

CHAPTER IV

HUMAN INTERACTION WITH THE QUR'AN TROUGH WOOD CALLIGRAPHY CARVING

A. The Meaning of Sticking Wood Calligraphy Carving For Jepara Society

As a social creature that not lives alone in this world, humans should act toward or interact with others. In responding their environment either physical, social or abstract object, humans must pass a process that Herbert Blumer called as *self-indication process*. It is a process where human know something then give it value and meaning and finally decide to act based on that meaning. Actually, objects are not having intrinsic and definite meaning. So to get meaning of objects, humans must get interaction with other. But, although the meaning is a social product, or resulted from their social interaction, the decision maker is their self. The final decision is decision that they made. They have freedom to choose and decide to act based on what is appropriate with their will, wish, aim and interpretations.¹ Thus, although most of people learn a common set of meanings, but in many cases they have different definitions of the same objects.²

Like wise, in acting toward and interacting with calligraphy carving, Jepara society also pass *self-indication process*. Before acting toward and interacting with wood calligraphy carving, they should know what is it, than give it value and meaning and finally acting toward and interacting with wood calligraphy carving based on that meaning. Actually, the meaning is resulted from their social interaction, its may be from their invironment or who has regardness or superiority belongs to them – such parent, friend, neighbor, or theacher – but the decision maker is their selves. The final

¹ Bachtiar, Wardi, *Sosiologi Klasik*, (Bandung:PT. Remaja Rosda Karya, 2006) p. 250

² Ritzer, George, *Sociological Theory*, (New York: The McGraw Hills Companies, 1996), p. 349

decision is decision that they made, they have freedom to choose and decide to stick based on what is appropriate with their wills, wishes, understandings, meanings and aims.

Jepara society act toward or get interaction with wood calligraphy carving on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to it. Each of them has different knowing, understanding, value and meaning about wood calligraphy carving with other. Thus, wood calligraphy carving will be a different object for a carver, calligrapher, industrialist, and devotee.

For most of industrialists and carvers, wood calligraphy carving is the source of their life. Thus, they carve and produce it just for making a living. Whereas calligrapher (writer) believes that wood calligraphy carving is media to get Allah blessing. As visual form of the Qur'an, it should be treated with enormous reference as a proof of his honor to Allah words. But according to devotees who stick wood calligraphy carving on their houses walls, it is a symbol of their identity (faith and grade). For them, the script appeared to be Arabic and it must have therefore been excerpt from the Qur'an, the Holy book of Islam. Thus, calligraphy carving that just being from the Qur'an is adequate to warrant being framed and hung or stuck on the wall. By sticking it, they want to show to others that the inhabitants are Muslims and come from the certain class.

Beside that, part of them has opinion that wood calligraphy carving is expression of art that make eye and heart quivered enough. Whoever face it will feel peace and fall in love immediately. It has beautiful and impressive form artistically, which moves the very depth of the soul of even those Muslim who do not know Arabic and do not comprehend the message of what written. Therefore, based on that opinion, they consider sticking calligraphy carving on their houses wall for fitting out and beautifying it with hope that his self or others who gaze it will get peace of mind.

Moreover, the others believe that as the visual form of the Qur'an that possessed of enormous power, wood calligraphy carving should represent

power also. It should be a source of healing and blessing and also protector from illness or evil eye. Thus, they stick calligraphy carving on their houses for protecting the inhabitants from illness and evil eye, and begging to Allah blessings. Most of the Qur'anic verses that they stuck are Al Hijr: 46, Nuh: 28, Al Naml: 40, al Thalaq: 2-3 and al Baqarah: 255 (*Ayat Kursi*).

1. In begging peace and safety from Allah, either for the inhabitant or who enter his house, part of Jepara society usually stick the passage of Al Hijr: 46 and Nuh: 28 on the front of door.

ادخلوها بسلام امنين (الحجر:46)

"Please enter with peace and safety (15:46)", and

رب اغفر لي ولوالدي وللمؤمنين والمؤمنات (نوح: 28)

"My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, and the believing men and the believing women (71:28)"

Actually the passage of al Hijr (15:46) is Allah command to who pious to Allah (*Muttaqin*) to enter Heaven peacefully³ and safely, secure from disaster and peace from calamity, as one hadith that narrated by Qosim from Abi Umamah said that the inhabitant of heaven enters in it with soft heart, clear from grudge and enmity. Allah lost it from his heart.⁴

حَدَّثَنَا الْقَاسِمُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا الْحُسَيْنُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو فَضَالَةَ، عَنْ لُقْمَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ، قَالَ: " لَا يَدْخُلُ مُؤْمِنٌ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَنْزِعَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ، ثُمَّ يُنْزِعُ مِنْهُ السَّبْعَ الضَّارِي "

"Narated to me al Qasim, said: narrated to me al Husain, said: narrated to me Abu Fadlolah, from Luqman, from Abi Umamah, said: Mukmin does not enter into heaven, except Allah has get rid grudge from their heart, then Allah gets rid seven miserables."

