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## **Astronomy Interpretation in Acehnese Poetic-form; Analysis of al-Baqarah: 189 in Tafsir *Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani Al-Qur'an* by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad**

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### **Abstract**

Many astronomical phenomena (Falak) in the Qur'an are closely related to human activities. The astronomy verses largely determine the determination of worship time. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, one of the Falaq scholars in Aceh, collaborated uniquely with the Qur'an and the Science of Falaq in his interpretation. This paper will discuss the interpretation of *Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Quran* by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, known as Abu Teupin Raya. The methodology of his interpretation will be the fundamental question in this research. Furthermore, this article will find the relationship between the interpretation of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad with a global context when the writing of the tafsir is done. Through Sociolinguistic and literary approaches, this paper argued that presenting the interpretation in the poetic Acehnese language is the advantage of this interpretation. The results are written like a literary poem. The Falaqiyah pattern will stand out in interpreting the Falaq verses. *Second*, Irsyad's choice to opt for a 'free' poetic translation reflects a conscious decision to present the Qur'an's content in a form based on pre-existing Acehnese literary culture. This interpretation is closely related to the advanced Acehnese society to this day.

**Keywords:** Science of Islamic Astronomy; Acehnese Poetic; Tafseer of *Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Quran*; Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad.

## Abstrak

**Tafsir Astronomi dalam Bentuk Puisi Aceh; Analisis al-Baqarah: 189 dalam *Tafsir Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani Al-Qur'an* karya Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad.** Fenomena astronomi (falak) banyak tertera dalam al-Qur'an yang pada kenyataannya sangat terkait dengan aktifitas manusia. Penentuan waktu ibadah pun banyak ditentukan oleh ayat-ayat yang mengisyaratkan komponen ilmu Falaq. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, salah satu ulama Falaq di Aceh, berhasil mengawinkan al-Quran dan Ilmu Falaq secara apik dalam karya tafsirnya. Tulisan ini akan membahas tentang tafsir *Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Quran* karya Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, atau dikenal dengan Abu Teupin Raya. Metodologi dan corak pemikiran akan menjadi pertanyaan dasar dalam penelitian ini. Selanjutnya, artikel ini akan menemukan relasi penafsiran Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad dengan konteks global saat penulisan tafsir dilakukan. Melalui pendekatan sosiologi dan sastra, dapat disimpulkan bahwa; *Pertama*, metode penyajian tafsir dengan bahasa Aceh yang puitis menjadi keunggulan dari tafsir ini. Hasil penafsiran ditulis layaknya syair sastra. Corak Falaqiyah akan terlihat menonjol saat menafsirkan ayat-ayat Falaq. *Kedua*, internalisasi nilai-nilai budaya Aceh cukup terlihat dalam tafsir ini. Ditulis pada awal era 1990'n menjadikan tafsir ini erat hubungannya dengan masyarakat Aceh progresif hingga saat ini.

**Kata kunci:** Ilmu Falak; Syair Aceh; Tafsir *Irsyadul Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Quran*; Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad.

## Introduction

In the history of civilization, Aceh is known as an accomplished composer of literary works, especially poetry. The expertise of the Acehnese to create poetry spontaneously has become a habit of culture. Many issues are expressed through oral poetry. The expression of this oral poetry, for example, is still found in *Seudati*, an Acehnese dance featuring dancers and poets (Harun, 2012, p. 2). Among the variety of Acehnese literature, poetry is the most widely used by Acehnese Ulama. In Aceh centuries ago, many literary works were found written in books or kitab in Arabic-Malay form. From literary works, various hikayat was born in Aceh's literary treasures, even though the names of the authors are not known because the authors in Aceh used to be generally scholars who did not want to mention their names in the works they wrote (Kurdi, 2009, p. 57).

Talking about the relationship between ulama and literature will involve several names of Aceh ulama who perpetuate their knowledge through literary works. Two

important names to mention here are Hamzah al-Fansuri and Nur al-Din al-Raniri. Abdul Hadi WM even mentioned the first name as the "Father of Malay Language and Literature." He was a Sufi ulama who first introduced poetry in the form of literary works in the 16th century. The poems popularized by Hamzah Fansuri are used as a medium of motivation. The content concerns Islam, especially the Sufism issue (Zakaria, 2016).

In addition, several Acehese scholars perpetuate the scholarship of the Qur'an in the form of written literature, such as Tengku Mahjiddin Jusuf, who translated the Qur'an into Acehese in his work "*Al-Qur'an al-Karim dan Terjemahan Bebas Bersajak dalam Bahasa Aceh*" (Jusuf, 1995, p. iii). This is the first al-Qur'an interpretation of Acehese poetry. Furthermore, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad written al-Qur'an interpretation in Arabic-Acehese poetry, namely *Irsyad al-Ikhwān ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* (Rizal & Iqbal, 2018, pp. 185-207) which will be discussed in this paper.

