

# THE URGENCY OF SUNNI TASAWUF OF K.H. AHMAD SANUSI IN TATAR SUNDA: A STUDY OF SIRĀJ AL-AẒKIYĀ' FĪ TARJAMAH AL-AZKIYĀ'

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Sanusi's journey in promoting Sunni Sufism through his book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* in the Sukabumi region of West Java. In his book, Sanusi not only focuses on Dakwah but also strengthens his position as a Sundanese *ajeng* who influences the way of Sunni Sufism in Sukabumi. The present study analyzed the preaching of Sanusi in the book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* and the authority of Sanusi which strengthened the Sundanese people to be guided by the tarekat Islam (the teachings of the Sufis' journey). By using qualitative methods and deductive analysis, this article aims to present Sanusi's response and the power of his Dakwah in Suni Sufism through his book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'*. The study found that on the one hand, the *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* shows the renewal of the integration of Sufism studies at the community level, Pesantrens and several taklim assemblies in Sukabumi, West Java. On the other hand, the book becomes an important reference for Sunni tarekat learners, especially the Sundanese people in Sukabumi.

**Keywords:** Ahmad Sanusi, *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'*, Tasawuf Sunni.

### **ABSTRAK**

Artikel ini memaparkan perjalanan K.H. Ahmad Sanusi dalam mempromosikan Tasawuf Sunni melalui kitabnya *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* di wilayah Sukabumi, Jawa Barat. Dalam kitabnya, Sanusi tidak hanya fokus pada dakwah saja, namun ia juga menguatkan posisinya sebagai Ajengan Sunda yang mempengaruhi wacana Tasawuf Sunni di Sukabumi. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan analisis deduktif, artikel ini bertujuan untuk menghadirkan respon Sanusi dan kekuatan dakwahnya dalam Tasawuf Suni melalui kitabnya *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'*. Tulisan ini menganalisa dakwah khususnya dalam kitab *Sirāj al-Azkiyā'* dan otoritas Sanusi dalam mengukuhkan masyarakat Sunda untuk berpedoman pada tarekat Islam. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya pembaharuan dan integrasi kajian Tasawuf di tataran masyarakat, lembaga pesantren dan beberapa majelis taklim di Sukabumi, Jawa Barat. Sisi lainnya menunjukkan bahwa kitab *Sirāj al-Azkiyā'* menjadi referensi penting bagi pembelajaran tarekat Suni untuk masyarakat Sunda di Sukabumi.

**Kata kunci:** Ahmad Sanusi, *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'*, Tasawuf Sunni.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nusantara scholars, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had a major contribution to the process of Islamization of Indonesia. Their religious teaching and preaching have been widely used as materials for study by researchers in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Among many regions in Nusantara which had many names of big scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is Tatar Sunda. In the da'wah tradition in Sunda, Ulama became the figures who played multiple roles in fostering Islamic educational institutions (*pesantrens*) as well as state affairs.<sup>2</sup> The community respected the presence of religious figures (Ulama) both genealogically and scholarly. The society respect to Ulama was due to historical authority as well as a cultural tradition to maintain the ties of knowledge between teacher and his students.

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<sup>1</sup> Jajang Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Tatar Sunda* (Bandung: Mujahid Press, 2014), 12–13.

<sup>2</sup> Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Dialektika Tradisi Kultural, and Pijakan Historis*, "Masterpiece Islam Nusantara," *Jakarta: Pustaka Kompas*, 2016, 76.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was also a historical period for the Islamic community in Java, as there were positive developments in the Javanese and Sundanese Pegon textbooks. The pegon letters in these languages aimed to accommodate community needs for religious references in Islamic studies, including Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, and Tasawuf.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of original books in local languages and Arabic translations in local languages was evidence that local civilizations played an active role in maintaining the resilience of the language and the preservation of Islamic values in society at that time. According to Rahmana, the local book translations are easily understood by the Santri community, even by the *abangan* (groups of people who adhere to Islam but do not practice the teachings as a whole),<sup>4</sup> so that the process of Islamization transformed easily.<sup>5</sup> The presence of religious figures (*Ulama*) and Islamic references in local languages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not much explored by scholarly studies on local cleric figures, especially those in Sunda land, also known as Tatar Sunda. In fact, the productivity of local Ulama including Sundanese Ulama in their work deserves to be appreciated.<sup>6</sup>

In addressing this gap, the present study aimed to examine one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sundanese religious figures, namely Ajengan Ahmad Sanusi and his contributions in the teaching of Sunni Sufism at Tatar Sunda through his book *Sirāj al-Aẓkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'*. More specifically, this article explored the rationales behind Sanusi's dedication as Sunni Sufism figure in Tatar Sunda, and the influence of his teaching among Sundanese society.

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<sup>3</sup> I. Syarif Hidayat, "Kitab Carita Anis Sahabat Rasulullah Kajian Atas Naskah Sunda Islami," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 10, no. 1 (June 29, 2012): 149, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v10i1.176>.

<sup>4</sup> "Arti Kata Abangan - Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online," accessed December 9, 2022, <https://kbbi.web.id/abangan>.

