

METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ORIENTALIST VIEWS ON EXISTENCE OF SURAH AL-FATIHAH IN THE QUR'AN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP

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Abstrak

Penolakan terhadap Surah Al-Fatihah sebagai bagian dari Al-Qur'an tidak hanya datang dari sarjana barat saja tapi juga datang dari sarjana muslim Hal ini menjadi menarik untuk dikaji dan dianalisa lebih jauh, sebab Al-Fatihah yang dalam hal ini adalah surah yang notabene surah paling utama dalam Al-Qur'an ternyata tidak lepas dari pro kontra dan kontroversi, lebih lebih tidak hanya datang dari sarjawanan barat, tapi juga dari sarjanwan timur. Sumber data yang digunakan terdiri dari sumber primer yang didapat dari karya beberapa orientalis dan sumber sekunder didapat dari beberapa penelitian sebelumnya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa, *Pertama*, Surah Al-Fatihah dalam sudut pandang orietalis dalam hal ini Arthur Jeffery, adalah surah yang tidak memiliki keterkaitan dengan surah-surah yang lain (*it was not originally part of the text*). Menurut Jeffery, Al-Fatihah merupakan susunan doa (*prayer composed*) sebagaimana buku suci lainnya dalam agama-agama lain. *Kedua*, argument tersebut di latar belakang oleh suatu hipotesa, dimana Al-Fatihah telah terpengaruh berbagai bahasa asing seperti Ethiopia, Aramaik, Ibrani, Syria, Yunani kuno, Persia, dan lainnya. Sehingga, kosa kata yang ada di dalam Al-Qur'an mengambil istilah-istilah dari Yahudi, Kristen dan budaya lain. Berdasarkan diskursus tentang kontroversi Surah Al-Fatihah diatas, *Ketiga*, Kajian yang dilakukan Jeffery setidaknya telah memberikan realita sejarah yang menarik tentang surat Al-Fatihah namun pembuktian yang diberikan Jeffery belum atau tidak bisa membantah kenyataan yang ada bahwa Al-Fatihah tetap diyakini sebagai bagian dari surat Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci : Kontroversi, Orientalis, Al-Fatihah

Abstract

The rejection of Surah Al-Fatihah as part of the Quran does not only come from Western scholars but also from Muslim scholars. This becomes interesting to study and analyze further because Al-Fatihah, which is notably the foremost surah in the Quran, is not exempt from controversy and conflicting opinions, not only from Western scholars but also from Eastern scholars. The data sources used consist of primary sources obtained from the works of several Orientalists and secondary sources obtained from previous research. The results of this study indicate that, firstly, from the perspective of Orientalists, in this case, Arthur Jeffery, Surah Al-Fatihah is a surah that is not connected to the other surahs (it was not originally part of the text). According to Jeffery,

Al-Fatihah is a composed prayer like other sacred books in other religions. Secondly, this argument is based on a hypothesis that Al-Fatihah has been influenced by various foreign languages such as Ethiopian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syriac, Ancient Greek, Persian, and others. Consequently, the vocabulary in the Quran adopts terms from Judaism, Christianity, and other cultures. Based on the discourse on the controversy of Surah Al-Fatihah above, thirdly, Jeffery's study has provided an interesting historical reality about Surah Al-Fatihah, but his evidence has not been able to refute the existing fact that Al-Fatihah is still believed to be part of the Quran.

Keywords: *Controversy, Orientalists, Al-Fatihah*

INTRODUCTION

The rejection of Surah Al-Fatihah as part of the Qur'an comes not only from Western scholars but also from Muslim scholars. Al-Assam, in his work, begins his discussion directly with Surah Al-Baqarah because he believes that Surah Al-Fatihah is not part of the Qur'an based on the mushaf of Ibn Mas'ud, which also does not include Surah Al-Fatihah. Al-Assam also says that Surah Al-Fatihah is not found in the Kufi manuscript of the Qur'an. This has become a controversial and interesting discourse because Al-Fatihah, which is the most important surah in the Qur'an, still causes controversy and discourse among Western and Eastern scholars alike. This then became one of the arguments put forward by Western scholars, especially Arthur Jeffery, to show that Surah Al-Fatihah is quite controversial and there is still much debate and polemic surrounding it. Jeffery then stated that Al-Fatihah was a surah that was added later by the codifiers at that time.