In the history of the development of interpretation in Indonesia, *Irsyad al-Ikhwān* has yet to be seriously analyzed. It can be seen from the minimal research related to this tafsir even though it has much uniqueness and is still studied today at Dayah Darussa'adah and the Teupin Raya ta'lim assembly, Sigli.<sup>1</sup>

The author of this interpretation, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, is known as an Astronomy scholar, so he is called al-Falaqy (Diauddin, 2020). He is also known as Abu Teupin Raya (Rizal & Iqbal, 2018). During his life, he was known as a prolific scholar. He has written 23 works in Arabic and Acehese. The tafsir of *Irsyad al-Ikhwān ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* is one of his works written in the Acehese language and using Arabic-Malay handwriting.

His expertise in Astrology has had a significant influence on his tafsir. It can be seen from one example of his interpretation of surah al-Baqarah verse 189. In interpreting this verse, Abu Teupin Raya said, "*Ka tatu'oh watee pade harom, musem keumeukoh pih meujan teuka*" which means "We understand when the rice already has an aroma, the rice harvest season is also known when it comes." There is no explanation related to the text of Surah al-Baqarah verse 89. Abu Teupin Raya added that

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muazzianah, Tengku Ali Arsyad's daughter, by Whatsapp on June 3, 2022.

explanation because it was adapted to the Acehese people's local culture, who were mostly farmers at that time. If related to this verse, the rice harvest in Aceh is determined based on monthly calculations (Irsyad, 1992, pp. 40-41).

Based on the example above, there are three reasons why this research is important to do, namely; First, until now, there has been no comprehensive and holistic study related to this interpretation, so this research is expected to be able to fill this void as well as introduce the interpretation of *Irsyad al-Ikhwan* to the public and academics, as well as become an important treasure in the field of exegesis. Second, this tafsir is unique because it was written manually in Acehese poetry and Arabic-Malay writing. Third, although written in a poetic form, this interpretation is far from a controversial debate like H.B. Jassin's work (Gusmian, 2015, p. 44). The lack of response and criticism towards this work of interpretation has become an anomaly considering that the study of interpretation has been growing.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Biographical Research*

Biographical research is an in-depth, systematic, critical study of historical figures, ideas, originality, and the socio-historical context surrounding the figures studied. This research aims to understand the characters' thoughts comprehensively, starting from the originality of the thoughts to the relevance and contextualization of the character's thoughts in the present context (Mustaqim, 2018, pp. 32-35). To support biographical research, this study will use the hermeneutic approach of H.G. Gadamer through the theory of awareness of historical influence, pre-understanding, and horizon assimilation (Syamsuddin, 2009, pp. 44-49). This approach is used to see the background of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irshad's thoughts in interpreting the al-Qur'an.

### *Historical-Critical-Sociolinguistic Approach*

This research used the historical-critical-sociolinguistic approach, that is, by tracing historical roots critically as the method to answer why the *mufassir* developed the idea to produce this interpretation and what the background is. At the same time, sociolinguistics will be used in analyzing aspects of the Acehese language literature in

the interpretation. Sociolinguistics is a combined science between sociology and linguistics that examines language problems concerning the use of that language in society with various situations (Ramadhan, 2020, p. 4).

## Method

This research used the descriptive-analytical method, which describes the basic construction of Abu Teupin Raya's interpretation theory, then analyzes it critically, and looks for the roots of the mufassir's thoughts with previous scholars and the implications. The data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data are Mufassir's work, especially those related to the theory of interpretation itself, namely the tafsir of *Irsyadu al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad. In comparison, secondary data are books and articles about the mufassir's thoughts.

The methodical steps of this research are: First, determining the mufassir as the formal object of this research, namely Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad and his interpretation in his tafsir *Irsyād al-Ikhwān ilā Ma'āni al-Qur'ān*. Second, inventorying and selecting the data, especially the works of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad and other books related to this research. Third, the writer classifies the important elements related to the theory of interpretation, starting from the basic assumptions and arguments to their implications. Fourth, the data will be carefully studied and described as the construction of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's theory of interpretation. Fifth, analyze the basic assumptions and sources of interpretation, then examine the advantages and disadvantages of this method of interpretation. Sixth, take a conclusion carefully as the answer to the academic problem. So this research will produce a formulation of holistic and systematic understanding.

## Result and Discussion

### *History of Intellectuality Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad*

This section will elaborate on the intellectual history of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, the process of transmission and transformation of his knowledge, and his contribution to tafsir.

