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SUNDANESE CULTURAL ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN TAFSIR ALQURAN: A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE INTEGRATION OF RELIGION AND LOCAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT: This study is based on the importance of the relationship between local culture and the interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly in the context of Sundanese culture. This research aims to examine how Sundanese cultural values are adapted in the interpretation of the Qur'an and how this interpretation contributes to the preservation of local culture. This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature study method to analyze the relationship between interpretation and Sundanese culture through the perspective of cultural anthropology. The findings indicate that Ahmad Sanusi's interpretation not only serves as a medium for Islamic preaching but also plays a role in preserving Sundanese culture. These are three strategies: tahmil, tahrim, and taghyir; this is reflected in the use of the Sundanese language, the undak-usuk basa (language hierarchy) system, and social values such as silih asah, silih asih, and silih asuh (mutual sharpening, mutual caring, and mutual nurturing). Additionally, Ahmad Sanusi incorporates local cultural elements, such as tawasul and wayang golek performances, as relevant preaching media for the Sundanese community. Thus, the interpretation of the Qur'an not only serves as an explanation of the sacred text but also as part of a cultural heritage that reflects local identity, proving that Islamic teachings can harmonize with local wisdom without losing their universal values.

Keywords: Ahmad Sanusi, Cultural Anthropology, Local, Qur'anic Interpretation, Sundanese Culture.



ABSTRAK: *Kajian ini dilatar belakangi oleh pentingnya keterkaitan antara budaya lokal dan penafsiran Al-Qur'an, khususnya dalam konteks budaya Sunda. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana nilai-nilai budaya Sunda diadaptasi dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an serta bagaimana tafsir tersebut berkontribusi dalam pelestarian budaya lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka untuk menganalisis hubungan antara tafsir dan budaya Sunda melalui perspektif antropologi budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tafsir Ahmad Sanusi tidak hanya menjadi sarana dakwah Islam, tetapi juga berperan dalam melestarikan budaya Sunda. Ada tiga strategi dalam penafsirannya; yakni tahmil, tahrir, dan tagyir. Hal ini tercermin dalam penggunaan bahasa Sunda, sistem undak-usuk basa, serta nilai sosial seperti silih asah, silih asih, dan silih asuh. Selain itu, Ahmad Sanusi mengakomodasi unsur budaya lokal, seperti tawasul dan pagelaran wayang golek, sebagai media dakwah yang relevan dengan masyarakat Sunda. Dengan demikian, tafsir Al-Qur'an tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai penjelasan terhadap teks suci, tetapi juga sebagai bagian dari warisan budaya yang mencerminkan identitas lokal serta membuktikan bahwa ajaran Islam dapat berharmoni dengan kearifan lokal tanpa menghilangkan nilai-nilai universalnya.*

Kata Kunci: *Antropologi Budaya, Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Ahmad Sanusi, Budaya Sunda, Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an.*

INTRODUCTION

Undak usuk basa (language etiquette or linguistic decorum) is frequently employed in daily communication. This becomes important as an expression of respect and mutual appreciation. One aspect of etiquette that exists in Sundanese culture is *babasan* and *paribasa*. Both are products of Sundanese cultural society.¹ This can be found in literary works and religious literature, one example being tafsir (Qur'anic commentary) books. Generally, the tafsir books we encounter are written in Arabic, based on their authors being of Arab descent. However, over time, there has been localization of previously written interpretations. Furthermore, interpreters have emerged from various regions, such as Java, Minang, Sunda, Bugis, and others.²

Previous scholars in studying the development of tafsir in Indonesia have focused more attention on works in Malay Indonesian. This is understandable given that Islam entered the archipelago through Malay-speaking regions, which was the *lingua franca* at that time. However, such focus pays less attention to interpretations in regional languages which, although circulating within more limited scope, had influence in their time, such as Sundanese tafsir that developed during the colonial period.³ The tradition of writing Qur'anic interpretation in Sundanese reached its

¹ Ade Sutisna, "Aspek Tatakruma Masyarakat Sunda Dalam Babasan Dan Paribasa," *Lokabasa* 6, No. 1 (2015): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.17509/Jlb.V6i1.3137>.

² Helmi Sumyati, "Unsur Budaya Dalam Tafsir Sunda (Studi Kitab Tafsir Ayat Suci *Lenyepaneun Karya Mohammad Emon Hasim*)," *Skripsi Universitas Islam Negeri (Uin) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta*, 2023, 5, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/72875>.