In general, existing studies on the controversy surrounding Surah Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an from the perspective of Orientalists and Eastern scholars have not escaped the attention of scholars. There are at least two trends in previous studies that have made the controversy surrounding Surah Al-Fatihah their subject matter. First, there are critical studies that examine the orthography and recitation of the various texts of Al-Fatihah.¹ The second category is studies of figures, both by Western and Eastern scholars, or studies with different perspectives (Orientalists Compilers of the Critical Edition of the Qur'an).² Based on existing studies, studies discussing controversial forms require a

¹ Muslih, "Membedah Pemikiran Arthur Jeffery Seputar Variasi Teks Al-Fatihah (Kajian Ortografi Dan Resitasi Terhadap Variasi Teks Al-Fatihah)," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1 (2016).

² Muhammad Luthfi Dhulkifli, "Kontroversi Surat Al-Fatihah Dalam Pandangan Arthur Jeffery," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan al-Hadits* 13, no. 2 (2020): 113-36, <https://doi.org/10.24042/al-dzikra.v13i2.3640>.

study of Surah Al-Fatihah with a rigid review of its controversial forms, how the methodology is constructed, and what the implications are. Therefore, this study attempts to take on that role and make it the significance of this study.³

The purpose of this study is to uncover the controversy surrounding the existence of Surah Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an, how it is viewed by Orientalists and Western scholars as well as Muslim scholars. Specifically, this paper will discuss three aspects. First, how the controversy surrounding the existence of Surah Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an is viewed by Orientalists and Western scholars as well as Muslim scholars. Second, what are the factors that drive the controversy over the existence of Surah Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an from the perspective of Orientalists, Western scholars, and Muslim scholars? Third, what are the implications of the controversy over the existence of Surah Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an from the perspective of Orientalists, Western scholars, and Muslim scholars?

This discourse is interesting to study and analyze in greater depth, because generally rejection or denial of the Qur'an often comes from Western scholars, but in this case the discourse on the controversy surrounding Al-Fatihah also comes from Eastern scholars. Moreover, what comes from Western scholars, specifically Arthur Jeffery in this discourse, is not based solely on ego and sentiment. Rather, it is scientific and accountable in accordance with standard scientific frameworks, because Jeffery himself refers extensively to the opinions of classical Islamic scholars.

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in this study is library research using critical discourse analysis. This study is classified as descriptive-analytical research. It is descriptive because it will explain the thoughts and arguments developed by Western scholars in viewing the position of Al-Fatihah in the Qur'an. Meanwhile, analysis is needed to enhance understanding by searching for meaning and elaborating it in specific explanations.⁴ In qualitative research, the emphasis is on the quality of data rather than

³ Muhammad Anshori, "Tren-Tren Wacana Studi Al-Qur'an Dalam Pandangan Orientalis Di Barat," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (2018): 13-44, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v4i1.35>.

⁴ Ahmad Rijali, "ANALISIS DATA KUALITATIF," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 17, no. 33 (2018): 81-95, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v17i33.2374>.

the quantity of data. This study will explore the controversy surrounding Al-Fatihah from the perspectives of Arthur Jeffery and Mustofa Al-A'zami.

The data sources that must be included in every scientific paper are primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are the main sources of authentic data. The primary data in this study was obtained from Arthur Jeffery's work entitled *A Variant Text of the Fatihah*. Meanwhile, secondary data sources support the research, such as reference books, websites, and journal articles relevant to this study. The data collection technique used is a documentation-type data collection technique. Documentation techniques in qualitative research are used to collect data from non-human sources, such as documents and recordings.⁵ In this study, the researcher collected primary and secondary data sources, both of which are literary in nature. Furthermore, in addition to collecting data, the researcher also selected secondary data sources so that the analysis and research results would have strong relevance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Controversy Regarding Surah Al-Fatihah from the Perspective of Western and Eastern Scholars

