Qur'anic Interpretation in the Form of Sundanese Poetry: K.H. Ahmad Dimyati's Interpretation of Q.S. al-A'lá/87

Jajang A Rohmana
jajangarohmana@uinsgd.ac.id
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract

This article focuses on Quranic interpretation in the form of Sundanese poetry or Sundanese nadoman. The object is Kitāb al-Tabyīn al-Ajlá wa al-Ahlá fī Tafsīr Sūrah al-A'lá written by K.H. Ahmad Dimyati (1886-1946) a famous scholar from the Sukamiskin Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) in Bandung. This book is a tafsir of surah al-A'la (Q.87: 1-19) in Sundanese with pegon style letters. Compared to Qur'anic translations, poeticized forms of interpretation are not widely practiced in Indonesia, given their attachment to strict poetic rules, such as the number of chants, syllables, and the final rhyme in each chant. However, for Ahmad Dimyati, this type of composition was chosen because, in addition to being popular, the lyrics are also concise, easy to read, and the song is pleasant to hear. This form of pupujian poetry is generally sung in mosques waiting for prayer time to arrive. This study shows that the use of pupujian poetry in interpretation adds to the diversity of interpretation literature in West Java. The provisions of the pupujian rules make it unfree to use extensive and analytical explanations. As a poetry-like composition, this type of Qur'anic interpretation contributes not only to the teaching of the Qur'ān but also to the development of Qur'ānic studies that adapt the poetic form of poetry to the Sundanese literary tradition.

Keywords: *Ahmad Dimyati, Pupujian, Qur'anic Interpretation, Sundanese Poetry*

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on Qur'anic interpretation texts in the form of Sundanese *pupujian* poetry or Sundanese *nadoman*. *Nadoman* from the Arabic *naẓm* (*nadom*, poetry). While the word *pupujian* from Sanskrit, *pujya* means a prayer, an adoration (Rigg 1962, 384; LBSS Dictionary Committee 1985, 401). Javanese Muslims refer to it as *syi'iran* (Arabic: *shi'r*). It is a poetic form of verse that is heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian literary traditions. This form of poetry in the Malay-Nusantara region is known as Malay poetry. The pattern of *kwatren* or *rubā'ī* (four-line rhyme) and the repetition of the final sound (a-a-a-a) are important features of this influence. The object of this article is *Kitāb al-Tabyīn al-Ajlá wa al-Ahlá fī Tafsīr Sūrah al-A'lá* (The book of loose and free explanations in interpreting surah al-

A'la) and the work of K.H. Ahmad Dimyati (1886-1946) or Kitāb al-Tabyīn (Dimyati 1931). The author's name is also known as Mama Gedong or Mama Dimyati, because he had a large house in the neighborhood of the Sukamiskin Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) in Bandung. The location is between the Cicaheum-Ujungberung road, not far from the Sukamiskin Correctional Institution (Lapas). Kitāb al-Tabyīn is a Qur'anic interpretation of surah al-A'la (87: 1-19) written in Sundanese with pegon letters. I used a library research method with a Tafseer Science approach to reveal the source, methodology, style and tendency of the Qur'anic interpretation. In addition, a Sundanese literary approach is also used to examine its poetic aspects based on the rules on the number of stanzas, syllables, and the final rhyme in each stanza.

Pupujian poetry is important to study considering its position as one of the proofs of the pesantren's contribution to the development of Sundanese literature and generally Nusantara literature. It is not only a medium for the preservation of the Sundanese language, but also a space for cultural negotiations between Islam and Sunda (Lahpan 2021, 1-23). Even compared to Sundanese literary genres, such as carita pantun, which are increasingly rarely performed in the community, pupujian still circulates orally and can be heard sung in mosques through loudspeakers (Rosidi 1973; Iskandarwassid 1976; Weintraub 1991). This is strong evidence that pesantren is not only the entry point for the development of Arabic literature into Sundanese literature but also an important institution in its preservation.

In the context of Qur'ānic studies in West Java, this study indicates a long-standing awareness among Sundanese about the importance of capturing influences of Arabic poetic verse and using the same function in Qur'ānic interpretation (Riddell 2014, 15-16). The poetic form is like a return to the influence of Arabic literature packaged in the frame of the literary taste of Sundanese pesantren. In addition, Qur'anic interpretation in the form of *pupujian* may be one of the few forms of poetry in the interpretation of the Qur'an in Indonesia. To this day there are not many Qur'anic interpretations found using poetic language style. Generally, Qur'anic interpretations are written using prose language. This study aims to explain the methodology of interpretation in Ahmad Dimyati's Kitāb al-Tabyīn, Kitāb al-Tabyīn as an interpretative text and lyrics of *pupujian* and the teaching of the Qur'an in pesantren. This will hopefully introduce more widely one of the other forms of Qur'anic interpretation that is rarely known in the archipelago.

In West Java, most forms of *pupujian* and *dangding* poetry are used for Qur'anic translation rather than exegesis. This can be seen, for example, in the works of R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah, K.H. Sirodjuddin Abbas of Cibiru, M. Syarif Sukandi, Enas Mabarti, R. Hidayat Suryalaga and several Qur'anic pupujian invented by Rusyana (Rohmana 2015a; 2020). Meanwhile, there are only poetic translations of the Qur'ān in Indonesian, such as H.B. Jassin's Qur'ān Bacaan Mulia, Muhammad Diponegoro, and Endang Saifuddin Anshary (Rahman 2005). There are also poetic translations of the Qur'ān into Acehnese, such as Mahjiddin Sjaf's Qur'ān and Free-Rhyming Translation in Acehnese (Bilmauidhah 2011). In addition, most tafsir in Indonesia use a non-poetic language style with scientific, popular, and some column and reportage language styles (Gusmian 2003, 165-170).

