

LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN INDONESIA: THE ROLE OF CAK NUN AND MAIYAH COMMUNITY IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the application of liberation theology in Indonesian Islam, focusing on the efforts of Muhammad Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) and the Maiyah Community Assembly, analyzed through Ali Shari'ati's concept of *rausyanfikir*. The study aims to explore how Cak Nun contextualizes Islam to address contemporary issues of injustice, oppression, and social alienation. Utilizing qualitative library research methods, it investigates various literary sources to evaluate the role of Islamic teachings in cultural and social emancipation. Findings indicate that Cak Nun and the Maiyah Community Assembly have played crucial roles in heightening community awareness about prevalent oppression, employing the Quran and Islamic thought as tools for liberation. The study concludes that Islam, as interpreted by Cak Nun, serves as an effective means for societal change, promoting a comprehensive application of Islamic teachings to address modern societal challenges. This research holds significant implications for scholars and practitioners interested in the intersections of religion and social transformation.

Keywords: *Maiyah, Cak Nun, Ali Shari'ati, Liberation Theology*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengulas tentang teologi pembebasan dalam Islam Indonesia, dengan fokus pada upaya Muhammad Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) dan Majelis Masyarakat Maiyah, dianalisis melalui konsep *rausyanfikir* Ali Shari'ati. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana Cak Nun mengkontekstualisasikan Islam dalam menangani isu-isu kekinian seperti ketidakadilan, penindasan, dan alienasi sosial. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian perpustakaan kualitatif, penelitian ini menelaah berbagai sumber literatur untuk menilai peran ajaran Islam dalam pembebasan kultural dan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Cak Nun dan Majelis Masyarakat Maiyah telah memainkan peran krusial dalam meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat terhadap penindasan yang merajalela, memanfaatkan al-Qur'an dan pemikiran Islam sebagai alat pembebasan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Islam, sebagaimana ditafsirkan oleh Cak Nun, berfungsi sebagai sarana efektif untuk perubahan sosial, mengadvokasi penerapan komprehensif ajaran Islam untuk menghadapi tantangan sosial masa kini.

Kata Kunci: *Maiyah, Cak Nun, Ali Shari'ati, Teologi Pembebasan*

A. Introduction

Discussing freedom inevitably entails addressing the chains and shackles that trouble humanity. These include the constraints imposed by state systems that restrict free speech, systems that fail to support nascent industries, and those that restrain free thinking, particularly concerning personal beliefs. Freedom is also a natural necessity for the existential realization of individuals in the world (Mukhtasar, 2000). With the presence of freedom, individuals become more expressive, creative, and innovative in their lives. As we enter the modern era, the forms of human repression have become increasingly varied. In all aspects of life, we encounter numerous forms of shackles attempting to suppress freedom. Nevertheless, oppression will not be entirely eradicated. Therefore, it is imperative to engage in a massive and structured struggle against the systems that curtail human freedom.

In Indonesia, Muhammad Ainun Nadjib, a reformer who uses the Qur'an as an analytical tool in his liberation theology movement, is widely recognized. Known as Cak Nun or Mbah Nun, he is a scholar, cultural figure, and cleric with a unique perspective, often positioned "in the middle" in addressing various societal issues. He frequently employs various artistic forms—such as theater, poetry, and music—to critique society. According to Ian L. Betts, he not only acts as a healer for the afflicted but also uses empathetic and motivational methods to encourage the community to adopt a more critical, objective, optimistic, and rational mindset, promoting the belief that no problem lacks a solution (Ian L. Betts, 2006). Cak Nun often discusses various issues related to Indonesia in the Maiyah Community forum, a community movement he spearheaded (Hasman, 2019).