³ Jajang A Rahmana, "Kajian Al-Qur'an Di Tatar Sunda Sebuah Penelusuran Awal," *Suhuf* 6, no. 01 (2013): 197–224, <http://jurnalsuhuf.kemenag.go.id/suhuf/article/view/27>.



peak in the early 20th century, when Haji Hasan Mustapa composed *Qur'anul Adimi* using Pegon script. During the same period, Ahmad Sanusi enriched the treasury of Sundanese tafsir with several of his monumental works, including *Raudhatulirfan fi Ma'rifati Al-Qur'an* (1931).⁴ These works reflect creativity in using local language born from the diversity of interpretive backgrounds, forming a distinctive horizon of Qur'anic understanding.

The tafsir *Raudhatul Irfan Fi Ma'rifati Al-Qur'an* by Ahmad Sanusi occupies an important position in the history of Sundanese language tafsir tradition. As a complete interpretation covering 30 juz, this work became a historic achievement amid the pesantren tradition that rarely produced complete interpretations at that time. Writing in Sundanese using Pegon script and employing the *ijmali* method (global interpretation) made this book easier to understand and accept, both by pesantren circles and the general public.⁵ The compilation method that combined oral and written transmission, accompanied by active involvement of students in the documentation process, made this book a significant primary source in the treasury of Islamic intellectual history in the Sundanese region.⁶ Ahmad Sanusi endeavored to construct Qur'anic meaning by contextualizing Qur'anic cultural values into local culture. This strategy is evident in the use of linguistic etiquette in presenting his interpretation, which represents a form of respect for Sundanese cultural tradition.

Ahmad Sanusi successfully integrated Islamic teachings with local Sundanese values, such as the concepts of *silih asih*, *silih asah*, and *silih asuh* which are life guidelines for Sundanese society in building harmonious social relationships. He also utilized the Sundanese language system, including *undak usuk basa* (language stratification), in his interpretation to show respect for the politeness norms prevailing in Sundanese society.⁷ This interpretation not only strengthens religious understanding but also enriches cultural dimensions through the integration of local values in Qur'anic interpretation.⁸ Therefore, it is important to study this interpretation through the perspective of cultural anthropology to reveal how Sundanese culture influences the construction of meaning in Qur'anic interpretation and how this interpretation contributes to the preservation of local values.

Previous studies on this research include several works. First, "Methodology of Archipelago Scholars' Interpretation in Pasundan Land (Study of Tafsir Books *Rawdhat Al-Irfân and Malja' At-Thâlibîn* by KH. Ahmad Sanusi)," written by Dedi

⁴ Miftahul Falah, *Riwayat Perjuangan K.H. Ahmad Sanusi* (Bandung: Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia Cabang Jawa Barat, 2009).

⁵ Falah, *Riwayat Perjuangan K.H. Ahmad Sanusi*.

⁶ Mafri Amir, *Literatur Tafsir Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mazhab Ciputat, 2013).

⁷ Sutisna, "Aspek Tatakrama Masyarakat Sunda Dalam Babasan Dan Paribasa."

⁸ Jajang A Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur'an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 79-99, <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/journal-of-quran-and-hadith/article/view/1164>.



Kuswandi and Abu Maskur.⁹ The difference between this author and previous research lies in the study approach; this research discusses Cultural Anthropology while the previous researcher discussed tafsir methodology. Second, "Understanding the Qur'an with Local Wisdom: Sundanese Cultural Nuances in Sundanese-language Qur'anic Interpretation," written by Jajang A Rohmana.¹⁰ The difference between this author and previous research lies in the study scope; previous research examined several Sundanese tafsir books while this research focuses on only one book. The problems to be investigated in this research are "How are Sundanese cultural values integrated in Qur'anic interpretation?, and how does this interpretation contribute to the preservation of local culture?" The purpose of this research is to analyze how Sundanese cultural values are integrated in Qur'anic interpretation and how this interpretation contributes to the preservation of local culture.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with library research method. This approach was chosen because it is relevant for exploring cultural meanings and symbols in tafsir texts, particularly in *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* by Ahmad Sanusi, through the perspective of cultural anthropology. The primary data source in this research is the tafsir book itself, which is analyzed textually to identify the integration of Sundanese cultural values in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses.¹¹ Data collection techniques are conducted through indepth study of the tafsir manuscript and relevant literature, while data analysis techniques are performed descriptively and qualitatively through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The selection of this method is based on the need to understand meaning construction that is contextual and historical, as well as to trace how local culture is used as an instrument of da'wah (Islamic preaching) in regional language tafsir works.¹²

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Ahmad Sanusi

Ahmad Sanusi (born September 18, 1888, in Cantayan Village, Cibadak, Sukabumi and died July 31 1950) was a scholar, educator, and prolific writer from West Java. Since childhood, he was affectionately called "Uci" and grew up in a pesantren environment supervised by his father, K.H. Abdurrahim. He pursued religious education at various pesantren in West Java before continuing his studies

⁹ Dedi Kuswandi and Abu Maskur, "Metodologi Tafsir Ulama Nusantara Di Tanah Pasundan," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* Volume. 1, no. 1 (2022): 1-17, <http://jurnal.stiq.assyifa.ac.id/index.php/alfahmu/index> Metodologi.