The Qur'anic interpretation in the form of Sundanese *pupujian* poetry, as well as interpretations in local languages in Indonesia, is one way for Sundanese people to appreciate the position of the Arabic Qur'an which experiences language incompatibility and is considered not comparable to the local language. The perceived impropriety of singing the Qur'ān through the melodies of traditional arts, such as *macapatan, karawitan* or *tembang*, Tafseer songs, and Qur'ānic translations through *pupujian* become an alternative (Rasmussen 2010, 85). In addition, the context of teaching the Qur'ān is also an important reason for using the pupujian form. The lyrics are concise, easy to read, and memorize and the song is pleasant to hear, making the teaching of the Qur'an easier to accept by the community.

Not many scholars have reviewed Ahmad Dimyati's tafsir. Endang Baihaqie's writing, for example, has studied this Kitāb al-Tabyīn with a philological approach. According to him, the manuscript was written by a Kiai who understands Islamic science and deserves the title of Sundanese writer. His work is organized by paying attention to similarity, harmony, similarity of sound, and repetitions of syllables or words at the beginning or end of each line of each stanza (Murwakanti) (Baihaqie 2010, iv). Likewise with Hidayat et al. (2019), only briefly discuss Ahmad Dimyati's works such as Kitāb al-Tabyīn and Tarjamah Khatam Al-Qur'an Manuscripts from the aspect of character building. The writing of Jamaluddin et al. (2022) only focuses on Ahmad Dimyati's translation of QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 22 from the aspect of Arabic and Sundanese language relations. Meanwhile, Ma'mun's writing discusses the Sawaréh Barzanji manuscript which is one of Ahmad Dimyati's works in the field of the Prophet's biography (sīrah) (Ma'mun 2019). Some of

Rohmana's previous studies also focused more on the translation of the Qur'an in the form of poetry of praise, not Qur'anic interpretation (Rohmana 2015b; 2019). This study focuses on the aspects of interpretation methods and the form of pupujian in Ahmad Dimyati's interpretation seen from the approach of Tafseer science and Sundanese literature.

DISCUSSION

1. The Qur'an and Pupujian Poetry in West Java

It is not known when pupujian or *nadoman* spread in Sundanese society. However, judging from its occurrence as an oral tradition in Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren), it developed along with the growing influence of Islam in the Sundanese region in the 16th century, which is believed to have been initially spread by Sunan Gunung Jati (Kistoro 2021). Not only that, the similarity of pupujian lyrics in various places in West Java shows the strong relationship between kiai and santri who are connected to the pesantren network in the Sundanese region (Kusdiana et al. 2013).

Generally, after completing their studies at the pesantren, the santri reside in the community as Quran teachers or mosque priests while pioneering the construction of new pesantren. As a center of religious education that accommodates an environment of students, pesantren prioritizes the mission of teaching, knowledge, and the development of noble morals and skills to support self-reliance. However, more than that, pesantren can spread aspects of culture. Religious literature, such as Sufism, is one of the teaching materials in Kitab Kuning (Manshur 1999, 108). It acts as a local cultural heritage, as well as a place to develop the resources of the surrounding community. The local culture that develops in pesantren consists of forms of oral and written literary traditions, spiritual traditions, martial arts (penca, pencak silat), and theatrical traditions including music, singing, and performances (Romli H.M. 2005, 151). The pesantren's collective culture is generally then embedded in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community, which plays a major role in developing artistic traditions, both from local pre-Islamic and Arabic cultures through the development of popular arts and culture (Rasmussen 2010, 23).

Pupujian poetry is one of the local cultures of pesantren in the form of oral tradition. It is commonly known to be sung in mosques. Data from 1982 states that there are about 32 thousand *Jami' Mosques* in the Sundanese region (Syaqiq 2009, 3). Generally, *pupujian* is

often heard singing every day, especially when waiting for the congregational prayer time between the call to prayer (*aẓan*) and the comma (*iqamah*), especially when waiting for maghrib, isha, and dawn prayers. Some pupujian are also often sung in commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's *maulid* ceremony, *khataman* (completing the recitation of the Qur'an) at weddings, or used to accompany the art of pencak silat (*penca*) played with *terebangan or genjringan* musical instruments. The pupujian song is one of the points that distinguishes secular Sundanese art derived from folk songs from Islamic art developed in pesantren (Patzold 2011, 172-186). Pupujian, as well as the traditions of *marhaba, rudat, kasidahan, tagoni, genjring terebang, Cigawiran,* and the like, are forms of Islamic tradition that enrich the repertoire of Sundanese Islamic literature and performing arts (Rosidi 2011, 90; van Zanten 1987, 42-43; Nurjamin 2005, 158).

In Sundanese literature, *pupujian* is a type of poetry that generally contains praise, prayers, advice, and education with an Islamic spirit. There are many lyrics of Sundanese *pupujian* poems that are similar and spread in Sundanese society, such as the popular *éling-éling dulur kabéh* (remember, dear brothers and sisters), *éling-éling umat* (remember, dear people), anak Adam, *nabi urang sadayana* (our prophet) and many others. Not only does it contain advice, but pupujian is also used to provide religious instruction. Pupujian is strongly influenced by the Arabic poetic tradition, as the large number of stanzas is like the composition (naẓm) in Arabic poetic verse (Rusyana 1971, 1). This can be seen from the number of stanzas, which is mostly four stanzas, syllables (usually eight syllables), and the final rhyme in each stanza (a-a-a-a). Pupujian sometimes also uses Arabic poetry which in the Javanese pesantren tradition is often referred to as *syi'iran*. For example, *ilāhī lastu lil firdausi ahlā* (My Lord, I am not a member of heaven), *allahumma ṣalli wa sallim 'alā* (O Allah, give salawat and salam), and others. In some mosques, Arabic hymns directly taken from Qur'anic verses are also found, such as *istaghfirū rabbakum innahu kāna ghaffāra/yursilissamā' 'alaikum midrāra/wayumdidkum bi amwāliw wa banīn/wa yaj'allakum jannatin/wa yaj'allakum anhāra* (QS. Nuh/71: 10-12). In practice, pupujian can be a kind of religious entertainment media, while conveying and preserving religious values in the language of songs so that they are easily memorized.

