

Text, Ethics, and Knowledge: A Philological Study of *Adab* in the *Tarjumān* within the Framework of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

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Abstract: This paper investigates the concept of *adab* in *Kitāb Tarjumān*, a classical Malay-Islamic text composed in the Madurese vernacular by KH. Abdul Hamid bin Isbat of Pondok Pesantren Banyuanyar, Pamekasan, Madura. Employing a philological analysis of the text's Malay translation and drawing upon the epistemological and philosophical framework of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the study contends that *adab* in the *Tarjumān* operates not solely as a code of ethical conduct but as an integrated epistemic structure that organizes the Muslim's relationship with God, the Prophet, the community, and the self. The philological analysis demonstrates that the text's compositional structure, which integrates *tawhīd*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf* in a deliberate, non-linear progression, exemplifies al-Attas's conception of *adab* as the just and proper ordering of all things, as well as his model of *ta'dīb* as the appropriate method of Islamic education. Furthermore, the study shows that the *Tarjumān*'s pedagogical system, grounded in the triadic relationship among teacher, student, and parents, empirically embodies *ta'dīb* as a communal and relational process of knowledge transmission that depends on *niyyah* and *barakah*. The text's critical and constructive engagement with Madurese cultural practices, including its treatment of *carok*, *kerapan sapi*, and *bersanding* through the lens of *adab* and *niyyah*, constitutes a dynamic ethical-epistemological system rooted in the Malay-Islamic worldview (*tasawwur Islāmī*). Collectively, these findings position the *Tarjumān* as an indigenous and textually grounded resource for Malay-Islamic cultural resilience in the contemporary multipolar era.

Keywords: *adab*; *Kitāb Tarjumān*; philology; al-Attas; Islamic epistemology; Malay-Islamic worldview; pesantren.

Introduction

The concept of *adab*, broadly translatable as propriety, courtesy, and the proper ordering of conduct in accordance with one's station and recognition of the hierarchical structure of existence, represents one of the most influential and far-reaching ideas in the classical Islamic intellectual tradition. *Adab* encompasses the full spectrum of a Muslim's obligations: to God, to the Prophet, to the scholarly tradition, to other human beings, to the natural world, and to the inner dimensions of the self.

In the late twentieth century, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas systematically and philosophically articulated the foundational significance of *adab* for Islamic civilization. Al-Attas contends that *adab* cannot be reduced to manners or social etiquette; instead, it signifies the just and proper ordering of all things in accordance with their true nature and hierarchical place within the cosmic and moral order of existence. This understanding is grounded in the Islamic conception of God's absolute sovereignty (*tawhīd*) and is manifested in every domain of human life, knowledge, and learning (al-Attas 1980, 22). In his address at the First World Conference on Muslim Education (Mecca, 1977), al-Attas identified the loss of *adab* as the fundamental crisis facing the Muslim world, asserting that this loss had resulted in disorientation, injustice, and confusion at the civilizational level (al-Attas 1980, 1–5; al-Attas 1993, 44).

Despite the theoretical richness and programmatic importance of al-Attas's account, limited empirical research has investigated how his conception of *adab* is reflected in the classical textual traditions of the Malay-Islamic world. Scholars of Nusantara Islamic intellectual history increasingly recognize the *kitāb kuning* tradition as a significant intellectual archive of the region (Azra 2004; van Bruinessen 1995). Nevertheless, most studies prioritize legal content, historical context, or sociological function, rather than undertaking rigorous philological analysis from an ethical-epistemological perspective (Dhofier 1999). Consequently, the philosophical depth and internal coherence of these texts, as well as their potential contributions to contemporary ethical and educational reflection, have often been underestimated.

This study addresses this gap by examining *Kitāb Tarjumān*, a comprehensive religious compendium authored by KH. Abdul Hamid bin Isbat, a scholar at Pondok Pesantren Banyuanyar, Pamekasan, Madura, wrote in the Madurese vernacular using the Arabic Pegon script (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.). The text, later translated into Malay by a researcher at the Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya, encompasses the principal domains of Islamic religious knowledge: *tawhīd* (theology), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *tasawwuf* (mysticism) (Imamuddin and Ali 2022). It is distinguished by a pervasive, explicit focus on *adab* across all aspects of human

