

THE SUNNI IDEOLOGY IN “AL-QUR’AN DAN TERJEMAHANNYA” BY THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

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Abstract:

This study aims to show how Sunni ideology influences the official Indonesian translation of the Qur’an and explore the reasons behind choosing this particular translation ideology. The primary data consist of a sample of several translations of theological verses from the 2019 edition of “Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahannya”. Interviews and relevant secondary data reinforce the primary data. Employing a critical linguistic approach, this article shows that Sunni ideology influences the translation of theological verses, evident in the selection of translated diction and explanations. The inclination towards this ideology is not only due to the majority of the Indonesian muslim society being Sunni but also because Sunnis are perceived as a religious group characterized by moderation (*wasatīyyah*), a main characteristic of Islamic teachings. In addition, Sunni moderation aligns with the Indonesian state model based on Pancasila, which accommodates pluralism. Thus, this study proves the hypothesis that a Qur’an translation is shaped not only by linguistic processes but also by ideological considerations.

Keywords: Ideology of Translation, Qur’an Translation, *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah* (Sunni), Theological Verses.

Ideologi Sunni dalam “Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahannya” Oleh Kementerian Agama**Abstrak:**

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana ideologi Sunni mewarnai dan memengaruhi terjemahan Al-Qur’an resmi negara (Indonesia) dan mengapa ideologi tersebut dipilih sebagai ideologi terjemahan. Data utama penelitian ini adalah sampel beberapa terjemahan ayat-ayat teologis dalam “Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahannya (Edisi 2019)” yang diperkuat dengan wawancara dan data-data sekunder yang relevan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan linguistik kritis, artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa ideologi Sunni mewarnai penerjemahan ayat-ayat teologis, baik melalui pemilihan diksi terjemahan maupun penjelasan. Kecenderungan terhadap ideologi Sunni ini, selain karena merupakan anutan mayoritas masyarakat Indonesia yang multikultural, Sunni juga dipandang sebagai kelompok yang merepresentasikan pandangan keagamaan yang moderat. Selain itu, moderasi Sunni juga selaras dengan model negara Indonesia yang berlandaskan Pancasila yang mengakomodir kemajemukan. Dengan demikian, studi ini membuktikan hipotesis bahwa sebuah terjemahan bukan hanya terkait dengan proses linguistik tetapi juga proses ideologis.

Kata Kunci: *Ideologi Terjemahan, Terjemahan Al-Qur’an, Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah (Sunni), Ayat-ayat Teologis.*

مبادئ العقيدة السنية في الترجمة الرسمية لمعاني القرآن الكريم إلى الإندونيسية

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار مدى تأثير مبادئ العقيدة السنية على الترجمة الرسمية لمعاني القرآن الكريم إلى الإندونيسية، كما تهدف أيضا إلى معرفة أسباب اختيار هذه المبادئ العقيدية لتكون إيديولوجية للترجمة. أما البيانات الرئيسية لهذا البحث فعبارة عن عينات من ترجمات الآيات العقيدية من كتاب «القرآن وترجمة معانيه»، إصدار ٢٠١٩ م. ثم عُززت هذه البيانات بالمقابلات الحوارية والبيانات الثانوية ذات الصلة. واستعانة بالمنهج اللغوي النقدي، بين هذا البحث أن مبادئ العقائد السنية تصبغ ترجمات الآيات العقيدية، سواء من خلال اختيار لغة الترجمة أم التوضيح. الميل إلى هذا المذهب العقدي السني في الترجمة، بصرف النظر عن كونه المذهب العقدي المتبع لغالبية السكان الإندونيسيين، فإنه يُنظر إليه أيضًا كمذهب عقدي يتميز بالإعتدال والوسطية، وهي السمة الرئيسية للتعالم الإسلامي. فضلا عن ذلك، فإن الإعتدال السني يتماشى أيضًا مع شكل الدولة الإندونيسية الذي يقوم على المبادئ الخمسة (البانتشا سيلا) التي تستوعب التنوع. وهكذا أثبت هذا البحث الفرضية القائلة بأن ترجمة القرآن لا تتشكل فقط من خلال العمليات اللغوية، ولكن أيضًا من خلال الإعتبارات الأيديولوجية

الكلمات المفتاحية: إيديولوجية الترجمة، ترجمة معاني القرآن، أهل السنة والجماعة، السني، آيات العقيدة.

Introduction

Sunni ideology significantly shapes the official Indonesian Qur’an translation, which was published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in its 2019 edition (Fath 2020; Tamam 2021). This influence of translation ideology on religious text translations, such as the Qur’an, supports the hypothesis that translation is not simply the act of ‘replacing textual material in a source language with equivalent textual material in the target language’ (Catford 1978: 20). The translation process extends beyond the realm of semantics, encompassing aesthetic, ideological, and political dimensions (Alavi 2012; Lane-Mercier 1997: 43–68). Moreover, translation goes beyond linguistic boundaries, involving the transfer of an entire culture from one context to another (Hervey & Higgins 1992: 31). In this sense, the translator functions within a specific social context and is an integral part of it. Translating, therefore, is inherently an ideological activity (Hatim & Mason 1997: 121).