One of the contents of Sundanese pupujian is the teaching of the Qur'an which consists of translation and interpretation. The use of the poetic form of pupujian as a

medium for translating and interpreting the Qur'an cannot be separated from the position of the holy Qur'an which has a central role in the life of Muslims. All Islamic communities not only copy the Qur'an, teach the rules of reciting it, but also translate its meaning into the local language as one of the activities needed to study it (Johns 2009, 50).

Sundanese pupujian poems containing Qur'anic translations are generally translations of short surahs, although some are long. From about a dozen translations of the Qur'an published since the early 20th century, there are only about four translations in the form of pupujian poems, namely the Qur'anic pupujian invented by Yus Rusyana, the Qur'anic pupujian by Enas Mabarti, Pupujian Nurul Hikmah by R. Hidayat Suryalaga and the Qur'anic pupujian by KH. Sirodjuddin Abbas from Pesantren Al-Sawiyah Cibiru Bandung (Rohmana 2013, 206; 2019).

Meanwhile, of the dozens of Sundanese interpretation works, Qur'anic interpretation in the form of poetry is only found in Ahmad Dimyati's work. He explicitly calls his work a work of interpretation, as seen in its title: Kitāb al-Tabyīn al-Ajlá wa al-Ahlá fī Tafsīr Sūrah al-A'lá (Dimyati 1931). It cannot be called a work of translation, which tends to be merely transliteration, but it is a work of Qur'anic interpretation because it provides an explanation of the meaning of the verse that no longer refers to the wording of the source language. This style of poetic language for tafsir is hardly found in other regions and areas of West Java. Generally, other regions only use the term poetic translation, not interpretation. This can be seen, for example, in the case of H.B. Jassin's poetic translation of the Qur'an and the Acehnese poetic translation. The same is found in F. Nikayin and Shawkat M. Toorawa's work on the tradition of poetic translations of the Qur'ān in English (Nikayin 2006, 143-153).

Therefore, Qur'anic interpretation in the form of poetry is unique and creative. Although there are very few of them compared to regular prose translations. Apart from the fact that the purpose of *pupujian* is generally praise and advice, composers of Qur'ānic pupujian interpretations that contain teachings tend to involve the emotions of the listener less when sung. Hence, they are less popular than other Sundanese *pupujian* poems that contain religious advice. In addition, not many kyai or santri have documented them in writing. Ahmad Dimyati's work is one of the unique works that are not found in the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia and the Islamic world in general.

2. Profile about K.H.R. Ahmad Dimyati

The name is K.H. Raden Ahmad Dimyati bin K.H. Raden Muhammad bin Alqo. He is also known as Mama Gedong, because his house is quite large (Sundanese: gedong). She is known as a scholar, teacher of *ajengan*, activist of the West Java Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization, and developer of Pesantren Sukamiskin, one of the oldest pesantren in the East Bandung area located not far from Sukamiskin Prison. His father, Muhammad bin Alqo, was the founder of the pesantren in 1881. The name K.H. Ahmad Dimyati is similar to K.H. Ahmad Dimyati (1910-1971 M), the founder of Sirnamiskin Pesantren in Kopo Bandung. Although both were activists of NU West Java, K.H. Ahmad Dimyati Sukamiskin appears to be more senior and was the teacher of K.H. Ahmad Dimyati Sirnamiskin.

After learning religious knowledge from his own father, Ahmad Dimyati then studied at the Keresek Garut Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren Keresek Garut), possibly with Kiai Tobri, the founder of pesantren, who was connected to the genealogy of the descendants of Sheikh Abdul Muhyi Pamijahan, Sunan Gunung Jati and Sultan Maulana Hasanudin (Baihaqie 2010, 48-51). After studying at Pesantren Keresek, Ahmad Dimyati then went to Mecca for about nine years (1902-1911). He reportedly met K.H. Ahmad Sanusi, the founder of the Cantayan Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) in Sukabumi, who was known as an independence fighter and the founder of the organization Persatuan Ummat Islam (PUI). Since Ahmad Sanusi was in Mecca from 1909-1914 M (Rohmana 2015c, 307), Ahmad Dimyati was probably in Mecca around 1909-1911 M. Similar to Ahmad Sanusi, Ahmad Dimyati was most likely also connected to a network of scholars in the Middle East, such as Sheikh Mukhtar 'Atarid Bogor, Sa'id al-Yamani, 'Abdullah al-Zawawi and others who educated many Nusantara scholars in Mecca. After returning from Mecca in 1912, Ahmad Dimyati was then given the mandate to lead Pesantren Sukamiskin. He continued the leadership of his uncle, K.H. R. Muhammad Khalil, who was the son-in-law of K.H. Muhammad bin Alqo, Ahmad Dimyati's father, who led Pesantren Sukamiskin in 1910-1912 (Hidayat et al. 2019; Baihaqie 2010, 50). Pesantren Sukamiskin experienced rapid development during Ahmad Dimyati's leadership. The height of his knowledge made the name of this pesantren grow and was visited by many students from various regions, not only from Priangan, but also Java and Lampung. Ahmad Dimyati also improved facilities for the students, such as the construction of new buildings, boarding houses for

male and female students, renovation of mosques, roads, drainage systems, and the establishment of rice mills and book printing businesses (Compilation Team 2021, 131).