existence, from intimate bodily practices to advanced spiritual disciplines, and by a systematic, critical engagement with the specific cultural practices of Madurese Muslim society. These features make it a particularly valuable source for analyzing how *adab* functions as an organizing principle of Islamic ethics and knowledge in the Nusantara context.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 outlines the philological and philosophical-analytical methodologies employed. Section 3 presents a philological analysis of the text, organized into seven sub-sections: the author, tradition, and structural features of the text (3.1); the application of al-Attas's theoretical framework (3.2); the four relational domains of *adab* within the text (3.3); the pedagogical system of *ta'dīb* (3.4); the *Tarjumān*'s critical-constructive engagement with Madurese cultural practices (3.5); the interior dimension of *adab* in *tafakkur* and *murāqabah* (3.6); and the *Tarjumān* as a Nusantara instantiation of *ta'dīb* in its most comprehensive form (3.7). Section 4 presents the main conclusions and proposes avenues for future research.

Method

This study employs a philological method in combination with a philosophical-analytical framework derived from the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. The primary data source is the Madurese *Pegon* of *Kitāb Tarjumān* that which analyzed by Imamuddin, a researcher at the Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya. Philology here is understood not merely as a preparatory technique for accessing pre-existing content but as a mode of interpretive engagement that reveals the text's ethical commitments through its formal properties; four analytical operations are applied: *semantic analysis* of key terms — above all *adab* and its related concepts (*niyyah*, *riyā'*, *barakah*, *khidmah*, *tawakkul*, *murāqabah*) — tracking both their explicit occurrence and the implicit operation of their logic throughout the text; *structural analysis* of the text's compositional architecture, including the sequence of thematic sections and the function of repetition as a pedagogical strategy; *intertextual analysis* identifying classical sources cited or alluded in the *Tarjuman*. This philological analysis is interpreted through al-Attas's philosophical-analytical framework, drawing primarily on *The Concept of Education in Islam* (1980), *Islam and Secularism* (1993), and *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (1995), as well as Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud's *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (1998); the deployment of this framework is analytical rather than deductive — al-Attas's vocabulary serves as a conceptual lens that illuminates dimensions of the text that might otherwise remain invisible, yielding a reading of the *Tarjumān* that is both textually anchored and theoretically productive.

Results and Discussion

1. *Kitāb Tarjumān*: Text, Author, and Pesantren Tradition

Pondok Pesantren Banyuanyar, located in Pamekasan, Madura, is among the oldest Islamic educational institutions in the Indonesian archipelago. Established in 1787 CE/1204 H by Kiai Isbat bin Ishaq, it maintains a distinguished scholarly lineage that continues to the present (Rakhman and Hidayat 2022, 14; van Bruinessen 1995, 17–19). The institution exemplifies the classical Shafi'i-Ash'arite tradition, which is the predominant form of Islam in Madura. This tradition is defined by adherence to the Shafi'i legal school, Ash'arite creedal theology, and the integration of Sufic ethical disciplines within normative Islamic law (van Bruinessen 1995, 17; Azra 2004, 8–12). Transmitted through pesantren networks and classical texts, this tradition is part of the broader Malay-Islamic scholarly heritage. Azyumardi Azra has documented this heritage through the networks of '*ulamā*' linking Nusantara to the centers of Islamic scholarship in the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina) and the wider Arabic-Islamic intellectual tradition (Azra 2004, 1–22).

KH. Abdul Hamid bin Isbat was a leading scholar at Pondok Pesantren Banyuanyar, and the *Tarjumān* is the primary expression of his pedagogical and ethical vision. The text's authority and institutional status are clear from the beginning: the muqaddimah, written by his grandson KH. Abdul Hamid Baqir bin Abdul Majid, states that only copies with the official stamp of Pondok Pesantren Banyuanyar are considered authoritative (Abdul Hamid Baqir n.d., 2–3). This requirement is more than administrative; it affirms that the *Tarjumān* is an institutional work, with its authority rooted in the pesantren's socioreligious network, which ensures its accuracy, transmission, and appropriate use. In this way, the text itself exemplifies *adab* by properly ordering the relationships among the author, the institution, the text, and the community.