Arthur Jeffery was a Protestant born in Melbourne on October 18, 1892. He was known as a Middle Eastern historian and professor of Semitic languages at the School of Oriental Studies in Cairo. Jeffery completed his bachelor's degree in 1918 and two years later completed his master's degree at the University of Melbourne. After completing his education, he went to Madras and taught at the Madras Christian College. Here, he met Reverend Edward Sell (1839-1932), a lecturer and missionary who was much older than him. Reverend Edward Sell was the person who most encouraged Jeffery to study the historicity of the Qur'an.⁶

Arthur Jeffery is one of the Orientalists who has shown critical attention and thought towards the Qur'an. This is evident from several works that emerged during his academic career, including: *The Textual History of the Qur'an*, *The Mystic Letters of the Koran*, *Variant Text of the Fatihah*, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an*,

⁵ I Wayan Suwendra, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Dalam Ilmu Sosial, Pendidikan, Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* (Nilacakra, 2018).

⁶ Arthur Jeffery, "The Quest of The Historical Mohammed," in *The Muslim Word* (1926).

The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, and A Reader on Islam.⁷ This shows that his thoughts and contributions to the discourse on the Qur'an are significant, regardless of the controversies that arise, as this is a dynamic of knowledge that will always be subject to pros and cons.

Jeffery married Elsie Gordon Walker, secretary to Dr. Charles R. Watson⁸, in 1923. Six years later, Jeffery received his doctorate from the University of Edinburgh with special honors. In 1938, Jeffery received an honorary doctorate in literature with *summa cum laude* honors from the University of Edinburgh. In the same year, Jeffery left the American University in Cairo for Columbia University in the United States. Jeffery was known to have several talents, including mastery of nineteen languages. Because of this talent, while at Columbia University, Jeffery served as Professor at the Faculty of Near-Eastern and Middle-East Languages and chair of the history of religions for the doctoral program.

Controversy is defined as a state of prolonged disagreement or debate over a certain period of time or a sufficiently long period of time, usually concerning conflicting opinions or points of view. In the KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary), controversy is defined as "debate, dispute, or conflict." The word controversy comes from the Latin word "controversia," which was changed to the word *controversus*, meaning "broken in opposite directions." This also shows that controversy is a prolonged public debate, generally about conflicting opinions or points of view.

In this study, the researcher will review the debate on the rejection of Surat Al-Fatihah using a comparative method, comparing interrelated variables by highlighting differences or similarities in a policy or opinion.⁹ The context of the discussion reviewed by the researcher in this case is Surah Al-Fatihah, which is considered not to be part of the Qur'an. Al-Fatihah is considered a prayer that is placed at the beginning and recited

⁷ Muslih, "Membedah Pemikiran Arthur Jeffery Seputar Variasi Teks Al-Fatihah (Kajian Ortografi Dan Resitasi Terhadap Variasi Teks Al-Fatihah.)"

⁸ Dr. Charles R. Watson was the first president of American University Cairo. As its founding president, his tenure from 1919 to 1945 greatly shaped the way AUC evolved. For example, the fact that AUC was initially associated with several issues throughout its history. For instance, during the anti-missionary campaign of the 1930s, Egyptians protested against Protestants whom they believed were trying to convert them. Watson was able to overcome these obstacles by adopting a more conciliatory and compromising tone. In addition, Watson led AUC in a direction that placed less emphasis on religion.

⁹ Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* (Idea Press Yogyakarta, 2014).

before reading the Qur'an.¹⁰ This controversy was then met with massive response from Muslim scholars, some of whom rejected it outright. Others argued that Jeffery's criticism was scientifically valid because it was in accordance with the framework and methodology of knowledge. This is because Jeffery referred extensively to the opinions of classical Islamic scholars. Mohaammad Akram Chaudary¹¹ then carefully and thoroughly analyzed Jeffery's opinion to understand his framework of thinking regarding the Al-Fatihah controversy.¹²

Surah Al-Fatihah is a Makkiyah surah with 7 verses.¹³ Al-Fatihah is the most important surah in the Qur'an, so much so that it is nicknamed Ummul Kitab. The content of Surah Al-Fatihah is very deep and comprehensive, ranging from celestial matters to terrestrial matters; from worldly matters to eschatological matters, promises and threats, and submission to Allah SWT. Although there are only seven verses in Surah Al-Fatihah, these seven verses cover everything, both macrocosmic matters in the form of the universe and microcosmic matters, both worldly matters and matters of the hereafter, both matters of God and matters of humans and their natural environment. Everything is discussed comprehensively and mutually supportive among the verses.

