

## **Motivational Messages to Improve Performance in Negeri Lima Menara (The Land of Five Towers) Novel**

**Muhammad Salman Palewai <sup>1</sup>**

**Siti Rugayah Hj. Tibek**

**Fariza Md. Sham**

**Zulkefli Aini**

**Sri Rahmayana Syam**

### **Abstract**

*Negeri Lima Menara (The Land of Five Towers) novel, A.Fuadi's work, has received several awards including a 2010 Khatulistiwa Nominations Award, Favorite Fiction Authors and Books in 2010 by Anugerah Pembaca Indonesia. The novel was first printed in July 2009 and up to March 2012 has been the fifteenth edition. The novel is not only a work of fiction but it can also be categorized as motivational book, hence it is taken from a true story (the author of life's journey) although it has been added with some imagination. He, as alumni of the Islamic boarding school, is very aware of the obligation to preach (dakwah) by the art. Thereby, he makes Novel as a media in spreading pure values. This research aims to convey a message dakwah in the novel. This study found that the content of this novel is full of dakwah messages, but the emphasized message here are the eagerness and discipline for achievement.*

**Keywords:** Negeri Lima Menara Novel, A. Fuadi, *Dakwah* message

### **Introduction**

Islam, as a *dakwah* religion, commands to all believers to carry out the "*Dakwah*" in the sense invite to the good and forbidding evil. This obligation is carried in accordance with the conditions and capacity of every Muslim.

In the normative, *dakwah* is derived from the revelation will never disappear as well as the preservation of the Qur'an. The implementation and strategies can be modified in accordance to the age and changing of times. This is because the categorization of Islam teaching, *dakwah* including worship *ammah* (general) or can be influenced by *ijtihad*.

One of the effective and efficiency *dakwah* approaches to *mad'u*(object of *dakwah*)currently is art. The art meant is *rabbaniyah* characterized which containing the beauty, goodness and truth. To be able to create works as intended the Qur'an as the main model.

A. Fuadi, as Muslim novelist, efforts the art of literature (novel) as a media to invite to the enlightenment of the soul from the dimensions of religion. Inspired by the journey of passed life, he raised the positive things that can be as motivation, reflection, and lesson, like in the story which taught in the Qur'an as well.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D student at Department of Dakwah and Leadership, Faculty of Islamic Studies, The National University of Malaysia, 43600 , Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

## Biography A. Fuadi

Biography of the author is the information about the author's date and place of birth, education, career and experiences. The experiences here are the experiences of life, such as what has been seen, felt, heard and done. To produce literary works such as novels, the experiences can be mixed with the imagination which is derived from sensitivity. It is because there are issues that need to be resolved. (Kamaruddin, 1998)

To be more familiar with the author, the readers should learn the author's biography. By knowing the twists and turns of the author's life, they will more understand the conveyed messages. The authors and their experiences cannot be separated.

Typically, the author will create work based on their own experiences, imagination and creativity. (Abdul Razak, 2008). The selected background of the place, time and people have been ever traversed first, so they will be able to recount in detail and properly.

The highlighted themes, issues and values regard for the author's tendency. The tendency of a writer with a background of religious education, for example, will most likely write religious matters. Therefore, the novels may affect as if the story is written entirely true, in fact there is an element of whimsy. One example is A.Fuadi's novels.

A. Fuadi, a young novelist, was born in West Bayur Maninjau, 1972, Sumatra, not far from the village of Buya Hamka. To fulfill the demand of his mother to continue study in a religious school, he traveled to Ponorogo, East Java. He completed his high school in Pesantren Modern Darussalam Gontor. Then, he continued a Master's Degree at the University of Padjadjaran (UNPAD) Department of International Relations, Bandung, Indonesia. Also he finished his Master's program at the School of Media and Public Affairs, George Washington University, USA, with a scholarship from the Fulbright in 1999.

While as college student, he became a Correspondent and Tempo Voice of America (VOA) reporter. Historical News reported, such as September 11th directly from the Pentagon, White House and Capitol Hill. In 2004, he got the Chevening Award scholarship to study at the Royal Holloway, University of London for the documentary film.

Hence his perseverance to seek scholarship and was always eager to continue his study, then made him gain 8 scholarships to study abroad. He had the opportunity to live and study in Canada, Singapore, The United States and British.