Previous studies provide substantial support for this research. For instance, Shofa Agniya Nur Azizah and colleagues, in their paper on Hassan Hanafi's liberation theology, explain that Islam offers a critical and just religious paradigm for women (Nur Azizah, 2022). Siti Syamsiyatul Ummah concludes that the discourse of liberation theology advocates viewing reality as holistic, universal, integral, and monistic (Siti Syamsiyatul Ummah, 2019). Zulkifli argues that Ali Shari'ati aimed to shift the consciousness of the Iranian community towards employing diverse methods in understanding Islam to advance civilization, especially at a time when the Islamic world was emerging from colonialism and lagging behind the West (Zulkifli, 2021).

Moh. Syafi'il Anam concluded that the Maiyah Padhangmbulan forum offers a space for community enhancement without restrictions, adhering to egalitarian values (Moh. Syafi'il Anam, 2019). Lukis Alam and colleagues describe how the Maiyah Community revives social piety among urban communities, contrasting with those who focus solely on religious symbols without connecting them to the essence of religion, which is morality (Alam et al., 2022).

Based on the descriptions above, this research identifies several issues to explore further. First, it seeks to explain how Cak Nun's theology of liberation functions within

the Maiyah Community in Indonesia. Second, it aims to analyze the interplay between Cak Nun's liberation theology and the Maiyah Community through the lens of Rausyanfikir Ali Shari'ati. Thus, it is crucial to revisit the movements led by Cak Nun and his Maiyah Community forum to remind ourselves that Islam, as *rahmatul lil-'ālamīn*, was revealed to address global issues, including oppression, injustice, and greed. Islam addresses not only eschatological concerns but also the social anxieties experienced by marginalized communities oppressed by systemic structures. Additionally, Islam mandates a critical examination of all sorts of shackles deliberately imposed by rulers on their populace.

B. Method

This research employs Ali Shari'ati's liberation theology framework to analyze the philosophies and activities of Cak Nun and the Maiyah Community. The study utilizes a library research methodology, anchored in a qualitative research paradigm. It systematically examines a range of literary sources, focusing primarily on academic books and peer-reviewed journals that discuss aspects of liberation theology. Key primary sources include the published works and essays of Ali Shari'ati, alongside those of Cak Nun, which are accessible through the official Maiyah website. This investigation is further enriched by a comprehensive review of secondary literature, specifically journals that have previously explored the ideological and social contributions of Cak Nun and the Maiyah Community. This dual approach ensures a thorough analysis, underpinned by both foundational texts and contemporary scholarly discourse on the subject.

C. Discussion

1. Rausyanfikir according to Ali Shari'ati

Ali Shariati's concept of "rausyanfikir" derives from his philosophy of humanity as a hybrid entity, directly affirmed by Allah in the Qur'an as a composition of clumps of earth mixed with divine elements. Thus, humans are not merely inferior beings but rather superior entities. Consequently, human life is a journey from a "satanic muddy self to a spiritual divine self," transitioning from a sin-coated existence to one filled with divine spirituality. This spiritual divine self represents the true structure of humanity (Long, 2019).

Within humans, there is a dialectical convergence between earthly elements and the divine, or the soul. Shariati interprets the earthly component within humans as a symbol of deficiency, incompleteness, and lowliness. In contrast, the soul, representing the divine within, symbolizes honor, superiority, and perfection. Hence, humans embody a dialectical reality, constantly battling internal and external forces. This makes change inevitable, requiring radical transformation agents, whom Shariati identifies as the "rausyanfikir" or enlightened thinkers. Herein, religion becomes an ideology because, according to him, if religion does not operate before death, it will follow thereafter, implying that religion governs all human affairs—before life, during life, and after death.

"Rausyanfikir" is a Persian term meaning "enlightened thinker," sometimes translated in English as intellectual or free thinker. Differing from scientists, who discover facts, rausyanfikrs seek truths. While scientists present facts as they are, rausyanfikrs offer judgments as they should be. Scientists speak in a universal language, but rausyanfikrs, akin to prophets, speak the language of their people. Scientists maintain neutrality in their work; rausyanfikrs must engage ideologically. History, according to Shariati, is shaped solely by the rausyanfikrs (Jalaludin Rakhmat, 2016).