Al-Fatihah is the surah that serves as the foundation, core, or basis of the Qur'an. In this regard, Surah Al-Fatihah is the surah that encompasses or contains all the core teachings of the Qur'an. The famous names of Surah Al-Fatihah include ummul kitab,

¹⁰ Nur Fahrizi and Muhammad Zubir, "HISTORITAS DAN OTENTISITAS AL-QUR'AN (STUDI KOMPARATIF ANTARA ARTHUR JEFFERY DENGAN MANNA' AL-QATHAN)," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 1, no. 2 (2022): 183-222, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v1i2.1113>.

¹¹ Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akram Chaudhary is a renowned scholar, author, speaker, and educational administrator. Dr. Akram served for eight years as Vice Chancellor of Sargodha University. Dr. Akram also served for many years as Dean at Punjab University Lahore and BZ University Multan and as Professor at Islamia University Bahawalpur. Dr. Akram is a Fulbright scholar with numerous international publications in English, Arabic, and Urdu. His primary areas of research are the Quran and the Divine Character.

¹² Mohammad A. Choudhury, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an: The Case of Arthur Jeffery," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 12, no. 2 (1995): 170-84, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v12i2.3057>.

¹³ Qurthubi mentions differences of opinion regarding the status of Surah al-Fatihah; some say it is Makkiyyah, which is the opinion of Ibn Abbas, Qotadah, etc. Others say it is Madaniyyah, which is the opinion of Abu Hurairah, Mujahid, and Atha' bin Yasar. There is even an opinion that says half of it is Makkiyyah and half of it is Madaniyyah, which is the opinion of Abu al-Laits. However, the first opinion, which states that al-Fatihah is a Makkiyyah surah, is the opinion chosen by Qurthubi. (See further Al-Qurthubi, *al-Jami' li ahkam al-Quran*, Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Mishriyyah, 1964), volume 1, p. 115).

ummul qur'an, sab'ul matsani, al-asas, fatihatul kitab, al-kanz, al-wafiyah, and so on.¹⁴ Regarding the revelation of Surah Al-Fatihah, there is no definite information about when this surah was revealed. There are accounts that say it was revealed after Surah al-Muddathir, while others argue that it was revealed even after Surah Al-Muzamamil and Al-Qalam. Others say that this surah was revealed in Medina, and due to the conflicting accounts, some argue that this surah was revealed twice to indicate its greatness, once in Mecca and once in Medina.

Surah Al-Fatihah, from the perspective of Orientalists such as Arthur Jeffery, is a surah that has no connection with the other surahs (it was not originally part of the text). According to Jeffery, Al-Fatihah is a composed prayer, similar to holy books in other religions.¹⁵ This is in line with what Theodor Noldek said about Surah Al-Fatihah, that according to Noldeke, Surah Al-Fatihah is a prayer full of meaning. However, Noldek had doubts about several words in Surah Al-Fatihah, which he believed were expressions borrowed directly from the Jews, particularly the reference to Allah as Ar-Rahman. In addition to Al-Fatihah, he also excluded two other surahs, namely Al-Muawwidhatain (Al-Falaq and An-Nas), from the Quran. According to him, these two surahs are referred to as magical formulas.¹⁶

Arthur Jeffery explains clearly in his work entitled *A Variant Text of the Fatihah*:
"Sura I of the Koran bears on its face evidence that it was not originally part of the text, but was a prayer composed to be placed at the head of the assembled volume, to be recited before reading the book, a custom not unfamiliar to us from otheer sacred books of the Near east. The koranic style, as is well known, is that it from the beginning to end, Allah is addressing man. In the Fatiha, however, it is man addressing Allah".