³ Al Mawardi interprets *salam* as secure from death and disaster and regard from Allah. See al Mawardi, *Nukat wal Uyun*, (Beirut: Dar al Kutub Ilmiyah), p.

⁴ Actually this hadith is dlo'if from riwayat, which is from Qosim ibn Abd Rahman from Abi Umamah, but if it comes from Qotadah, it is shohih. See Muhammad Syakir, Mahmud and Ahmad, *"Tafsir al Thobari"*, (Dar al Shodr), Print. 2, vol. 17, p. 107.

According to at Tsa'laby narration, actually the passage of Al Hijr: 46 is revealed to the Prophet PBUH is caused by Salman al Farisi who blench and had no truck with others for three days unconsciously after hearing Allah say “ And actually Jahannam is place that threatened for them entirely (Satan followers)”. He delivered to the Prophet PBUH, and then he said: Ya Rasulallah! By revealing that verse, I feel broken heart. Hence, Allah revealed this verse “Actually who pious to Allah (Muttaqin)⁵ is placed on heaven that there are many flowing springs in the middle of it,⁶ and said to them: Please enter in it safely and peacefully.⁷

Whereas the passage of Nuh: 28 is a Nuh prayer to Allah when his self and his followers are battered by *kafir*. Al Baghowi recorded in this *tafsir* that Muhammad ibn Ka'ab, Muqothil, Robi', and others said that Nuh express this prayer in 40 years (said 70 years) before Allah punish them with deluge. This pray is continuation of previous prayer (two verses before). It is pointed for his self, his parents (Lamak ibn Mattusyalih and Samha' binti Inusya, said Adam and Hawa) and faithful men and women (*mukmin* and *mukminat*) who enter in his house (said masjid, ship, or faith).⁸

Wahbah Zuhaily note in “*Tafsir al Wasith*” that the complete of Nuh prayer is:

ربّ استر علي ذنوبي، واستر علي والدي المؤمنين برسالتني، واغفر لكل من دخل منزلي وهو مؤمن، ولكل المصدّقين الواقّين بوجودك ووحدانيتك، وكل

⁵ At Thobary interprete “al Muttaqin” as who pious to Allah loyally, do Allah command and avoid His prohibition. See al Thobary, *Jami'ul Bayan fi Tafsir al Qur'an*, (Turki: Dar al Hajar), vol. 17, p. 107

⁶Al Qurthubi interprete “Uyun” as four wellsprings, they are water, khomr, milk and honey. See Al Qurthubi, *Tafsir al Qurthubi (al Jami' li ahkam al Qur'an)*, (Kairo: Dar al Kutub al Mishriyah, 1964), vol. 10, p.32

⁷ Shaleh, KH. Qamaruddin, HAA. Dahlan and Prof. Dr. M.D. Dahlan, *Asbabun Nuzul*, (Bandung: CV. DIPONEGORO, 1995), p. 284

⁸ Al Baghowi, *Ma'alim al Tanzil*, (Dar Thaybah, 1997), vol. 8, p. 234

المصدقات بذلك من الأمم والأجيال القادمة، ولا تزد الذين ظلموا أنفسهم بالكفر،
إلا هلاكاً وخسراناً ودماراً.

“Oh My God, Please cover my sin and parent of who believed in my treatise, and forgive faithful men who enter my house, and for who believe in your present and Oneness, and don't add to who treat his self with kufr except damage and loss.”⁹

2. In expressing the gratitude to God for His all blessings, showing to others that anything in home is a really gift from God (the Most Sustainer), and begging to Allah to give them blessing (*rizqi*) and safe their houses for any evil intention, be it robbery or envy, or divert to any suggestion that the owner's wealth is ill begotten, Jeparu society stick the verse of Al Naml: 40 and al Tholaq: 2-3.