There were thousands of Ahmad Dimyati's students who came from various regions, especially from around Priangan, such as Banten, Bogor, Karawang, Cirebon, Tasikmalaya and others. His famous students include K.H. Muhammad Sudja'i founder of Singdangsari Al-Jawami Cileunyi Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren), K.H. Zaenal Musthafa (a national hero from Tasikmalaya), Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin or Abah Anom from Suryalaya, K.H. Ahmad Al-Hadi from Sukamiskin, K.H. Oma Badrudin from Cigondewah and others. Ahmad Dimyati is rumored to have abilities in traditional medicine. He is also a Kiai who is widely read, so he is very concerned about the reading of the students. He not only wrote books but also developed a book-printing business for students. Generally, the printing press produces books translated from Arabic into Sundanese. The breadth of Ahmad Dimyati's reading makes him known to master various scientific disciplines, including kalam and Islamic philosophy.

Besides leading his pesantren, Ahmad Dimyati was also active in the NU organization. He participated in the fourth NU Congress in Semarang in 1929 representing NU Priangan (Sujati and Thohir 2020, 189; Purnama 2017). He is also rumored to have debated with A. Hassan, the main teacher of the Islamic Union (PERSIS) in Bandung on the issue of heresy and khilafiyah, unfortunately, there is no historical documentary evidence recording the incident. In addition, during the Dutch colonial period, Ahmad Dimyati was a member of the Bandung district council (Lid van de Regentschap Raad Bandung), an institution that accommodated representatives of the Bandung community (Compilation Team 2021, 132).

During 1944-1946, Ahmad Dimyati fled to the South Bandung area, precisely to Pesantren Baitul Arqam in the Pacet area, because Japanese troops bombed around the Sukamiskin Pesantren area. Reportedly, several pesantren facilities were also affected. As a result, the activities of the Sukamiskin pesantren were disrupted. Ahmad Dimyati finally died in the shelter in 1946. His body was buried in Ciseureuh Village, Pacet District, Bandung Regency (Compilation Team 2021, 134).

There are several written works almost all in Sundanese, including the interpretation of the Qur'an in Sundanese in the form of *pupujian* poetry. He named it Sunda Purwakanti Bandingan Surat-Surat which collects interpretations in the form of pupujian short letters

and quotations of certain verses (Dimyati t.th.a). He also interpreted surahs al-A'la and al-Ghashiyah in the Sundanese pupujian format entitled *Kitāb al-Tabyīn al-Ajlá wa al-Ahlá fī Tafsīr Sūrah al-A'lá* and *Bustān al-Fawākih al-Ghaliyyah fī Tabyīn Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah* (Garden of auspicious fruits in explaining surah al-Ghashiyah). In addition, he not only wrote Qur'anic interpretations in the form of pupujian poetry but also in the form of a short commentary, entitled *Surat Qul Huwallāh Aḥad* (Dimyati 1925). He also wrote a polemical book responding to the disagreements surrounding the Tariqah, entitled *Qurrah al-'Ayn fī Ṣulḥ bayn al-Farīqayn* (Conditioning the heart in reconciling the two sects) (Dimyati t.th.b). He also compiled Sundanese Islamic scholarly books, some of which are translations, including *'Aqā'id al-Īmān, 'Ilm al-Bayān, Wirid, al-Barzanjī; Rarakatan Solat, Ājurūmiyah, Sullam al-Tawfīq, 'Aqīdah al-'Awām, Tijān, 'Imriṭī, Safīnah,* and other books. Ahmad Dimyati's books are generally printed by Sukamiskin's al-Ikhtibar printing press using a stencil machine organized by K.H. Ahmad Zarkasyi, his student and secretary from Sindanglaya Bandung. This study will focus on the Kitāb al-Tabyīn in the form of Sundanese *pupujian* poetry.

3. Overview of Kitāb *al-Tabyīn al-Ajlá wa al-Ahlá fī Tafsīr Sūrah al-A'lá*

As already mentioned, Kitāb al-Tabyīn is a work of tafsir composed in the form of Sundanese pupujian poetry. Ahmad Dimyati calls it *reundeuk tedak purwakanti* (*purwakanti* rhyming style). The meaning of purwakanti is "the first" (*purwa*) and "accompanying" (*kanti*), i.e. the former accompanies the latter, both in terms of sound (e.g. the vowel letter "u" in the sentence "*guguling nu digugulung*,", *guling* that continues to be thought about), as well as in terms of literature (e.g. the word "*kapungkur*" in the sentence *sok emut jaman kapungkur, kapungkur nalika abdi,* remembering the past, the past when I was) (Satjadibrata 2005, 311). Therefore, the name *purwakanti* in Ahmad Dimyati's work is intended to refer to an essay that uses the beauty of the sentence form. In the Sundanese literary tradition, *purwakanti* only indicates the beauty of the sentence form, not the type of literary composition. Judging from the various types of essays in Sundanese literature, Ahmad Dimyati's poems in Kitāb al-Tabyīn belong to the category of pupujian or nadoman. This can be seen from the number of stanzas, syllables, and the final rhyme in each stanza.