¹⁰ Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur'an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda."

¹¹ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yogyakarta: Buku Obor, 2008).

¹² Rahmadi, *Rahmadi, Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian* (Banjarmasin: Antasari Press, 2011).



to Mecca in 1909. There, he studied under several renowned scholars, such as Syaikh Ali al-Maliki and Syaikh Mahfudz Termas.¹³ Upon returning from Mecca in 1915, Ahmad Sanusi returned to his hometown and began teaching at Pesantren Cantayan. In February 1935, he established Pesantren Gunung Puyuh in Sukabumi. He was widely known for his simple and communicative teaching methods, which made it easier for students to understand religious material.¹⁴ In addition to being an educator, Ahmad Sanusi was also known as a highly productive writer. From 1914 to 1950, he produced hundreds of written works in Arabic and Sundanese. Some of his important works include *Nahratu Dargham*, *Tasyqiiqu al-Auhaam*, *Maljau ath-Tholibin*, and *Raudhatul Irfan fi Ma'rifat al-Qur'an*. These works were published by the Gunung Puyuh Pesantren Foundation.¹⁵

The Book of *Tafsir Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an*

The tafsir *Raudhatulirfan fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* is divided into two volumes. The first volume covers the interpretation of Qur'anic verses from juz 1 to juz 15, while the second volume continues the interpretation from juz 16 to juz 30.¹⁶ The writing of the first volume was led by Ahmad Sanusi, assisted by 30 of his students. They systematically followed the process of reading, recording, translating, and explaining each verse of the Qur'an that he dictated to them.¹⁷ The second volume was compiled directly by Ahmad Sanusi. However, the original manuscript suffered damage that made reading difficult. Before the damage worsened, Badri Sanusi, Ahmad Sanusi's second son, had copied the entire text from juz 16 to juz 30. Considering that the writing was deemed unclear, recopying in handwritten form was entrusted to Acep Mansyur, a writer directly chosen by Badri Sanusi. The copying process by Acep Mansyur was done using lithographic printing technique, which was then printed and published by Pesantren Gunung Puyuh.¹⁸

The interpretive method applied by Ahmad Sanusi in the tafsir book *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* is the *Ijmali* method (global interpretation).¹⁹ This method conveys the message and substance of the Qur'an broadly and comprehensively without discussing it in depth. This interpretation only covers

¹³ Annisaa Siti Zuadah, "Kyai Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Kajian Tokoh Ulama Hadis Asal Sukabumi" 24 (2023): 965, <http://conferences.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/gdcs/article/view/1779>.

¹⁴ Jajang A Rohmana, "Polemik Keagamaan Dalam Tafsir Malja' at-Thalibin Karya K.H. Ahmad Sanusi," *Suhuf* 10, no. 1 (2017): 25-57, <http://jurnalsuhuf.kemenag.go.id/suhuf/article/view/207>.

¹⁵ Munandi Saleh, "KH. Ahmad Sanusi Dan Karya-Karyanya: Khasanah Literasi Ilmu-Ilmu Ajaran Islam Di Nusantara," *Jurnal At-Tadbir : Media Hukum dan Pendidikan* 29, no. 2 (2019): 74-114.

¹⁶ Siti Novi Nafisah, "Fikih Dalam Tafsir Berbahasa Sunda," *El-Faqih : Jurnal Pemikiran dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2022): 167-185.

¹⁷ Ifranudien, Solahudin, and Rumba Triana, "Metodologi Tafsir Raudhatu Al-Irfan Fi Marifati Al-Qur'an," *Cendekia Muda Islam* 3, no. 2 (2023): 250, <https://www.jurnal.staialhidayahbogor.ac.id/index.php/cendekia/article/view/4731>.

¹⁸ Abdul Rahman, "Corak (Laun) Tasawuf Dalam Kitab-Kitab Tafsir Karya Kh. Ahmad Sanusi (Study Terhadap Kitab: Raudhatul Irfan Dan Tamsiyatul Muslimin)," *Program Pascasarjana Ilmu Al-Quran Dan Tafsir Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*, 2017.