The *Tarjumān* is situated within the tradition of *kitāb kuning*, the classical Islamic texts that constitute the core curriculum of the pesantren tradition throughout Nusantara (van BThe *Tarjumān* belongs to the tradition of *kitāb kuning*, the classical Islamic texts that form the core curriculum of pesantren throughout Nusantara (van Bruinessen 1995, 17). Its unique feature is its composition in the Madurese vernacular using the Arabic Pegon script, reflecting a significant linguistic and cultural choice. Van Bruinessen notes that, until the nineteenth century, pesantren in Madura typically used Javanese rather than Madurese for religious instruction and translation. The emergence of *kitāb kuning* written directly in Madurese marks a deliberate shift toward the

community's native language (van Bruinessen 1990, 233; Suryaningrat et al. 2026). KH. Abdul Hamid's decision to write in Madurese was a conscious effort to make the classical Islamic tradition accessible to ordinary Madurese Muslims, demonstrating *adab* by engaging the community in their own language and context. The *Tarjumān* is a comprehensive compendium covering the main areas of Islamic religious knowledge and practice. Its topics include the fundamentals of *'ilm al-tawhīd* (the science of divine attributes), the full range of *fiqh*—including *ṭahārah* (ritual purity), *ṣalāt* (prayer, including all *nawāfil* prayers), *ṣawm* (fasting), *zakāt* (almsgiving), *ḥajj* (pilgrimage), and *munākahāt* (marriage law)—and a wide array of ethical subjects under the heading of *adab*. The text also features substantial *tasawwuf* content in its later sections, with detailed guidance on *tafakkur* (contemplation), *murāqabah* (self-vigilance), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tawakkul* (reliance on God). It discusses the attributes of God (*ṣifāt wājib*), the twenty impossible attributes (*ṣifāt mustahīl*), and the permissible attributes (*ṣifāt jā'iz*) as defined by the Ash'arite school, before shifting to *fiqh* (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 4–13). On pages 93–97, the text revisits *tawhīd*, focusing on the Ash'arite doctrine of divine causality, the affirmation of divine *qudrah* and *irādah* as the exclusive genuine causes of all events, and the rejection of the notion that created entities possess independent causal efficacy (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 93–97). This discussion then transitions to *tasawwuf*, culminating in the exploration of *tafakkur*, *murāqabah*, *shukr*, and *tawakkul*, which conclude the text.

This non-linear structure is not a weakness, as might be assumed by comparison with classical *fiqh* manuals, but is instead intentional and coherent. The return to *tawhīd* after the discussion of *fiqh* reflects the author's belief that outward practice must always be rooted in the recognition of God's absolute sovereignty and the rejection of independent causation in created things. The text's conclusion with *tasawwuf* further shows that outward practice must arise from and return to an inner orientation toward God. In this way, the structure of the text itself enacts the *adab* it teaches: *tawhīd* grounds *fiqh*, which is then sustained and enriched by *tasawwuf*, forming a continuous and integrated movement.

2. Al-Attas's Framework: *Adab*, *Ta'dīb*, and the Islamic Worldview

Al-Attas's account of *adab* represents a philosophically substantive and practically significant contribution to modern Islamic educational thought. A concise restatement of its key elements is necessary to establish the conceptual framework for the subsequent philological analysis of the *Tarjumān*.

According to al-Attas, *adab* signifies the just and proper ordering of entities, encompassing the recognition and acknowledgment of each entity's true nature and appropriate position within the hierarchical order of creation, as well as the comportment of the self in accordance with this recognition (al-Attas 1980, 22). This definition comprises several distinct dimensions. Ontologically, *adab* is rooted in the Islamic conception of existence as a divinely ordered hierarchy, wherein each entity occupies its proper place and maintains its appropriate relationship to others. Epistemologically, *adab* constitutes the condition for the possibility of genuine knowledge: true understanding requires recognition of an entity's proper place in the order of existence, and the acquisition of *'ilm* (knowledge) necessitates the *adab* that properly orients the knower toward both the known and the source of knowledge (al-Attas 1980, 22–23). Ethically, *adab* governs the appropriate conduct of the self in all relationships, including those with God, the Prophet, teachers, fellow human beings, and oneself. These dimensions are inseparable; the ethical, epistemological, and ontological aspects of *adab* are fundamentally interconnected, each presupposing and reinforcing the others.