Kitāb al-Tabyīn is written in Arabic and Sundanese in pegon letters. The type of paper is plain paper with a brownish-colored cover. The manuscript is 24 pages thick with a size of 21 x 17 cm. Each page contains 21 lines. There is a page number at the top of the

manuscript and the word alihan at the bottom. The script used is Arabic and pegon letters that can be read well. This manuscript was originally handwritten with a black ink pen, then later reproduced using a stencil printing machine by Maṭba'ah al-Ikhtibāriyyah Sukamiskin. I received a copy of the printed manuscript of Kitāb al-Tabyīn from Umar Rosadi, a graduate student of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This manuscript has been edited and studied using a philological approach by Endang Baihaqie in 2010.
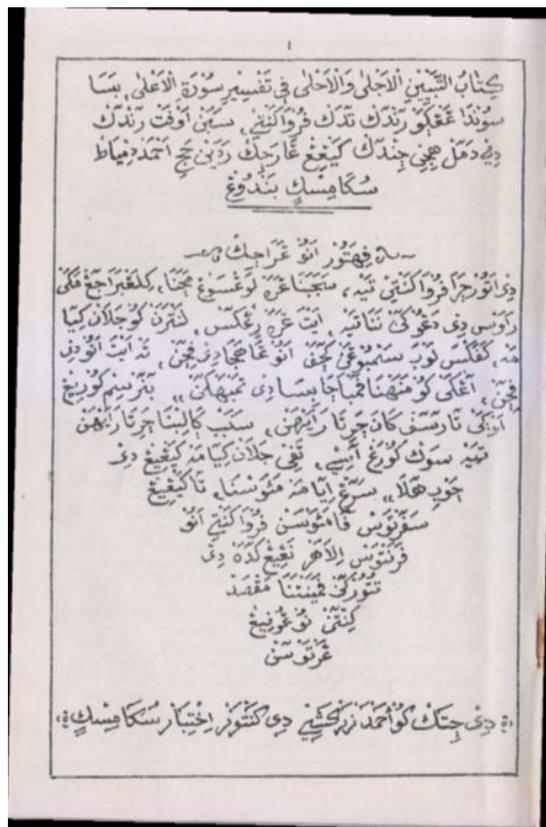
Picture 1. Front cover of Kitāb al-Tabyīn

Ahmad Dimyati uses the technique of brackets to mark the text of the Qur'anic verse and then follows with stanzas of praise poetry as its interpretation. This form of presentation follows the pattern of tafsir al-Jalālain, an Arabic interpretation commonly used in pesantren. Therefore, unlike the stanza format of poetic verse, the stanzas of poetry in the manuscript are not ordered downwards. The total number of stanzas is 325. In the middle of the poetic interpretation, Ahmad Dimyati sometimes inserts prose or non-poetic explanations, for example, the interpretation of verses 4-5 (Dimyati 1931, 7). The copying was done in 1350/1931. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the source of the book used as a reference by Ahmad Dimyati in this interpretation.

In the beginning, as the compiler (*nu ngaracik*), Ahmad Dimyati gives an introduction that his essay is composed using *reundeuk tedak purwakanti* (*purwakanti* arrays). He mentioned that every four *reundeuk* ("stanzas") are made into one (stanza). He went on to say that the purpose of composing the interpretation of Kitāb al-Tabyīn in the *purwakanti* style was not only to make it easy to recite but also to make it beautiful to hear and to make it concise. He stated that by using this (poetic) form, many word connections were deliberately discarded. However, he believes that the discarded words will be added to the reader's feelings. Ahmad Dimyati admits that he dislikes the form of words that are deliberately embellished because according to him, such forms usually lack content. Therefore, this way of writing poetry can be tried first. After all, for him, reading an essay like this is not the same as other similar essays (*pupujian*) that are familiar, but must be followed by a plea so that the listener understands the meaning.

Ahmad Dimyati then explains the identity of surah al-A'la. Then proceed to the core of the surah's interpretation. He interprets the verses one by one sometimes two verses at a time followed by at least three stanzas of praise and at most a dozen stanzas of praise. He marks one comma (,) for array separators and two commas (,,) for stanza separators. The total number of stanzas is 325 stanzas (one stanza consists of four lines) or 1300 lines. The following table details the number of stanzas of poetry used in Kitāb al-Tabyīn:

No	Verse	Number of Stanzas	Sequence of Stanzas
1	1	3	1-3
2	2	4	4-7
3	3	31	8-38
4	4-5	38	39-76
5	6-7	14	77-90
6	8	10	91-100
7	9	8	101-108
8	10	4	109-112
9	11	22	113-134
10	12	8	135-142
11	13	15	143-157
12	14-15	36	158-193
13	16-17	113	194-306
14	18-19	19	307-325

Table 1. Number of stanzas of poems in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

Thus, the description of Ahmad Dimyati's interpretation works in the form of Sundanese pupujian poetry. The Qur'anic interpretation is organized by paying attention to

the rules of the number of chapters, syllables, and the final rhyme in each chapter. As a pupujian, the interpretation is a song lyric that can be sung. However, as an interpretation, it seems to freely express the explanation of the verse. Therefore, the next section will explain Ahmad Dimyati's tafsir from the aspect of interpretation methodology.

4. Methodology of Qur'anic Interpretation

In the study of interpretation, there is an explanation of the methodology of interpretation. It explains the source, method, and style of interpretation. The source of interpretation consists of interpretation by history and reason. The method of interpretation consists of *tahlili, ijmali, muqaran,* and *maudhu'i* methods. The style of interpretation consists of linguistic, Sufistic, philosophical, theological, fiqh, ilmi, and other styles (al-Dzahabi 2000, 199).

Judging from the methodology of interpretation, Ahmad Dimyati's works use the source of interpretation by reasoning (*bi al-ra'y*). This can be seen from his explanation which is dominated by the explanation of reason when interpreting the verse of the Qur'an. In certain parts, Ahmad Dimyati connects with the context of modern and actual situations of his day, although his thoughts tend to be within the limits of traditional beliefs that are far different, for example, from Muhammad 'Abduh, a rational Islamic reformer in the modern era (Hidayah and Maghribi 2023). In addition, in terms of the method of interpretation, Ahmad Dimyati uses the ijmali (global) method in interpreting surah al-A'la. He gives a general explanation of the verse. This is his purpose in compiling his essay to provide an easy and concise explanation. As for the style of interpretation, Ahmad Dimyati does not have a particular style of interpretation, because the explanation is too general, brief, and limited to one sūrah. The following is an example of the interpretation in Kitāb al-Tabyīn of Q.S. al-A'la/87: 1 (Dimyati 1931, 3) which is transliterated from pegon letters to Latin script and then translated into English so that the reader can understand it.