Perhaps the most accurate translation of rausyanfikir is "true intellectuals." These are not merely scholars, defined as individuals who have completed higher education and earned academic degrees. Nor are they simply scientists, who delve into and develop knowledge through reasoning and research. True intellectuals are those who feel called to better their societies, capture their aspirations, articulate them in comprehensible language, and propose strategies and alternatives for solving problems.

Indeed, the term "intellectual" carries diverse meanings, so much so that Raymond Aron abandoned the term altogether. However, James MacGregor Burns, discussing intellectual leadership as transforming leadership, defines intellectuals in a manner akin to Shariati's description of rausyanfikir: as devotees of ideas, knowledge, values. An intellectual critically engages with values, aims, and ideals beyond practical needs.

Ali Shariati described rausyanfikir as organic intellectuals capable of detaching themselves from the determinism of nature, history, and self. Aware of the past, understanding the present, and effecting future change, they are responsible for carrying the spirit of revolution within society. According to Shariati, "if you are not in the struggle, you will not distinguish between a mosque and a bar" (Ali Shari'ati, 1986).

Ali Shariati likened rausyanfikir to prophets, figures in history who sought and enacted change. Prophets did not speak abstractly but rather in terms relatable to their people, making their messages comprehensible and acceptable, except to those who disbelieve. Ali Shariati referenced Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 134, Q.S. ar-Ra'd verse 11, and Q.S. al-Muddaththir verse 38 to argue that both communities and individuals are accountable for their actions before Allah, with each person granted the privilege by Allah to shape their destiny with their own hands. This appears contradictory to some scholars, as it represents both the accountability and freedom of humans to change society on the one hand, and the concept of determined and definite laws that cannot be interfered with by humans on the other. However, because the Qur'ān is a book of mercy to the worlds, it views these two poles as complementary and necessary aspects of life that Muslims must precisely consider (Syari'ati, 2021).

According to Ali Shari'ati, Muslims have often portrayed Islam as passive, filled with rituals. However, referencing the aforementioned verses, Islam should be balanced with active, revolutionary, ideological engagement. Using Islam as a foundation for societal awareness, it is imperative to oppose the disparities, oppression, and injustices in our surroundings. It is a duty to fight for the rights of oppressed and alienated groups,

advocating for egalitarian values so that everyone has an equal right to a dignified life in this world (Syari'ati, 1993).

2. Moderation Cak Nun and the Maiyah Community Assembly

Muhammad Ainun Nadjib, commonly referred to as Emha Ainun Nadjib or Cak Nun, and more recently known as Mbah Nun, is an intellectual, cultural figure, artist, and scholar continually searching for formulas for the advancement of Indonesia through his assembly, the Maiyah Community Assembly. Cak Nun was born in the village of Menturo, Jombang on May 27, 1953 (Faiz, 2019). He attended Muhammadiyah 4 Junior High School and Muhammadiyah 1 High School in Yogyakarta. He then pursued further education at Gadjah Mada University but did not complete his degree. Earlier, he also studied religious education at Pondok Gontor but was expelled by the management after protesting against the leadership, which he believed had implemented an educational system that was not ideal at the time.

During his youth in Yogyakarta, Cak Nun participated in a literary movement called the Persada Study Club, spearheaded by Umbu Landu Paranggi. Umbu was regarded by Cak Nun as a mentor with significant influence on his knowledge of literature, theater, socio-politics, and Sufism. According to Cak Nun, Umbu was a mysterious Sufi wanderer who willingly "shed his blue blood" to roam in Malioboro. Like his mentor, Cak Nun also wandered with a specific purpose. This wandering helped to stimulate his awareness of social issues and indirectly sharpened his literary creativity, which ultimately led him to international recognition as an artist. In 1980, Cak Nun began showcasing his artistic talents abroad, performing in the Philippines, then at the International Poets Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands (1980), the International Writing Program in the United States (1984), and the Horizonte III Festival in Germany (1984) (Faiz, 2019).