The Qur’an translation produced by the MORA, entitled *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahannya* (henceforth referred to as QT), was selected as the subject of this research for several reasons. Firstly, QT is recognized as the official Indonesian Qur’an translation and holds significant authority (Johns 1988: 279). Notably, it was translated by collective-collegial teams of various experts. Secondly, QT is considered a representation of Indonesia’s diverse Muslim population and is widely used in society. This recognition came as a result of research conducted by the Qur’anic Mushaf Correction Committee (LPMQ) (Syatri et al. 2017). Thirdly, QT can be seen as a government-sponsored effort to provide Indonesian Muslims with a ‘standard’ reference work, fostering uniformity in national discussions about the sacred text (Feener 1998). Simultaneously, it demonstrates the state’s support for Islamic values and underscores the intellectual prowess of Indonesian scholars (Federspiel 1994: 27, 65). Consequently, QT plays a strategic and substantial role in shaping the religious perspectives and understanding of Indonesian Muslims (Balitbang Kemenag 2019; Syatri et al. 2017).

This study builds upon the research initiated by Ichwan regarding ideological aspects in the QT. Ichwan, using ideological analysis theory, posited that the two editions of QT (1971 and 1991 editions) reflect a shift in power within the MORA, transitioning from ‘traditionalist’ to ‘reformist’ domination. This official state Qur’an translation also exhibits several ideological biases: state bias, reformist bias, and patriarchal ideological bias (Ichwan 2009). Pink, in another study, discusses the translation of various theological verses, such as anthropomorphic verses, in several Qur’an

translations circulating in Indonesia. This analysis encompasses three editions of the QT published in 1965-9, 1989, and 2013 (Pink 2015). In a separate study, Fridayanti & Lu'lu (2022) delve into the translation of the term '*nafs*' in QT's 1990, 2002, and 2019 editions, examining the changes in translation between these editions.

Numerous researchers have conducted studies on QT from various perspectives. Rodin et al. (2021) approached it from the politics of translation, utilizing Foucault's power-knowledge theory. Chirzin (2018) and Ikhwan (2015) conducted comparative analyses of QT (2002 edition) and M. Talib's translation '*Al-Qur'an Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*'. Gunawan (2022) explored the ideological aspects of both translations using the perspective of translation techniques. On the other hand, studies by Lubis (2001), Mansyur (1998), Syihabuddin (2000), Al Farisi (2010, 2016), Thalib (2011) and Muta'ali (2018), generally focus on linguistic aspects with a translation theory approach. Faizin (2021, 2022) and Lukman (2022) conducted a comprehensive reviews of QT. Faizin's work covers the history of QT from the first edition (1965) to the last edition (2019) and the characteristics and changes in each edition. Additionally, Lukman delves into the historical aspects of QT and analyzes the involvement of the state in translation politics in the production of Qur'an translations.

This article aligns with the findings of Rohmana (2019) and Lukman (2022), both of whom assert that Sunni ideology dominates QT. According to Rohmana, this alignment with the majority ideology, particularly in the Sundanese translation of the Qur'an, which heavily relies on QT, is a strategic move by the government. It aims to position itself as the guardian of Islam and the Muslim society, which constitutes the majority of Indonesia's population. On the other hand, Lukman's analysis underscores the role of Arabic commentaries (*tafsir*) with a Sunni ideology as the source for the translation, which naturally influences the resulting translation. This study differs from previous research by revealing the presence of Sunni ideology in the translation of theological verses in the 2019 edition of QT. Consequently, it raises two fundamental questions: First, how does Sunni ideology manifest in the translation of theological verses in the 2019 edition of QT? Second, why was this Sunni ideology chosen for the 2019 QT translation?

Understanding the role of ideology in translation is crucial, as it goes beyond linguistic work and is deeply intertwined with the translator's ideological stance (Tymoczko 2014). Contemporary studies demonstrate a close and significant relationship between translation and ideology. As Aichele (2002) notes, 'no translation is ever complete. The selection of

possible meanings to be excluded or included is always ideological. According to Schäffner (2014: 23), ideology and translation are closely linked, with social agents' interests, aims, and objectives guiding the selection of source text and target text, making any translation an inherently ideological act. Ideological aspects can also be discerned within a text itself, both at the lexical and grammatical levels.

In this study, the term 'ideology' pertains to the system of thought or value system held by the translation teams, serving as a superstructure that informs the translation of Qur'anic verses and produces infrastructure in the form of the resulting translation. Hence, this study not only sheds light on the relationship between translation and ideology but also unveils the ideological model of Qur'an translation, as represented by Sunni ideology, which is perceived as a moderate stance in religious thought.