Al-Attas derives from *adab* the concept of *ta'dīb*, which he identifies as the most appropriate term for Islamic education, in contrast to the more commonly used *tarbiyah* (nurturing/upbringing) and *ta'līm* (instruction/teaching). He contends that *ta'dīb* uniquely integrates the ethical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of formation, whereas *tarbiyah* primarily denotes physical nurturing, a process shared with the animal world, and *ta'līm* primarily refers to cognitive instruction, which risks reducing education to information transfer without moral development (al-Attas 1980, 26–27). In contrast, *ta'dīb* involves the inculcation of *adab* in the entirety of the human being—body, mind, and soul—resulting in a person who recognizes the proper ordering of things and acts accordingly in all aspects of life. This process is inherently communal, requiring properly ordered relationships between teacher and student, school and family, and between the Islamic tradition and the living community.

Al-Attas situates *adab* and *ta'dīb* within his comprehensive articulation of the Islamic worldview (*tasawwur Islāmī*), which he defines as a coherent vision of reality, truth, and goodness that arises from the recognition of God as the Creator and Sustainer of all existence, grounded in divine revelation (*wahy*) and developed through sound reason (*'aql*) (al-Attas 1995, 1–5). This worldview functions not as an abstract philosophical system but as a living orientation that shapes the Muslim understanding of self, community, the natural world, history, and the cosmos. Transmission of this worldview occurs primarily through concrete practices, relationships, and texts within the Islamic tradition, and most significantly through *ta'dīb* in its fullest sense: the formation of Muslim individuals who internalize and embody the Islamic worldview as the natural orientation of their entire being.

The concepts of *adab*, *ta'dīb*, and *tasawwur Islāmī* constitute the analytical framework for the subsequent reading of the *Tarjumān*. The guiding question for the philological analysis is as follows: In what ways, and through which textual strategies, does the *Tarjumān* exemplify the integration of ethics, epistemology, and

worldview that al-Attas's framework identifies as the defining characteristic of authentic Islamic *adab*?

3. *Adab* as Relational Architecture: The Four Domains of Ordering

A systematic philological analysis of the *Tarjumān* demonstrates that *adab* functions as the central organizing principle across four relational domains, each corresponding to a dimension of the Islamic worldview as articulated by al-Attas. Rather than appearing as distinct, isolated chapters, these domains are interwoven throughout the text, recurring in various contexts and with differing emphases. This integration produces a comprehensive depiction of Muslim life structured by *adab* in all its facets.

The first and foundational domain is *adab* towards God, or *adab* towards the Creator. This dimension permeates the entire *Tarjumān* through the persistent exhortation to direct all actions toward God with sincere intention (*niyyah*). The text's detailed discussion of "Adab Orang Hidup" (Propriety of the Living), which holds a central position, presents an extensive list of prohibited inner dispositions: arrogance (*takabbur*), envy (*hasad*), ostentation (*riyā'*), desire for reputation (*sum'ah*), self-admiration (*'ujb*), and tale-bearing (*namimah*) (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 43–44). These are characterized not as breaches of social norms but as failures to maintain the proper inner orientation before God, representing fundamental lapses in *adab*. The guiding criterion is consistently the pleasure (*ridā'*) of God and the avoidance of divine displeasure. As KH. Abdul Hamid explicitly states (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 43):

akan orang baik itu bukan orang yang tampan wajahnya, kaya dan pemberani, tapi orang yang baik itu adalah orang yang berjihad (bersungguh-sungguh) mengerjakan segala perintah Allah swt dan menjauhi laranganNya serta mati dalam keadaan Islam.

(The truly virtuous individual is not defined by physical attractiveness, wealth, or bravery, but by earnest striving to fulfill God's commands, avoid His prohibitions, and die in a state of Islam.)

This statement encapsulates the text's ethical framework regarding *adab* towards God: external indicators of worldly status, such as beauty, wealth, and bravery, are inconsequential in the assessment of a person before God. The essential criterion is the internal alignment of the self with God's commands and prohibitions. This understanding of *adab*, as articulated by al-Attas, involves recognizing one's proper position as a creature before the Creator, manifested through the comprehensive orientation of one's life.

KH. Abdul Hamid grounds *adab* towards God within a sophisticated Ash'arite theological framework. The *Tarjumān*'s central discussion of divine causality, which asserts that no created thing possesses genuine causal efficacy and that all effects in the created world are directly produced by God's *qudrah* and *irādah*, serves as the foundation for the text's ethical concerns rather than a digression (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 93–97). Since all causes ultimately derive from God's will, the appropriate *adab* for a Muslim is to attribute all matters—including actions, capacities, and achievements—directly to God, rather than to oneself or to natural causes. The warning that attributing genuine causation to created things constitutes *kufr* (disbelief), according to unanimous scholarly consensus, is, in this context, a statement about *adab*: the improper ordering of the self in relation to God and creation.

