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A Mediamorphosis on the Book of Yaseen

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ABSTRACT

Most Indonesian Moslems would customarily hold a particular tahlilan ceremony for the deceased family member. Throughout the ceremony, it has been a common tradition to print out a handful amount of the book of Yaseen in order to pay an homage for the deceased. This customized book will be hand out to the guests of the ceremony on every 40th, 100th day of the deceased date. The book contains not only Surah Yaseen, but there are also tahlil recites, prayers and a complete worship arrangement guides with the picture of the deceased on the cover, the full name of the deceased and the list of their close family. As you might expect, on every deceased people, there is a considerable chance of stacking book of Yaseen on every houses. The main expectation of the host of the book of Yaseen is that the guests would read it and hoping it would bring a good merit to the referred deceased person. Hence, it is not meant to be piling and stacking for granted. Another issue would be piles of worn-out papers from the book, shed out from the binding because of the weather or bugs. Therefore, this research is aimed to answer: Is there a possibility of changing the printed version of the book of Yaseen into a digital one? What are the chances and the challenges so it could fulfill the existed media today? The mixed research method will be used to deliver this research with survey as the data collecting tool and proceed with observations and documents. The conclusion of this research is the mediamorphosis of the book of Yaseen is happening and is still going.

Keywords: *deceased, mediamorphosis, the book of Yaseen*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every living thing will eventually die, including humans. Humans have various ways to handle their own body and spirit. As occurred to most of Indonesian Moslems, when a family member passed away, they usually hold a ceremony to pray together for the deceased, this ceremony is called *tahlilan*. The word *tahlilan* is incorporated in the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language website which stands for a reciting Holy Quran activity in a group of people in order to pray for God's blessings and forgiveness for the referred deceased. According to Shihab (2001:V), *tahlil* has been a tradition of Moslem community as an affectionate way to accompany the late dearest one. Generally, *tahlilan* will be held on the first night after the burial, and it will continue every night for the first week, two-weeks, a month, a 40th days, a 100th days, annually and 1000th days. On those long periods, the family of the deceased usually print out the book of Yaseen to be hand out to the guests on the *tahlilan* ceremony. On the online survey, with 168 respondents spread out from Riau, North Sumatera, South Sumatera, West Sumatera, Lampung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, DI Yogyakarta, East Java, NTB, North Kalimantan dan Central Kalimantan, it is discovered that there are *tahlilan* ceremony on those regions with different local terms, but not all of them print out the book of Yaseen on the occasion.

The book of Yaseen is also stated as a book which contains certain surah from the Holy Quran and particular worshipping guides. The book is given by the bereaved families to their close neighbourhood

and the guests on the *tahlilan* ceremony. The book of Yaseen is aimed to pay an homage to the deceased and also an appreciation for the condolences, prayers and supports for the deceased throughout their life. The book of Yaseen also contains wishes from the bereaved families who asks for forgiveness for every fault that the deceased have ever made. The bereaved families also wish that Surah Yaseen, *tahlil* and prayers will continuously pray upon in hoping that God's forgiveness and good merit will be earned for the deceased on their afterlife. Hereby, the book of Yaseen is also exist as a communication form which comes from the bereaved families to the neighbourhood for their support throughout the moment of grief. The benefit for the neighbourhood is not only for complimentary of the book itself, but they also receive guides and prayers that can be useful on religious event in the future. The benefit for the bereaved families is the memory preservation and a good merit if they use the book themselves properly.

From the gathered survey, it is discovered the top 5 of how the 102 respondents treat their book of Yaseen are put it aside on the shelves at home, store it in the drawer, leave it on nearby mosque, put it on glass cabinet at home and give it out to other people. The top 5 of how the 102 respondents use their book of Yaseen are they brought it along when they pay visit to the graveyard, they read it occasionally to find some particular prayer guide, they brought it along whenever there is a religious event, they read it every Thursday night and the brought it to *taklim* assembly. This survey result shows that expectations and reality are work according to plan, which means the given book of Yaseen is used as their fundamentally intended to in diverse circumstances. The concerned issue is how the treatment on the book of Yaseen, which resulting in the poor condition of the book such as splitting half. There is also some who keep it as personal collection (stacked, stored, displayed) and some who do not keep it to themselves as they move it or give it out to other people. This issue is understandable, considering that a new book of Yaseen will always come up every time someone in the neighbourhood is passed away and a number of the book of Yaseen will be indisputably piling up even more. As well as the condition of the book itself, the paper will slowly be distorted and deteriorated. The top 3 of the survey result shows that related to the condition of the book, 102 respondents would clean it, leave it as it is and burn it.