He was the Director of Communications at The Nature Conservancy, an international NGO Conservancy. Now he is busy for writing, being a motivation speaker, as well as establishing a social foundation to help the education of poor people, namely the Komunitas Menara (Tower Community).

Some novels which he has written are *Negeri Lima Menara*, *Ranah Tiga Warna* and *Rantau Satu Muara*. *Negeri Lima Menara* novel was translated into English with the title *The Land of Five Towers* and also was filmed. It has received several awards, namely the *Khatulistiwa* Literary Nomination Award 2010, The Most Favored Book and Writer *Anugrah Pembaca Indonesia* (Indonesian Reader Award)'s 2010. In 2011, He received the *Liputan 6* Award, SCTV for Motivation and Education category. (A.Fuadi:2012).

### *Negeri Lima Menara* Novel Synopsis

*Negeri Lima Menara* novel talks about life's journey of Alif character with his friends while studying at *MadaniPesantren*. The story is inspired by the experience of the author himself, but of course the literary imagination added up with the author's imagination.

Started when Alif, as the only boy of three siblings, had completed his education at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. He, as the brilliant student, received the award at his school farewell night party.

His admiration of Prof. B.J. Habibie, brought him aspire to continue his study at the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB). To achieve his hope, after finishing studying at *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, he wished to continue his study at the Public High School.

What Alif's wish was not as easy as he imagined. His parents, especially his mother, were expecting their excellent boy (Alif) continued to religious education, in hope soon he would become religious leader such as Buya Hamka. His mother's sacred dream had been intended when her son was still in the womb.

He had to obey the will of his mother with the requirement he did not want to attend the school in his own village, but in *MadaniPesantren*, East Java. This decision was taken while he isolated himself in his room because he was frustrated with his mother's desire. Fortunately, a letter came from his uncle who was studying at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. In his letter, he reported that many of his friends in Egypt who were very disciplined and fluent in English and Arabic, they were alumni from *Madani Pesantren*. At the end of his letter he proposed to Alif to study there.

He, by using the three days bus crossing the island of Sumatra, was accompanied by his father went to *Madani Pesantren*. During the trip, Alif still doubted whether it was the best decision, or in tune with the situation to himself. He did not know much of this *pesantren*, the only information he got was from his uncle.

Consequently, while living in *pesantren*, Alif had friends with Atang from Bandung, Raja from Medan, Said from Surabaya, Dulmajid from Madura and Baso from Gowa, South Sulawesi. Every day before sunset they gathered under the tower the place where they planned their dreams, ideals. To other friends called them as tower *sahibul* (fellowship).

The ups and downs they went through in the process of studying. The most prominent feature in the *MadaniPesantren* was the students' ability in English and Arabic fluently. New students were only given four months to use the Indonesian language. After four months, no more tolerated, they must use a second foreign language. Since their perseverance and effective teaching method, eventually all students could communicate with the foreign languages within the limits specified time, including Alif.

The exemplary and life principles were inculcated by their teachers with discipline and sincerity. These principles strongly etched and burned into their souls, so the provision that is applied at each of their steps, and finally delivered accomplish what desired.

Among the principles that affect their lives were *man jadda wajada* (He who gives his all will surely succeed), *i'malū fauqa mā amilū* (going the extra mile), *i'timadu alā nafsik* (stand on their own feet), *man thalaba al-u'lā sahira layāli* (He who wants glory will work late into the night), and *Man sabara zhifira* (He who patient will be fortunate). Among the five principles that affect them the most prominent and often raised each perform activities was *man jadda wajada* especially if the activities require extra struggles and challenges.

### **Dakwah Message in Negeri Lima Menara Novel**

Because he was very impressed with what happened during studying at *Pesantren Darussalam*, A. Fuadi determined to write about the learning process and the *pesantren*. Although at first he was forced to enter *pesantren*, just following the will of his mother, but finally he was satisfied and thanked to his mother for gaining valuable knowledge as provision of life. Initially it will be written in the form of a book, but this time embodied in the form of the "*Negeri Lima Menara*" novel.