His full name is Tengku Haji Muhammad Ali bin Irsyad. He was born in 1915 in Teupin Raya, Glumpang Tiga District, Pidie Regency. He is the second child of 4 siblings. His parents Tgk Irsyad were a scholar and Qadhi during the reign of Ulee Balang in Aceh (UIN Ar-Raniry Team, 2004). Since childhood, he has been educated to be a devout child who is religious, diligent in worship, and loves science. Since he was young, his high enthusiasm and willingness to explore knowledge have continued to grow and develop within him. He received his first education from his father, Tengku Muhammad Irsyad. His father was a *qadhi* in the Ulee Balang Glumpang Payong area (Rizal & Iqbal, 2018, p. 187).

Besides he studied with his parents, he also took formal education by enrolling in a Dutch school (HIS) in 1923 in Teupin Raya. Then he continued his education at the MULO school in Sigli for three years. After completing his education at the MULO school in 1932, he decided to study religion with well-known scholars. In 1935 he began studying and deepening his religious knowledge at the Islamic boarding school Tgk Abdul Madjid bin Abdurrahman in the village of Uteuen Bayu, Ulee Glee, Pidie. At the dayah, he studied various Islamic disciplines, such as the Science of Monotheism (Theology), Fiqh, especially the Imam Syafi'i school, Tafsir, Hadith, Linguistics, Mantiq, and Sufism.

His attention and curiosity are high enough to allow him to exceed his comrades in arms. This condition convinced his teacher, Tgk. Abdul Madjid appointed him an assistant or *teungku rangkang* to help his teacher teach and learn activities at the Pondok he leads, according to his eldest son, Tgk. H. Armia, Tgk H Muhammad Ali Irsyad spent most of his study time at Tgk Abdul Madjid's Islamic boarding school until 1947 or for 12 years.

During his life, Teungku Muhammad Ali Irsyad had three wives. His first wife was Hj. Aminah (Teupin Raya). They were blessed with five children from this first wife: Teungku Armia, Teungku Syakya, and Hj. Fatimah, Zakaria and Yahya. His second wife was Hj. Fatimah (Trieng Gadeng Puduek) was blessed with three children: Marhamah, Muhammad, and Helmi. At the same time, the third wife was Hj. Fatimah (Peradeue Panteraja), from this third wife, was blessed with a child, Muazzinah (Diauddin, 2020, p. 102).

Since 1950 the development of politics in Aceh has continued to increase, especially the relationship between the center and the regions after the betrayal committed by President Soekarno. The conflict led to the outbreak of the DI/TII movement led by Tgk Muhammad Daud Beureu'eh in 1953. As a young man with a spirit of patriotism, Tgk H Muhammad Ali Irsyad became interested in political issues and joined DI/TII and fought with Tgk Muhammad Daud. Beureu'eh.

His involvement in political activities lasted only a short time because his goal was not to become a politician, but he wanted to become a scientist. To realize this wish in 1961, he moved to Jakarta to prepare himself for Cairo, Egypt. One year after that, in 1962, Tgk Muhammad Ali Irsyad was accepted as a student of the Faculty of Sharia, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, by concentrating on Falaq science. There is an old scholar named Sheikh Ulaa Al-Banna who teaches astronomy there. During his time as Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's teacher, Shaykh Ulaa al-Banna was surprised that until now, no one had studied Astronomy with Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad even though he has extraordinary abilities in astronomy.

His expertise in falaq seems so prominent that he has added a new designation to his name with the title al-Falaqy, which shows his expertise in falaq (Diauddin, 2020, pp. 103-104). In 1966 he completed his education at Al-Azhar in Falaki syar'i with cum laude predicate. He has the ability in the field of Falaki arithmetic in various ways. Then also the knowledge that can determine dates (dates), regulate prayer schedules throughout the country, fall from the beginning of the qamariah month or the month indicated by the new moon, the distance to the stars wherever they are, the occurrence of solar and lunar eclipses, determining the Qibla direction in any area and various sharia science concerned with the science of astronomy. Thanks to all this, he created a hijrah calendar that is valid as a guide in determining the times for prayer, breaking the fast, and the time for imsak (Diauddin, 2020, p. 104).

When he returned from Cairo in 1966, Tgk H Muhammad Ali Irsyad immediately devoted his knowledge to the community, especially in the village where he was born, Teupin Raya. The first step to preaching and developing knowledge to the community was establishing a salafiyah Islamic boarding school, Darussaa'adah, in 1967. Then he developed the Islamic boarding school by opening a Darussa'adah branch

in Cot Puuk Village, Gandapura District, North Aceh (now Bireuen Regency) on January 1, 1968 (UIN Ar-Raniry Team, 2004). Until now, Dayah Darussa'adah has more than 130 branches, both in Aceh, West Java, and abroad.