¹⁹ Ifranudien, Solahudin, and Triana, "Metodologi Tafsir Raudhatu Al-Irfan Fi Marifati Al-Qur'an."



several main aspects with the use of concise and clear language, such as word meanings, asbabun nuzul (reasons for revelation), and brief related explanations. This method appears simple, easy, practical, and quick, making the Qur'anic messages conveyed easier to understand and comprehend by readers.²⁰ Additionally, the tafsir *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* falls into the category of tafsir bi al-ra'yi, which is interpretation that prioritizes the use of reason and the intellectual capacity of the interpreter over narrations from companions or Prophetic hadiths.²¹

The style and interpretive approach applied by Ahmad Sanusi in Tafsir Raudhatul Irfan is inclusive, meaning it is not bound to one particular school of thought. His interpretation is conducted neutrally, without emphasizing specific aspects such as creed, jurisprudence, or Sufism. Instead, he explains Qur'anic verses comprehensively and professionally, adapting to existing needs. For example, verses related to fiqh law are explained in the context of fiqh issues, such as prayer, *zakat*, fasting, and pilgrimage. Similarly, verses discussing muamalah (social transactions), theology, and Sufism are explained in a balanced manner according to their context.²² Upon further examination, Tafsir *Raudhatulirfan fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* tends to be oriented toward a jurisprudential approach. This is evident from Ahmad Sanusi's interpretation of Surah Al-Fatihah, where he explains that reading Surah Al-Fatihah in prayer is obligatory according to the Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools. However, according to the Hanafi school, this is not obligatory, and it is permissible to replace it with other surahs or verses from the Qur'an.²³

Sundanese Cultural Values in the Tafsir Book *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an*

The interaction between the Qur'an and culture first manifested when God's revelation was conveyed and recorded in Arabic text. Although the Qur'an is the word of Allah, the Arabic language used as a communication medium is part of culture that is relative in nature, with a language sign system that is arbitrary or based on social agreement. Therefore, from a certain perspective, the Qur'an can be viewed as part of human culture. Even Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid clearly states that the Qur'an is a cultural product, because fundamentally the Qur'an is language-based discourse, while Arabic itself is a human creation, not God's creation.²⁴

In Sundanese tafsir, culture has a significant impact on the interpreter and his work. Although tafsir generally focuses on explaining Qur'anic text, Sundanese cultural elements often appear in the interpretation. This cultural influence is closely

²⁰ Ahmad Izzan, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir*, 2011.

²¹ Rahman, "Corak (Laun) Tasawuf Dalam Kitab-Kitab Tafsir Karya Kh. Ahmad Sanusi (Study Terhadap Kitab: Raudhatul Irfan Dan Tamsiyatul Muslimin)."

²² Ifranudien, Solahudin, and Triana, "Metodologi Tafsir Raudhatu Al-Irfan Fi Marifati Al-Qur'an."

²³ Muhammad Ruli, "Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda Kajian Metode Dan Corak Tafsir Raudatul Irfan Fi Ma'raifati Al-Qur'an Karya K.H Ahmad Sanusi," *Skripsi Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang*, 2017.

²⁴ Shonhaji And Kiki Muhammad Hakiki, "Antropologi Budaya Jawa Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Jawa Karya Kh. Bisri Mustofa," *Al-Adyan* 14, No. 2 (2019): 309-37, <https://doi.org/10.24042/Ajsla.V14i2.5771>.



related to the language used. As the primary identity of an ethnic group, language reflects culture while functioning as a tool to express, shape, and represent cultural reality. For Sundanese society, language is a means to convey their cultural values and worldview. Therefore, the use of Sundanese language in tafsir not only facilitates understanding of the Qur'an but also revitalizes the Sundanese language, expands its social function, and opens space for the integration of Sundanese cultural elements and local wisdom in tafsir works.²⁵

Including Ahmad Sanusi, when he interpreted the Qur'an, he endeavored to interpret the Qur'an by adapting Qur'anic values to the local cultural context. Additionally, he encouraged courage to enjoin good and forbid evil. In this regard, Sanusi demonstrated his attitude through *tahmīl*, *tahrim*, and *taghyir*.