هذا من فضل ربي (النمل: 40)

“This is (an outcome) of My Sustainers Bounty (27:40),

ومن يتق الله يجعل له مخرجا، ويرزقه من حيث لا يحتسب (الطلاق: 2-3)

“Whoever is careful of (his duty to) Allah, He will make for him an outlet, and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not (65:2-3)”

Infact, the passage of al Naml: 40 is expression of Sulaiman AS when a scribe, Asif ibn Barkhiya' who became his secretary able to bring Bilqis throne in front of him in a jiffy. Actually, this challenge is given to his men of note. Ifrit (Genie) said to Sulaiman that he able to bring Bilqis throne before Sulaiman stand from his seat (27: 38-39). Yet, Asif is faster than Ifrit, he is able to bring Bilqis throne in a jiffy.¹⁰

Whereas the verse of al Thalaq: 2-3 is promise of Allah to whoever that always do His command and avoid his prohibition, will be given outlet from difficulties in life and here after and also will be given sustenance from whence he thinks not. According to Ikrimah, Sya'by and

⁹ Zuhaily, Wahbah, *Tafsir al Wasith li al Zuhaily*, (Damascus: Dar al Fikr, 2001), vol. 3, p. 2747

¹⁰ Katsir, Ibn, *Tafseer Ibn Katsir*, (Riyadh: Dar as Salam), p. 1000.

al Dlahak, the mean of “*man yattaqillaha*” is who divorced accord to Allah command. Thus, they will be given outlet to reconciliation (Ruju’).

حدثنا ابن حميد، قال: ثنا يحيى بن واضح، قال: ثنا الحسين، عن يزيد، عن عكرمة (وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا) قال: من طلق كما أمره الله يجعل له مخرجًا اى الرجعة.

*Narrated to me Ibn Hamid, said: Narrated to me Yahya ibn Wadlih, said: Narrated to me al Husain, from Yazid from Ikrimah: (Whoever is careful of (his duty to) Allah, He will make for him an outlet), said: who divorced accord to Allah command. Thus, they will be given outlet to reconciliation (Ruju’).*¹¹

But most of interpreters (*Mufasssirun*) assert that this verses is revealed based on Auf bin Malik al Asyja’i who poor and has many children. He asks the Prophet Muhammad PBUH help for his son who arrested by enemy and also for his sufferings. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH said: be pious and patient, please!, Then he return at home, and his son bring a goat (loot that he get from his enemy when he flee) come to him. This occurrence is reported to the Prophet PBUH immediately, and then the Prophet PBUH said: Please eat that goat!¹²

3. In protecting the inhabitants from illness or “the evil eye”, part of Jepara society sticks the verse of Al Baqarah: 255 on their houses.

لِلَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (البقرة: 255).

“God, there is no deity save Him, the Ever Living, the self subsistent font all of being, Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep His all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that could intercede with Him. Unless it be by His leave? He knows all that lies

¹¹ Katsir, Ibnu, *op.cit*, p. 1415.

¹² Al Thobary, *op. cit*, vol. 23, p. 446, or see also Shaleh, KH. Qamaruddin, *op. cit.*, p.

upon before people and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain to aught of His knowledge, save that which he wills (them to attain). His eternal power overspread the heavens and the earth and their upholding wearies Him not and he alone is truly exalted, tremendous (2:255)”.

Actually, Ayat Kursy used by Muslims to protecting his self from evil is begun firstly when Prophet Muhammad’s way back from Ta’if in big, where he had just suffered a deep personal humiliation and even physical assault, he paused to engage in the optional midnight prayers and group of Jinns come to listen to him. Deeply moved, they went off as firm believers in Muhammad and the Qur’an: We have really heard a wonderful recital! (*Qur’anan ‘Ajaban*) it gives guidance to the right and we have believed there in (72:12).

This verse (2: 255) is named by Ayat Kursi or the verse of the Throne, due to the word Kursi appearing therein.¹³ It is the most excellent verse of all the Qur’an verses.

وروى الأئمة عن أبي بن كعب قال قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " يا أبا المنذر أتدرى أي آية من كتاب الله معك أعظم؟" قلت: الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: " يا أبا المنذر أتدرى أي آية من كتاب الله معك أعظم؟" قلت: " الله لا إله إلا هو الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ" فضرب في صدري وقال: " ليهنك العلم يا أبا المنذر."

“Narrated from al Aimmah from Ubayy bin Ka’b said, the Prophet PBUH said: “O Aba Mundzir! What is the most excellent verse of the Quran?”, I replied: “Allah and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet PBUH said, “In your opinion, what is the most excellent verse of the Quran?” I replied, “Allah, There is no god but He” (i.e. Ayat al-Kursi).