### *Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's Works*

Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad is a prolific ulama. He took many roles in reforming Islamic education in Aceh. Not only established *Dayah* (Islamic boarding schools) in Aceh, but he also wrote 24 books. Some of his works are in Acehnese, Arabic, and Arabic-Malay writing (Rizal & Iqbal, 2018, p. 189). Some of the books are translations from Arabic into Acehnese. Others are personal works.

Table 1. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's Works

No.	Title	Disciplines	Quantity	Description
1.	<i>Irsyadul Ikhwan</i>	Interpretation	15 volumes	personal work
2.	<i>Aqidatul Awwam</i>	Tauhid	1 volume	personal work
3.	<i>Awwaluddin Ma'rifatullah</i>	Tauhid	1 volume	personal work
4.	<i>Al-Da'watu al- Wahabiyah</i>	Tauhid	1 volume	personal work
5.	<i>Iman al-Din</i>	Fiqih	2 volumes	personal work
6.	<i>Irsyad al-Ghabi</i>	Fiqih	1 volume	Translation of <i>Matan Ghayah Taqrib</i>
7.	<i>Badru al-Duja</i>	Fiqih	1 volume	Translation of <i>Safinatu al-Naja</i>
8.	<i>Tuffatu al-Hujjaj</i>	Fiqih	1 volume	personal work
9.	<i>Khuluq al-'Adzim</i>	Moral	1 volume	personal work
10.	<i>Taqwim al-Hijri</i>	Falak	1 volume	personal work
11.	<i>Irsyad al-Amiyah</i>	Nahwu	1 volume	personal work
12.	<i>Qadah al- Irsyadiyyah</i>	Nahwu	1 volume	personal work
13.	<i>Dar al-Asyi</i>	Nahwu	2 volumes	Translation of <i>Mutammimah</i>
14.	<i>Abu al-'Ulum</i>	Nahwu	2 volumes	personal work
15.	<i>Faradis al-Jinan</i>	Nahwu	1 volume	personal work
16.	<i>Hilyatu al-Lisan</i>	Nahwu	1 volume	personal work
17.	<i>Ummu al-Ulum</i>	Sharaf	2 volumes	Translation of <i>Kitab al-</i>



18.	<i>Nafahatu al-Iqlim</i>	Sharaf	1 volume	<i>Jurumiyah</i> personal work
19.	<i>Dalil al-Sharf</i>	Sharaf	2 volumes	personal work
20.	<i>Mukhkhu al-'Ibadah</i>	Social and du'a	1 volume	personal work
21.	<i>Afdhalu al-Zikr</i>	Social and du'a	1 volume	personal work
22.	<i>Irsyadiyah</i>	Social and du'a	1 volume	personal work
23.	<i>Tashilu al-Tasharif</i>	Logic and linguistic	1 volume	Part of the Translation of <i>Matan Sulam</i>
24.	<i>Asjady</i>	Logic and linguistic	10 volumes	personal work

Based on the table, it can be understood that he has a broad scientific capacity. This can be seen from the nine scientific fields in his works and studied by many people.

### *Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's Thought Contribution*

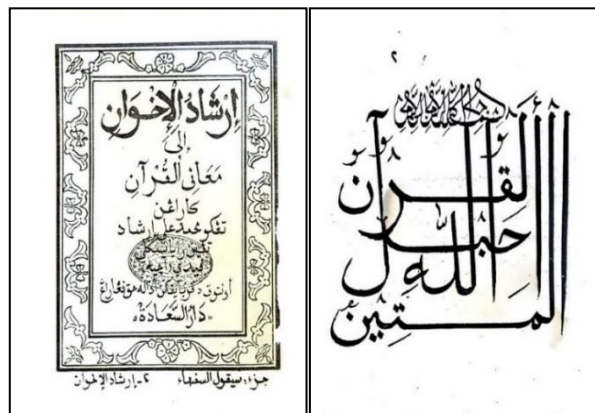
In the 17th century, *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by Abdur Rauf al-Sinkili was found using Malay. After this work, no more works of interpretation were found in the archipelago until the 19th century (Mustaqim, 2018, pp. 65-66). In Aceh, interpretations began to appear again since Abdurrahim al-Daudy wrote *Tafsir Gayo* in 1938 and Tengku Mahjiddin Jusuf wrote his translation entitled *Qur'an al-Karim and the Free Translation of Poetry in the Acehese Language* (Jusuf, 1995). Jusuf's work is the first tafsir in the Acehese language. Next, *Tafsir Irsyad al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad appeared. This work was written in the Acehese language with Arabic-Malay script in the poetry form (nazam). Next, the interpretation of *Umm al-Qur'an; Interpretation of Surat al-Fatihah in Sya'ir Aceh* by Tengku Ameer Hamzah (Hamzah, 1992, p. 1). This work is also written in Acehese Arabic-Malay script in verse form.

Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's interpretation can be quite contributive in the context of the development of interpretation in Aceh. One of them lies in the intensity of the study of this interpretation which is still being studied at Dayah Darussa'adah, - the Islamic boarding school founded by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad-, and the ta'lim around the Teupin Raya area, Pidie. On the other hand, he wrote many works in various fields, such as Nahw, Sharaf, Tauhid, Morals, Astrology, and others. His works are still

used today, starting with students, Acehnese people, and Acehnese ulama (Rizal & Iqbal, 2018, pp. 189-197).

*Irsyad al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* was only written up to chapter 2. His daughter, Muazzinah, then interprets the next part. Muazzinah was only cited and changed the Latin script of Jusuf's work into Arabic-Malay font. It has been completed up to juz five until now.

Picture 1. Cover and the first page of Tafsir *Irsyadu al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an*



The first volume of tafsir was completed by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad on 12 Ramadhan 1412 H/March 17, 1992 (Irsyad, 1992, p. 124). In comparison, the second volume's data is unknown because it was not written on the last page of the second volume. Likewise, the source of the interpretation needs to be made available in his muqaddimah. He only explained his reason that this interpretation could be useful for anyone. He used the *ijmali* (general) method in interpreting. An explanation about *asbabun nuzul*, *munasabah ayah*, linguistic analysis, and other detailed explanations must be explained. Applying the *ijmali* method is considered appropriate to the renewal period of Islamic education in Aceh through the interpretation of al-Qur'an.

Two volumes of this interpretation are handwriting. The first volume contains 125 pages, and the second volume contains 101 pages. Until now, the publisher still used the old interpretation layout. They still preserve the original layout by duplicating it. Specifically related to Irsyad's interpretation, there are several contributions from his tafsir, including:

### 1. *As An Acehese Poetry Interpretation in Arabic-Malay Writing*

*Irsyad al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an*, written by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad in 1992, is still in its original manuscript form, without changing the layout, font, decoration, and size. The preservation of the original form of this book is a unique method in the renewal period of Islamic education in Aceh. Previous work of Jusuf's interpretation has no this process of preservation. Initially, Tengku Mahjiddin Jusuf's work was written through the same process: Acehese with Arabic-Malay writing. However, when published more widely, this work has a transliteration process by a team from Aceh's Center for Research and Studies of Islamic Culture (P3KI). Thus, Tengku Mahjiddin Jusuf's works are now complete, with Latin inscriptions, computer decorations, and thick and elegant paper types.

This preservation is a special value for Irsyad's work. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad has carried out the transmission and transformation of knowledge, which according to A.H John's terms, can be referred to as "the vernacularization" of the al-Qur'an (Faiqoh, 2018, p. 88) in the context of the people of Aceh. Vernacularization translates the Arabic Qur'an into local languages, such as Acehese, Javanese, Sundanese, Bugis, and others.

### 2. *Strengthening Aceh's Cultural Identity through Interpretation*

Using the Acehese language and Arabic-Malay letters in Irsyad's interpretation is an averment of Aceh's cultural identity. This can be explained from two aspects. First, this interpretation was written to strengthen the identity between the Dutch colonial period, which was over, and the renewal of education in Aceh. Through his commentary, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad shows that reformation can continue by preserving the Acehese identity. Second, to convey the Qur'an message, it is necessary to use language easily understood by the public (*bi lisani qaumihi*). This concept is seen in the introduction to the interpretation delivered by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad. He said;

*Nyoe tafsir Qur'an yang mulia*

*Tafsir nyoe ngen bahasa Aceh*

*Nyang ureueng preh katreb lagena*

*Jinoe katroh wate ilham  
Nibak Tuhan keu sidroe hamba  
Tafsir ayat dengon cara nazam  
Inong agam ka that meuguna  
Habeh meuphom aduen ngon adoe  
Hingga sampo Ma nyang ka tuha*

The statement above means that this interpretation is written in the Acehnese language. Many people have long awaited this interpretation, and now the time has come. God has inspired a servant (read: Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad) to make a work of interpretation. This interpretation is written in poetry, which is expected to be useful for anyone, both men and women. The young and the old (Irsyad, 1992, p. 9).

This statement shows us his strong desire so that all people can understand al-Qur'an. Thus, to make the people of Aceh closer to the Qur'an in Arabic, he chose the Acehnese language as the media for conveying the message. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad also proved this argument in interpreting the al-Qur'an, one of which can be seen from his interpretation in surah al-Baqarah: 189, which will be analyzed more deeply in the next sub-chapter.