The desire to write is only for sharing to the society is a part of *dakwah* (encourage the good and forbidding the evil) with the hope of making it as motivation, *ibrah*(lesson) as the author's own experience. Based on the writer's analysis and after studying this novel, there were some noble values that can be as motivation for the readers, such as disciplinary, eagerness, *dua* (pray), hope, and friendship.

## Increasing Achievement Motivation

Human entrusted as God's vicegerent on earth. To be honorable discharge, man equipped with various potentials such as spirit, mind, the heart, passion, as well as physical endurance. Moreover, the most valuable things a man is accompanied by scriptural guide. However, this potential is not function automatically, but requires a struggle for every owner to expand itself with a capital base that has been given. For those keen to develop their power to fix themselves, the more likely to succeeding fulfill the mandate of his caliphate.

Through self-reformed based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, it will produce faithful, knowledgeable, work, steadfast and sincere *ummah* (human). These characters are the power to control self and mobilizing efforts on track to achieve the tenets of true life. These qualities were fundamental strength for the successful task and to overcome the obstacles that interfere with the goal.

Real effort that must be done is use the time optimally, because it is very valuable capital for all of humanity. Success or failure of every human being is the extent to which they fill the time positively.

Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi advised, time is more valuable than gold. Gold is just material and time is much more valuable than all the holy stones. Therefore, time is a human life. If someone removes the time, means removes his own life. The biggest mistake which is done by a man is the rights of the time. The greatest neglect is the neglect of time, that mistake is greater than the neglect of property.

In Islam, the time is very valuable, because God swears to it. He vowed to time parts like the dawn (*fajr*), the sun (*dhuha*), late afternoon (*asar*), evening, and day. It is to remind people to pay attention to the time and to think those function of diversities of time.

In the *Negeri Lima Menara* novel, author embedded those principles through some storylines and personality of some characters.

Narrated that one special person in the learning process in *Madani Pesantren* was the extra night classes where teacher accompanied students in a relaxed atmosphere. At that time they usually repeated and explored what had been learned in the morning and also prepared for tomorrow. They discussed and anyone could ask directly to their teacher and the teacher was happy to answer their questions.

One night, their teacher (Ustad Salman) came in to the class carrying a pile of thick books and said that he would read to students the pearls from the stories of these leaders' lives, by showing off the books: *Mandela: The Biography*; *BJ Habibie, Mutiara dari Timur (The Pearl from East)*; *Bung Hatta, Pribadinya dalam Kenangan (Him in Memory)*, *Martin Luther King, Jr: Stride Toward Freedom* and *Mohammed of Man of Allah*.

"Akhi, do you know what makes successful people different than ordinary people?" Ustad Salman asked rhetorically.

"According to the book I am reading, there were two most important in preparing for success. One is going the extra miles. Never settle for average. If other people learn for one hour, study for five. If others run two kilometers, run three. If people give up in 10 seconds, don't give up until 20 seconds. Always try to be more than ordinary. Therefore, let's make going *the extra* mile part of our culture, and give more initiative, time, effort, determination and so on than others. Then you will be successful." (A. Fuadi: 2012)

Through the character Ustad Salman, author inserted catchphrase that contain work ethic messages. The essence of the message is overstate the effort and use the time more than others on typically, this is a requirement to gain the success and privileges than the average people.

The phrase is an elaboration of the principles taught by the Qur'an in utilizing the best time. One of God's word on the matter as follows. (al-Qur'an Surah al-Insirah, 94:7)

The meaning of this sentence "When you have the spare time (when you were busy), then (be earnest work) until you get tired, or establish (a new task) to be real. Similarly he correlating with the Prophet organized the followers to emulate God in His character and attitude according to His ability as a creature. And the one that needs to be emulated is the attitude of God described in the surah Ar-Rahman (55) verse 29 which means every moment He (God) is in a bustle. (M.Quraish Shihab:2009)

This ayah provides guidance that if the work is not just work carelessly. But working in earnest. Similarly, no room for the unemployed during the remaining time, because after finishing one bustle then demanded doing other strenuous or produce real work, to mold the destiny.

A high work ethic and discipline in the novel were shown in various descriptions of student activities at *Madani Pesantren*. And linked to the principle of life imparted by teachers *man jadda wajada*.