¹³ Al Thabari writes that the Companions RA and their students held a difference of opinion concerning the meaning of the word Kursi, which appears in this verse. Some scholars are of the opinion that no one knows the true meaning of this word apart from Allah Most High. But other scholars say that the word Kursi in this verse refers to the Knowledge of Allah Most High, meaning that His Knowledge encompasses all that is the heavens and the earth, or refers to the Throne of Allah Most High. This is because another name for throne is Kursi. And the last say that the Kursi is a creation of Allah Most High whose magnitude makes that of the heavens and the earth insignificant.

*The Prophet PBUH placed his hand on his chest and said, "O Aba Mundzir! May your knowledge be pleasant for you."*¹⁴

The reason why Ayat al-Kursi is the most excellent verse is that this verse mentions the names of Allah Most High and His six attributes (sifat). They are the Divine Oneness (*Wahdaniyyah*) of Allah Most High, His Life (*Hayah*), His Knowledge (*'Ilm*), His Kingdom (*Mulk*), His Divine Power (*Qudrah*) and His Will (*Iradah*).¹⁵ As mentioned in hadith:

روي عن شهر بن حوشب عن أسماء بنت يزيد بن السكن قالت : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول في هاتين الآيتين { اللهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ } و { الم اللهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ } "إن فيهما اسم الله الأعظم".

"Narrated from Syahr ibn Hausyab from Asma' bint Yazid bint al Sakan said: I heard the Messenger of Allah PBUH say about these two following Ayahs, i.e, verses: "Allah! There is no god but He - the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. [2:255], and Alif Lam Mim, Allah! There is no god but He - the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal [3:1-2], that both contain Allah's Greatest Name."

روى القاسم عن أبي إمامة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، قال : إن اسم الله الأعظم لفي سور من القرآن ثلاث : البقرة وآل عمران وطه.

*"Narrated by al Qasim fro Abi Imamah from the Prophet PBUH, said: actually, the names of Allah Most High is mentioned in three chapters of the Qur'an: Al Baqarah, Ali Imran and Thoha".*¹⁶

Beside that, Ayat Kursi has merits that have been mentioned in numerous hadiths. As An Nasa'I, ar Rowayani, Ibn Hibban, Dar al Quthny, al Thobrony, and Ibn Murdawiyah write in their works.

روي عن أبي أمامة قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من قرأ آية الكرسي دبر كل صلاة مكتوبة لم يمنعه من دخول الجنة إلا أن يموت.

¹⁴ Abdul Baqi, Fuad, *Sahih Muslim: Fada'il al-Qur'an, under Surat al-Kahf & Ayat al-Kursi*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' Turath al Araby). p.

¹⁵ Sa'idi , Allamah Ghulam Rasul, *Sharh Sahih Muslim: Fada'il al-Qur'an, under Surat al-Kahf & Ayat al-Kursi*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' Turath al Araby). p.

¹⁶ An Naysabury, *Al Kasyaf wal al Bayan an Tafsir al Qur'an*, (Beirut: Dal al Ihya' al Turath al Araby), vol. 2, p. 230

“Narrated from Abi Umamah said: the Prophet PBUH said that whosoever recites Ayat al-Kursi after the obligatory prayer, will enter Paradise straight away after death.”¹⁷

And Al Hakim Abu Abdullah in his “*Mustadrak* note”:

روي عن أبي صالح عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "سورة البقرة فيها آية سيدة أي القرآن لا تقرأ في بيت فيه شيطان إلا خرج منه! آية الكرسي".

“Narrated from Abi Sholih from Abu Hurairah said, actually the Prophet PBUH said: al there is the excelent verses in Baqarah chapter, if recite in house that there is Satan in it, he will get out.”¹⁸

In *Fadlail al Qur'an* (the exelence of the Qur'an), *Wakalah* (representation) and characteristic of Iblis chapter, Imam Bukhari writes that:

قال عثمان بن الهيثم حدثنا أبو عمرو حدثنا عوف عن محمد بن سيرين عن أبي هريرة قال: وكلفني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بحفظ زكاة رمضان فأتاني أت فجعل يحثو من الطعام فأخذته وقلت: لأرفعنك إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: إني محتاج وعلي عيال ولي حاجة شديدة. قال: فخليت عنه. فأصبحت فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "يا أبا هريرة ما فعل أسيرك البارحة؟" قال: قلت يا رسول الله شكا حاجة شديدة وعيالا فرجئته وخليت سبيله. قال: "أما إنه قد كذَّبك وسيعود" فعرفت أنه سيعود لقول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "إنه سيعود" فرصدته فجاء يحثو من الطعام فأخذته فقلت: لأرفعنك إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: دعني فإني محتاج وعلي عيال لا أعود. فرحمته وخليت سبيله فأصبحت فقال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "يا أبا هريرة ما فعل أسيرك