### *Exposition of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad's Interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah: 189*

Surah al-Baqarah was revealed in Medina after Prophet Muhammad emigrated. This surah explained about explaining and proving how true and correct the holy book is and how natural its instructions are to be followed and heeded. So many issues were discussed. It was assumed that the people of Medina at that time were very heterogeneous regarding ethnicity, religion, and tendencies (Shihab, 2016, p. 99). One of them is seen in verse 189, which talks about the customs of the Arab community at that time.

This section will discuss the interpretation of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad specifically for surah al-Baqarah: 189. This verse was chosen for two reasons. First, the Falakkiyah style is quite strong in interpreting this verse. This interpretation will

strengthen Irsyad's expertise in Astrology. Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad explains second, many Acehnese cultures in verse al-Baqarah: 189:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْآهْلِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَا يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْبَيْتِ ۚ إِنَّ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبَيْتَ مِنَ اتَّقَى ۗ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

English Sahih Internasional

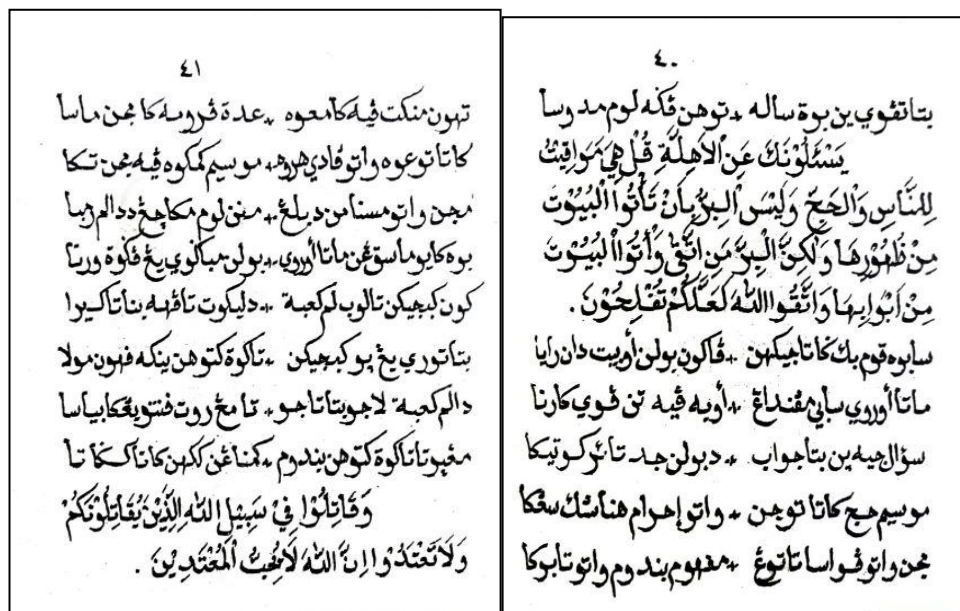
189. They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the new moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj." And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.

Interpretation of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad Against Surah al-Baqarah:

189

As previously discussed, all writing in this interpretation still preserves the original writing. It can be seen that the verses and interpretations are still written by hand.

Picture 2. The Interpretation of surah al-Baqarah : 189



After mentioning the verse, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad wrote his commentary at the bottom in a rhyme sentence. Each sentence is separated by a special mark shaped like a vertical division sign.

<i>Saboh kaom bak gata jikheun</i>	❖ <i>Pakon buleun ubit dan raya</i>
<i>Mata uroe sabe meupandang</i>	❖ <i>Ubah pih tan pue kareuna</i>
<i>Soal jih nyan beutajaweub</i>	❖ <i>Di buleun jeut taeu kutika</i>
<i>Musem haji ka ta tujuan</i>	❖ <i>Watee Ihram hana syok sangka</i>
<i>Meujan watee puasa tatueng</i>	❖ <i>Meuphom bandum watee ta buka</i>
<i>Thon meuneukat pih ka meu'oh</i>	❖ <i>'Iddah poe rumoeh ke meujan masa</i>
<i>Ka ta tu'oh watee padee haroem</i>	❖ <i>Musem keumeukoh pih meujan teuka</i>
<i>Meujan watee meuseunaman di blang</i>	❖ <i>Meunan loem meukacang di dalam rimba</i>
<i>Boh kayee masak ngon mata uroe</i>	❖ <i>Buleun meubagoe nyang peugoet warna</i>
<i>Kon keubajikan taloeb lam Ka'bah</i>	❖ <i>Di likoet ta peuhah beu na takira</i>
<i>Beu taturie nyang yue keubajikan</i>	❖ <i>Takoet keu Tuhan nyan keuh phon mula</i>
<i>Dalam Ka'bah lajue beu tatajoe</i>	❖ <i>Tameung rot pintoe nyang ka biasa</i>
<i>Meungnyoe tatakoet keu Tuhan</i>	❖ <i>Keumeunangan kakheun kana keu gata bandum</i>