Narrated, the first material that students received in class is motivation to live or principle of life. It affects and always appears well from teachers and from the students themselves to encourage their enthusiasm. This principle is the growing confidence of every individual to manage their own destiny, that the success in their own hands. In various other storyline constantly reminded sentence motivation, especially if the activity reflects the need strongly enthusiasm, such as language proficiency or exams.

This principle of life is an implementation of Allah's words, (al-Qur'an Surah Al-Ra<sup>c</sup>du, 11:13). Based on this verse can be understood that fundamental change is a man himself. Human color of their life whether good or bad, appropriate to their needs. Also it shows that the change is dictated by God and undertaken by man. This verse explains that the changes made by God will not happen until they have worked (Rugayah, 1997). Through the character of Kiai Rais, the author reinforced this message,

"Don't hope the world will change, but we have to be the change. Remember that my children, Allah said He will not change people's fate, until the people themselves make the change. If you want something and want to be something, don't just dream and pray, but make it, change it, do it here. And now!" (A.Fuadi: 2012)

The verse indicates, God swt has set a rule in nature, commonly known as the *Sunnatullah*, which is universally and finite. Anyone who is on the road to success and according to sunnatullah, Allah swt will give him. And who ignores, will be ignored latter.

Then through character Kiai Rais author showed, the outcomes must be reached with high motivation and determination. After that translated in concrete with hard work.

"And no less important, for the new children, you only have four months left in which you may speak Indonesian. After four months, everyone must speak English and Arabic, 24 hours a day. Believe that you can if you try. Foreign languages are the keys to unlocking the doors of the world. (A.Fuadi: 2012)

After setting a target for a compulsory foreign language in four months, then new students devoted all their potential through the process with a very disciplined and a variety of language learning method. Here is a picture of how the students learned the language.

"Imagine, this really was a learning process that used all senses. Yelling new vocabulary words at the break of dawn, forcing ourselves to understand and put it into our sentences, then seeing how it was spelled and finally tying it into our deepest memory by writing it down. We did this every day, seven days a week. It was a simple method that was very strong and helped to embed the new language into our subconscious, so it would never forgotten. "

"That wasn't all though, we don't know who ordered it, but most of us brought dictionaries. If not an actual dictionary, definitely a *mufradat* book-a notebook that was cut to be smaller so that it was thinner and easier to bring everywhere-we could just tuck into our pants or shirt pockets. Students were often seen with *mufradat* books in their hand in line for the shower, line for food, walking, even among sport activities. We were crazy about enriching our vocabularies." (A.Fuadi:2012)

Until one student expressed Arabic language unconsciously even for chatting. Through the success, the author repeated powerful sentences inductively.

"Kiai Rais' voice full of enthusiasm rang in my ears:"Set your strong intention, work hard, and pray, slowly but surely, what you strive for will come to be. This is God's law." (A.Fuadi: 2012)

Setting a goal to reach a certain hope in certain time, Allah S.W.T. stated,(alQur'an Surah al-Hashar, 59:18). This verse reminds people often imagine his record book and pay attention to details stockpiles practice sheet to see how much supply is provided for tomorrow. Therefore, people should be cautious and remember Allah. In the following verse of the Qur'an reminds not to be like those who forgot Allah does not complete the obligation. (Sayyid Qutb 2000). Therefore, whoever always pays attention to their success in the hereafter would be motivated to write as part of worship and it can add a lot of good reward.

In addition to the expression of *man jadda wajada* as locomotion, that is just another expression of strength burn *manthalaba Ula Sahira Lail*, and *i'malū fauka Mā amilū* or *ijtahidū fauka mastwa al-ākhar* and when this Arab proverb collaborate in the soul of the *MadaniPasantren* students, so the author narrated:

"Never before in my life had I seen people studying together in such large numbers in one place. At *Madani Pesantren*. People studied all the time, everywhere. We were able to read while walking, riding bikes, in line for the bathroom, in line for food, while eating, even while dozing off. Our spirits got higher when exam time came. We urged ourselves to go beyond the normal limits to find new, higher limits." (A.Fuadi: 2012)

Narrated that one month before the final exam, students will follow a six-level exams were gathered in a hall to review their lesson from the first floor to the end.