Cak Nun is recognized as a progressive Muslim intellectual. His works encompass not only books and essays but also drama scripts, film scripts, short stories, music albums of salawat, and poetry. His notable publications include "Indonesia Bagian Dari Desa Saya" (1980), "Sastra yang Membebaskan: Sikap terhadap Struktur dan Anutan Seni Modern Indonesia" (1984), "Slilit Sang Kiai" (1991), "Secangkir Kopi Jon Parkir" (1992), among others. Recent publications include "Anak Asuh Bernama Indonesia - Daur 1" (2017), "Anak Asuh Bernama Indonesia - Daur 2" (2017), "Anak Asuh Bernama Indonesia - Daur 3" (2017), "Kapal Nuh Abad 21 - Daur 4" (2014), "Kiai Hologram" (2018), "Markesot Belajar Ngaji - Daur 5" (2019), "Siapa Sebenarnya Markesot - Daur 6" (2019), "Sinau Bareng Markesot - Daur 7" (2019), and "Lockdown 309 Tahun" (2020) (Cahyo, 2018).

When discussing the outreach efforts of Cak Nun, one cannot overlook his involvement with Maiyah. According to Cak Nun, the term "Maiyah" derives from the syllables "ma'a," meaning "together." The Maiyah assembly emphasizes a method of collectively understanding and addressing issues, where everyone is both a teacher and a

student. Therefore, Maiyah represents all forums that provide a space for the community to explore and balance values, aiming to find something eternal in life, namely God (Muvid, 2020). Cak Nun often clarifies the origins of Maiyah, asserting that it is not his creation but a divine gift to the people of Nusantara. He believes it would be impossible to influence the hearts of hundreds of thousands across every corner of Nusantara to study life so radically and comprehensively without divine intervention.

Initially, Maiyah consisted of forums for contemplating the Qur'ān, and after several years, these forums were officially named the Maiyah Community Assembly. The Padhangmbulan study group in Jombang, which began in October 1993, is considered the origin of the Maiyah forums in Indonesia and abroad, still active at Cak Nun's childhood home (Alamsyah & Hasbullah, 2020).

In 1999, in response to the tumultuous conditions in Indonesia, Cak Nun initiated the Mocopat Syafaat forum in Yogyakarta. This was followed by expansions to Semarang, named Gambang Syafaat, and later to Surabaya in 2006, named Bangbang Wetan (Alamsyah & Hasbullah, 2020). The Maiyah forums have since spread widely across Indonesia, including Damar Kedaton (Gresik), Paseban Majapahit (Mojokerto), Jemparing Asih (Bandung), Juguran Syafaat (Banyumas), Gamelan Batu Aji (Batu, Malang), and Mafaza (Europe), attended by several students studying in Europe.

Rizqa Ahmadi noted a unique aspect of the Maiyah community; they learn not only from experts but also from those considered less knowledgeable, embracing the idea that everyone is both a teacher and a student. In Maiyah discussions, many young participants display wisdom beyond their years. According to Cak Nun, a person's maturity does not always correlate with their intellectual understanding (Ahmadi, 2017).

Cak Nun rejects the notion of being seen as a spiritual guide, an important figure in Maiyah, or distinct from other members. He believes all Maiyah attendees are students constantly seeking enlightenment from God. The true teacher, he asserts, is God, not himself. The Maiyah community actively engages in dialogue with others, with no barriers to the spiritual connections among its members. Maiyah is described as an energy, not a solid entity; it is like water that precisely fills its container. The members of Maiyah are passionate seekers of knowledge, wisdom, love, and happiness, viewing every aspect of life as a conduit to wisdom.