¹⁷Hafiz Ibn Kathir writes, in his commentary on Ayat al-Kursi that the chain of transmission of the above hadith is weak. Ibn al-Jawzi has said that this hadith has been fabricated. (Ibn Kathir, Hafiz, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Under Ayat al-Kursi*, (Riyadh: Dar as Salam), but although the chain of transmission may be weak, surely other, strong hadiths have informed of the excellence and benefits of Ayat al-Kursi. If the above mentioned hadith of the recitation of Ayat al-Kursi after obligatory prayer, being rewarded by one being admitted into heaven without questioning, is fabricated, there is no doubt that Allah Most High will reward greatly, the one who recites Ayat al-Kursi after the obligatory prayer. And Allah Most High knows best. See Sa'idi, Allamah Ghulam Rasul, *Tafseer Tibiyan al-Quran: Tafseer Ayat al-Kursi* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' Turath al Araby), p.

¹⁸ Al Baghowi, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 310

البارحة؟" قلت : يا رسول الله شكنا حاجة و عيالا فرحمته فخليت سبيله. قال: "أما إنه قد كذبتك وسيعود" فرصدته الثالثة فجاء يحثو من الطعام فأخذته فقلت: لأرفعنك إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. وهذا آخر ثلاث مرات أنك تزعم أنك لا تعود ثم تعود. فقال: دعني أعلمك كلمات ينفعك الله بها. قلت: ما هن. قال: إذا أويت إلى فراشك فاقرأ آية الكرسي: { اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ } حتى تختم الآية فإنك لن يزال عليك من الله حافظ ولا يقربك شيطان حتى تصبح فخليت سبيله فأصبحت فقال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "ما فعل أسيرك البارحة؟" قلت: يا رسول الله زعم أنه يعلمني كلمات ينفعني الله بها فخليت سبيله. قال: "ما هي؟" قال: قال لي: إذا أويت إلى فراشك فاقرأ آية الكرسي من أولها حتى تختم الآية: { اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ } وقال لي: لن يزال عليك من الله حافظ ولا يقربك شيطان حتى تصبح. وكانوا أحرص شيء على الخير، فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أما إنه صدقك وهو كذوب تعلم من تخاطب مُدَّ ثلاث ليال يا أبا هريرة؟" قلت: لا قال: "ذاك شيطان".

"Uthman ibn al Haisyam said, narrated to me Abu Umar and Auf, from Muhammad ibn Sirin, from Abu Hurayra RA (Allah be well pleased with him) said: the Messenger of Allah PBUH deputized me to keep Sadaqah of Ramadan. Someone came and started taking handfuls of the Sadaqah, quickly. I took hold of him and said, "By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah." He said, "I am needy and have many dependents." I released him, and in the morning the Messenger of Allah PBUH asked me, "What did your prisoner do yesterday?" I said, "O Messenger of Allah! The person complained of being needy and of having many dependents, so, I pitied him and let him go." The Messenger of Allah PBUH said, "Indeed, he told you a lie and he will return." I believed that he would return again as the Messenger of Allah PBUH had told me that he would return. So, I waited for him watchfully. When he returned and started stealing handfuls of foodstuff, I caught hold of him again and said, "I will definitely take you to the Messenger of Allah. He said, "Leave me, for I am very needy and have many dependents. I promise I will not come back again." I pitied him and let him go. In the morning the Messenger of Allah PBUH asked me, "What did your prisoner do?" I replied, "O Messenger of Allah! He complained of his great need and of too many dependents, so I took pity on him and set him free." The Messenger of Allah PBUH said, "Verily, he told you a lie and he will return." I waited for him attentively for the third time, and when he came and started stealing handfuls of the Sadaqah, I caught hold of

him and said, “I will surely take you to the Messenger of Allah as it is the third time you promise not to return, yet you break your promise and come.” He said, “Forgive me and I will teach you some words with which Allah will benefit you.” I asked, “What are they?” He replied, “Whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat al-Kursi: ‘Allah – There is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting,’ till you finish the whole verse. If you do so, Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you and no devil will come near you till morning.” So, I released him. In the morning, the Messenger of Allah PBUH asked, “What did your prisoner do yesterday?” I replied, “He claimed that he would teach me some words by which Allah will benefit me, so I let him go.” The Messenger of Allah PBUH asked, “What are they?” I replied, “He said to me, ‘whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat al-Kursi from the beginning to the end: ‘Allah – There is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting.’ He further said to me, ‘If you do so, Allah will appoint a guard for you, who will stay with you, and no devil will come near you till morning.’ (Abu Hurayrah or another sub-narrator) added that they (the companions) were very keen to do good deeds. The Prophet PBUH said, “He really spoke the truth, although he is an absolute liar. Do you know whom you were talking to, these three nights, O Abu Hurayra?” Abu Hurayra said, “No.” He said, “It was the Devil”.”¹⁹