Jeffery then made a rather controversial statement, saying that the rejection of the authenticity of Al-Fatihah as one of the surahs in the Qur'an did not only come from Western scholars but also from Eastern scholars, such as Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi, who quoted the opinion of Abu Bakar Al-Asamm.¹⁷ Al-Asamm, in his work, began his discussion with Surah Al-Baqarah because he believed that Surah Al-Fatihah was not part of the Qur'an based on the mushaf of Ibn Mas'ud, which did not include Al-Fatihah.

¹⁴ Hasby Ash-Shidiqi, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Majid An-Nur* (Bulan Bintang, 1965).

¹⁵ Arthur Jeffery, "A Variant Text of the Fatiha," in *The Muslim Word*, vol. 29 (1939).

¹⁶ Theodor Noldek, *The Qur'an: An Introductory Essay*, ed. N.A. Newman (Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1992).

¹⁷ Jeffery, "A Variant Text of the Fatiha."

Al-Assam also said that Al-Fatihah was not found in the early Kufi manuscripts of the Qur'an.¹⁸ Then, to strengthen his argument, Arthur Jeffery quoted the opinion of the Shi'a group regarding the variations of Surah Al-Fatihah. Jeffery mentioned that Al-Fatihah is found in the book *Tadkirat al A'immah* by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi.¹⁹ Jeffery's statement was then responded to by Mohammad A. Chaudhry by writing Surah Al-Fatihah in Arabic²⁰, namely:

ملك يوم الدين . الرحمن الرحيم . نحمد الله رب العالمين سبيلا . ترشد سبيل المستقيم . هياك نعبد و
وياك نستعين سوى المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين . الذين أنعمت عليهم

Regarding this variation in the recitation, Chaudhry said that this version of the Fatihah does not have a complete and authentic chain of transmission, but even so, it still exists today.²¹

Further research explains that Arthur Jeffery discovered an anomaly in the wording of Surah Al-Fatihah. Editorially, the pattern of the Qur'an as a whole shows that Allah acts as the caller and commander of mankind. However, this is not the case in Surah Al-Fatihah, where mankind acts as the caller. Jeffery then said that Surah Al-Fatihah was a surah that was added later by the codifiers of the Qur'an at that time, and its authenticity needs to be questioned. Al-Fatihah is not an original part of the Qur'an, but was deliberately placed at the beginning because of its unusual form, which was unknown in Arab customs at that time.

According to Arthur Jeffery, there are several words in Surah Al-Fatihah that originate from other languages, not Arabic. The word *Sirat*, for example, according to Jeffery, is only mentioned five times in the Qur'an and is used in religious terms or meanings. According to Jeffery, this word originates from Aramaic²², which was then

¹⁸ Dhulkifli, "Kontroversi Surat Al-Fatihah Dalam Pandangan Arthur Jeffery."

¹⁹ Muhammad 'Azat Darwazat, *Al-Tafsir al-Hadits* (Dar Ihyau' al-Kitab al-'Arabiyyah, 1383).

²⁰ Choudhury, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an."

²¹ Choudhury, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an."

²² Aramaic is a Semitic language spoken in the Middle East. It was once the language of government in various empires and the language used in religious ceremonies. Aramaic is the original language of most of the Books of Daniel and Ezra in the Bible, and is the main language used in the Talmud. It is also the mother tongue of Jesus Christ (see Aramaic of Jesus). Modern Aramaic is now spoken as a first language by many scattered communities, especially by the Assyrians and Chaldeans. It is considered an endangered language.

Arabized.²³ The word can be read by replacing the letter sad with sin or za'.²⁴ In this discourse, Jeffery actually constructs a framework of thought with a comprehensive methodology, based on in-depth linguistic analysis. Therefore, Jeffery's criticism is scientifically valid, as it is in line with the scientific framework and is open to debate and scientific discourse. In addition, Jeffery refers extensively to the opinions of classical Islamic scholars, while also being competent in Arabic himself. For example, according to him, the word Ar-Rahman in Surah Al-Fatihah comes from Hebrew²⁵, a view he quotes from Al-Mubarrad and Ats-Tsa'labi. As-Suyuti also argues that this word comes from a Hebrew word originally using the letter kha'. When clarified in the original source, this is indeed the case.²⁶

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Therefore, from an academic perspective, Jeffery's criticism should be appreciated. Of course, this does not mean that his opinion should be completely rejected or fully affirmed.