<sup>5</sup> Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Quran Di Tatar Sunda*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning Pesantren dan Tarekat Tradisi-Tradisi Islam Di Indonesia" Mizan, 1995. <https://lib.ui.ac.id>.

Ahmad Sanusi, also called Ajengan Sukabumi, or Ajengan Cantayan, or Ajengan Genteng,<sup>7</sup> is one of Sundanese *ajengans* who is highly respected in academic fields. Ajengan is a term referring to someone who had both religious authority and high social engagement. His lineage of knowledge was influenced by Sundanese, Javanese, and the role of Mecca scholars. In addition to Sanusi's role as ajengan at the Syamsul Ulum Sukabumi Pesantren, he was also actively engaged in the science of Sufism as a response to the high need of Sukabumi people who were beginners in studying Islamic reference sources.<sup>8</sup> Previous studies have focused on exploring Sanusi's characters and his thoughts in general. Other studies also discussed his political role, his preaching at Syamsyul Ulum Pesantren and his position as a legislative member.<sup>9</sup> In 1992, a study of Ahmad Sanusi began with a dissertation by Fadlil Munawwar Manshur entitled *Rawḍah al-'Irfān fī Ma'rifah al-Qur' ān* oleh Kiai Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Analisis Semiotik dan Resepsi."<sup>10</sup> In this study, Manshur examined the semiotic analysis on Sanusi Tafsir and explored how this Tafsir dedicated a semiotically reception. The next study was conducted by Abdul Rahman in his article, *Corak Tasawuf dalam Kitab-Kitab Tafsir Karya K.H. Ahmad Sanusi*. Rahman's study examined Sunni Sufism in both *Rawḍah al-'Irfān fī Ma'rifah al-Qur'ān* and *Tamsyiyah al-Muslimīn*. The study concluded that the most dominant Sufism of Ahmad Sanusi was the moral tasawuf.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Asep Shodiqin, "The Thought of KH Ahmad Sanusi (1889-1950) in Dakwah and Education Paradigm," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 17, no. 1 (June 30, 2019): 198

<sup>8</sup> Maman Abdurrahman, Interview with Sanusi's Family (2), 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Wawan Hernawan, "Ahmad Sanoesi (1888-1950): Penggerak Organisasi Al-Ittihadijatoel Islamijjah (AII)," *Patanjala: Journal of Historical and Cultural Research* 5, no. 2 (June 2, 2013): 200–216

<sup>10</sup> Fadlil Munawwar Manshur, "Rawḍah Al-'Irfān Fī Ma'Rifah al-Qur'ān Karya Kiai Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Analisis Semiotik Dan Resepsi" (Master Degree Thesis, Yogyakarta, PPs UGM Yogyakarta, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Abdul Rahman et al., *Corak Tasawuf dalam Kitab-Kitab Tafsir Karya K.H. Ahmad Sanusi*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Prodi S2 Studi Agama-agama UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2020), IV.

Studies on Sanusi generally mentioned his biographical context and rarely discussed about his knowledge transmission. Meanwhile, Sanusi had much contributed in strengthening the discipline of Sufism in Pesantrens and society in general.<sup>12</sup> Ahmad Sanusi's persistence in distributing religious knowledge, especially in the field of Sufism, has been proven in several of his works, one of which is the Book of *Sirāj al-Adzkiyā*. This Sundanese book written in pegon Arabic script iwas a translation and/or syarah (commentary) of the book *Hidāyat al-Adzkiyā ilā Ṭarīq al-Auliyā* by Zainuddin bin Ali bin Ahmad al-Malibari (873-928 H), a prominent scholar from South India. Sanusi examined the three major components of Islamic religious teachings, namely Shari'a, Tarekat and Hakekat.<sup>13</sup> This transmission of Sanusi's teaching would be one of focuses of the present study. His sufism under study was in his book entitled *Sirāj al-Adzkiyā fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā* (or *Sirāj al-Adzkiyā* in shorts).

The present study employed qualitative approach, with literature study as the main method. Various references that were relevant to the object of study were analyzed and compared. Observations and interviews were also conducted with the descendants of Ahmad Sanusi and students of the Syamsul Ulum Pesantren in Sukabumi. Upon the data collection, deductive analysis was carried out to generate findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### a. Ahmad Sanusi: His Works and Educational Background

Kyai Ahmad Sanusi, hence Sanusi, was born in the village of Cantayan, Cikembar, Sukabumi City, West Java Province, on 3 Muharram 1306/18 September 1888. According to van Bruissen, Sanusi had great potential as a leader of Al-Ittihadoel Islamiyyah (AII) which has now changed into the Islamic Community Association (PUI). He was also known to have succeeded in producing many scholars and figures who were quite influential because his ssscholarly network was connected with Ajengan

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<sup>12</sup> Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Tatar Sunda*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Sanusi, *Siradj Al-Adzkiya Fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya* (Sukabumi : Cantayan Press, 2010), 24.

pesantren in Priangan.<sup>14</sup> Sanusi was quite productive in academic works written in Sundanese pegon script in the fields of Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Theology, and others. Sanusi's works were not only motivated by the need to develop the pesantren's scientific tradition, but also as a response to socio-political situation in 1930, namely the conflict between reformers against the traditionalists. One of Sanusi's notable works was the one who instilled anti-colonial spirit in Priangan.<sup>15</sup>