This research employs a qualitative approach based on library research. The primary data source is *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (2019, improved edition), the most recent refined edition published by the state (the MORA). Primary data includes *mutasyābihāt* verses and verses that describe the relationship between God's power and human freedom. Critical linguistics analysis is utilized to unveil the internal mechanism of the text, inherently influenced by Sunni ideology in these verses. Critical linguistics treats language technically and as an ideological practice with functional implications, examining vocabulary, clauses, and grammar in light of their ideological functions and effects on language. Language is seen not only as the formal structure of language as an abstract system, but also as a functional interaction between language and context, where each language–vocabulary, clauses, and grammar– is understood and criticized according to the context in which the text is present (Eriyanto 2015: 164–165; Fowler 2013: 10).

The translations of the two groups of verses are subsequently analyzed interpretively, employing Sunni ideology (*Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*) as the basis for the analytical framework. This analysis is fortified by various literature related to the research theme. The translated verses are categorized based on the research theme, and the translation data is presented in a systematic and logical narrative.

***Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Sunni)**

The term *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, which translates to 'the people of the Sunnah and the Consensus,' finds its roots in hadiths attributed to Prophet Muhammad. More than eight hadiths assert that *Ahl as-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah* represents the genuine and accepted theology. However, the

interpretation of this term varies among different theological schools, including Salafites, Asy'arites, Mu'tazilites, and Shi'ites. Analyzing the development of Islamic theology across different phases, the concept of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* was initially perceived as the practices and characteristics associated with *ahl al-ḥadīṣ*, particularly in the early era of Islam up to the time of Asy'arism. Subsequently, the term underwent redefinition, solidifying its significance during the rise of the Asy'arist sect at the beginning of the 14th century to the present day (Duhri 2016).

Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah is characterized by two fundamental attributes. First, it entails conformity with the Sunnah (traditions) practiced by the Prophet and the subsequent generations (*as-salaf as-ṣāliḥ*), which are viewed as representing a pure form of Islam, free from any deviations (*bid'ah*). As a result, the majority group, which adheres to the Sunnah and accepts authentic hadith, interprets the term *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* in contrast to the Mu'tazilites, a minority group that is seen as not adhering to the Sunnah and questioning the authenticity of hadith containing the Sunnah. Second, their loyalty extends to the congregation, namely, the broader Muslim community following *as-salaf as-ṣāliḥ*. The term *jamā'ah* (community) underscores their historical awareness rooted in the support of the majority of Muslims. In essence, they are committed to upholding the continuity of the ummah's history to prevent disintegration. *Jamā'ah* stands in opposition to *iftirāq* (division), which leads to fragmentation. Abiding by the consensus of the community serves as a safeguard for the preservation of the Muslim community. *Jamā'ah* also functions as a tool to counter falsehoods (Abrahamov 1998: 5–6). Consequently, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* is a group that adheres closely to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, along with the understanding and practices of the companions in interpreting and practicing Islam (Saleh 2008: 18–22; Wahidin 2017: 135). Several earlier studies suggest that Asy'arites, traditionalists, and Salafites have argued that the term *Ahl al-Sunnah* represents the core of Islamic religion and the standard theology of Islamic faith (Duhri 2016).

In its historical development, *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, in theological terms, encompassed Asy'arites, Maturidites, and Hanbalites, distinguishing them from other theological groups such as Kharijites, Qadarites, Jabarites, and Mu'tazilites. On a political level, Sunni used the term *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* to differentiate themselves from Shi'i, mainly due to differing perspectives on leadership (*imāmah*) following the death of Prophet Muhammad (Saleh 2008). Subsequently, the term *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* expanded into the field of fiqh, referring to four sects, namely: Ḥanafī, Maliki, Shafī'i, and Ḥanbali schools, distinguishing

them from Ja'fari sect school, and others. The success of Asy'arite theology in attracting a substantial following can be attributed to its affiliation with the followers of Shafi'i and Maliki, which have grown significantly as schools of fiqh (Şubhî 1985: 33–34).

Translation of *Mutasyābihāt* Verses

Verses in Qur'an are generally divided into two types: *muḥkamāt* (singular: muḥkam) and *mutasyābihāt* (singular: mutasyābih) (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7). Al-Harārī interprets *muḥkamāt* as verses whose meaning is apparent or verses that contain only one meaning without the need for *ta'wīl*. While *mutasyābihāt* is a verse whose meaning is not clear or which has many possible meanings so that it requires study to understand it in the appropriate meaning (al-Harārī 1995: 33–34; 2004: 182–184). Furthermore, Subhî aṣ-Şāliḥ (1926-1986) categorized some Muslim scholars' opinions regarding Qur'an verse. First, there is a group that believes in the *mutasyābihāt* features and attributes them to Allah. Second, there is a group that interprets the verses and provides an inverted meaning (*ta'wīl*). This argument was conveyed to 'Abd al-Malik bin Yūsuf al-Juwainī (1028-1085), and Abū Muḥammad bin Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭūsī al-Gazālī (1058-1111), as well as recent scholars (*muta'akhhirīn*) (aṣ-Şāliḥ 2000: 1/284). Between these two groups, a third group takes a middle way (moderate, *mutawassiṭah*) by accommodating both methods to avoid misunderstandings (B 2020).