The above interpretation can be translated as follows;

The people ask to you	❖ Why is the moon (sometimes) small and big
The sun is always (can be) seen	❖ Change without any cause
That question must be answered	❖ (Meanwhile) we can see the month (its) period
We already know the Hajj season	❖ There is no doubt about the time of ihram
We already know the time of fasting (take it)	❖ Everyone understands the breaking time
Time to do business has also been understood	❖ The wife's iddah is known
We already know when the rice is fragrant	❖ It is known when the rice-cutting season will come
It can be known when farming in the fields	❖ Likewise, when planting peanuts in the forest
Fruits ripen with (the help of the rays of) the sun	❖ Moon of various colors

It is not our virtue to enter the Kaaba	❖	Behind this, we have to consider to open
We must know who instructed the virtue	❖	Fear of God is the first element
In the Kaaba, we immediately headed	❖	Enter through the familiar door
If we all fear God	❖	The victory you say is already there for you

The content of surah al-Baqarah verse 189, in general, talks about two things, namely; First, the circulation of the moon as a sign of changing human activities and worship, and Second, an order to enter the house from the right door (Shihab, 2016, pp. 503-506). All of this message is closely related to the Arab cultural context surrounding the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

In *Irsyad al-Ikhwan*, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad provides more explanation. The author noted that there were six things he explained, namely;

#### 1. *Circulation of the Sun and Moon and Their Effects*

In his commentary, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad pointed out that the sun and moon have different appearances. As for the sun, it is always the same size, while the moon can be arbitrary. Changed or not, it has an influence. The difference in the size of the month can be used as a basis for calculating worship, such as pilgrimage, fasting, 'iddah, and others. Meanwhile, the sun's rays benefit fruits to be harvested with maximum results (Irsyad, 1992, pp. 40-41). This explanation is closely related to astronomy, and this is the area of expertise of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad.

#### 2. *Hajj and Ihram Period*

This verse explains that the beginning of the month in the form of a crescent is used to determine the times of worship, such as the beginning of fasting, the end of fasting, the time of pilgrimage, and so on. The mention of the pilgrimage separately in this verse emphasizes that the pilgrimage has a certain time, namely in the month of Zulhijah; it cannot be moved to another month as was done by the Arabs in the time of ignorance.

### 3. *Fasting and breaking the fast time*

The conversation of this verse with the previous verses explains fasting in Ramadan and the laws related to fasting, so this verse explains the time humans need to carry out their worship, such as fasting and breaking the fast. Of course, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad fully understood the role of the circulation of the moon and sun concerning fasting.

### 4. *The period of 'iddah*

The Aceh people have determination regarding the wife's iddah period. This determination runs under Islamic law. If divorced, her iddah is three months and ten days, unless she is pregnant. If divorce dies, the 'iddah is four months and ten days (Hurgronje, 1985, p. 414).

### 5. *Agriculture and Commerce*

Previously, the majority of the livelihoods of the people of Aceh were farming. They grow rice, sugarcane, peanuts, pepper, and fruits such as coconuts, bananas, etc. When asked when to sow the seeds, the Acehnese would often answer the months of *Hajj* and *Asan-Usen* or the months of Zulhijjah and Muharram (Hurgronje, 1985, p. 277). Apart from farming, many Acehnese also trades. Generally, they sell crops. In his commentary, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad describes various traditional activities of the Acehnese people, which are carried out according to the lunar calendar, such as determining the time when rice bears fruit, harvesting rice, sowing seeds, seasoning fruits, and also doing business. The Acehnese people have a special month called "*Kanduri boh kayee*" or fruit alms, usually held in the month of *Jumada al-akhir* (Hurgronje, 1985, p. 246).

### 6. *Enter the Kaaba*

The interpreters explain that many of the Anshar people enter the house through the unusual door when they have done ihram or pilgrimage. They enter from the back door, and that is considered a virtue. This verse explains that virtue is not according to feelings and traditions or *khurafat*, such as entering the house from behind or from above) Nevertheless, that virtue is fear of Allah, and they are prescribed to enter the house from the usual door (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2012, p. 282-283).



Unlike the interpretation of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad, he interpreted the word "*al-bait*" with the Kaaba. He explained the recommendation to enter the Kaaba from the usual door. This interpretation creates confusion when it is correlated with the *Asbabun Nuzul* of this verse, which is about the custom of Arabs entering their house through another door (besides the normal door) after they perform Hajj or Umrah (Shihab, 2016, p. 505). The word "*al-bait*" would be more appropriate if interpreted as a house in general. Although in other verses, the word "*al-bait*" is interpreted as the Kaaba, as in surah al-Baqarah: 125, 127, and 158, sura Ali 'Imran: 96-97, sura Al-Maidah: 97, and others. Regarding this difference, the reason or argumentation of Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad cannot be traced in this way.