Sanusi's formal education had networks in Priangan cities, such as Sukabumi, Cianjur, Garut and Tasikmalaya.<sup>16</sup> Sanusi's educational process began at the Salajembe pesantren led by Muhammad Anwar and continued with the Sukamantri pesantren led by Ajengan Muhammad Siddik, in the city of Sukabumi. The two pesantrens witnessed Sanusi's success in the fields of jurisprudence and Tasawwuf and later this success was manifested in many works written by Sanusi. Then, Sanusi deepened Arabic grammatical knowledge or *Nahwu Sharaf* at the Cianjur pesantren and the Gudang Tasikmalaya Pesantren. It can be said that Sanusi had dedicated a lot of his life to pesantren and was active in preserving the discussion space in several Priangan pesantrens.<sup>17</sup>

Sanusi founded Syamsyul Ulum Pesantren, Cantayan, Sukabumi. This Pesantren is the oldest Pesantren currently in Sukabumi. According to an interview with Endang Fitriana, a *ndalem* (student who lives in the Kyai's house), revealed how serious Sanusi was in developing the intellectual treasures of the pesantren. Endang showed Sanusi's literacies works including some books on Tafsir, Jurisprudence, Hadith, and Tasawwuf. He also revealed that the study of Tasawwuf in the pesantren requires the practice of the *Qadariyyah Naqsabandiyyah* tariqah.<sup>18</sup> Among the traditions of the Syamsyul Ulum pesantren in developing its Tasawwuf was *wiridan* (dhikr recitation), Sunnah fas-

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<sup>14</sup> Munandi Shaleh, *Pemikiran dan Perjuangannya dalam Pergolakan Nasional* (Sukabumi: Grafika Ofset, 2011), 101.

<sup>15</sup> Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Quran di Tatar Sunda*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Shaleh, 110.

<sup>17</sup> Rohmana, 63.

<sup>18</sup> Abdurrahman, Interview with Sanusi's Family (2).

ting as a form of *Tazkiyyatu al-Nafs* (purification of oneself). Every practice in the pesantren was the application of the book *Sirāj Al-AẒkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'*.

Abdurrahman, a leader of Syamsyul Ulum Pesantren, revealed that Sanusi's teachers existed from Priangan to Mecca. According to him, one of Sanusi's teachers was Ajengan Syatibi, who had sanad to Shaykh Khalil Bangkalan to Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani. Sanusi also noted in several of his works and mentioned his closeness to his teachers in both Priangan and Mecca.<sup>19</sup>

In the city of Mecca, Sanusi served as a chairman of *Al-Ittihadoel Islamiyyah* (AII) and chose to continue studying with Indonesian Ulama who lived there. Beginning in 1909-1914, Sanusi studied from Shaykh Muhammad Garut, Shaykh Mukhtar, Shaykh Shalih Bafadil, Shaykh Sa'id Jamani, and Shaykh Abdullah Zawawi.<sup>20</sup> According to Abdurrahman, Sanusi was more attached to Shaykh Muhammad Garut than the others. Syaikh Garut was an influential Indonesian scholar in *Tariqah Naqsabandiyyah* and was a student of Shaykh Khatib Sambas<sup>21</sup>.

Sanusi also studied with Shaikh Zawawi, an Ulama who was known to be the teacher for many Indonesian scholars, such as Hashim Asy'ari (1871-1947) and Haji Hasan Mustapa (1852-1930).<sup>22</sup> Zawawai was the author of *Bughyah al-Rāghibīn*, a collection of hadiths of the Prophet, which is still being studied by the students of Shamsyul Ulum Sukabumi pesantren. According to Asep Shalahuddin in his book *Sundanese Sufism: The Relationship between Islam and Culture in Sundanese Society*,

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<sup>19</sup> Abdurrahman.

<sup>20</sup> Rifa Tsamrotul Sa'adah and Rohmatul Maulidiana, "Al-Qur'an and the Unities: The Study of Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan's Thoughts in Indonesia," *Tashwirul Afkar* 40, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 42.

<sup>21</sup> Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning Pesantren dan Tarekat Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia, 52

<sup>22</sup> Jajang A. Rohmana, "Polemik Keagamaan dalam Tafsir Malja' at-ṭālibīn Karya K.H. Ahmad Sanusi," *SUHUF* 10, no. 1 (September 4, 2017): 34

Sanusi studied a lot of the Prophet's Hadith in the book of *Bughyah al-Rāghibīn* through Shaikh Mahfud Termas.<sup>23</sup>

It can be inferred from abovementioned description that Sanusi's expertise in pesantren literacy was strongly influenced and supported by Indonesian ulama in Priangan and Mecca. Sanusi's integrity in the field of Tasawwuf was not known at that time, as he was more recognized as the author of Tafsir *Raudāh al-'Irfān fī Ma'rifah al-Qur'ān*. Later, after studying with Ulama in Mecca, he then focused on the teachings of Tasawwuf and *Tariqah Naqsabandiyah*.<sup>24</sup>