1 Tahmīl

Tahmīl is an attitude of appreciating and adapting traditions so they can be accepted within the framework of Islamic law, in line with the principle *al-'ādah muḥakkamah* (custom can be used as a legal basis). Therefore, the arrival of Islam was not to eliminate customs ('urf) that had taken root in society, but to guide them to align with Islamic teaching values.²⁶ This attitude is reflected in Ahmad Sanusi's tafsir work, *Raudhatulirfan fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an*, where he demonstrates the *tahmīl* approach by adopting, accepting, and continuing local traditions that do not conflict with Islamic principles.

a. Language Stratification (Undak-Usuk Basa)

Language etiquette or *undak-usuk basa* in Sundanese represents a speech level system that regulates language use based on age, social status, position, level of familiarity, and situational context among speakers, interlocutors, and subjects of conversation. Originally, this system derived from Javanese Mataram culture, which subsequently influenced the Sundanese language.²⁷ The implementation of this language etiquette reflects the strong values of respect in Javanese ethics²⁸, forming part of the feudal cultural heritage of the past.²⁹ Since the Sundanese Language Congress in 1988, the use of *undak usuk basa* in Sundanese is no longer interpreted as a marker of social class differences, but rather as a form of respect and mutual appreciation. Currently, Sundanese generally has two main forms: refined register (honorific language) and casual register (considered less formal or more relaxed), used both in self reference and when addressing others.³⁰

²⁵ Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur'an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda."

²⁶ M Noor Harisudin, "M. Noor Harisudin 'Urf Sebagai Sumber Hukum Islam (Fiqh) Nusantara," *Al-Fikr* 20, no. 1 (2016): 66-86, <http://journal.uin-alaudidin.ac.id/index.php/alfikr/article/view/2311/2240>.

²⁷ Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur'an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda."

²⁸ Frans Magnis-Suseno, *Etika Jawa* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia, 1991), 60.

²⁹ Ajip Rosidi, *Kearifan Lokal dalam Perspektif Budaya Sunda*, 35.

³⁰ Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur'an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berbahasa Sunda."



According to Jajang A. Rahmana, all Sundanese commentators apply language etiquette in their exegetical works, although the degree of refined and casual language usage varies, as previously explained. The commentators attempt to adapt the egalitarian nature of Quranic language to their local cultural context.³¹

1) Language Etiquette in Surah Taha: 92-93:

قَالَ يَهْرُونُ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا ۖ أَ۟لَا تَتَّبِعُنَّ أَفْعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي ۚ ٩٣

"Ngadawuh Nabi Musa, Hei Nabi Harun naon anu ngahalangan anjeun, waktu ningali anjeun ka Bani Israil sasar kupur kabeh. Kana hanteu nurutkeun anjeun ka kaula. **Naha make nyulayaan anjeun kana parentah kaula.**"

"Musa nyarita (ka Harun dina nalika dongkapna ti gunung Thur): "He Harun! Naon nu janten pamengan ka anjeun nalika anjeun ningali ka maranehna parantos sarasab (malusyrik)". "**Bet ngantep henteu tumut kana conto kang rai (dina ambek karana Alloh sareng merangan jalmi- jalmi nu kupur ka Mantennat)?, anapi memang kang raka ngahaja doraka kana parentahan kang rai?**"

"Musa nyarita, "He Harun naon nu ngahalangan ka anjeun, waktu anjeun mireungeuh maranehna geus sarasab?, (Nepi ka) anjeun henteu nurut ka kaula? **Naha anjeun ngahaja wangkelang kana parentah kaula?**"

"Musa nyarita: "Yeuh Harun, naon nu jadi halangan pikeun hidep basa hidep ngajeueung kasasar lampah? Ku naon teu nurut ka kami? **Naha hidep geus ngalawan kana parentah kami?**"³²

Four different Sundanese translations are provided in the original text, each using different levels of formality and terms of address such as *anjeun*, *kang*, *raka*, and *hidep* in the conversation between Prophet Moses and Prophet Aaron, reflecting the language hierarchies in Sundanese culture. These word choices demonstrate social relationships, respect, and authority according to Sundanese communication norms. Through this approach, Ahmad Sanusi adapts Islamic teachings for easier comprehension without losing their essence, showing how Islam acculturates with local culture.

2) Use of the Word *maot* (death) in Surah Al-Baqarah: 154:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ۚ ١٥٤

"Nu *maot* syahid hakekatna hirup di jero kubur".³³

Ahmad Sanusi explains this verse concisely, simply, and in a manner easily understood by Sundanese society. In Sundanese, the word *maot* means to die, pass away, or leave this world, and is generally used specifically for humans. Besides *maot*, there are other terms such as *pupus* and *tilar dunya*, which are more refined forms of Sundanese language.