Factors Influencing the Controversy Surrounding Surah Al-Fatihah (Methodology, Reference Sources, and Concepts of Truth)

This subchapter will explain the factors behind the thoughts on Surah Al-Fatihah. This is important to examine because it reveals the methodology used, the thought process, including the sources of reference used, and the concept of truth held by a figure.

²³ Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, vol. 3 (Brill, 2007).

²⁴ Muhammad Mas'udi Fathurrahman, *Metode Praktis Sorogan Qira'at Sab'ah: Teori Dan Praktek Ilmu Tentang Bacaan Al-Qur'an Dan Tata Caranya Menurut Tujuh Imam Ahli Qiro'at*. (Pusat Studi Pengembangan Pesantren (PSPP), 2012).

²⁵ Hebrew is a language from the Afro-Asian language family. It belongs to the Semitic languages and is the official language of Israel. Hebrew is spoken by some Jews around the world. Culturally, it is considered the language of the Jewish people, although it is also used by non-Jewish groups, such as the Samaritans. Hebrew almost died out as a spoken language in ancient times, but continued to be used as the liturgical language of Judaism and as a literary language, and was only used to study the Bible and the Mishnah. However, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the language was reborn as a true language with its own speakers. It then replaced Arabic, Ladino, Yiddish, and other languages as the main language of Jews worldwide and later in the state of Israel. Hebrew is one of the two official languages of Israel. The other official language is Arabic. In Hebrew itself, Hebrew is very similar to Aramaic and also still similar to Arabic. In fact, modern Hebrew vocabulary also borrows heavily from Arabic.

²⁶ Al-Suyuthi, , *Al-Ittqan Fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Mazma' al-Dirasat al-Qur'aniyah, 1873).

It should be noted that Arthur Jeffery began his historical criticism of the Qur'an in 1926 by collecting data from various sources such as tafsir books, hadith, dictionaries, qira'ah, philological works, and Qur'an manuscripts.²⁷ All of this was done to realize a very ambitious idea, namely to create a critical edition of the Qur'an. One of the main reasons Jeffery created a critical edition of the Qur'an was that the current Qur'an is not critical and unsatisfactory because it does not include foreign language influences. In Jeffery's view, the Qur'an has been influenced by various foreign languages such as Ethiopian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syrian, ancient Greek, Persian, and others. Thus, the vocabulary in the Qur'an takes terms from Jewish, Christian, and other cultures.²⁸ This statement is related to Jeffery's statement regarding Surah Al-Fatihah, which has been distorted by non-Arabic languages. Jeffery proved his statement regarding the influence of foreign vocabulary through his work published in 1938 entitled *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*.

In this work, Jeffery discusses approximately 316 words in the Qur'an that he considers to be derived from foreign vocabulary. If the influence of foreign vocabulary in the Qur'an can be properly explored, Jeffery hopes that there will be a Qur'anic dictionary that contains philological, epigraphic, and textual analysis sources. This dictionary could be compared to dictionaries that have already been used for the Old Testament and New Testament. It would also be useful for thoroughly researching the vocabulary of the Qur'an.²⁹

Regarding Surah al-Fatihah, Jeffery concluded that the two variations he found, including the current Al-Fatihah, were unreliable. In these variants, there was an attempt to construct grammatical language with the aim of beautifying and clarifying the recitation. After looking more closely and carefully, Jeffery stated that Al-Fatihah was a prayer often recited by the Prophet. This can be seen from the style of language used and the expressions found in Al-Fatihah itself. Arthur Jeffery then quoted a reading circulating among the Shi'ah as written in the book *Tadzkirah al-A'imma* by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi.

²⁷ Dhulkifli, "Kontroversi Surat Al-Fatihah Dalam Pandangan Arthur Jeffery."

²⁸ Al-Makin, *Antara Barat Dan Timur: Batasan, Dominasi, Relasi, Dan Globalisasi* (SUKA Press, 2017).