The second domain concerns *adab* towards the Prophet. The *Tarjuman* contains numerous invocations of blessing upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt* offering multiple formula—ns—including the *Ṣalawāt Sa'ādah*, the *Ṣalawāt Nāriyyah*, version attributed to Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and the *Ṣalawāt al-Fātiḥ*—each accompanied by detailed prescriptions regarding occasions, frequencies, and associated benefits (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., [halaman — pending verification No. 8]). The *adab* of *du'ā'* (which requires), which requires the *basmalah*, the *ḥamdalah*, and the *ṣalawāt* as i, proper opening, structures all petitionary prayer in the correct act of correct orientation towards God, mediated by the Prophet. The instruction that upon hearing any of the Prophet's names, one should immediately demonstrate *ṣalawāt*, demonstrates a pervasive attentiveness to the Prophet's presence as a constant dimension of the *adab*-ordered life (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.). The Prophet is presented not merely as a historical figure but as a living point of orientation, through whom *adab* towards God is practically realized.

The third domain addresses *adab* towards the community, or *adab* towards fellow human beings. This dimension is the most elaborated in the *Tarjumān*, encompassing *adab* towards parents, teachers, political authorities (*pemerintah*), spouses, children, neighbors, guests, the poor, the sick, the dying, and the deceased (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 61–70). provides a particularly detailed and philosophically significant treatment of neighborly obligations. KH. Abdul Hamid defines the neighbor (*jiran*) as extending to forty houses in all four cardinal directions, derivation derived from the classical tradition, and enumerates the specific obligations entailed by this relationship (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 64–65):

Sebaiknya orang itu berbuat kepada jirannya seperti tolong menolong ketika sedang ada hajat... kalau susah bantu kesusahannya... kalau ada aibnya ditutupi aibnya, kalau mahu menghutang beri dia hutang, kalau lapar beri makan, kalau punya kuwah bagikan (sebahagiannya) kepada tetangganya...

(One should behave towards one's neighbor with mutual assistance when there is a need... if they are in difficulty, help with their difficulty... if they have a fault, conceal that fault; if they wish to borrow, lend to them; if they are hungry, give them food; if you have a dish, share some of it with your neighbor...)

The ethical logic of neighborliness in the *Tarjumān* is founded not on social utility alone but on the recognition that the neighbor, regardless of distance or difference, shares a relationship of creaturely solidarity before God that mirrors one's own. The prohibition of actions that harm the neighbor, such as constructing a house so high that it obstructs the neighbor's air, demonstrates the text's understanding that *adab* towards the community encompasses spatial and material aspects of life, in addition to interpersonal conduct (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.). This represents a comprehensive social ethic, reflecting the text's central conviction that *adab* allows no domain of exception: every aspect of a Muslim's life, including the built environment, is subject to the just and proper ordering of affairs.

The fourth domain concerns *adab* towards the self, or one's own person. The *Tarjumān*'s discussions of propriety in sleep, eating, dress, and bodily conduct form a comprehensive program of bodily discipline, reflecting al-Attas's conception of *adab* as the ordering of the entire human person—body, mind, and soul (al-Attas 1980, 22; Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 54–56, 79). Practices such as ritual purity (*wuḍūʾ*) before sleep, recitation of specific Qur'anic passages and invocations, orienting the body towards the *qibla*, and intending *Tahajjud* prayer upon waking, collectively transform sleep from a biological function into an act of *adab*. Likewise, the regulation of eating—prohibiting excess, requiring the basmalah before meals, discouraging careless eating while standing, and encouraging the sharing of food with neighbors—elevates a biological necessity into an expression of *adab* towards God, the self, and the community.

What is most striking about the four-domain structure of *adab* in the *Tarjumān* is its integration, rather than merely its comprehensiveness. A single inner quality—the proper orientation of the self towards God—grounds *adab* across all four domains. Arrogance (*takabbur*) violates *adab* towards God by usurping a status reserved for the divine, towards the community by treating others as unworthy of concern, and towards the self by corrupting the inner moral faculty. Conversely, cultivating proper *niyyah* in one domain, such as eating, reinforces and expresses the same inner orientation required in every other domain. Thus, the four domains of *adab* are not isolated ethical modules but are mutually constitutive dimensions of a unified moral and spiritual orientation, as al-Attas's framework suggests (al-Attas 1993, 54).