3) Use of the Word *paeh* (death) in Surah Al-Baqarah: 161-162:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ۚ ١٦١ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ۚ ١٦٢

"Neurangkeun yen sakabeh jalema anu *paeh* kafir eta dila'nat ku Allah ta'ala ku

³¹ Rohmana, "Memahami Al-Qur ' an Dengan Kearifan Lokal : Nuansa Budaya Sunda Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur ' an Berbahasa Sunda."

³² Ahmad Sanusi, *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran* (Sukabumi: Pesantren Syamsul Ulum Gunung Puyuh, n.d.).

³³ Sanusi, *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.



*malaikat ku sakabeh jalma anu ngala'nat (161). Neurangkeun yen sakabeh jalma anu paeh kafir eta langgeung dina naraka moal meunang kaentengan siksaanana (162).*³⁴

The use of *paeh* and *maot* in Ahmad Sanusi's commentary reflects a communicative approach adapted to Sundanese culture and language patterns. In the Sundanese language system, *paeh* is categorized as a crude term generally used to refer to animal death or in certain emotional situations, such as anger. This word choice shows that Sanusi functions not only as a commentator but also as a communicator who understands language dynamics and community psychology. From an anthropological perspective, this word choice can be seen as a form of linguistic adaptation in spreading Islamic teachings. By using terms that are more straightforward and familiar to the general public, his commentary becomes more comprehensible and less foreign. This demonstrates that Islam, in its development in Sundanese land, underwent a process of acculturation with local language and culture.

b. Sundanese Social Life Values (*Silih Asah, Asih, Asuh*)

One of the teaching values that remains alive and thriving in Sundanese society is Trisilas, an acronym for *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh*. The values in this teaching can be understood as community empowerment efforts to enhance individual capacity for more dignified social life. *Silih asih* reflects attitudes of sincere mutual affection, *silih asah* refers to the spirit of mutual enlightenment for improving human quality, and *silih asuh* depicts life filled with harmony and togetherness.³⁵ In his commentary *Raudhatulrifan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an*, Ahmad Sanusi gives special attention to aspects of social life. He elaborates concisely and clearly in his interpretation of Surah Ali Imran: 103-105:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ فُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ١٠٣ وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ١٠٤ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ١٠٥

"Ayat 103 neurangkeun kana asas kahiji dina pergaulan islam nyaeta wajib ngahiji rukun karana eta anu jadi jalan kana meunang ni'mat dunia akherat. Ulah pabarencay bari karana eta jadi jalan kana naraka dunia."

"Ayat 104 nerangkeun kana asas anu kadua tina pergaulan hirup islam nyaeta kudu aya hiji golongan nu nganyahokeun kana sakabeh perkara hade jeung goreng buat di dunia di akherat serta nyebarkeun jeung ngajakan kana eta perkara ka sakabeh umat islam gagara umat islam meunang bagja di dunia akhirat."

"Ayat 105 nerangkeun yen umat islam lamun henteu ngahiji, balik pabarencay bari cerai-berai tangtu meunang siksa anu pohara. Ari anu meunang siksa beungeut-beungetna geuneuk tur hideung, ari anu meunang rahmat eta beungeutna ngampur cahayaan".³⁶

Ahmad Sanusi illustrates how Islamic teachings adapt to Sundanese cultural values, particularly in social aspects such as solidarity, social responsibility, and the

³⁴ Sanusi, *Raudhatulrifan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.

³⁵ Nandlia Fauzia, Sri Maslihah, and Diah Zaleha Wyandini, "Trisilas Local Wisdom Scale (*Silih Asih, Silih Asuh, Silih Asah*)," *Jurnal Psikologi* 5, no. 2 (2020).

³⁶ Sanusi, *Raudhatulrifan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.



detrimental effects of division. In his interpretation of verses 103–105, he emphasizes the importance of unity, social engagement, and the dangers of discord in Islam elements that align with Sundanese cultural values. Verse 103 teaches that togetherness brings blessings, as reflected in the Sundanese principles of *silih asah* (mutual learning), *silih asih* (mutual affection), and *silih asuh* (mutual care). Verse 104 highlights the role of community leaders in promoting righteousness, similar to the responsibilities of *ajengan* and *kyai* in guiding the community. Meanwhile, verse 105 warns that division results in punishment, resonating with the principle of social harmony embedded in Sundanese tradition. This interpretation demonstrates that Islam does not replace local culture but rather reinforces the positive values that have long been rooted in Sundanese society.