The first group was called *mufawwidah*, or the group that applied the *tafwīd* method (delegating their knowledge of Qur'an meaning to Allah). The *tafwīd* method was generally used by the salaf (the ancient scholars). They believed that Allah has attributes such as a hand, face, and more. Allah is also described as laughing, being angry, feeling jealousy, being alive, never sleeping, and so on. However, they did not attribute qualities like '*kayf*' (asking how), quality, length, color, weight, etc., to Allah. The description of anthropomorphism was accepted without argumentation or materialization. The other group was called the *mu'awwilah*, or the group that applied the *ta'wīl* method. The *ta'wīl* method was used by the *khalaf* group. However, the *ta'wīl* group eventually believed that *ta'wīl* or interpretation was not the exact meaning. They also attributed the ultimate understanding to Allah. Therefore, both groups agreed that Allah is distinct from His creatures. Allah is the transcendence (*tanzīh*), and He is free from all negative characteristics that are contrary to His perfection (al-Būṭī 1997: 138).

When translating *mutasyābihāt* verses related to the anthropomorphic characteristics of Allah, encompassing both the attributes of essence (*ṣifāt*

zātiyyah) and the attributes of activities (*ṣifāt fi'liyyah*), the QT (2019 edition) accommodates two methods/approaches: the *tafwīd* and *ta'wīl* method (Kementerian Agama 2019a: vii). These two methods align with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* method, as stated by an-Nawawī (1233-1277) when commenting on the *ḥadīṣ* narrated by Mu'āwiyah bin al-Ḥakam as-Sulamī in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim about enslaved women. When she asked the Prophet, 'Where is Allah?' he replied, 'in the sky.' According to an-Nawawī, this *ḥadīṣ* is an attribute *ḥadīṣ*. In this matter, there are two groups. The first group has faith in it without delving into its meaning after believing that there is nothing like Allah, and that He is purified (*tanzīh*) from all the characteristics of creatures. The second group interprets it with a meaning worthy of Him (an-Nawawī 1392: 5/24). On the other hand, the dispute between the Salafis and Asy'arites on this issue has recently grown stronger and more contentious, making it essential to reconcile these two groups (Tamam 2020).

However, understanding anthropomorphic verses in *ḥarfīyyah* and textually (*tafwīd*) without *ta'wīl* – whether general *ta'wīl* (*at-ta'wīl al-ijmālī*) or detailed *ta'wīl* (*at-ta'wīl al-taḥṣīlī*) – is not possible. Such an approach can lead to conflicts regarding these characteristics and give rise to contradictions between one verse and another. When addressing the *mutasyābihāt* verses, which may visually appear contradictions in the Qur'an, the *ta'wīl* method is appropriate for reconciling *muḥkamāt* verses with *mutasyābihāt*, both through general and detailed *ta'wīl*. General *ta'wīl* is widely adopted by the majority of the *salaf* scholars. They believe that the verse originates from Allah, and the meaning it contains pertains to the majesty and holiness of Allah, devoid of the characteristics resembling creatures, without specifying a particular meaning. Instead, they relate the meaning of these verses to the *muḥkamāt* verses. In contrast, detailed *ta'wīl* is carried out by interpreting the *mutasyābihāt* verses meticulously, determining their meaning according to their usage in the Arabic language (B 2020; Yanti 2016). This method is highly suitable to follow, particularly when there is a concern that the beliefs of the ordinary people might be shaken, aiming to protect and strengthen them against *tasybīh* (anthropomorphism).

In the QT (2019 edition), a combination of both methods was applied to translate the *tafwīd* meaning while inserting *ta'wīl* meaning, encompassing both detailed *ta'wīl* and general *ta'wīl*. General *ta'wīl* accompanied by suitable explanation about Allah's excellence in brackets and footnotes, was employed to prevent the comprehension of *tajsīm* and *tasybīh* (anthropomorphism). Furthermore, detailed *ta'wīl* was employed

by inserting selected meaning within brackets and footnotes (Tamam 2020, 2021). In detail, the *tafwīd* method was prioritized when the *mutasyābihāt* verses clearly described Allah's attributes (Kementerian Agama 2019a: vii). For instance, a phrase *wajhullāh* in sura al-Baqarah [2]: 115 was translated as *wajah Allah* 'the face of Allah', and then it was explained (in a footnote) that the face of Allah might mean *Zat Allah* 'self of Allah' or *rida Allah* 'pleasure of Allah' (Kementerian Agama 2019a: 23). On the other hand, the *ta'wīl* method was prioritized when the *mutasyābihāt* verses did not clearly depict the attributes of Allah (Kementerian Agama 2019a: vii). For instance, the phrase *wajhullāh* (literally 'the face of Allah') in sura al-Baqarah [2]: 272; ar-Rūm [30]: 38-39; al-Insān [76]: 9, ar-Ra'd [13]: 22, and al-Lail [92]: 19-20 was interpreted as *rida/keridaan Allah* 'pleasure of Allah'. As for the phrase *wajhu Rabbika* (literally 'the face of your God') in sura ar-Raḥmān [55]: 27, it was interpreted as *zat Tuhanmu* 'the self of your God'.