Besides his activity in pesantren, Sanusi was actively maintaining conversations with Indonesian Ulama in Mecca. He even aspired to build a network of Ulama in Indonesia.<sup>25</sup> Since then, Sanusi began to follow in the footsteps of Abdul Halim (1887-1962), one of the PUI figures who was influential in the national movement in Indonesia. It was therefore not surprising that Sanusi was entrusted with being the chairman of the BPUPKI which formulated religious issues in Indonesia.<sup>26</sup>

Sanusi's works on pesantren literature can be categorized into several thematic studies. According to Gunseikanbu in his book *Appendix to the Most Popular Indonesian Registration in Java*, Sanusi wrote 125 works, including 101 books in Sundanese and 24 books in Indonesian. Meanwhile, according to S. Wanta, Sanusi had written around 450 writings with the addition of several books in Arabic such as Tafsir, Hadith, Aqidah/Tawhid, Fiqh, Arabic Literature, and Sufism.<sup>27</sup> Among the books, the currently being studied by santri (students) of Syamsyul Ulum include : *Malja' al-Ṭālibīn fī Tafsīr Kalām Rabb*

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<sup>23</sup> Asep Shalahuddin, *Sufisme Sunda Hubungan Islam dan Budaya dalam Masyarakat Sunda* (Tasikmalaya: Nuansa Cendikia, 2017), 143.

<sup>24</sup> H. Istikhori, "K.H. Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950): Biografi Ulama Hadis Keturunan Nabi Saw Asal Sukabumi," *Refleksi* 18, no. 1 (September 24, 2019): 53

<sup>25</sup> Sulasman Sulasman, "Kyai Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Berjuang dari Pesantren hingga Parlemen," *Jurnal Sejarah Lontar* 5, no. 2 (2008): 77.

<sup>26</sup> Shaleh, *Pemikiran dan Perjuangannya dalam Pergolakan Nasional*, 75.

<sup>27</sup> Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Quran Di Tatar Sunda*, 55.



*al-‘Ālamīn, Kasyf al-Auhām wa al-Zunūn fī Bayān Qaulihī Ta’ala: Lā yamassuhū illa al-Muṭahharūn, Raudah al-‘Irfān fī Ma’rifah al-Qur’ān* and others. In the field of Hadith, Sanusi wrote *Tafsier Boechoerie and al-Hidajah* (the thematic collection of Hadith of Imam Bukhari) in Malay language. Sanusi also studied Jurisprudence and wrote books entitled *al-Jauharāt al-Marḍiyyah* (Imam Syafi’i Fiqh), *Tarjamah Fiqh Akbar li al-Imām Ḥanāfi* and *Ḥilyāt al-Ghulām*. In the field of Sufism, Sanusi wrote *Tarjamah Kitāb al-Ḥikām and Sirāj al-Aẓkiyā’ fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā*.<sup>28</sup>

Sanusi’s mission in writing several works of religious literature did not stop in the city of Mecca.<sup>29</sup> Sanusi continued his contribution at the Cantayan Sukabumi Pesantren. Sanusi’s dedication was awarded with the title “Ajengan Cantayan” by the Cantayan community for his persistence on Islamic teaching. According to Endang, Sanusi’s intellectual works was not limited to writing down his thoughts in respond to the problems of society at that time. Sanusi also translated Arabic books into Sundanese in his book *Sirāj al-Aẓkiyā’ fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā’*. This book is a summary of the book *Hidāyah al-Aẓkiyā’* written by Zainuddin Malibari. Eventhough Sanusi and Malibari were far apart, their intellectual sanad was connected through a network of Meccan scholars at that time.<sup>30</sup>

The education system in Mecca influenced greatly on Sanusi’s thoughts and intellectuality. Sanusi replaced the classical Javanese pesantren curriculum of *sorogan* with discussion or *munaqasyah*. According to Abdurrahman, Sanusi’s teaching style had similarities that of other pesantrens, but the method Sanusi used was inspired by Meccan teachings applied by

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<sup>28</sup> Rifa Ts Saadah, “K.H. Ahmad Sanusi: Ulama Sunda Ahli Tafsir dan Pendapatnya Soal NKRI” (Bincang Syariah, 2020), <https://bincangsyariah.com/khazanah/k-h-ahmad-sanusi-Ulama-sunda-ahli-tafsir-dan-pendapatnya-soal-nkri/>.

<sup>29</sup> H. Anwar, Maslani Maslani, and Ratu Suntiah, “Kyai Haji Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950): Karya-Karya dan Pemikiran Ulama Sukabumi,” *Atthulab: Islamic Religion Teaching and Learning Journal* 3, no. 2 (November 18, 2018): 203

<sup>30</sup> Bizawie, Kultural, and Historis, 112.