From those hadiths we have known, that the verse of the throne is the most excellent verse that has merits. Whoever recites it, Allah will protect them from Satan. But that became a question is how if it stuck on wall for protecting from illness or evil eye (amulet), is it permitted or forbidden? Seeing that part of Jepara society does that. They stick wood calligraphy on their houses walls for amulet.

In *Fatawa Ath-thiflul Muslim*, Syeikh Abdul Aziz al Baz notes that *tamimah*, or that also called by *hirz*, *jami'ah*, amulet or talisman is things that hung on neck or other object for chase evil eye, ill and etc. It is divided into two kinds: *First*, amulet that its usage is forbidden by Islam, it is amulet that comes from names of Satan, bones, nails or writing (*thalasim*). *Second*, amulet that its usage is debated by Islamic scholars, it is amulet that comes from the verses of Qur'an and the praying of prophet.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibnu Hajar, al Hafidz, *Syarh Shohih al Bukhori*, Print. 2. (Cairo: Mathba'ah as Salafiyah). p. 4/568, 6/386, 8/672.

²⁰ Excerpted from Ibn Sa'id Alu Syalwan, Yahya, “150 Fatwa Seputar Anak Muslim”, (Jakarta: Griya Ilmu), p.

Part of Islamic scholars asserts that use Qur'anic verses, include wood calligraphy carving as amulet is permitted. They treat it the same as ruqa' (spells) that permitted with requirement it will not deliver or lead them (who stick it) to *syirik*. They base their opinion on hadith:

روى ابو داود بسنده عن عوف بن مالك قال كنا نرقي في الجاهلية فقلنا يا رسول الله كيف ترى في ذلك فقال « اعرضوا على رقاكم لا بأس بالرقى ما لم تكن شركا ».

“Narrated by Abi Daud with his sanad, from Auf ibn Malik said: in Jahiliyyah era, I ever do ruqyah (reciting prayer for sick man), then I said: Ya Rasulallah, what is your opinion about that? Rasulallah said: show your ruqyah to me and it is doesn't matter if there is no syirik in it.”²¹

But actually, Abu Taimiyah defines *syirik* as take ally for Allah. It became in form of worship the idol, fire (Majusi), stone, tree (animism), or spirit men (dynamism) or asking help or pray to righteous men (prophets, *wali*, martyrs). *Syirik* is divided into two: major (*akbar*) and minor *syirik* (*ashgar*). That included in major *syirik* are *syirik do'a* (pray to other God, beside Allah (35: 13-14)), *syirik niat* (willing to worship to other, beside Allah (11: 15-16)), *syirik tho'ah* (obey to other, beside Allah (9: 31)), and *syirik mahabbah* (place Allah on a par with other in love (2: 165)). Whereas minor *syirik* is divided into *dlahir* (take the oath on name beside Allah and wear necklace for amulet) and *khofi* (doing something in order to heard and praised by others (*riya* and *sum'ah*)). Thus, most of Islamic scholars, forbids it. According to them, sticking any kind of amulets is a big sin that must be avoided. They also based their opinion on:

1. There is no speciality of hadith that permitted Qur'anic verses usage as amulet (*tamimah*). Thus, any kind of amulets have to forbidden based on generality of hadith.

²¹ Abu Daud, *Sunan Abi Daud*, (Bairur: Dar al Kutub Al Araby), vol. 4, p. 12.

روى احمد بسنده عن عقبة بن عامر قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "من علق تميمة فلا أتم الله له ومن علق ودعة²² فلا ودع الله له" وفى رواية أخرى عن عقبة بن عامر قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ

"Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated with his sanad from Uqbah bin Amir RA say: I heard Rasulullah PBUH said: who hang tamimah (amulet), Allah will not complete his affair surely, and who hang wada'ah (mollusk), Allah will give him composure." And in the other narration Uqbah bin Amir RA say: "Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated with his sanad from Uqbah bin Amir RA say: I heard Rasulullah PBUH said: who hang tamimah (amulet), he is do Syirik certainly."²³

روى الترمذى بسنده عن عبد الله بن عقيم قال: ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ شَيْئًا وَكَلَّ إِلَيْهِ

"Imam Tirmidzi narrated with his sanad from Abdullah bin Ukaim RA said: Actually the prophet PBUH said: who hang something (as amulet), he will made reckon on it.