سبح اسم ربك الاعلى			
No	*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*		Translation
1	*Ku manéh kudu bersihan,* *Muhammad, Pangéran manéh,* *nu Agung nu Maha Luhur,* *nu kagungan kaagungan.*		Cleanse by you, Muhammad, your Lord, the Great, the Most High, who has majesty.
2	*Tina sakur patékadan,* *nu ngurangan kaluhungan,* *nyuparkeun kapangéranan,*		Of all beliefs, which diminishes the glory, invalidate divinity,

3	*kaantelan kamahlukan.*		tainted the divinity.
3	*Tegesna tolak lainkeun,* *béjakeun jalanna lain,* *geus kitu tuluy terangkeun,* *patékadan anu bener.*		Strictly speaking, refuse to differentiate, tell the other way, and then explain, the right intention.

Table 2. Poetic interpretation of QS. Al-A'la/87: 1 in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

Ahmad Dimyati explains that the meaning of the verse is a command for Muhammad to purify Allah from all beliefs that can reduce His glory, canceling divinity so that it is not tainted by deity. He emphasizes the importance of rejecting and distinguishing between the divine and the divine attributes. This brief explanation shows an interpretation that tends to be based on in-depth reasoning resulting from Ahmad Dimyati's musings. Therefore, his interpretation seems to tend to use *bi al-ra'yi* sources with *ijmali* method.

Ahmad Dimyati gives a brief and general explanation of his interpretation. He clarifies the meaning of the verse with language that is easy to understand. He not only explains the meaning under the verse's wording but also chooses words that can represent his explanation. The choice of meaning seeks to pursue the meaning as well as the sound of the word that is *murwakanti*. Therefore, the next section will explain the position of Ahmad Dimyati's tafsir pupujian as a tafsir text that contains the meaning of the interpretation as well as the lyrics of *pupujian* songs that are *murwakanti* and beautiful to hear.

5. Kitāb al-Tabyīn as Interpretation Text and Pupujian Lyrics

As already explained, Kitāb al-Tabyīn is a work by Ahmad Dimyati that uses the Sundanese pupujian language style. His work is composed as an explanation of Qur'anic verses by paying attention to the pattern of pupujian poetry which pays great attention to the number of arrays, syllables, and final vowel sounds. It is not just an interpretation as other interpretation books, but also a lyric pupujian that can be sung. Therefore, this section will explain the position of his work in both aspects. There are at least some characteristics of Ahmad Dimyati's tafsir works in terms of their position as tafsir works as well as pupujian poetry works:

a. The interpretation is general and brief

As already explained, Ahmad Dimyati in the interpretation of Kitāb al-Tabyīn and Surat Purwakanti tends to use the ijmali (global) method. Therefore, his interpretation tends to provide explanations of verses in general and not in detail by using short

sentences. This is in accordance to write his work as explained in the introduction to his work of tafsir Kitāb al-Tabyīn mentioned earlier. The following is an example of his general interpretation of the brief language of surah al-A'la/87 verse 10 (Dimyati 1931, 9):

فذكر إن نفعت الذكرى			
No	*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*		Translation
109	*Ku sabab kitu pék manéh, geura prak muruk mitutur, Qur'an geura prak wurukkeun, Saréat geura petakeun.*		Therefore, you, immediately give advice, Qur'an immediately teach, the Shari'ah immediately execute.
110	*Upama jiga teu guna, pédah jiga dibaékeun, nu nampana teu saregep, barang mimiti mah jamak.*		When it seems useless, because it's like you don't care, the one receiving is not willing, at first, it's normal.
111	*Malah tinimbang jol-jol brek, mimitina ngabereyek, lila-lila tingporosot, mening gé kendor ngagémbol.*		Instead of suddenly a lot, at first many people joined, and then back out, it's better to be slow but produce.
112	*Kawit ngetrik eutik-eutik, beuki lila beuki loba, nu ti heula mararaju, ti pandeuri ngadirihdil.*		In the beginning, we invited a few, and then more and more, the first to move forward, the last one pushes forward.

Table 3. Poetic interpretation of QS. Al-A'la/87: 10 in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

The explanation of Surah al-A'la verse 10 shows a brief general explanation of the command to provide a warning. Ahmad Dimyati explains that the effort to warn is by teaching the Qur'an and practicing Shari'ah. However, he then adds an explanation of the process of giving the warning. According to him, if initially many do not care, it is normal. Rather than suddenly many, but then less and less. Better to be slow, as long as it produces. A few at first, but more and more over time. The explanation is delivered briefly and generally as an explanation for the verse he is interpreting.

b. Inconsistency in the application of poetic rules of praise

In his work of interpretation, Kitāb al-Tabyīn, Ahmad Dimyati often chooses certain words that are inconsistent with the rules of pupujian. Although he seems to be trying to conform to the rules of *pupujian* poetry in the number of arrays and syllables, the final vowel is often not fulfilled. This can be seen, for example, when he interprets surah al-A'la/87: 2 (Dimyati 1931, 2):

الذي خلق فسوى			
No	*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*		Translation
4	*Nyaéta anu ngadamel,* *tegesna anu ngayakeun,* *nya kitu deui ngeuweuhkeun,* *mumkin turut sakersana.*		That is, the one who creates, strictly speaking the one who makes, as well as negates, who may follow His will.
5	*Ari nu kasebut mumkin,* *nyaéta mahluk nu bukti,* *jeung nu geus kasebut aya,* *atawa nu baris bukti.*		That which is called *mumkin*, is a real being, and which are already called existent, or that which will be real.
6	*Tuluy jeung mernahkeunana,* *mémérés sapangersana,* *sanggeusna sajero aya,* *atawa keur dina euweuh.*		Then along with the placement, tidying up as He wills, afterward in the position of being, or when it is not.
7	*Jadi naon jiga naon,* *rupa adegna kumaha,* *cicing usikna di mana,* *waktuna tepi ka mana.*		So what, what it looks like, what it looks like, what it looks like, where is the still motion, the time until time.