3. The Liberation Movement of Cak Nun and the Maiyah Community

Cak Nun frequently deconstructs common understandings concerning various issues. He believes many problems arise from an essential misunderstanding of matters. With an artistic background, Cak Nun expresses his concerns through books, poetry, and drama performances. Firstly, in 1979, the world was shaken by the political polemic in the Middle East, specifically the Iranian Revolution. This revolution influenced several predominantly Muslim countries, including Indonesia. It led many university and school students to start wearing the hijab. However, this situation seemed to unsettle the Orba regime at the time. On March 17, 1982, Daoed Joesoef, then Minister of Education and

Culture, issued Decree No. 052/C/Kep/D.82 regarding the National School Uniform. This decree prohibited the wearing of the hijab in schools (Abdillah, 1998), a measure stemming from the regime's suspicion of Islamic politics potentially undermining Pancasila.

Disturbed by this, Cak Nun felt compelled to protest. He believed that the hijab ban infringed upon the freedom of every individual to choose. He articulated this concern in a poem titled "Ocean of Hijabs," spontaneously recited at the "Ramadan on Campus" event held by Jamaah Shalahuddin UGM in May 1987. The poem's performance, attended by approximately 6,000 people (Pratama, 2019), did not end with mere recitation but evolved into a theater play. The play, containing Muslim resistance against the oppressive Orba regime, was performed in cities like Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Madiun, and Makassar. "Ocean of Hijabs" blurred the awareness of the Muslim viewers, subtly infusing the importance of wearing hijab among the 5,000 attendees.

Since then, wearing the hijab has symbolized resistance against the Orba regime's iron grip. According to an article on caknun.com, Cak Nun stated:

"Wearing or not wearing a hijab is a personal authority of every woman. The choice of this authority can be derived from cultural studies or direct theological compliance. What I advocate is not the act of wearing or discarding the hijab but the right of every person to choose."

*"Pakai jilbab atau tak berjilbab adalah otoritas pribadi setiap wanita..
Pilihan atas otoritas itu silahkan diambil dari manapun: dari studi kebudayaan,
atau langsung dari kepatuhan teologi..
Yang saya perjuangkan bukan memakai jilbab atau membuang jilbab, melainkan
hak setiap manusia untuk memilih"*

Secondly, the Orba regime caused Cak Nun multiple anxieties. Again, he used theater to critique the regime. The script for "Pak Kanjeng" depicted the arbitrary oppression during the construction of the Kedung Ombo dam. In this play, the character Pak Jenggot represented the oppressed common people of Boyolali, suffering under the hegemony of the regime's development plans (Editorial, 2018). In "Pak Kanjeng," three actors portrayed societal characteristics of the time: those who fiercely resisted oppression, those who passively followed the regime's hegemony, and those uncertain about the dam's construction. For Cak Nun, the play was more than just a simple performance; it served as a field study, delving into the actual conditions and controversies surrounding the Kedung Ombo dam (Editorial, 2018).

Thirdly, Cak Nun's critical insight never waned when observing the intricacies of national life. The 2019 play "Sengkuni" reflected his ongoing commitment to offering critical reflections through art. In this script, Cak Nun highlighted the social inequalities in Indonesia caused by ruthless capitalism dominating assets that should be managed for public welfare. The play conveyed:

"You do not suffer, hence you easily become leaders. You are not poor, so you can pay to rule. You are educated, thus you become politicians." "I am evil

because I am oppressed, I am evil because I suffer." "Whereas you are evil, the sole reason being that your soul is ignorant, your personality despicable, your mentality low, your morals rotten. Because your mentality is indeed low. You devastate the homeland of your people. You cut down the trees of your nation's wealth to sell to the colonizers" (Agustian, 2019).

"Kalian tidak menderita sehingga kalian mudah untuk menjadi pemimpin.."