Shaykh Garut. It might be due to the influence of Madrasah Shaulatiya system, a traditional class system that still adhered to contemporary studies in discussion. Many Indonesian Ulama who lived in Mecca follow this system and apply it when they return to Indonesia.<sup>31</sup>

In general, the Syamsyul Ulum pesantren used Salafiyah system (traditional Islamic studies) where students were required to study and memorize the Turaş.<sup>32</sup>

There were major Indonesian scholars who were productive and highly respected in Mecca, namely: Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani (1813-1897) who was known for his works in multiple disciplines, Shaykh Nawawi who had strong influence on the pesantren curriculum and is still used today, Shaykh Khatib Minangkabau (1860-1916) who was a student of Shaykh Nawawi and had an influence on the Islamic reform in Indonesia, Shaykh Mahfudz Termas (1868-1920), who studied a lot from the teachers at Masjid al-Haram mosque and had students who later fought hard for Indonesian independence, including Hasyim Asyari and Ahmad Sanusi.<sup>33</sup>

While at the pesantren, Sanusi's teachers were the students of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, while in Mecca he studied with Shaykh Khatib and Shaykh Mahfudz Termas. Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani studied *Hidāyat al-Azkiyā ilā Ṭarīq al-Auliya'*, then called it the book *Salālim al-Fudala'*. There has been a common misunderstanding which mentioned that the author of *Fath al-Mu'in* was also the author of *Hidāyat al-Azkiyā ilā Ṭarīq al-Auliya'*. Whereas, *Hidāyat al-Adzkiyā ilā Ṭarīq al-Auliya'* was written by Zainuddin bin Ali bin Ahmad al-Malibari, while *Fath al-Mu'in* was written by Zainuddin bin Abd al-Aziz, the grandson of Zainuddin bin Ali bin Ahmad al-Malibari.<sup>34</sup> Shaykh Nawawi also wrote a commentary (syarah) of the book *Qurrah al-Ain* entitled *Nihayah al-Zain*.

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<sup>31</sup> Bruinessen, 88.

<sup>32</sup> Abdurrahman, Interview with Sanusi's Family (2).

<sup>33</sup> Taufiq Hakim, *Kiai Sholeh Darat dan Dinamika Politik di Nusantara Abad XIX-XX M*, Cetakan pertama (Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta: Indes Publishing, 2016), 153.

<sup>34</sup> Istikhori, "K.H. Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950)," 61.

Sanusi translated and provided commentary for the book *Hidāyat al-Adzkiyā ilā Tarīq al-Auliyā'* in his work entitled *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* written in Sundanese pegon as a characteristic of traditional pesantrens. Martin argues that Sundanese pegon in classic books was only used by a few pesantrens, including the Syamsyul Ulum which succeeded in educating students who later trained many pegon experts for the Dakwah in society.<sup>35</sup>

### **b. The Dakwah Strategy of Pegon Sunda in the Book of *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'***

According to Falah, Sanusi's dedication to pesantrens and Tatar Sunda in general began right after his return from Mecca. When he joined Sarekat Islam, he wrote the book *Nahrāt al-Durhām* to respond to the accusation by Islamic reformers saying that SI had no credible basis. The society relied on Sanusi for solving problems, even when he was in prison. KH. Ahmad Sanusi was exiled to Tanah Tinggi in Batavia centrum by Governor General B.C. De Jonge for the reason of resisting Kyai Asnawi in 1926 and the destruction of telephone cables in 1927. Sanusi did not have direct involvement in both cases, but he was considered to have influence in society and could harm the colonial government elite, hence he was imprisoned.<sup>36</sup>

In the exile at Batavia Centrum, Ahmad Sanusi was still given the opportunity to meet with his followers. Santri and the community from Sukabumi visited him at Batavia Centrum. During their visit, they discussed community issues. This could be the reason Ahmad Sanusi was very productive in writing his books. Most of his works were books with a strong traditional ideology, such as *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, *Syafii Fiqh*, *Ghazali tasawuf* and *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'* were aimed to respond to religious issues and attacks from people with different ideologies.

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<sup>35</sup> Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning Pesantren dan Tarekat Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia, 110

<sup>36</sup> Miftahul Falah, "Riwayat perjuangan K.H. Ahmad Sanusi," 2009, 25.

There were 101 books written in the Sundanese pegon script and 23 works written in Malay written by Sanusi. The Sunda pegon was vary popular at that time, coinciding with the widespread use of Javanese-Sundanese pegon throughout Java in the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, there were several works written in pegon by Ahmad Rifa'i Kalisalak (1786-1878), Sholeh Darat Semarang (1820-1903), Hasyim Asy'ari Jombang (1875-1947), Hasan Mustofa Garut (1852-1930), Ahmad Sanusi and Bisri Mustofa (1915-1977). The use of the Sundanese pegon in *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'* was a da'wah strategy for some reasons.

First, Ahmad Sanusi was situated in a society of rural and traditional pesantrens which were familiar with the Sundanese pegon. At that time, the society was seeking answers for their the confusion regarding the modern reform groups. He still shared his knowledge to his people although he was behind the prison. This was evidenced by the hundreds of his works written in Sunda pegon.