روى ابى داود بسنده عن عبدالله ابن مسعود قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: إِنَّ الرُّقَى وَالتَّمَامِمَ وَالتَّوَلَةَ شِرْكٌ

"Abu Daud narrated with his sanad from Abdullah bin Mas'ud RA said: I heard Rasulullah PBUH said: actually, incantations, amulets and tiwalah is the form of Syirik.

2. Close the way that can mire people into *syirik*. As known that sticking calligraphy carving as amulet will become minor *syirik* (*Syirik asghor*) if who stick it believes that calligraphy is just cause or *wasilah*, who give advantages or disadvantages is Allah. Yet, if who stick it believe that

²² Wada'ah is Good that taken from sea, it like scallop shell. According to Jahiliyyah people it can be used as amulet of the illness.

²³ Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, (Kairo: Muassasah al Qurthubah), v. 4, p. 154-156. This hadits also narrated and asserted as shohih by Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban and al Hakim .

calligraphy it self protect him without Allah intervention, it will become major *Syirik* (*Syirik akbar*).²⁴ Furthermore, if sticking calligraphy carving that consist Qur'anic verses as amulet is permitted, it will make difficulties in differing between permitted amulet that forbidden amulet. Thus, it would better if way that leads people to *Syirik* is locked densely.

Moreover, Asy-Syaikh Muhammad ibn Shalih Al-'Utsaimin Rahimahullah (a preacher of Al-Jami'ul Kabir mosque, in 'Unaizah), said in his sermon, that sticking calligraphy on for protecting self (face saver) and begging Allah blessings trough the Qur'an (*tabarruk*) is wrong. Actually the true protecting and *tabarruk* is by reciting it rightly, articulate it orally, believe it by heart and apply it by body (2: 121). Practically sticking calligraphy on that is pointed to hark back to the Qur'an is not reached. People seldom carry the wind to read that calligraphy (writing), even think about what is consist in. Most of them regard it as decoration or adornment. But actually, the Qur'an is so sublime to be decoration. The Qur'an revealed not to be adornment, it is revealed to be recited, understood and applied in life.²⁵

But a apart from permitted or forbidden, Nasr said that calligraphy preeminent use is the writing of the divine message of the Qur'an, of course, which endowed it with extraordinary strength and transcendent significance. It is not merely an art form but involves divine and moral representations from which calligraphy carving acquires its sublime reputation. From philosophic perspective and the involved meaning, actually calligraphy buries deep meaning. If word is spoken meaning, so calligraphy is a silent meaning. However, although it is silent, it does moving action, its contents deliver the devotee toward understanding and lately it delivers him to obey

²⁴ See Taymiyah, Abu, *Haq al Wadlih al Mubin*, p. 59. Or see also, Abdul Qadir Jawas, Yazid ibn, 2004. *Syarah Aqidah Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka At-Taqwa), p.

²⁵ Mutiara Kata Column, Asy Syariyah Magazine, Vol. I/No. 08/1425 H/2004, p. 74-76, or see also (<http://abumuslimsalafi.multiply.com/journal/item/282>)

the God command. It is the art that express Islamic revelation and explain perception of Muslims soul to God message. It is visual manifestation of spiritual realities crystallization (*al haqaiq*) that included in Islamic revelation. Its letters show power of philosophic and transcendent meaning, spiritual taste and influence of it function. Its beauty which is mixed with spiritual values can give novelty, decorative and religious effect that ideal to reach the top of beauty (God). Trough wood calligraphy carving Jepara society may get beautiful soul, that is light of beauty and truth that comes from God. Calligraphy carving that can be found in houses in entire Jepara is become visual of *dzikr*. It is difficult to know from where it is started and ended. But it's easy to feel that every part of calligraphy has focus and moment that makes gazer spellbound. It is appropriate with *tauhid* understanding that difficult to find where the beginning and the end are. Everything is unlimited. It is a truly deepest soul of calligraphy that then is integrated with illumination.