c. Tawasul

Tawasul represents a prayer tradition commonly practiced by Sundanese society, particularly when visiting graves or in various other religious rituals. In Java, from sociological and anthropological perspectives, *tawasul* practice is closely related to pilgrimage activities, *nyekar*, or *sowan*. This tradition is generally practiced by traditional scholars, especially from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) circles. Hasyim Asy'ari, founder of NU, defines *tawasul* as an effort to seek Allah's help through intermediaries of figures who hold high positions before Him, such as prophets, saints, and righteous people. However, ancestral spirits are not included in the category that can be used as intermediaries in *tawasul* practice.³⁷

This view contrasts considerably with reformist groups, especially Muhammadiyah and Islamic Union, who tend to have stricter views regarding *tawasul* practice. Referring to Ibn Taimiyyah's thinking, they generally believe there is no *syar'i* basis allowing requests for help from the Prophet at his grave.³⁸ However, Ahmad Sanusi asserts that the concept of *tawasul* he believes in is actually commanded by Allah and contained in Surah Al-Ma'idah: 35:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ٣٥

"Neurangkeun kudu *tawasul* kalawan jalma atawa kalawan anbiya aulia jeung solihin matak yakin sasarna anu ngamusrik ka sagala *tawasul*."³⁹

According to Ahmad Sanusi, *tawassul* refers to the act of seeking intercession through prophets, saints, and pious individuals. This practice has deep roots in local tradition and is often associated with the veneration of ancestors and revered religious figures. However, in his interpretation, Sanusi emphasizes that *tawassul* must be properly understood to avoid falling into *shirk* (associating partners with God). The fundamental principle that must be upheld is the belief that only Allah possesses absolute power. From a cultural anthropological perspective, communities that highly value tradition and religious figures tend to preserve the practice of *tawassul* as part of their spiritual heritage. Thus, Ahmad Sanusi's interpretation reflects an effort to align Islamic teachings with local cultural

³⁷ Yuni Fatonah, "Konsep Tawasul Dalam Al-Qur'an: Kajian Komparatif Tafsir Klasik Dan Kontemporer," *Ulumul Qur'an: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–18.

³⁸ Kuswandi and Maskur, "Metodologi Tafsir Ulama Nusantara Di Tanah Pasundan."

³⁹ Sanusi, *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.



practices while remaining firmly grounded in the core principle of tawhid (the oneness of God).

2 Tahrim

Tahrim refers to the rejection of a tradition that contradicts Islamic law. A custom is deemed unacceptable if it does not align with religious teachings and norms, and therefore cannot be continued. One example that occurred in Sukabumi at the time involved a practice by religious elites (ulama pekauman), in which zakat al-fiṭr and zakat māl which should have been distributed to the rightful recipients (*mustahik*) were instead collected and used to pay the salaries of government officials. Since this practice violated the fundamental principles of zakat in Islam, it was rejected and considered unjustifiable for continuation.⁴⁰ In his commentary *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an*, Ahmad Sanusi explains Surah Al-Baqarah: 42-43:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكُنُوا لِلْحَقِّ وَالْأَنظَمِ تَعْلُمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾
"Ayat 42-43 neurangkeun teu meunang nyampurkeun hak jeung batil. Ngawajibkeun ngalakonan solat fardu. Jeung ngawajibkeun masrahkeun zakat ka mustahik."⁴¹

Ahmad Sanusi voices a form of social critique against practices that deviate from Islamic values. He employs simple yet meaningful language to remind the community not to conflate the pure teachings of Islam with manipulative power practices. His interpretation also reflects the *tahmil* attitude, as previously discussed namely, an effort to harmonize local traditions and customs with Islamic values while remaining firm against any form of deviation. Through an anthropological approach, Ahmad Sanusi's exegesis can be read as both a reflection and a critique of the socio religious structure in Sukabumi. He does not merely interpret the text in a literal sense but also instills a moral consciousness within society to preserve the purity of Islamic teachings amid a complex social reality.

3 Taghyir

Taghyir refers to an approach that accepts traditions which do not contradict Islamic law (*shari'ah*), and subsequently modifies or adjusts those traditions to align with prevailing Islamic teachings and values.⁴² One example of the application of this principle is the Wayang Golek performance tradition. Wayang Golek is a traditional Sundanese performing art that utilizes three-dimensional wooden puppets. These puppets are intricately crafted to resemble miniature human figures and are brought to life by a *dalang* (puppet master), who narrates the story and manipulates the puppets during the performance.⁴³ The Sundanese language *wayang golek* puppet art is believed to have begun developing in West Java during

⁴⁰ Munandi Shaleh, KH Ahmad Sanusi: *Pemikiran Dan Perjuangannya Dalam Pergolakan Nasional* (Tangerang: Jelajah Nusa, 2016).

⁴¹ Sanusi, *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.