The second reason of why Sanusi wroten in Sundanese pegon was as a resistance against the invaders. The majority of Sukabumi's population was Muslims. The Dutch colonial fear was that the values of sectarianism practiced by the people of Sukabumi would turn into a revival of religious movements. Therefore, the Dutch colonialists worked to closely monitor the behavior of the *kyai* who had a strong influence on society, including K.H.Ahmad Sanusi. Sundanese and Javanese pegon scripts were a strategy of resistance against the Dutch. Before Ahmad Sanusi, for example, Ahmad Rifai Kalisalak and Sholeh Darat in Central Java used pegon as a model of resistance. Even though they couldnot survive physically, their anti-colonialism teachings were well understood by the community and followed by later scholars. In this case, Sanusi had the same views with other Priangan Ulama in fighting colonialism, such as K.H. Badruzaman from Al-Falah Biru Garut Pesantren and Kyai Mustafa Kamil from the Bojong Melati Pesantren.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ading Kusdiana et al., "The Pesantren Networking in Priangan (1800-1945)," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 1, no. 2 (2013): 129,

Third, pegon served as a distinct marker from the reformers who used non-pegon Sundanese. Traditional Ulama have a strong tradition of maintaining the local language, as shown in the book *Hidāyat al-Adzkiyā ilā Ṭarīq al-Auliyā* by Zainuddin al-Malibari. It was translated by Ahmad Sanusi with *Siraj al-Adzkiya fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya* also commented by Sayyid Bakri b. Syaththa 'ad-Dimyati with *Kifāyah al-Atqiyā' wa Minhāj al-Aşfiyā'*, by Syaikh Nawawi Banten with *Salālim al-fudalā'*, by Kyai Sholeh Darat with *Minhāj al-Atqiyā'*, and by Abd al-Jalil Hamid al-Qandali with *Tuḥfah al-Aşfiyā'*<sup>38</sup> Besides maintaining the local languages, this translation was also to maintain the networks of Ulama.

Ahmad Sanusi's strategy of using pegon scripts in his books was well appreciated. By doing this, he could maintain solidarity with local and traditional people. He also founded *al-Hidajatoel Islamijjah* magazine as local news portal. It showed that Sanusi was a traditional Islamic figure who acted progressively in spreading Islamic da'wah. For Sanusi, Sundanese pegon is the identity of the society, while other languages such as Latin was a tool to explain to people from different backgrounds or identities. Sanusi's principle was in between *mujaddid* (renewal) and traditional thought. This renewal was evident when he was transliterating Quran into Latin letters at the time when no one tried to do it. He then translated the Quran into Malay and did Tafsir on the same language, as was done by Mahmud Yunus. Sanusi's thoughts and inspiration were felt by everyone, especially by the Cantayan community.<sup>39</sup>

Harry J. Benda, one of the most famous historical figures at the time said that Sanusi was among orthodox Ulama. Meanwhile, Mawardi categorized him into progressive-orthodox groups. Then Muhammad Iskandar denied these two opinions; he said that Sanusi's thoughts were more on traditional science, hence Iskandar grouped him into a group of progressive tradi-

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<sup>38</sup> Shaleh, *Pemikiran dan Perjuangannya dalam Pergolakan Nasional*, 72.

<sup>39</sup> Ibnu Fikri, *Aksara Pegon: Studi Tentang Simbol Perlawanan Islam Di Jawa Pada Abad XVIII–XIX* (LP2M IAIN Walisongo, 2014), 128.

tional scholars. All of these opinions prove that Sanusi's ideas and thoughts about Islamic teachings and about the state, nationality and society were clearly and explicitly conveyed both orally and in writing. Sanusi always referred to the sources of various *salaf* and *khalaf* books in explaining the Quran and its interpretation, Hadith, Fiqh, even in Aqidah (including Sufism) to the scholars of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*.

Sanusi's type of Tasawuf thought in *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'* is Tasawuf Akhlaqi, namely the teachings of *tasawuf* which studied the perfection and purity of the soul through a process of regulating mental attitudes and strictly disciplining behavior. To achieve optimal happiness, a person must identify his existence with divine qualities (*takhalluq bi akhlaq al-karimah*), through the purification of the soul and body which started from the formation of a complete moral person through moral character based on the attributes of Allah. One example of his advice he expressed in the book *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'* as follows:

*"Jeung wajib ka jalma anu bermaksud kabagjaan dunia akhirat kudu ngaji ilmu anu manfaat karna Allah karna ngaji jeung ngajarkeunna eta pang alus-alusna ibadah jeung meunang fakat khilafatullah jeung warisan ti Nabi. Ulah nyalahkeun cariosan Ulama mun aya wajah benerna, wajib ngagungkeun Ulama, meunang nanyakeun ka Ulama tapi ulah mujaadalah ulah ngaheulakeun faham urang jeung mandeurikeun faham Ulama kajaba lamun yakin salahna."*<sup>40</sup>

[Knowledge is the key for our happily life, now and hereafter. Others, if you would to compete and suggest the Ulama's words, tell him by a good behaviour without blaming his ability while they are in the truth].

*"Dahar kudu tina halal ulah anu syubhat sumawona anu haram sakura-sakur heunteu dicacad ku syara' eta halal. Tetep ulah gembul karna matak bareurat, matak teuas benci, matak leungit pinter, matak doif ibadah, matak loba hees, tah eta hees ulah di jajadikeun."*

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<sup>40</sup> Istikhori, "K.H. Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950)," 31.