When translating the phrase *yadullāh* (hand of Allah), *tafwīd* and *ta'wīl* methods were employed. The *tafwīd* method was used directly to translate *tangan Allah* 'hand of Allah' in sura al-Ḥadīd [57]: 29 and Āli 'Imrān [3]: 73, emphasizing the gift of Allah. Additionally, the *ta'wīl* method was used when describing Adam's creation with Allah's both hands [*limā khalaqtu bi-yadayya*] (Ṣād [38]: 75), interpreting the phrase as *kekuasaan Allah* 'the power of Allah'. In verses where Allah is described as 'building the heaven/universe with hands' [*was-samā'a banaynahā bi-aydīn*] (az-Ẓāriyāt [51]: 47), the word *aydin* was interpreted as *kekuatan* 'power'. The *ta'wīl* method was also employed when explaining the phrase *yadu l-lāhi fawqa aydihim* 'tangan Allah di atas tangan mereka, Allah's hands are upon their hands' (al-Faṭḥ [48]: 10) by explaining (in footnote) that the commentators (mufasssirs) hold different opinions regarding the *ta'wīl* of this verse. Some interpret it as *kekuatan dan kekuasaan* 'strength and power' of Allah, while others understand it as *pengawasan Allah* 'God's supervision' of the pledge of allegiance given by several people to the Prophet Muhammad (Kementerian Agama 2019a: 747).

The translation of the word *rūḥ* when attributed to Allah in the verses about the breathing of Allah's spirit into Adam was interpreted as *ciptaan* 'creation' (al-Ḥijr [15]: 29; as-Sajdah [32]: 9; Ṣād [38]: 72). The word *rūḥ* (al-Mujādilah [58]: 22) which talks about the spirit of Allah given to believers, was interpreted as *pertolongan-Nya* 'His help'. Meanwhile, the phrase *rauḥillāh* (Yūsuf [12]: 87), which conveys the message of the Prophet Ya'qub to his sons not to despair of *rauḥillāh* when looking for news about their brother (Yūsuf) was interpreted as *rahmat Allah* 'the grace of Allah'. When translating the word *nafs* (self) attributed to Allah, some used the *tafwīd*

method; *diri-Nya* 'His self' (al-An'ām [6]: 12, 54), while others employed the *ta'wil* method; *siksa-Nya* 'His punishment' (Āli' Imrān [3]: 28, 30), depending on the context of the verses.

The QT (2019 edition) employs a combination of both methods (*tafwīd* and *ta'wil*) when translating attributes of actions (*ṣifāt fi'līyyah*). If a verse clearly describes the act of Allah, *tafwīd* is the primary method, as seen in the phrase *an ya'tiyahumu l-lāhu* '*kedatangan Allah*, Allah comes to them' (al-Baqarah [2]: 210). Similarly, the phrase *jā'a Rabbuka* (al-Fajr [89]: 22) was literally (*tafwīd*) translated as *Tuhanmu datang* 'your God comes' without further explanation. In cases where a verse does not clearly show the attributes of Allah, the *ta'wil* method was applied, such as the translation of the phrase *ya'ū amru Rabbika* (an-Nahl [16]: 33) was translated as *kedatangan perintah Tuhanmu* 'your God's (command) comes', with a footnote explaining that the intended meaning was *kedatangan azab Allah* 'the arrival of the punishment of Allah' to destroy them (Kementerian Agama 2019a: 377).

The phrase *istawā 'alā al-Arsy* (al-A'rāf [7]: 54; Yūnus [10]: 3; ar-Ra'd [13]: 2; al-Furqān [25]: 59; as-Sajdah [32]: 4; al-Ḥadīd [57]: 4; and Ṭhā [20]: 5) was translated literally (*tafwīd*) as *bersemayam di atas Arasy* 'established/settled on the 'Arsy'. This translation was explained in the footnote (*ta'wil*) as an attribute of Allah that must be believed in, under the majesty and holiness of Allah (Kementerian Agama 2019a: 214). Moreover, the phrase *istiwā ilā l-samā'i* (al-Baqarah [2]: 29; Fuṣṣilat [41]: 11) was translated as *menuju ke langit* 'go to the sky'.

When explaining an attribute of Allah that manifested Himself on the mountain in sura al-A'rāf [7]: 143, the phrase *tajallā Rabbuhū li l-jabalī* was translated as *Tuhannya menampakkan (keagungan-Nya) pada gunung itu* 'God manifested/revealed (His glory) to the mountain'. A footnote explains that scholars (mufassirs) have different opinions about the phrase. Some argued that it was the 'power and glory of Allah' (*kebesaran dan kekuasaan Allah*), while others stated that it was the 'light of Allah' (*cahaya Allah*). However, it is emphasized that the manifestation of Allah is not the same as the creature; it merely appears under His attribute, a concept beyond the human mind's measurement (Kementerian Agama 2019a: 228).