Table 4. Poetic interpretation of QS. Al-A'la/87: 2 in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

The stanza of pupujian poetry in the form of interpreting surah al-A'la verse 2 shows a choice of editorial words that are not by the rules of pupujian poetry. Although Ahmad Dimyati seems to consistently use four stanzas for one stanza and eight syllables for each stanza, he is less consistent in the uniformity of the final vowel. For example, he sometimes chooses the pattern a-a-a-a, but sometimes e-eu-eu-a, i-i-a-i, a-a-a-eu and o-a-a-a. This shows that it is not easy to explain the meaning of the verse on the one hand and pay attention to the rules of pupujian poetry on the other amidst the difficulty of finding words that match the final vowel sounds consistently. Ahmad Dimyati seems to emphasize the meaning of the verse interpretation rather than the final vowel rule.

c. The truncated sentence

In addition to the general choice of wording and interpretation, Ahmad Dimyati also sometimes uses imperfect wording in one line but then perfects it in the next line. This is what he refers to as an obstacle in the form of "deliberately discarded word connections". That is, the words are truncated because they are forced by the rules of pupujian poetry that peg the number of syllables in each line, so the words are imperfect. However, he believes that the discarded words can be added in the next line or added by the reader's feelings. The following is an example of some imperfectly truncated lines that are

completed by the next sentence when interpreting surah al-A'la/87 verse 3 (Dimyati 1931, 2-3):

	والذي قدر فهدى		
No	*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*		Translation
8	*Jeung Pangéran téh nyaéta, nu masti matok papastén, mumkin nu kasebut tadi, ti kawit tepi ka tungtung.*		And God is, the one who makes sure to set the destiny, perhaps the one mentioned earlier, from beginning to end.
9	*Jeung nu nuduhkeun pamilih, hayang kieu embung kitu, ah dék kieu ah dék kitu, ieu alus itu goréng.*		And that shows choice, want this, don't want that, ah want this, ah want that, this is good, that is bad.
10	*Kadé dék nuding deleka, ka Allah duméh migeuykeun, pamilih nyokot nu goréng, nu ahirna nyilakakeun.*		Beware of accusing treason, to God, for playing games, choosing to take the bad, which ultimately harms.
11	*Karana tuduhan ieu, ku Pangéran disamarkeun, jadi pikeun ngaran mahluk, hal ieu teu kudu nyaho.*		Because of that accusation, the name of God is disguised, so to the name of the creature, it is not necessary to know.
12	*Kana teu kuduna nyaho, éta teu kudu teu ngeunah, sababna ieu panganggo, panganggo ka Pangéranan.*		Because affairs don't have to know, it doesn't have to be unpleasant, because of this advantage, the advantage of divinity.

Table 5. Poetic interpretation of QS. Al-A'la/87: 3 in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

The poem shows several sentences that are truncated and deliberately discarded. For example, the sentence *jeung Pangeran teh nyaeta* (And God is) is then continued in the next sentence. This shows that interpretation in the form of poetry cannot freely make perfect sentences. Therefore, the reader must look at the next sentence and think about its meaning.

d. Actual explanation of his time

In addition, Ahmad Dimyati sometimes also uses actual explanations in his day when explaining Qur'anic verses. He mentions several phenomena heard and seen in his time as parables, such as the existence of cars, electricity, airplanes, telephones, and romofon. This can be seen when he interpreted surah al-A'la/87 verses 4 and 5 (Dimyati 1931, 6):

	والذي أخرج المرعى فجعله غثاء احوى		
No	*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*		Translation
46	*Tapi ieu kajadian, jadi sotéh pamandangan,*		But this incident, can be an illustration,

	ka jalma geus loba dasar, *poko bahan kaimanan.*		for people to have many bases, the basic material of faith.
47	*Iman yén sakur nu jadi,* *teu bisa jadi sorangan,* *tapi aya nu ngayakeun,* *aya anu ngajadikeun.*		Faith is everything that is made, cannot be alone, but someone made it, there is something that makes.
48	*Coba lebah jadi jukut,* *hiji tangkal entong loba,* *mungguh ka jalma nu bieu,* *sok mana teuing anéhna.*		Try it when it becomes grass, one tree, not many, for people just now, where is the strange.
49	*Sabab kapan lebah mobil,* *listrik jeung kapal udara,* *telepon hawa romofon,* *éta téh pokona anéh.*		Because when it becomes a car, electricity and airplanes, the air phone is a romophone, that's just weird.
50	*Lain zatiah-na barang,* *da bakalna mah teu pira,* *beusi waja jeung bangsana,* *bahan sisimpenan gunung.*		Not the substance, because the material is trivial, iron, steel and the like, mountain deposits.
51	*Dipaké sotéh ka héran,* *ngingetkeun kanu nyieunna,* *maké bisa nyieun kitu,* *kumaha petana nyieun.*		Feeling of wonder, remembering the maker, why they made it, how it was made.
52	*Jeung sok dipikagét sotéh,* *ku jalma nu kara manggih,* *tambah manéhna teu bisa,* *nyieun barang rupa kitu.*		And likes to shock, for people who just saw, plus he can't, make such a thing.
53	*Jadi tétéla ka héran,* *bijilna ana ngingetkeun,* *kumaha peta nyieunna,* *mikahéran ka Nu Nyieun.*		So it turned out to be a sense of wonder, came out of remembering, how to make it, wonder at the Creator.
54	*Péndékna datangna anéh,* *mikahéran bubuatan,* *éta téh pangdipianéh,* *ngingetkeun aya nu nyieun.*		In a nutshell, it's weird, wonder at artificial items, it is considered strange, reminded of the one who made.