[Everything we eat must be halal foods, as they do not make our bodies tarnished by doubt or even unclean. Don't be a greedy person because it can make our bodies feel heavier and hard-hearted, lose intelligence, lack enthusiasm for worship, and also sleep a lot. So that, we have to avoid this bad activity because it will destroy our worship]

After several interviews with one of the alumni of the pesantren founded by Sanusi, all the applications ordered by him in the book are still directly proportional to what the students do.<sup>41</sup>

*“Sarta kudu daek muthalaah Ihya Ulum al-Din al-Ghazali karna eta buku jadi obat anu manjur jang akhlak manusia yang artinya: kita harus rajin membaca kitab Ihya Ulum al-Din al-Ghazali karena kitab ini adalah obat yang paling mujarab.”*<sup>42</sup>

[We must diligently read the book *Ihya Ulum al-Din* by al-Ghazali, it is certainly the medicine for calming the heart in every human being]

These advices suggested that Sanusi highlighted the position of *Tasawuf Amali*, the Sufism activity that had big values for human beings. Sanusi mentioned al-Ghazali's resource regardly sharing these activities followed by Santri (students of the p), and Sundanese societies.

#### **A. Sanusi's Scholarly Transmission in *Sirāj al-Azkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-Azkiyā'***

Sanusi's integrity in Tafsir was greatly appreciated and accepted in Nusantara. Some of his most cited works were *Rauḍah al-'Irfān fī Ma'rifah al-Qur'ān*, *Malja' al-Ṭālibīn fī Tafsīr Kalām Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, *Tafsir Surat Yasin*, and *Tamsyiat al-Muslimīn*. Rohmana mentioned that his contribution in this field came from his authority and experience in pesantrens. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sanusi began to struggle with the study of Tasawwuf and gave

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<sup>41</sup> Endang Fitriana, Interview with Sanusi's Family (1), 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Ahmad Sanusi, *Siradj al-Adzkiya fī Tarjamah al-Azkiya*, (Cantayan Press: Sukabumi), 26.

birth to his work entitled *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'*. This book was widely used by the students at the Syamsyul Ulum pesantren and Sundanese people at that time.

This book was a translation of *Hidayatul Adzkiya* book by Zainudin Malibari. This book contained 35 sheets of Sundanese pegon script and referred to *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (the book of Sufism) by Imam al-Ghazali. Ahmad Sanusi took many references from the philosophy of Imam al-Ghazali and also created a trilogy of Sufism, namely *thariqa*, *haqiqa*, and *sharia*. In addition, Sanusi mentioned the nine paths of the Sufi in his book, such as: *al-Taubah* (repentance), *al-Qanaah* (enough), *Ta'allum 'Ilm* (seeking knowledge), *Hifzh al-Waqt* (punctual), *Muhafazhatu 'ala al-Sunnah* (guarding sunnah), *al-Ikhlash* (sincere), *Zuhd* (zuhud), *al-Istiqamah*, and *Tawakkal* (surrender). In his book *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'* Sanusi called these nine paths as the pathway to the hereafter spirituality.<sup>43</sup>

Physically, *Sirāj Al-Azkiyā' Fī Tarjamah Al-Azkiyā'* was covered in green cover, published by a local publication. The photocopied version did not mention the year of publication on the cover page. This book discussed *syariat*, *tarekat* and *hakekat*. Pages 2-20 of the book described nine steps to develop complete morals. Then Sanusi explained various forms of the virtues of worship, such as the importance of congregational prayers and the importance of *muthalaah* (reading) *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by al-Ghazali, which was said to be a panacea for *tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification). On page 55, there was a warning (*tazkirah*) regarding the discipline of worship and the variety of worship to avoid being bored. Sanusi revealed that it was the time for students to study and worship. According to Endang, Kyai Sanusi's politeness and punctuality was so profound in his teaching, and even when he became chairman of the BPUPKI in 1945.<sup>44</sup>

The nine steps for spirituality by Sanusi were as follows.

First, *al-Taubah*. It is a serious repentance in regretting past actions, not repeating it again, cleaning self and introspecting self. Repentance was the basis of all forms of obedience and

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<sup>43</sup> Ahmad Sanusi, *Siradj al-Adzkiya fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya*, 28

<sup>44</sup> Fitriana, Interview with Sanusi's Family (1).



kindness. It is entirely possible for someone to fall into sin to repent. Second, *Qanaah*. It is to accept God's provision as it should be, not expecting anything else or different. Third, *Zuhud*. Sanusi categorizes this as part of life's patience. According to Abdurrahman, an alumnus of the Syamsyul Ulum Pesantren, Sanusi practiced asceticism such as the Daud fasting. According to him, David's fasting habit was a proof that Ahmad Sanusi believed in Sunni tirakat which he later wrote in his book.<sup>45</sup>

Fourth, *Taallum al-'Ilm*. In this case, Sanusi provided three important components for knowledge seekers, namely worship, knowledge and faith.

Fifth, *al-Istiqāmah*, it is being consistent with all sunnah practices and maintaining all forms of sunnah and the attitudes of the Prophet.

Sixth, *al-Tawakkul* (surrender), it is not only limited to the world of Sufis, but also related to *aqidah* or belief to Allah Almighty.

Seventh, *al-Ikhlas* (sincere). It is seeking Allah's grace (*ridha*), and not expecting other realities. *Ikhlas* is necessary to train oneself to be abstain from *riya* (pride), because faith was imperfect when there was a desire to be praised and a fear of ridicule. An Ikhlas person receives glory from Allah the Almighty, not from peer humans.