The method employed by the QT (2019 edition) in translating the attributes of Allah, especially in the verses of the *mutasyābihāt*, represents the Asy'arite view who acknowledge the existence of these attributes and relies on Allah, rather than something else, as the Mu'tazilites believed. According to Mu'tazilites, the word of Allah is an attribute of Allah that existed in Musa's mother when she was pregnant with Musa. Likewise,

kalamullāh, like the Qur'an, is considered something new. Therefore, they deny the attribute in the essence of Allah (Kamarzaman 2019).

Asy'ari scholars preferred Ahmad b. Hanbal's (780-855) interpretation of the the Qur'an verses that appear anthropomorphic. They chose to accept them *bilā kaif* (without asking how), without attempting to understand them beyond their description in the Qur'an and traditions. Prominent Asy'arite scholars such as Abū Bakr al-Bāqillanī (950-1013), al-Juwainī (1028-1085), and others contended that these words must be interpreted metaphorically. The Asy'arite view of the beatific vision (*ru'yā*) was consistent with their overall efforts to avoid anything that may be interpreted as anthropomorphism (*tasybih*) (Halverson 2010: 18–19).

Translation of Predestination Verses and Free Will

The issue of predestination versus free will is one of the most contentious topics in classical Islamic thought. In the ninth century, two opposing views emerged. First, the Mu'tazilites held a rationalist-oriented position that emphasized the centrality of reason as the governing principle in understanding God's role in the universe and regulating human behavior. Consequently, they believe in free will and individual responsibility for moral choices. Second, the *ahl al-ḥadīṣ* emphasized the absolute omnipotence and inscrutability of the divine being, which can only be known insofar as he has revealed himself through the Qur'an. They denied the utility of reason in religious or moral choices, asserting that all human action ultimately represents the will of the creator rather than independent exercise of free will (Lapidus 2002: 89). The concept of free will, as advocated by the Mu'tazilites, without God's intervention, makes human will seem arbitrary and limits God's power beyond human will and freedom. On the other hand, the concept of the absolute will of God, as held by the *ahl al-ḥadīṣ*, renders humans completely devoid of will, contrary to the concept of *taklif*, which imposes religious duties. Their views are also inconsistent with Islamic claims about human freedom to choose their religion (al-Baqarah [2]: 256) (Masrukhin 2020: 127).

In an attempt to reconcile the contradictions between these two views, Asy'ari sought a middle ground that would demonstrate human freedom without diminishing God's authority over humans. The middle doctrine of 'acquisition' (*kasb*) promoted by Asy'ari, posits that human actions are predetermined by God, but it is not predetermined which individual will perform which action. Each individual has several actions at their disposal, and by choosing these actions, whether good or bad, they become eligible for rewards or punishment in the hereafter by God. This concept allows

individual humans to bear responsibility for specific actions, which have been predetermined by God as activities. It serves as Asy'ari's method for reconciling God's justice (preventing unjust rewards or punishments) with God's omniscience (for God to know it all, He must know the future, which implies predetermination) (Woltering 2019: 225–226).

The theory of acquisition (*kasb*) is formed by al-Asy'ari's central principle that God is the sole creator of everything, which reflects his occasionalistic metaphysics. This Asy'ari doctrine is a reaction against the Mu'tazilite's view of human freedom. The Mu'tazilite divides the universe into two distinct realms to justify human liberty. First, the realm that God created. God has complete control over everything here. Second, the human realm. God is not the source of human behavior. People themselves make them. Asy'ari rejects this aspect of Mu'tazilite doctrine because it ascribes to humans a creative power that can only be attributed to God. However, since this power belongs to humans, they can use it. Nevertheless, Asy'ari accepts human free will. Involuntary actions are performed under an impulse that we naturally feel, like shuddering, for example. However, regarding voluntary human actions, Asy'ari makes a distinction: the production of them by God and the acquisition of them by people (Muhtaroglu 2010: 48–49).

When translating verses concerning the power of Allah and its relation to human freedom in the QT (2019 edition), it generally reflects the Sunni perspective, which recognizes human effort and the freedom of action, in addition to God's will. In the translation of these verses, the Sunni ideology is evident through three modes of translation. Firstly, the choice of wording, which conveys the ideology of human freedom. The phrase *wa man yuḍlilillāhu* was translated as *siapa yang dibiarkan sesat oleh Allah* 'who is left astray by Allah' (an-Nisā' [4]: 88; az-Zumar [39]: 23) or *yuḍillullāhu; Allah membiarkan sesat* 'Allah lets go astray' (Gāfir [40]: 34, 74). The choice of wording in these translations emphasizes the ideology of human freedom (free will) over phrases like *Allah menyesatkan* 'Allah misleads', which describes the ideology of predestination (*jabr*).