Table 6. Poetic interpretation of QS. Al-A'la/87: 4-5 in Kitāb al-Tabyīn

The poem shows that Ahmad Dimyati borrowed many images of phenomena that were present in his day. He borrows the existence of cars, electricity, airplanes and other technological tools to philosophically describe the human phenomenon of feeling surprised at man's own making, but not feeling surprised at God's creation. According to him, this is related to the nature of humans who feel strange towards their makers, who are both humans, not their creations. The description shows Ahmad Dimyati's deep observation in understanding verses that are understood philosophically by borrowing the social and technological developments of his time.

6. Praise and Qur'anic Teaching in Pesantren

From a pedagogical aspect, Ahmad Dimyati's Kitāb al-Tabyīn was influenced by the interests of teaching the Qur'an to his students in pesantren. The use of pupujian poetry media is intended to make it easier for students to memorize and understand the tafsir text. The students would sing the stanzas of the poem while understanding the Qur'anic verse. Here, oral tradition in teaching plays an important role in the use of Sundanese poetry in Kitāb al-Tabyīn. As with the interlinear translation used in the teaching of kitab in pesantren (Pink 2020), the use of poetic Qur'ānic commentaries in Sundanese pegon letters also shows the dominance of the teacher (kiai) as the owner of religious authority in the practice of Qur'ānic interpretation.

In addition, this tafsir shows that Ahmad Dimyati was influenced by the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation commonly taught in traditional pesantren. He tries to keep the Arabic text as the main text in brackets, followed by the interpretation on the outside of the brackets. This is common in tafsir al-Jalālain (Nurtawab 2018). By continuing to present the Arabic text, the authenticity and originality of the text is guaranteed. Thus, the text remains authoritative as a source for its readers to use. In addition, by presenting the original text in Arabic which is then complemented by its interpretation in pegon Arabic letters, readers can simultaneously learn Arabic in the presentation of local language interpretations at once (Azra 2009, 440). The following is an example of a picture of Kitāb al-Tabyīn that shows the form of interpretation that uses the technique in brackets:

Picture 2. Interpretation Techniques in Kitāb al-Tabyīn That Use Brackets

Qur'anic interpretation that combines with Sundanese literary works in the form of *pupujian* represents how pesantren circles negotiate Islamic teachings with Sunda (Lahpan 2021, 10). Ahmad Dimyati realized that the tradition of interpretation must be grounded by translating it into the Sundanese literary tradition. Therefore, he then brought together the Islamic Arabic tradition in the form of poetic verse that was widely studied in pesantren with the Sundanese literary tradition in the form of pupujian. Here, Ahmad Dimyati as the caretaker of the pesantren has an important contribution in bringing the two traditions together in the context of teaching Qur'anic interpretation.

This shows the importance of the pesantren's position in maintaining Sundanese culture that is brought together with Islam. This effort is different from the tendency of the Dutch colonialists who tried to keep Sundanese culture away from the pesantren, because Islam, which was increasingly influential among the Sundanese, could only be countered through strengthening Sundanese traditions and culture (Burhanudin 2007, 117). Therefore, it is understandable that the colonial government kept the pesantren away from Sundanese culture. So Sundanese culture developed more among Sundanese aristocrats (*menak*) than among pesantren (Yahya 2003, 279-281).

The pesantren community that kept its distance from Dutch colonial interests tried to negotiate, one of which was by adapting Sundanese literature and culture with Islamic teachings through pupujian or nadoman poetry, dangding or guguritan, the development of pegon letters and others. Therefore, in this context, Ahmad Dimyati's efforts through Kitāb al-Tabyīn tried to show his Islamicity and Sundanese at the same time in order to bring the two traditions together.

CONCLUSION

The above explanation shows that Ahmad Dimyati in Kitāb al-Tabyīn uses the poetic form of pupujian as a means of interpreting the Qur'an. His work is organized as an explanation of Qur'anic verses by paying attention to the pattern of *pupujian* poetry which pays great attention to the number of arrays in a stanza, the number of syllables and the final vowel sound in each stanza. It is not simply a tafsir as other tafsir books are, but also a lyric *pupujian* that can be sung. Therefore, it is understandable if the characteristics of the tafsir use the source of reasoning (*bi al-ra'yi*) with a global interpretation method (*ijmali*). The provisions of the rules of poetry prevent him from using extensive and analytical

sources. However, in the application of the rules of poetry, he sometimes lacks consistency and is forced to discard some words. In addition, as a Sundanese cleric and Muslim who understands pesantren literature, Ahmad Dimyati uses an interpretation that emphasizes rational-reflective explanations that involve describing the context of certain phenomena of his time. This is done so that readers can understand the meaning of the verse in depth with concise and concise language. Ahmad Dimyati's Kitāb al-Tabyīn shows the contribution of Sundanese scholars in applying the wealth of Sundanese literature in pesantren to be brought together into the Islamic scientific tradition so that it can be easily accepted by readers, as is common in the treasures of Islamic literary traditions in various regions in Indonesia.

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