"Kalian tidak miskin, sehingga kalian bisa membayar untuk menjadi penguasa"

"Kalian bisa sekolah tinggi, sehingga kalian bisa jadi politisi"

"Saya jahat karena ditindas, saya jahat karena menderita"

"Sedangkan kalian jahat, satu-satunya alasan adalah karena memang jiwa kalian bodoh"

"Kepribadian kalian hina, mental kalian rendah, moral kalian busuk"

"Karena mental kalian memang rendah. Kalian merusak tanah air bangsa kalian"

"Kalian tebangi pohon kekayaan bangsa kalian untuk kalian jual kepada para penjajah"

Cak Nun's underlying message was that many commit crimes in this country yet refuse to acknowledge that their actions stem from deep-seated desires. The rulers claim to act in the "people's interest" while oppressing them. Disparities arise, and palace officials mock their own people with terms like "low human resources," despite the disordered state governance system being a contributing factor.

In terms of educational liberation movements, education in Maiyah discussions often provokes thought, sometimes even radical, deconstructing religious, political, and cultural values that have been unchallenged in society. Maiyah teaches the skill of viewing problems from overlooked perspectives, a skill that yields new, organic hypotheses from its members. Cak Nun emphasizes how a viewpoint, distance of view, and circle of view should generate a thousand understandings (Nadjib, 2017). Observing phenomena should not diminish one's imagination and associative power regarding related matters.

If formal educational institutions are confined by pedagogical boundaries, where learners are positioned as objects laden with ancient knowledge, Maiyah offers freedom to express dialogues with speakers and attendees. Free thinking and foresight are encouraged, always reflecting on the past (Nadjib, 2017). An egalitarian question-and-answer session ensues, liberating anyone to speak authentically.

Maiyah also revitalizes journalistic tradition by reporting on discussions. This includes topics discussed, personal experiences of attendees, and sometimes key points assigned by speakers for further discussion at subsequent meetings. Reportage is featured on websites such as caknun.com and mymaiyah.id. Additionally, various Maiyah forums maintain their own websites and social media to recap discussions, such as the Maiyah Bangbang Wetan forum in Surabaya, which documents discussions on Instagram and bangbangwetan.org.

Maiyah can be described as akin to a study group but differs from traditional conservative study groups. It resembles a virtual pesantren or a free open school or street university that does not select who may enter its "classroom." Unlike formal education, which screens eligible "classroom" attendees, Maiyah deconstructs this notion. Everyone is welcome, unrestricted by any specific organization, attire, or even religious affiliation. Maiyah acts as a social laboratory, training logical thinking and life management skills. It is not a "tool" but a space—fluid, flexible, allowing anyone to participate harmoniously. As previously emphasized, there are no guides and disciples, or professors and students, as is typical in conservative education. There is no distinction between imams and congregants, or kiais and santris as in conventional pesantrens. Cak Nun often addresses attendees as "my grandchildren, my children, my friends." This exemplifies the egalitarian nature of education in Maiyah (Nadjib, 2017).

In Maiyah, no one is absolutely a teacher or student, as all humans are inherently learners seeking enlightenment through knowledge. The term "student" derives from the Arabic words *araada*, *yuuridu*, *muriidan*, meaning someone with a strong desire to acquire new understanding. In the context of education, Maiyah challenges the public's conventional view of schools (formal schools). If returning to the essence of education, which is learning, then education is not solely obtained in formal schools. Thus, being "educated" does not exclusively apply to those who have undergone formal schooling, nor does it imply that those who have not are uneducated (Ungsaka, 2021).

4. A Critical Review of Ali Shari'ati's Liberation Theology

Discussing Cak Nun and Maiyah, researchers feel it is inseparable from the prophetic values he champions. Accompanying oppressed communities, who suffer under biased rules, reflects the idealism typical of liberation figures. Subsequently, he encourages the public to realize that life has a broader spectrum than one might assume. Meaning, he invites the lower classes to stand strong against oppression imposed by regimes, clinging to God's approval. After all, no matter how hard humans strive, if God does not decree "Be, and it is," then change will not occur.