Secondly, the ideology of human freedom is conveyed through explanations provided in brackets. Verses that state that 'Allah guides whom He wills', were explained in brackets as *berdasarkan kesiapannya untuk menerima petunjuk* 'as their readiness to receive Allah's guide' (al-Baqarah [2]: 142, 213, 272; Yūnus [10]: 25; Ibrāhim [14]: 4; an-Nahl [16]: 93; an-Nūr [24]: 46; al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 56; Fāṭir [35]: 8; al-Muddaṣṣir [74]: 31), or *karena kecenderungan dan pilihannya terhadap kebaikan* 'due to their tendency and their choice towards goodness' (al-Isrā' [17]: 97). Verses that

stated that Allah lets go astray whom He wills, were explained in brackets as *karena kecenderungannya untuk sesat* 'because he tended to go astray' (Ibrāhīm [14]: 4), *karena [berdasarkan] kecenderungan dan pilihannya sendiri* 'based on the tendency and their choice' (asy-Syūrā [42]: 44; al-Muddassir [74]: 31), *berdasarkan pilihannya* 'based on their choice' (Fāṭir [35]: 8), or *karena tidak mengikuti tuntunan-Nya dan memilih kesesatan* 'because they did not follow His guide and chose digression' (an-Nisā' [4]: 143). The verse *inna alladhīna ḥaqqat 'alayhim kalimatu Rabbika lā yu'minūna* [those against whom your Lord's sentence is passed will not believe] was explained in brackets as *menjadi kufur atas pilihan sendiri* 'to be unbeliever as their choice' (Yūnus [10]: 96). While the explanation of the verse *waja'alnā 'alā qulūbihim akinnatan* [We place a covering on their hearts], is *sesuai dengan kehendak dan sikap mereka* 'suitable with their will and their deed' (al-Isrā' [17]: 46).

Thirdly, explanations about human freedom were given using the footnote method. Verses stating that 'Allah lets go astray or He guides' were explained in footnotes, such as 'Allah misleads someone because the person concerned denies His instructions. He gives guidance to someone because of his obedience to His instructions' (ar-Ra'd [13]: 27), 'those who Allah misleads chose the wrong path; meanwhile, those guided by Allah have chosen the guidance path' (al-An'ām [6]: 39), 'a person becomes astray because of his denial and does not want to understand Allah's instructions' (al-Baqarah [2]: 26; al-A'rāf [7]: 186; an-Nahl [16]: 36; and ar-Rūm [30]: 29), 'Allah lets that person go astray because Allah knows that he does not accept the instructions He gave him' (al-Jāsiyah [45]: 23). In at-Taubah [9]: 115, the explanation is that 'a servant of Allah will not be punished by Allah just for their digression unless they violate Allah's commands that He conveyed.'

Explanations provided in brackets and footnotes, along with various diction choices in the QT (2019 edition), underscore the existence of an ideology emphasizing human freedom. These explanations highlight the Sunni doctrine that attributes human guidance or misguidance not solely to God's absolute power, but also to individuals' choices, efforts, and actions, whether good or bad.

Sunni as an Ideology of Qur'an Translation

Qur'an translation holds a strategic role in shaping public understanding. Translation allows people with limited proficiency in Arabic to delve into the teachings of the holy book. As Peter Werenfels (1627-1703) aptly noted, people often seek their own beliefs in scriptures, finding what they are

looking for (Goldziher 2013: 3). Through their understanding, translators and interpreters share a body of values, beliefs and assumptions (Saeed 2006: 115). Therefore, translation can effectively convey the author's ideological interests into the translated text.

The tendency of the translation team towards the views of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Sunni ideology) when translating theological verses in the QT (2019 edition) seems to be based on several considerations. First, Sunni theology, especially Asy'arite theology, has become dominant in the Muslim world and is embraced by most Indonesian Muslims (Azra 2005, 2006). This ideology serves as the theological foundation for defining the identity and religious practices of nearly all Islamic adherents and religious sects in Indonesia (Saleh 2008). NU legally-formally, as written in its statutes, emphasizes that in the field of theology, it refers to Asy'arites and Maturidites (*Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*). Whereas Muhammadiyah uses a different term (*Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa as-Sunnah*), substantively, it does not deviated from the views of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*. Likewise, the Persatuan Islam (Persis) claims to be followers of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* because they always try to eliminate *bid'ah* and carry out religious teachings truthfully (Qomar 2021: 89–96).

Second, Sunni religious views emphasize moderation, balance, justice, and tolerance in all aspects of life (Yasid 2022: 5–6). Sunni positions often aim to find a middle ground and prevent sectarian conflicts (Woltering 2019: 225). This moderation can be seen in the law-making method, which combines texts and reason, as well as in the ability to reconcile revelation with rationality. Such a moderate approach can mitigate both textual and intellectual extremism (Tim Penyusun 2012: 22). Moreover, Asy'arite moderation extends to its openness to other schools of thought (Masrukhin 2020: 96).

Furthermore, Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib (1946-...), Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar (2010-present), formulates the moderation character of Asy'arites theology in its ability to harmonize between two tendencies: the fear of sin and the hope of sinners for Allah's mercy and forgiveness. In the Asy'ari school of thought, even if a person has not repented for a major sin, they remain a believer. If they pass away without repenting, their fate is left to Allah's discretion, whether He chooses to punish or forgive them (aṭ-Ṭayyib 2014: 19–20). Kharijite maintained that committing major sins (*kabā'ir*) was contrary to faith (*iman*) and equal to infidelity. Therefore, the perpetrator of a major sin is a kafir. On the other hand, Murji'ite held that faith and belief are a matter of the heart. One should remain a Muslim if one's faith, an internal affair of the heart, is intact; evil deeds cannot do any harm.