Eighth, *Uzlah*. *Uzlah* is not seclusion oneself in the mountains and avoiding crowds. Instead, it is not to mix with vain things and be haughty. In this case one does not immediately leave people and let them live in martyrdom.

Ninth, *Hifz al-Waqt* (guarding time). The idea of guarding time here is that one is praying all the time. A happy life of Sufi does not necessarily keep everything away, but most importantly, they are able to benefit others, both in this world and in the hereafter.

Some of the Sufi figures used as references by Sanusi were the tasawuf concepts of *Imam al-Ghazali*. Sanusi was so inspired by Ghazali's understanding on the studies of Fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, Theologist. At the same time, he felt dissatisfaction with the

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<sup>45</sup> Fitriana.

methods of seeking truth offered by philosophy so that the concept of Islamic Sufism in general and Sunni Sufism in particular became a public spotlight.

Sanusi's concept combined Fiqh as a esoteric representation and ethics and aesthetics as exoteric aspects as discussed in *Ihya Ulum al-Din*. His thoughts always based his tasawuf views on the Quran and Hadith. Like other Muslim thinkers, Imam al-Ghazali's interpretation on Quran and Hadith appeared to be more circumstantial, especially with regard to humans. That is, when he was dealing with the texts of the Quran and Hadith, he was not empty-minded. These tendencies and thoughts are the hallmarks of al-Ghazali's thought.<sup>46</sup>

From the theological point of view, al-Ghazali was a follower of *Ash'ariyyah*. This was because he had studied theology with his eminent teacher, al-Juwayni. Since then, he became a prominent supporter and greatest promotor of the *Ashariyya* sect. The originality of theological thoughts was almost non-existent. Kalam *Ashariyya* became the theological framework that guided al-Ghazali's mystical reflections. What al-Ghazali held were well absorbed by the people who accept. The confluence of al-Ghazali's Sufism and Sunni orthodoxy has been maintained by the majority of ulama to this day. It was clear that Ghazali's model of Sufism was orthodox (Sunni) that emphasized spiritual purity and completeness, authentic and valid manifestations of one's religion.

Ghazali thoughts much influenced how Sanusi put his thoughts and applied them to the Sundanese people. Sanusi had strong influence to people, even he received a title of Ajengan in the Cantayan community at that time. Even though Sanusi was one of the influential people in Sarekat Islam, he did not show it to his people. His da'wah was so simple but still referred to the books of Sufism and morality with the concept of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*. The submission based on the Quran and Hadith was closely linked to Imam al-Ghazali. In educating his students and his community, Sanusi always emphasized that humans must have good and noble morals, a clear mind that can

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmad Sanusi, *Siradj al-Adzkiya fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya*, 41.

distinguish between truth and falsehood, the courage to call for good and prevent evil. In this attitude, he showed his attitude in the form of *tahmil*, *tahrim*, and *taghyir*.

In showing the third attitude (*taghyir*), the Dakwah that Sanusi practiced was nothing but appreciating or accommodating a tradition to be applied in religious law. He uses this rule as an implementation of moderate Dakwah and proved that the presence of Islam was not to destroy the customs that developed in society. In fact, it was present with the condition of selecting adat. When religion and customs conflict, then Islam modified (*taghyir*) to suit the values of Islamic teachings. According to Abdurrahman, this attitude was proven by Sanusi during his leadership in Cantayan and influenced moderate values of Sundanese, especially in the science of Tasawuf in accordance with the teachings of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*.<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Ahmad Sanusi's contribution in spreading Sufism in Tatar Sunda was quite significant, for his book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-AẒkiyā'* had been influencing Sundanese society at that time until today. Although Ahmad Sanusi has developed works in various scientific disciplines, such as interpretation, hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism has become an important science for pesantren audiences and society. First, Sanusi promoted the primacy of the science of Sufism as the spiritual foundation of Islam and its practice through tarekat practice. Sanusi even focused on practicing the ten orders and dedicated himself as an expert on Sunni Sufism in his book.

The book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā' fī Tarjamah al-AẒkiyā'* compiled by Ahmad Sanusi incorporated moderate interpretation and introduced Sunni Sufism with an *Akhlaqi-Amali* approach. As such, Sanusi's da'wah had coherence with national and regional interests which aimed to develop the character of religious moderation in Tatar Sunda. There were nine characters of Sunni Sufism that he wrote in the book *Sirāj al-AẒkiyā'* such as *al-Taubah*, *al-Qanā'ah*, *al-Zuhd*, *Ta'allum al-'Ilma*, *Istiqāmah*

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<sup>47</sup> Abdurrahman, Interview with Sanusi's Family (2).

(according to sunnah practices), *al-Tawakkul*, *al-Ikhlās*, *al-'Uzlah* and *Hifz al-Waqt* (keeping time). Based on these nine characters, it can be concluded that Ahmad Sanusi had been influenced by al-Ghazali's Sufism as outlined in the book *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, and all the theories mentioned by al-Ghazali were also supported by Ahmad Sanusi in *Sirāj al-Azkiyā'*.

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