### *Combining Al-Qur'an Interpretation and Astronomy with Harmonious Poetry*

The main discussion of Surah al-Baqarah verse 189 talks about astronomy, especially regarding the circulation of the moon. According to scientists, the moon is a satellite of the Earth which is about a quarter of the size of the Earth. It circulates the Earth at an average distance of 384,400 kilometers under the pull of the Earth's gravitational force. As a result of this circulation, the moon has several phases, and among them, there are phenomena of the crescent moon, full moon, new moon, and dead moon. Everything happens because the positions of the moon and the Earth regularly shift with the sun's position. When the moon is between the Earth and the sun, its dark side faces the Earth so that the moon is not visible to us on Earth. This phase is called the new moon phase. Then it shifts from the new moon phase to the full moon phase and from the full moon phase to the dead moon phase. In the dead moon phase, the moon will not reappear.

While the crescent moon (*al-ahillah*) occurs between the new moon phase to the first half-moon phase (first week, before the full moon) and between the second half-moon phase (fourth week, after the full moon) to the new moon phase, from the new moon phase to the full moon phase, what happens is the crescent moon phase which looks like a thread that we can see in the western sky after sunset. Gradually the crescent widened until it became half. We call this phase of the moon the half-moon phase. Then seven days after the half-moon phase, we can see the full moon picture. We call this phase of the moon the full moon. Seven days later, the moon's appearance shrinks again

so that it returns to the half-moon phase. Thus, until the moon returns to a crescent phase which eventually disappears, we call this phase the dead moon phase. So the crescent phase occurs twice a month, namely in the first and fourth weeks.

The distance between the phases of the new moon to the next new moon or from the full moon to the next full moon is 29.5306 days which we call the synodic period. This is the basis for the calendar, which is made using the lunar calendar system that we know as the lunar calendar (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2012, p. 284). This lunar calendar received special attention from Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad. He mentioned the various activities of the Acehnese people, which were based on lunar calculations. The uniqueness of his interpretation in conveying this message is reflected in the form of poetry, which of course, not all mufassir can do it.

In the treasures of Acehnese literature, rhyme or poetry is known as *pakhôk* or *antok*. *Pakhôk* functions to harmonize the sound between one line and another, both between the final sound of each line, between the final and middle sounds between lines (*zig-zag rhyme*), and the balance of sounds in one horizontal line (*internal*). At the same time, *buhu* has the same meaning as the syllables or the number of syllables in one line. The calculation of the *buhu* of the hikayat is done by paying attention to the number of syllables per line (Harun, 2012, pp. 334-335).

<i>Saboh kaom bak gata jikheun</i>	❖ <i>Pakon buleun ubit dan raya</i>
<i>Mata uroe sabe meupandang</i>	❖ <i>Ubah pih tan pue kareuna</i>
<i>Soal jih nyan beutajaweub</i>	❖ <i>Di buleun jeut taeu kutika</i>
<i>Musem haji ka ta tujan</i>	❖ <i>Watee Ihram hana syok sangka</i>

This article concluded that the interpretation by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad considers the two aspects above, namely *pakhôk* and *buhu*. Especially for the application of *buhu*, Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad seemed freer because he had to adapt the original text, namely the al-Qur'an. While applying *pakhok*, he does it consistently in all his translated texts, ending with the letter "a" in every second verse sentence. The explanation of surah al-Baqarah verse 189 in Tafsir *Irsyadu al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an* is a form of vernacularization of the Qur'an in the Acehnese language combined with harmonious rhymes. This interpretation is a sign that cultural preservation and

interpretation of the al-Qur'an can go in line without reducing the sacredness of the al-Qur'an.

## **Conclusion**

Based on research on Tafsir *Irsyadu al-Ikhwan ila Ma'ani al-Qur'an*, The following conclusions can be drawn; Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad provides more explanations if the verse is related to the science of astronomy. Through a sociological and literary approach, presenting interpretations in poetic Acehese was considered the right strategy to convey the meaning of the Qur'an to various groups in Acehese society at that time who loved poetry. This tafsir connected many verses with the Acehese culture at that time. Interpretations that carry cultural aspects like this become more exclusive because they can only be understood by the local community. Even so, this interpretation succeeded in attracting the enthusiasm of the community and students because it is still used today. The *Ijmali* method used by Tengku Muhammad Ali Irsyad in interpreting the al-Qur'an is the right choice for bringing the Aceh people closer to the al-Qur'an so that the contents of the Qur'an will be easier to understand without having to go through detailed studies.

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