Faith compensates all wickedness. Meanwhile, the Mu'tazites took a middle path in this matter (intermediate position). They maintained that the perpetrator of a major sin is neither a *mu'min*, nor he is a *kafir*, but occupies a position between two positions (*manzilah baina al-manzilatain*).

The multicultural nature of Indonesian society necessitates the recognition of various perspectives and differences, including religious views. Managing this diversity requires an ideology that promotes harmony and peace amidst differences. In this context, the ideology of moderation is ideal, as it respects diversity, avoids extremism, and seeks common ground between opposing viewpoints. Hence, the ideology of moderation can serve as a cultural strategy for nurturing a heterogeneous Indonesian society (Kementerian Agama 2019b: 7 10). This is why Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia is often described as being characterized by peaceful and moderate Islam (Njoto-Feillard 2015). Due to this moderate stance of Indonesian Islam, Newsweek magazine referred to Indonesian Islam in the 1990s as 'Islam with a smiling face,' signifying its moderate and accommodating nature in the modern world, embracing modernity, democracy, plurality, human rights, and other contemporary values (Azra 2005, 2006).

The strengthening of the moderation ideology in the QT (2019 edition) is increasingly understandable, particularly in light of the resurgence of radicalism and religious extremism in the revised edition. Even though, socio-historically, for centuries, Indonesia, with its diversity of religions, cultures, ethnicities, languages, etc., have been able to put forward a moderate model of diversity. On the other hand, one of the causes of religious extremism (*at-taṭarruf ad-dīnī*) is the result of an extreme understanding of religious texts (Qur'an and hadīṣ) (al-Qarḍāwī 2001: 52). Therefore, the ideology of moderation serves as a 'middle way' to bridge the gap between the two extremes; the textualist-scripturalist-literalist approach, which prioritizes text over context, and the de-textualist-liberalist approach, which emphasizes context over text (Mustaqim 2019: 14).

Third, the moderation of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, in line with the Indonesian state model based on Pancasila as the national ideology, aligns with Indonesia's character as a diverse nation where Islam is the most widely practiced religion, but it is not the official state religion. Pancasila, which has been embraced by all segments of society, serves as the common ideological foundation for managing the nation's ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. The principles in Pancasila are generally seen as consistent with the basic teachings of Islam for most Muslims (Azra 2006). This spirit of Pancasila contains

the value of moderation, which makes Douglas Ramage (1995) call Pancasila the 'ideology of tolerance.'

As a basic principle, Pancasila allows for the growth of the moderate character of its people in terms of nation, state, and religion. Based on Pancasila, the state must protect diversity (heterogeneity). In turn, the state's guarantee of pluralism in society will be a suitable medium for the growth of an attitude of moderation, including in religion (Kementerian Agama 2019b: 10, 53-54). Besides that, moderation is needed as an alternative way of de-radicalization to align with Pancasila as the middle ideology and moderate character of the Indonesian nation to become a strategic reference in dealing with radicalism in Indonesia (Nashir 2019: 70).

Conclusion

The ideology of the translation of theological verses in the Qur'an translation by the MORA (2019 edition) reflects Sunni ideology. In this edition, this ideology becomes evident, particularly in the translation of verses and verses pertaining to the relationship between God's power (predestination) and human freedom (free will). The translation of *mutasyābihāt* verses involves the use of *tafwīd* and *ta'wīl* methods, which align with Sunni ideology for understanding these verses. Meanwhile, in translating verses related to God's absolute will concerning human actions, the translation mirrors Sunni theology, especially the Asy'arites views. This theology harmonizes God's power (predestination) and human freedom (free will) through the concept of 'acquisition' (*kasb*).

The preference for Sunni ideology in this translation is justifiable because it serves as a model for the majority of Muslim communities and various religious organizations in Indonesia, particularly in the realm of theology. In addition, Sunni ideology is characterized by moderation (*wasatīyyah*), where *wasatīyyah* itself is the main character of the teachings of the Qur'an 'ummatan wasatān' (al-Baqarah [2]: 143). This moderation aligns well with the diverse nature of Indonesian society, rooted in the principles of Pancasila. Therefore, religious moderation is seen as a 'middle way' for addressing signs of extremism in Indonesia and can serve as a cultural strategy for nurturing harmony within its heterogeneous society. So far, this research has shown that the tendency towards the choice of an ideology indicates that any text, including religious texts such as translations of the Qur'an, cannot be separated from the ideological tendencies of the translator, which are influenced by the socio-cultural of the translator. This study still requires further studies to examine the ideology stored behind

the Qur'an translation by the MORA in other verses, such as political verses, gender, jurisprudence and others. Through this research, the ideology of translation can be dismantled because translation does not only involve linguistic aspects but also involves non-linguistic aspects. Thus, the study of ideology in the translation of the Qur'an is highly recommended. []

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