Cak Nun's mission of liberation extends beyond his writings and theatrical performances; fundamentally, it involves his role as a pioneer in the Maiyah Community movement. In Maiyah forums, discussions are not limited to the human relationship with God but also dialectically engage with Quranic verses and Hadiths concerning social issues. For instance, injustices are philosophically peeled back, understood from sociological, psychological, and cultural perspectives, or other relevant viewpoints, culminating in practical Sufistic solutions that render Maiyah discussions factual.

From a pedagogical perspective, Maiyah is an assembly that also formulates a structure of knowledge. Everything dissected in Maiyah discussions is hence dialogically sublimated, whether by Cak Nun or other participants, thereby garnering new perspectives. Such views are based on the unique conceptual construction of Maiyah's

knowledge system. This formula is then propagated in every Maiyah session through studies and responses to participant queries (Pratama, 2017).

Cak Nun frequently asserts his commitment to the common folk, preferring gatherings in remote villages, which he describes as "dark areas" often overlooked by state officials. Here, officials typically seek support without genuinely aiding the "left-behind" communities. Justice for individuals is a recurring theme in every Maiyah forum, with Cak Nun always attentive to structured oppression in both urban and rural settings.

As conceptualized by Ali Shari'ati, the enlightening intellectual or *rausyanfikir* should carry Islam to address alienation among the lower classes. Cak Nun prioritizes the oppressed, aiding them in reclaiming their identities. Identities of people entitled to express concerns about their nation, to care from their government, and not just be political "cash cows" exploited for electoral gains and then disregarded. Cak Nun guides individuals and their communities back to essential spiritual and moral values.

In the *rausyanfikir* concept proposed by Ali Shari'ati, the first step towards enlightenment is self-critique. According to the researcher, Cak Nun fosters self-critical awareness in every Maiyah forum. Through interactive discussions where all are free to express and critique, this encourages critical consciousness, distancing individuals from stagnant thinking. Participants are encouraged to respect others and be prepared for criticism or disagreement with their views.

The Quran states that God commands humanity to sow justice: "Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (Q. S. an-Nahl, verse 90). Cak Nun, with the Maiyah Community, upholds the values of justice and benevolence as encapsulated in the verse. Historically, Cak Nun has been vocal in criticizing regimes that prioritize personal over public interests.

In various Maiyah forums, Cak Nun also often emphasizes self-sovereignty. In essence, the community should understand why it acts, the basis for its actions must be righteous and prudent, and the manner of action wise. Drawing from Nietzsche, he advocates that the community should not foster a slave or herd mentality within itself, a mindset that leads to pessimism and acceptance of burdensome conditions without critique or effort to change.

Sovereignty, derived from the Arabic word "daulah" meaning power, is interpreted by the researcher as an initial step towards liberation. Being sovereign means having power over oneself, others, and God's commandments. Importantly, according to Cak Nun, being sovereign over one's thoughts is crucial: Are our thoughts correct, good, or wise? How can one be sovereign over others if one cannot govern one's own thoughts?

From self-sovereignty, the doors to liberation open. Further, when we understand our place in the world and what God created us to be, it becomes easier to position ourselves in various situations. Being sovereign over oneself keeps us vigilant, critically observant, not blindly following, not negligent, among other things. Fundamentally, we are created to be leaders over ourselves and our surroundings. As stated in Q. S. al-

Baqarah, verse 30: "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." Cak Nun interprets this verse to mean that each human is a leader on Earth, and being free from all interventions is a prerequisite for sound decision-making.

According to Ali Shari'ati, *rausyanfikir* involves critiquing foreign thoughts and understanding their weaknesses so that its practice can be objective. Echoing this, if Ali Shari'ati often opposed humanistic-Marxist concepts that distance humans from God, Cak Nun targets any concept that estranges humans from their creator.

Human resonance with God is essential; without it, life feels empty and meaningless. It seems inappropriate for humans to "stand tall" before God, in the sense of arrogance towards life's challenges, feeling that they alone can resolve issues without divine intervention. Spirituality encourages humans to remain faithful to moral, ethical, or belief values that guide them towards the right path.