"The hall continually buzzed with the of hundreds voices studying to face the final people learn to face the final examination. Lively and noisy. At a glance, this looked like a refugee camp of scientist and scholars. Anywhere I looked, there were tables cluttered with piles of books, glasses of coffee, and clothes draped over them, and hundreds of young men busy in discussion or solemnly reading textbooks. To brighten up atmosphere, we hung motivational banners on he walls with saying like: "*Man Thalaba ula Sahira Layali*," "A thick book is begun with the first letter on the first page," and of course, "*man jadda wajada*."

The pulse of the hall really beat 24 hours a day. There were some people who studied all day and slept at night, but there were also those who loved to study at night and sleep all day. (A.Fuadi: 2012)

Picture of the dynamics, work ethic and discipline in *MadaniPasantren* in this novel is a reflection of the normative teachings of Islam in response time. Malik Bin Nabi advised like quoted by M. Quraish Shihab simultaneously dawn is exclaimed: "O son of Adam, I am a new creature witness, use me as I will not return until the Day of Judgement". (M.Quraish Shihab:2000)

The author described the mood of separation when it slid message in tune with expression.:

"Then my turn arrived, and Kiai Rais hugged me tightly as if I were his only son about to head off to war. "My Boy, good luck. Life is only once, so live meaningfully," he whispered in my ear. All I could say was, "Please bless me Kiai, thank you for your sincerity". I bit my lips, which had begun to quiver, touched by the embrace of the teacher I admired most. (A.Fuadi: 2012)

The phrase "Good luck. Life is only once, so live meaningfully" this is a very good advice and worth transcendental. Time is a human capital. When it is not filled positively, it will pass you by.

Through this novel the author wanted to show that a high work ethic to derive meaning from the time a spiritual approach is the key to success to celebrate the glory of eternity. Also the message that each Muslim avoid wasting of time. The Qur'an explicitly condemn people who occupies himself without purpose.

### Conclusion

Start by good intentions to spread good values and coupled with knowledge of literary then produce the brightening heart and mind work. This work as well as providing lessons that preaching in general can be done by everyone in according to a given profession and the ability of the Creator.

A. Fuadi was given an ability to process the words and he used it for the *dakwah* field. Through his writing he conveyed the spiritual messages as a part of the vicegerent task. This is also a lesson to other professionals to drive ourselves creations engage in doing good and prohibit evil according to the capacity and capability of each.

From this study, it can be cited studies that *dakwah* messages of Islam is so broad and infinity. Islam is not understood as simply perform the ritual *mahdha* only such as prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage, but beyond of that all the virtue values can deliver for people to achieve His blessing. Included in this case, discipline and determination are also be a part of worship and is used as the *dakwah* messages too.

### References

Al-Qur'an Al-Karim

- Khalid, As-Sa'ad Shaikh. (2003). Kumpulan Ceramah Pilihan Shaikh Al-Qaradhawi. Terj Khalifurrahmaan Fath: Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar.
- A. Fuadi. (2012). Negeri Lima Menara, Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Umum.
- Husin, Kamaruddin Hj. (1998). Kaedah Pengajaran Kesusasteraan, Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bhakti.
- Shihab, M. Quraish. (2000). Wawasan Al-Quran: Tafsir Maudhu'î atas pelbagai Persoalan Umat. Bandung: Mizan.
- Shihab, M. Quraish. (2009). Tafsir Al-Mishbah Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.
- Razak, Mohd. Kasiem Abdul. (2008). Penghayatan Novel Ekspedisi. Selangor: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- al- Sābūny, Muhammad Āli. (1992). Sahwatu al Tafāsir Tafsir li al-Qurān al-Karim, juz 1,2,3. Bairut: Dār-al-Fikri.
- Nizam, Mohd Khairul. (2012). Motivasi Gaya Rasulullah. Selangor-Malaysia: PTS Millennia SDN BHD.
- Qutub, Sayyid. (1992). Taswīr al- Fanny fī al-Qur'ān. Bairut: Dār al-Shurūq.
- Tibek, Siti Rugayah Hj. (1997). Perubahan Sosial Menurut Al-Qur'an. dalam Dinamika Dakwah dalam Masyarakat. Selangor : Jabatan Pengajian Dakwah dan Kepimpinan UKM.