4. *Adab* as Pedagogical System: The Three Pillars of *Ta'dīb*

A key theoretical contribution of this philological study is the *Tarjumān*'s articulation of a coherent pedagogical system rooted in *adab*, which closely parallels and empirically substantiates al-Attas's theoretical concept of *ta'dīb*. This system is elaborated across multiple sections of the text and is structured around three principal actors and their respective relationships: the teacher (*guru*), the student (*santri*), and the parents.

The section titled "Adab Santri" (Propriety of the Student) provides the most concise and direct articulation of the student's role within the pedagogical system. KH. Abdul Hamid instructs students to prioritize seeking the approval (*ridā*) and pleasure of the teacher, to serve the teacher (*khidmah*) with sincere devotion, and to exercise vigilance against any action, whether intentional or inadvertent, that might disturb or displease the teacher (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 69). These directives are grounded in the empirical realities of the pesantren tradition.

Sebagai santri (pelajar pondok) wajib mencari reda gurunya. Berhati-hati jangan berbuat sesuatu yang dapat mengejutkan (hati) gurunya. Justeru bersungguh-sungguh untuk berkhidmat untuk gurunya. Kerana sudah ada banyak cerminan (pengajaran) iaitu ramai daripada kalangan santri di pondok pesantren yang berbuat sesuatu yang menjadikan gurunya marah mesti tidak dimarahi ketika sudah balik ke rumahnya tidak pernah mendapatkan berkah segala urusannya dan termasuk juga anak keturunannya.

(As a student at the pesantren, one must seek the approval of one's teacher. Be careful not to do anything that might disturb the teacher's heart. Rather, strive earnestly to serve the teacher. There are numerous cautionary examples: many students at pondok pesantren who have acted in ways that angered their teacher, even if not reprimanded at the time, have subsequently failed to receive blessings in their affairs, including those of their descendants.)

His passage reveals the epistemological stakes of *adab* in the teacher-student relationship. The transmission of knowledge (*ilm*) through the teacher-student relationship is not understood as merely a cognitive transaction—the transfer of information from teacher to student—but as a spiritual process that depends on the right ordering of the relationship according to *adab*. The *barakah* (blessing) that flows through a properly ordered teacher-student relationship is not a magical addendum to the educational process; it is the spiritual dimension of *ilm* itself, the quality that distinguishes genuine knowledge from mere information. Knowledge received without *adab*—without the proper ordering of the student's relation to the teacher—is, in the text's understanding, knowledge received without its spiritual substance, and will therefore fail to bear the fruits (*manfa'ah*) that genuine *ilm* is supposed to produce. This is al-Attas's insight about *ta'dīb*—that knowledge and *adab* are constitutively inseparable (al-Attas 1980, 22)—now empirically instantiated in the concrete pedagogical realities of the Madurese pesantren.

The section titled "Adab Orang yang Mengajar" (Propriety of the Teacher) presents the complementary

perspective of the teacher. KH. Abdul Hamid asserts that the teacher must prioritize the purification of intention (*niyyah*), directing instruction not toward worldly gain but toward the revival of the religion of the Prophet (*ihyā' dīn al-Rasūl*) (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 77):

Kalau sekiranya ditakdirnya menjadi orang yang mampu mengajar maka perbaiki niatnya dengan berniat ingin menghidupkan agama Rasulullah saw. Jangan ingin mendapatkan balasan dunia (harta). Kerana kalau ikhlas hanya mengharapkan balasan akhirat maka hajat dunianya akan dimudahkan tanpa ragu lagi. (If one is given the capacity to teach, one must rectify one's intention by intending to revive the religion of the Messenger of God. Do not seek worldly compensation. If one is sincere in seeking only the reward of the afterlife, one's worldly needs will be fulfilled without doubt.)

This prescription encapsulates the *adab* of the teacher in the *Tarjumān*: teaching, when properly understood, constitutes the teacher's act of *adab* toward God, the Prophet, and the community of knowledge-seekers. It is not a professional service rendered for remuneration, but rather a trust (*amānah*) grounded in divine commission and oriented toward the eschatological (ukhrawi) revival of the religion. KH. Abdul Hamid assures readers that a teacher who instructs with this intention will find that God provides for his worldly needs as a result of his sincerity, without the necessity of seeking worldly reward directly. This exemplifies *tawakkul* (reliance on God) within the educational context, representing the proper ordering of the teacher's relationship to God as the foundation of the pedagogical enterprise.