B. The Interaction Of Jepara Society With The Qur'an Trough Wood Calligraphy Carving

It has been known, that the Qur'an that provides guidances and mercies is the holly book for Muslims (45: 20). Although in different model or capacity, every Muslim has been getting interaction with the Qur'an. It is the heart of Muslims life. It fulfills many of part of functions in Muslims life. They believe that there is no great activity except which God himself engages in. It is evident that activity of committing the Qur'an, reciting, writing, listening and memorizing regarded as acts of great spiritual merit.

Some of the Qur'an phrases are recited at great occasions and in the most humble circumstances of daily life. It is recited in the daily prayers, researched at funerals and memorial rituals, and chanted at the side of the newly born and the ill when they depart from this world, to ease the passage of the departed soul into the next and to provide comfort for those left behind. It is a source of healing and mercy for people of faith (17:82). It is

possessed of enormous power (59:21). A specific verse of it is recited by Muslim housewives when commenced cooking in order to ensure that more people were able to enjoy the meal. Passages from the Qur'an are used to protect from illness or the evil eye, such a few verses containing the prayer that the Qur'an suggests Noah "In the name of God, be its run and its riding at anchor! Behold, my Sustainer is indeed much forgiving, a dispenser of Grace!" (11:41) offered when he entered the ship are stuck on the windcreens of vehicles from Chicago to Jakarta to offer protection to the driver and passengers, palatial mansions in many Muslim countries have the verse "This is an outcome of my Sustainer's bounty" (27:40) stuck on the gates or walls to ward off any evil intention – be it robbery or envy – or to divert any suggestion that the owner's wealth is ill begotten. As for its inhabitants, they believe that protection is offered by pasting a few verses, known as the verses of the Throne – Ayat al Kursi (2:255) – behind the front door.

Moreover, the Qur'an which is creation of Possessor of beauty – who has written beauty upon the face of all things – consist of beautifulness, either language or writing. From language side, language of the Qur'an is considered as a miracle of the Qur'an itself. It has been recognized to have hypnotic qualities. Its awe inducing power is such. It's smooth and calming can move people to tears. Although the Qur'an is relentless in its denial that is poetry and of any suggestion, indeed accusation that there was relationship between Muhammad and Professional soothsayers and singer – *the kahin* – (52:29), much of the Qur'an comprises of intertwining allusions and rhythms in the fabric of art.

While from the writing side, the Qur'an was written in beautiful writing namely calligraphy. Actually, calligraphy is profane thing. It is just beautiful writing that carved on stone, copper, metal, aluminum, ceramic, wood or bamboo, and also drawn or painted on paper, canvas or leather. But because it is a visual form of Allah words that sacred, it can be

transformed into something more than itself, it became sacred. It has same position as the Qur'an. In their shrine called the Ka'ba for example, Muslims revere a sacred blackstone. Though on one level that object remains to this day just a stone, no faithful follower of Muhammad would ever recognize it as that. From the instant of hierophany – from the moment, that is, when Muslims saw it as something touched by the sacred – this profane object was transformed, it became no longer a mere stone but a holy object, an imposing package, we might say, that carries the sacred within. Thus, calligraphy is should be treated with enormous reference. It should be placed on regarded place.

As Muslims, Jepara society really understands about it. They carve calligraphy in various styles, forms and sizes with teak and mahogany wood as the matter, then sell to others and stick it on regarded place of their houses, that is wall that not be stepped by foot. Beside as decoration for their house, calligraphy also used as symbol their faith, and medium for begging Allah's blessings, mercies and protecting. Calligraphy carving is their medium to close to Allah and His Qur'an. In other word, sticking calligraphy is a form of their interaction with the Qur'an.

Based on classification of the Qur'anic Lover – who effort to close to the Qur'an – that Esack, a Contemporary Muslim scholar made, they are the Uncritical Lover, the Scholarly Lover, the Critical Lover, the Friend of the Lover, the Voyeur, and the Polemicist, most of Jepara society are included in the Uncritical Lover who love the Qur'an pot luck. To be with the Qur'an is to be in presence of the Divine. The presence and beauty of the beloved can transport them to another plane of being that enables them to experience sublime ecstasy, to forget his woes, or to respond to them. For them, the Qur'an is everything. It can console their aching heart and can represent stability and certainty in a rather stormy world. As same as the Qur'an, calligraphy carving as a visual manifestation of the Qur'an also occupies the high place in Jepara society heart. Without knowing what kind

of verses that carved, the meaning even the message that included in it, they believe that it has power that can appear Allah blessing and protecting. The important for them is the script appeared to be Arabic and it must have therefore been an excerpt from the Qur'an. Just being from the Qur'an is adequate to warrant being farmed and hung on the wall.