2. DISCUSSION

Fidler (1997:22-29) asserts the term mediamorphosis to mean a transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations. The example he brought is the transformation on radio which is slowly replaced by television, and also newspaper, magazines and movies. Shortly, the emerge of new forms of media it is not happened on their own and it is always linked to the previous media, in other words it is a metamorphosis from the preceding format. Mediamorphosis principle is based on three concepts, they are coevolution, convergence and complexity, and then identifies into six base principles, which are coevolution and coexistence, metamorphosis, propagation, survival, opportunity and need, delayed adoption. Attributed to the book of Yaseen, before this research is conducted, 10 Yassen and *tahlil* apps are already found in App Store and more or less of 125 apps in Play Store. There also numerous websites which provide Yaseen and *tahlil* ready to download documents. Based on those findings, it is clear that the 3 base concepts of mediamorphosis by Fidler is happening and it is still going. Nonetheless, the available apps and websites about Yaseen are not specifically compiled to the deceased, unlike the book of Yaseen which respectively compiled to the deceased. At most, there is only 1 app which meet the need.

In an online article from Republika.co.id (2015), the book of Yaseen has been a public demand since the late 1980 in South Jakarta area. If we take a closer look on Indonesia graphic design timeline in 1980, Kardinata (2015:168) states that in 1980, a large-scale offset printing machine and the upgraded colour separation technique has made a better quality of book covers and magazines. Those subjects are obviously not related directly, however, the advance of technology is the sole purpose of dynamic change in human history. The change is noticeably happened in the latest version of book of Yaseen

today, there are a lot of options ranging from the looks of the cover (soft cover or hard velvet cover with gold corner accent), the paper materials (from HVS, art paper to matt paper), sizes (pocket size to book size) and the bindings. Based on the observation of a dozen book of Yaseen in the past 10 years (2011-2021), all the observed documents show an improved in printing quality and colour. On the other hand, 10 years prior (2001-2011), the quality printing remains unexceptional with regular type of papers and one-color print.

The steady development of the book of Yaseen complements the overall *tahlilan* procedure. Before the book of Yaseen exists, there is no communication media to preserve memory about the deceased person, except for national heroes and other significant figures which has been immortalized into public monument or a title of city street. The bereaved families do not have any approach to ask their neighbourhood and other relatives to join their prayers. In this fashion, by printing and giving out the book of Yaseen, the bereaved family will prolong the memory of their loved ones who passed away, not only for the neighbourhood and relatives but also for their future descendants.

A digital version of the book of Yaseen, which currently still unavailable for personalized and customized, will be an extend development of the book itself. Based on the 6 fundamental principles of mediamorphosis, adjustments into digital version and screen-operated must be the main considerate. New media format must pay more attention from their precedent's media format, therefore their appearance will bring a sense of refining the previous version, instead of deconstructing or rebuilding the old one. These days, the book of Yaseen do not have any sense of personalization, as they mostly look similar and the name of the deceased is the only element that make them apart. The similarity is often contributed by the printing industry which provides the printing service. The main contents of the book are already prepared beforehand. The designs and small content only act more like an accessory and it is possible to add after. Customization is available only for exceptional price and the process will be longer.

The main purpose for the book of Yaseen is that it will always be carried around and to be read anytime. Therefore, new format of the book must include new features to make the owner have easier access and settings, such as adjustable letter size, audio support and adjustable or adaptive brightness level. On top of that, the picture of the deceased is possibly having a chance to be upgraded as a brand-new feature by adding up some audio and visual support and some origin story. The issue of worn-out and deteriorated paper of the book will also be solved once the digital version takes action. The potentials and demands are positively feasible, as the oldest generation are the passive user of technology, while the much younger generation are the active user and more familiar with advanced technology.

Possible challenges and difficulties which may emerge are more about evolving from the romanticized ancient tradition. Furthermore, before the book of Yaseen becomes a trend in 1980, there is no such concept to have a similar role as the book of Yaseen, which means the book of Yaseen has only been around for 30 – 40 years. The following challenge is the inferior perception of using a smartphone, although it is not entirely accurate. For the last five years, reading a Holy Quran becomes quite a topic to discussed and it is examined legally. On the contrary, the Holy Quran has been through a swift media evolution. Transforming voices into writings, into tapes, CDs and today into apps. These challenges are pointing out the last principle of the six fundamental principles of mediamorphosis, which is the delayed adoption, which means a new media format could not be easy or quick to adjust and it needs time to grow. On calculation, it needs one generation period of time which approximately 20 to 30 years.

3. CONCLUSION

A mediamorphosis on the book of Yaseen is happening and is still going, although it is not yet on a personalized and idealized formation as refer to the six fundamental principles of mediamorphosis. It needs further consideration to examine today's book of Yaseen. The major principle for a new media format is not entirely original, it is also not random or incidental. The emerge of new media format is a development from its precedent, therefore the new media format must consider its approach to complementing on how it will be ordered, designed, and distributed to the bereaved families and how it is going to be used by the neighbourhood and relatives who give their condolences and pray for the deceased.

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