KH. Abdul Hamid's account of the three necessary conditions for effective knowledge transmission most closely parallels al-Attas's conceptualization of *ta'dīb* as a communal and relational process (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 78):

Kerana mengikut adat kebiasaan yang dapat membuat cepat murid paham ada tiga perkara iaitu ijtihad (kesungguhan) daripada gurunya yang mengajar, ijtihad orang tua yang merawatnya memberikan bekalan untuk belajar dan ijtihad murid itu sendiri.

(According to customary practice, three factors facilitate rapid student comprehension: the earnest effort [ijtihād] of the teacher in instruction; the earnest effort of the parents in supporting and caring for the student; and the earnest effort of the student.)

This triadic account of *ta'dīb* assigns responsibility for effective knowledge transmission to the teacher, parents, and student, placing the pedagogical process within a relational framework that includes school, family, and individual. No single actor is sufficient: a sincere teacher cannot compensate for parents who do not support their child's education; a diligent student cannot compensate for a teacher who lacks sincere intention; and the combined efforts of teacher and parents cannot compensate for a student who lacks personal commitment. The three forms of *ijtihād* are interdependent and together create the conditions for transmitting knowledge as *'ilm*, which carries *barakah* and produces *manfa'ah*. This view presents *ta'dīb* as a social-ethical system rather than only an individual spiritual discipline, consistent with al-Attas's assertion that *ta'dīb* involves forming the whole human being within the Islamic community (Wan Mohd Nor 1998, 173–174).

5. *Adab* as Living Ethics: Critical Engagement with Madurese Culture

The most distinctive feature of the *Tarjumān*, and the most significant for its reception as a resource for cultural resilience, is its sustained, systematic, and critical-constructive engagement with the specific cultural practices of Madura. KH. Abdul Hamid does not regard Madurese culture as a neutral backdrop for the application of Islamic norms; rather, he considers it a living reality already encompassed by *adab*, which must be evaluated, appropriated, or critiqued through the Islamic worldview. This methodology constitutes what may be termed a living ethics: an ethical system that is genuinely responsive to the specificities of its social and cultural context while remaining anchored in the universals of the *tasawwur Islāmī*.

The *Tarjumān*'s most sustained example of cultural critique addresses the practice of *bersanding*, the display of bride and groom on the wedding dais as a form of public entertainment, which KH. Abdul Hamid explicitly prohibits on the grounds that it violates *adab*. The text characterizes *bersanding* as making one's children "alat tontonan untuk orang ramai semacam hiburan" (a spectacle for the masses, a form of entertainment), a framing that reveals the author's evaluation of the practice as a failure of *adab* because it treats marriage as a vehicle for public display rather than as a sacred institution oriented towards God (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.). The critique is not presented as a legal prohibition; KH. Abdul Hamid does not cite a specific hadith or legal ruling against the practice. Instead, he employs *adab*-centered reasoning: the practice violates the proper ordering of the marriage ceremony by introducing ostentation (*riyā'*), which corrupts its inner orientation towards God.

The text's treatment of *carok*, the traditional Madurese practice of honor conflict conducted with a sickle, is similarly instructive. The Malay translator's footnote preserves the author's characterization of *carok* as an expression of arrogance (*takabbur*), defined as the desire to assert one's superiority through intimidation and the threat of lethal violence (translator's note no. 9, in Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.). By situating *carok* within the taxonomy of moral vices in the "Adab Orang Hidup" section, KH. Abdul Hamid addresses the practice without

resorting to elaborate legal argumentation. He reasons directly from *adab*: *carok* is wrong because it reflects a fundamentally disordered relationship between the self and God, a failure to recognize that status and honor before God are determined not by one's capacity for violence but by one's *ijtihād* in following God's commands. The contrast between the *Tarjumān*'s ethic of *adab* and the *carok* ethos is pronounced: while *carok* asserts status through dominance over others, *adab* recognizes status as a gift of God, expressed through *tawādu'* (humility) before God and others.