In Cak Nun's works, the triangle of love—Allah, Prophet Muhammad, and oneself—is always involved. Every aspect of life, whether political, cultural, musical, or literary, is a path to God, to know and love Prophet Muhammad more, to better understand oneself (sovereignty), and to strengthen one's faith. Islam recognizes the phrase 'Innā li-llāhi wa-'inna 'ilayhi rāji'un, similar to the Javanese *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*, both expressing the concept of monotheism. Everything in the world is a manifestation of God. From God we come, to God we return.

Aligned with Cak Nun, Sachedina states that all human activities and relationships, whether political, economic, or artistic, must be on the path of Monotheism. Monotheism provides a single direction, ensuring unity of spirit among its followers. In other words, monotheism not only offers certainty, security, and peace of mind to humans, it also makes them responsible for their own welfare and that of others by giving meaning to their existence (Latif, 2017). Thus, monotheism, religion, understanding about God should produce something, one of which is liberating society from oppression. Because, all things in life are discussed in religion, including fighting oppression (Sudarman, 2015).

In combating oppression, an interesting perspective comes from Toto Rahardjo, an elder of Maiyah, in his article on *caknun.com* titled "Maiyah for Liberation", explaining that liberation begins from assemblies of self-governed, autonomous, self-managed, and self-reigning communities that are interconnected organically based on mutual understanding, referred to as *jamaah*. *Jamaah* first forms within small social units that spread and grow into larger assemblies while maintaining their individual characteristics (Toto Rahardjo, 2011).

Finally, one criterion of *rausyanfikir* is thinking out of the box. Observing social phenomena from various angles. Cak Nun often explains this in his books, essays, and Maiyah discussions. He talks about perspective, distance of view, and scope of view. By considering these aspects when interpreting social phenomena, people can objectively understand what is happening, thereby finding appropriate solutions to their problems. But for Cak Nun, among perspective, distance, and scope, something more absolute is the

central view of Allah. And humans can only strive to reach Allah's central perspective. Because the perspective of Allah cannot be fully grasped by humans. And lastly, according to Ali Shari'ati, a characteristic of *rausyanfikir* is how the thinker creates appropriate solutions. Much has been discussed in previous paragraphs about Cak Nun's solutions to the issues in Indonesia. Like the interactive *Maiyah* forum method is a solution for society, where there is still a lack of liberating public spaces in Indonesia, and *Maiyah* becomes one of the solutions for this. Then, the deconstruction that Cak Nun does to old and non-contextual thoughts is also one of the solutions he provides to the community or *Jamaah Maiyah*.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, Cak Nun's initiatives underscore a tripartite mission aimed at ushering societal and spiritual enlightenment. His multifaceted approach integrates political liberation, spiritual healing, and emancipatory education, effectively communicated through a variety of mediums such as lectures, books, essays, music, and theater. This diverse communicative strategy ensures that his philosophical offerings resonate with a broad audience. His works consistently advocate for critical engagement with social phenomena, a practice he champions in the *Maiyah* forums he leads, where the emphasis on resisting societal constraints is a cornerstone for fostering transformative change.

Moreover, Cak Nun's methodologies resonate with Ali Shari'ati's concept of *rausyanfikir*, blending Islamic tenets of justice, human dignity, and compassion to address the nuances of Indonesian societal challenges. The spiritual harmony and principle of mutual benefit that he promotes are not merely philosophical ideals but practical tools that enhance the efficacy of communal practices among the *Maiyah* community. By advocating for self-sovereignty and a profound understanding of both self and society, Cak Nun equips his followers with the tools necessary for precise and informed resistance against oppression, epitomizing the active intellectual engagement that Shari'ati envisaged. Cak Nun's work exemplifies the potent application of Islamic principles in advocating for justice and well-being in Indonesia, positioning his efforts as a paradigmatic example of religion's role in social transformation.

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