⁴² Rosyadi Rosyadi, "Wayang Golek Dari Seni Pertunjukan Ke Seni Kriya (Studi Tentang Perkembangan Fungsi Wayang Golek Di Kota Bogor)," *Patanjala : Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya* 1, No. 2 (2009): 135, <https://doi.org/10.30959/Patanjala.V1i2.239>.

⁴³ Pandam Guritno, *Wayang, Kebudayaan Indonesia dan Pancasila* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1988), 11.



the expansion of the Mataram Sultanate in the 17th century. Nevertheless, the influence of Hindu culture from the era of the Sunda Pajajaran Kingdom has remained persistent in several regions of West Java.⁴⁴

The storyline in *wayang golek* performances generally adapts narratives from *wayang kulit* traditions in Java, particularly classical epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. However, there are notable differences, one of which lies in the naming of the *punakawan* characters in the Sundanese version. The *punakawan* figures Semar, Petruk, Nala Gareng, and Bagong hold a special place in Javanese society and are among the most anticipated characters in every *wayang* performance in Java. Interestingly, these characters do not originate from the original Indian epics. Instead, they are local creations developed through cultural adaptation, crafted to better reflect the diverse social and cultural conditions of Javanese society.⁴⁵ Ahmad Sanusi in Tafsir *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Qur'an* explains the meaning of Surah Al-An'am:32:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ۝ ٣٢

"neurangkeun yen sagala kahirupan dunia anu hanteu dibarengan ku agama eta wungkul hehereyan sabab dimana-mana paeh eta ditinggalkeun sarta terus asup ka naraka. Tatapi perkara akherat eta leuwih alus karana dimana-mana paeh didinya karasa bagjana jeung senengna"⁴⁶

Ahmad Sanusi emphasizes that worldly life, when devoid of religious values, is ultimately meaningless, as true happiness is only attained in the hereafter by those who live according to religious teachings. Within the context of Sundanese culture, this teaching finds resonance in the traditional *wayang golek* puppet theater, which has long served as a medium for Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*). *Wayang golek* is not merely a form of entertainment; it functions as a vehicle for conveying religious and moral values to the community. Many performances contain narratives that incorporate teachings of *tawhid* (monotheism), ethics, and the consequences of virtuous and sinful deeds. The characters ranging from wise figures to antagonists depict the ongoing struggle between good and evil, reflecting the Islamic worldview that life in this world is a test for humanity.

Through his exegesis, Ahmad Sanusi illustrates how local cultural expressions such as *wayang golek* can serve as effective tools for transmitting Islamic values. This reflects Islam's capacity to adapt to Sundanese culture, not by erasing its identity, but by reinforcing the moral and spiritual principles that have long been embedded within the culture.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the tafsir *Raudhatul Irfan fi Ma'rifat al-Qur'an* by Ahmad Sanusi serves not only as a medium for Islamic propagation but also plays a significant role in preserving Sundanese culture. These are three strategies;

⁴⁴ Nur Wachid Hidayatur Rofi', "Nilai-Nilai Budaya Sunda Dalam Kitab Tafsir Malja'u Al Ṭālibīn Fi Tafsīri Kalām Rabb Al 'ālamīn Karya KH. Ahmad Sanusi" (2019).

⁴⁵ Kuswandi and Maskur, "Metodologi Tafsir Ulama Nusantara Di Tanah Pasundan."

⁴⁶ Sanusi, *Raudhatulirfan Fi Ma'rifat Al-Quran*.



tahmil, tahrir, and taghyir, this is evident in his use of the Sundanese language, the hierarchical system of speech levels (*undak-usuk basa*), and the integration of core cultural values such as *silih asah* (mutual learning), *silih asih* (mutual affection), and *silih asuh* (mutual care) within his interpretations. Moreover, Sanusi incorporated local cultural practices, such as *tawasul* and *wayang golek* (traditional puppet theater), as tools for conveying Islamic teachings. Conceptually, the study affirms that Qur'anic exegesis can harmoniously integrate with local cultures without compromising the universal values of Islam. Methodologically, the use of the *ijmali* (general and straightforward) approach, along with regional language application, enhances the accessibility and comprehensibility of Qur'anic messages for lay audiences.

However, this research is limited in its exploration of the current influence and relevance of Sanusi's tafsir among the Sundanese community. Future studies are encouraged to investigate the contemporary impact of Ahmad Sanusi's exegesis in various spheres, including pesantren education, da'wah activities, and social life. Employing field research and interdisciplinary will enrich the understanding of the role of local exegesis in the context of modern societal developments.

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