²⁹ Dhulkifli, "Kontroversi Surat Al-Fatihah Dalam Pandangan Arthur Jeffery."

Jeffery added to his explanation with a book he found during a visit to Egypt. Jeffery obtained a small fiqh manual from someone at that time. This book begins with Al-Fatihah, which has another version. According to him, the book may be copied and reproduced, as long as the author is not mentioned, for fear of being attacked by orthodox Muslims. Jeffery finally argued that the book was lost, so he did not know the author's name. Jeffery quoted another variation from the writings of Riwayah Abi al-Fath al-Jubba'i 'an Syaikh al-Susi 'an al-Nahrazwani 'an Abi al-Sa'adah al-Maidani 'an al-Marzubani 'an al-Khalil bin Ahmad.³⁰

The first variation does not include the basmallah in Surah Al-Fatihah, while the second variation does include it. Muslims themselves have various opinions regarding whether the basmallah is part of Surah Al-Fatihah or not. A clear example of this difference is the recitation of the basmallah in Surah Al-Fatihah during prayer, which is recited clearly by some and softly by others. The basmallah is generally believed to be a phrase recited when beginning to read the Qur'an.

Jeffery concluded his argument regarding the variations in the recitation of Al-Fatihah by stating that there is no definite reason for reciting either variant. Neither is a change for the sake of more refined grammatical construction, nor do they have any doctrinal significance. Both are simply variants in the transmission of the prayer, which was originally preserved in oral form and later corrected when the Qur'an was compiled. The second variant originated from Khalil bin Ahmad, who was known as a Reader from Basrah.³¹ It is very likely that Khalil had access to good old traditions such as the earlier recitation of Al-Fatihah. In addition, there are several copies of the Qur'an that were not destroyed during the codification of the Qur'an. This makes it very possible for these variations to exist because there were indeed different dialects of the Qur'an in the past.

Al-Fatihah Implications of the Controversy over Surah Al-Fatihah

Jeffery's boldness in questioning the existence of Al-Fatihah has become controversial because this surah is already considered established in the composition of the Qur'an. Regarding Al-Fatihah, the debate among Muslims so far has centered on the basmallah in it, not on whether it is part of the Qur'an or not. Jeffery's assumption is in stark contrast to the current reality that the Qur'an consists of 114 surahs, beginning with

³⁰ Jeffery, "A Variant Text of the Fatiha."

³¹ Choudhury, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'an."

Al-Fatihah and ending with Al-Nass. On the other hand, Jeffery's statement has led to the assumption that his criticism of the Qur'an is merely an attempt to weaken and cause doubt among Muslims.

Basically, Jeffery was not the first person to criticize Al-Fatihah, as Theodor Noldeke had previously argued that Al-Fatihah was not part of the revelation and originated from Jewish and Christian languages.³² According to Jeffery, it should be noted that the process of codifying the Qur'an did not exist during the time of the Prophet and was only carried out during the time of Caliph Uthman. From this, Jeffery then argues that it is possible that some manuscripts from the time of the Prophet were not collected or were lost. In his belief, all evidence related to the preservation of the Qur'an must be valid and verifiable. Jeffery's argument contradicts historical records that the Arab society at that time was an oral tradition and not many people were able to write well. The history of writing and collecting the Qur'an only began in earnest during the reign of Caliph Uthman, making it difficult to find manuscripts from the time of the Prophet.

Jeffery's next opinion is that there were many qurra' who collected qira'ah in various mushafs, such as Salim Ibn Mu'qib, 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Anas bin Malik, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Ubay bin Ka'ab, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, and various mushafs that had circulated in various regions, such as the mushaf of Miqdad bin al-Aswad, which was based on the mushaf of Ibn Mas'ud and circulated in Damascus. The Ibn Mas'ud manuscript was widely used in the Kufah region. The Abu Musa al-Asy'ari manuscript was used in Basra and the Ubay bin Ka'ab manuscript in Syria.³³ These manuscripts differed from the Usmani manuscript. Thus, when the Usmani manuscript was made the official standard text and used throughout the Islamic empire, this canonization was inseparable from political reasons.³⁴

The study of the Quran using a critical textual approach similar to that used for the Bible, as conducted by Arthur Jeffery, has implications for the errors in his arguments and conclusions. This is because in the early period of Islam there were many ways of reading the Quran, and these were not based on the mistakes of a Muslim in reading the

³² Theodor Noldek, *The History of the Qur'an* (Brill, 2013).

