region to reject the concept of *taklid* (blind imitation) to the Syafi'i doctrine in deciding on an Islamic ruling. Indeed these movements succeeded in spreading their influence up to Malaysia [8].

The Islamic reformation trend also affected the course of Tafsir studies in Indonesia. Moreover, its influence was seen to be greater in various aspects related to Tafsir studies there compared with in Malaysia. These aspects include translation activities and production of original works related to the field of Quranic Tafsir.

Translation activities of Islah-oriented Tafsir manuscripts began when *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, written by Syaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi was translated to Indonesian language by M. Thalib and was later on republished to Malaysian-Malay language in Malaysia in the year 2001. The translated version of this manuscript could be commonly found among the local Muslim society at that time.

Translation activities were also carried out by Bey Arifin and Jamaluddin Kafie. Both of them translated *Tafsir fi Zilal al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutb, though not all 30 volumes. The book was published in 1984 by Pustaka Fajar in Shah Alam, Selangor. Besides them, it was also translated by As'ad Yasin, Abdul Aziz Basyaharil and Muchotob Hamzah and the translated version was later printed in the year 2000 by Gema Insani Press, Jakarta.

Before that, non-Tafsir Islah-oriented books had also been translated such as Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida's work called *Khulasah al-Sirah al-Muhammadiyah- Hakikat Seruan Islam* was translated by Muhammad Basyuni “Imran, *Tafsir Surat al-Fatihah* was translated by Musa Mahmud and *al-Wahyu al-Muhammadi* was translated by M. Hashem and published under the title *Wahyu Allah Kepada Muhammad*.

What's interesting is that these Islah-oriented Tafsir manuscripts were made a part of the learning syllabus. For instance, *Tafsir al-Manar* began to be taught in Madrasah Sumatra al-Thawalib for students in level VI and VII [26] in 1914. The usage of these Tafsir manuscripts would definitely contribute to the entry of Islamic reformation ideas into the region in a drastic manner.

Afterwards, the emergence of several other Mufassirs during late 1920s in Indonesia further animated the dissemination of Islamic reformation ideas to the Muslim people there. For example, A. Hassan appeared with his work called *al-Furqan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* or *al-Furqan Tafsir al-Quran* [27] in the year 1928 and *Tafsir al-Furqan* or *al-Hidayah Tafsir Juz "Amma* in 1933 that was once published in *al-Fatwa* magazine and was later made into a book. And then in 1957, *Risalah al-Fatihah*, another book by A. Hassan was printed. In more ways than one, he was seen to have been influenced by the Islah ideology.

The emergence of several Islah-oriented scholars continued to make an impact on the direction of Tafsir studies in Indonesia, for instance Abdul Karim Amrullah through his book of Tafsir of Juz “Amma titled *Al-Burhan* which was published in 1930s [28].

Then there was also the combination of H.A. Halim Hassan (1901–1969), H. Zainal Ariffin Abbas (1912–1977) and Abdur Rahim Haitami (1910–1948) with their manuscript called *Tafsir al-Qur'anul Karim* [28] which was first published in Indonesia in 1936 and later in 1969 for the Malaysian edition. This Tafsir manuscript was seen to have been much influenced by *Tafsir al-Manar* and the ideology of other reformist scholars. The most obvious piece of evidence is when the authors of *Tafsir al-Qur'anul Karim* stated in the introduction part that they had made *Tafsir al-Manar* as one of their references.

Therefore, many of Syaykh Muhammad Abduh's and Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida's viewpoints were included in this Tafsir. Similarly, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* [28], written by Hamka during the 1980s, continued to have an effect on the world of Quranic interpretation in Indonesia as this book was considered to have been much influenced by the concept of *Tafsir al-Manar* as had been stressed by the author himself and explained lengthily by Peter Ridell [16]. This statement was made by taking into account several main factors, which are: in the introduction section, Hamka himself emphasized that the primary source used in interpreting the Quranic verses was *Tafsir al-Manar* [29]. As a result, many comments and interpretations that were put forth paralleled the ideology of Islamic reformation. This condition was also due to his personal background; he was the main and biggest supporter of the *Islah* trend in Indonesia. Another factor was the realistic approach used by him in interpreting a particular verse based on contemporaneous situations and which was modified to meet the needs of all levels of the Muslim society. This particular approach was clearly akin to what had been done by the author of *Tafsir al-Manar*.

Apart from that, there were also several other *Islah*-oriented manuscripts such as *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Nur*, written by Mohammad Hasbi al-Shiddieqiy [10] and was published in 1956 [27]. He was also the author of another Tafsir book called *Tafsir al-Bayan*. Then, there was also Mohamad Quraish Shihab [10], another *Islah* scholar, who wrote *Tafsir al-Misbah* which was a full 30-volume Tafsir book and was printed by Lentera Hati in Jakarta [30]. His interpretation of the Quran was moderate, rational, based on religious obligations and yet was considerate of contemporaneous needs. Thus, it is evident that Mohamad Quraish Shihab held on to the principle of "*al-Muhafazah 'ala al-Qadim al-Salih wa Ahkdhu bi al-Jadid al-Aslah*" (maintaining the old but good matters and taking the new and better ones).

The previous statement clearly showed that *Islah*-oriented Tafsir from Egypt had gained a place among the local Muslim community, be it in Malaysia or in Indonesia. Furthermore, *Tafsir al-Manar* can be described as the drive and agent of reformation among the local scholars to the extent that they were able to come forward with their own original Tafsir manuscripts by making *Tafsir al-Manar* and other Tafsir books as the sources of reference. Thereof emerged several local and regional personalities who were deemed to be experts in the religious field especially in Tafsir studies and they were also regarded as the main supporters of the *Islah* struggle in giving the right understanding of Quranic teachings to the Muslim people of the Archipelago.

5. Conclusion

Highly intellectual Egyptian reformists such as Syaykh Muhammad Abduh and his disciples who were very knowledgeable, especially in the field of Quranic Tafsir have attracted the attention of the Muslim people in this region to deepen their knowledge about religion. Many *Islah*-oriented works such as *Tafsir al-Manar*, *Tafsir al-Maraghi* and others received promising support from the Muslim society, thus resulting in the transmission of ideas from those well-known individuals to the local people. In the field of Tafsir, the influence of those Egyptian reformists quickly penetrated the local community after the spread of *al-Manar* magazine, *Tafsir al-Manar*, *Tafsir al-Maraghi* and other similarly oriented works of Tafsir. These manuscripts containing interesting discussions, *Tajdid*-oriented interpretations of the Quran which touched on contemporary issues faced by the Muslim people, received heavy attention. In fact, parts of Syaykh Abduh's and Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Rida's interpretations of the Quran in *al-Manar* were translated to the Malay language and included in *Islah* magazines in the Archipelago. In addition, translation activities of Egyptian reformists' books were conducted by local scholars such as Syaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, Sayyid Syaykh al-Hadi, Hamka, A-Hassan and others who clearly made an impression on the scenario of Tafsir studies. What's more, several local Tafsir scholars emerged afterwards with their own original books, containing similar methods of discussion as had been propagated by *Tafsir al-Manar*, *Tafsir al-Maraghi* and others. This plainly shows the heavy influence of Egyptian reformists specifically on the writing of Tafsir manuscripts in the Archipelago.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed more or less equally to this work.

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