³³ Farhat Aziz, "Variant Readings, Companion Codices and Establishment of the Canonical Text (An Analysis the Objections of Arthur Jeffery and A.T. Welch)," *European Journal of Social Sciences* 28, no. 2 (2012).

³⁴ Arthur Jeffery, *Material for the History of the Text of the Koran* (Brill, 1937).

Uthmanic mushaf, but rather had already occurred and been taught directly by the Prophet to the early community. Moreover, the tradition of writing was very limited in the process of transmitting the Quran in the early days of Islam. Therefore, the “coercion” of using Arthur Jeffery's textual criticism study resulted in arguments and conclusions that were very easy to refute.

From the above review, a common thread can be drawn that, Surah Al-Fatihah, from the perspective of Orientalists, in this case Arthur Jeffery, is a surah that has no connection with other surahs (it was not originally part of the text). According to Jeffery, Al-Fatihah is a composed prayer, similar to holy books in other religions. This is based on a hypothesis that Al-Fatihah has been influenced by various foreign languages such as Ethiopian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syrian, Ancient Greek, Persian, and others. Thus, the vocabulary in the Qur'an takes terms from Judaism, Christianity, and other cultures.

Jeffery's boldness in questioning the existence of Surah Al-Fatihah has become controversial because this surah is already considered established in the structure of the Qur'an. The implication of this is that Muslims' belief in Al-Fatihah needs to be reexamined. What Jeffery has said needs to be reexamined, as similarities between one book and previous books are natural and very easy to find.³⁵ The similarity of the vocabulary of the Qur'an with other languages cannot be interpreted absolutely to mean that the Qur'an was influenced by other languages. Islam brings new meaning because it criticizes the distorted teachings of Judaism and Christianity.

Based on the discourse regarding the controversy surrounding Surah Al-Fatihah above, Jeffery's study has at least provided an interesting historical reality about Surah Al-Fatihah, but the evidence provided by Jeffery has not or cannot refute the existing reality that Al-Fatihah is still believed to be part of the Qur'an. There is no definite reason to accept this variation of Surah Al-Fatihah because Jeffery is unable to provide valid evidence. In his writing, Jeffery mentions that the existing variation is a transmission of a prayer that was originally preserved in oral form and then corrected when the Qur'an was compiled. This indicates that the variation is a prayer that existed in the past. Jeffery's analysis is a historical study that still invites criticism. On the other hand, the analysis is linguistic and based on the mutawatir qira'ah history.

³⁵ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, “Tradisi Orientalisme dan Framework Studi al-Qur’an,” *TSAQAFAH* 7, no. 1 (2011): 1, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v7i1.105>.

CONCLUSION

From the above review, a common thread can be drawn that, Surah Al-Fatihah, from the perspective of Orientalists, in this case Arthur Jeffery, is a surah that has no connection with other surahs (it was not originally part of the text). According to Jeffery, Al-Fatihah is a composed prayer, similar to holy books in other religions. This is based on a hypothesis that Al-Fatihah has been influenced by various foreign languages such as Ethiopian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Syrian, Ancient Greek, Persian, and others. Thus, the vocabulary in the Qur'an takes terms from Judaism, Christianity, and other cultures. Based on the discourse on the controversy surrounding Surah Al-Fatihah above, Jeffery's study has at least provided an interesting historical reality about Surah Al-Fatihah, but the evidence provided by Jeffery has not or cannot refute the existing reality that Al-Fatihah is still believed to be part of the Qur'an. There is no definite reason to accept this variation of Surah Al-Fatihah because Jeffery was unable to provide valid evidence. Nothing is perfect, and this study still has many gaps that need to be addressed and reexamined. Further studies are needed to refine and complete it.

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