Not all of the *Tarjumān*'s engagements with Madurese culture are critical. The discussion of *kerapan sapi* (bull racing) is especially nuanced: KH. Abdul Hamid does not prohibit the practice entirely but distinguishes between its permissible and impermissible forms based on intention (*niyyah*) (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.).

...kerapan sapi dan pertandingan kuda kalau diniatkan kerana ingin mencari nafkah untuk bekalan akhirat bukan kerana riya' maka tidak masalah in sya Allah swt.

(Bull racing and horse racing, if intended for earning a livelihood as provision for the afterlife and not out of ostentation, then there is no objection, God willing.)

This distinction between *kerapan sapi* as legitimate livelihood and as ostentation reflects the *Tarjumān*'s characteristic *adab*-centred discernment. The determining factor is not the outward form of the practice but its inner orientation. The same outward action, such as bull racing, can be an expression of *adab* if performed with sincere, *ukhrawi* intention, or a violation of *adab* if performed with *riyā'*. This nuanced approach demonstrates that the *Tarjumān*'s engagement with Madurese culture is not a blanket rejection of local tradition but a principled, *adab*-centred discernment that seeks to preserve practices that can be oriented towards God and to redirect or prohibit those that cannot.

The *Tarjumān*'s treatment of smoking (*merokok*) and betel-chewing (*meminah*), both common Madurese social practices, follows the same *adab* logic. KH. Abdul Hamid characterizes smoking as *bid'ah* (a blameworthy innovation) because it was not practiced during the time of the Prophet, wastes resources without producing genuine benefit, and, most significantly from an *adab* perspective, distracts the self from the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God, which is the central obligation of the *adab*-ordered life (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 25):

...rokok itu tidak mengenyangkan, tidak menghilangkan dahaga haus, malah menjadi sibuk sahaja. Membuang wang belanja sesuatu yang tidak berfaedah. Dan boleh disebut orang bodoh yang mengahlikan rokok. Serta menjadi fitnah dapat melupakan Allah swt.

(Tobacco does not satisfy hunger, does not quench thirst, but merely keeps one occupied. It wastes money on something without benefit. One who prioritises tobacco may truly be called foolish. And it becomes a temptation that can make one forget God.)

The anti-tobacco argument in the *Tarjumān* is not primarily based on health or legal considerations; rather, it is grounded in *adab*. Smoking is considered problematic because it engages the self in a purposeless activity that displaces the remembrance of God from the center of daily life. This reasoning demonstrates the depth of the text's *adab* framework, in which every practice, regardless of its apparent triviality, is evaluated according to its relationship to the fundamental *adab* of the Muslim: the continual orientation of the self towards God.

A significant philological observation that sheds light on the *Tarjumān*'s pedagogical ethics is its use of repetition as a deliberate compositional strategy. The Malay translator initially identifies several passages as apparent redundancies, noting discussions that appear to repeat content already presented elsewhere in the text. However, the translator's subsequent footnote offers an authoritative interpretation (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.):

Apabila ada perbincangan yang diulang-ulang itu dikeranakan supaya dapat diperhatikan secara lebih dan bersungguh-sungguh. Bukan perkara yang sia-sia. Konsep ini sama dengan ayat-ayat al-Quran yang tidak jarang Allah mengulang-ngulangnya.

(When a discussion is repeated, it is so that it may be attended to more carefully and earnestly. It is not a trivial matter. This concept is the same as the verses of the Qur'an, which God not infrequently repeats.)

This note holds significant philological and theoretical importance. It demonstrates that repetition in the *Tarjumān* is not a compositional flaw but a deliberate pedagogical strategy, explicitly modeled on the Qur'an's use of repetition for emphasis, reinforcement, and the cumulative instillation of key moral principles. The *Tarjumān* does not simply teach *adab* as content; it enacts *adab* through its compositional form, employing the same strategy of repetition found in the Qur'an to instill the principles of *adab* within its community of readers. The structure of the text thus serves as an expression of *ta'dīb*.

6. *Adab, Tafakkur, and Murāqabah: The Interior Dimension of Knowledge*

The final sections of the *Tarjumān*, which address *tafakkur* (contemplation), *murāqabah* (self-vigilance before God), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tawakkul* (reliance on God), reveal the interior or *tasawwuf* dimension of *adab* and bring the text's ethical vision to its logical culmination (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 102–103). Rather than serving as an appendix to practical ethics, these sections constitute the innermost core of the work.

The section on *tafakkur* is especially substantive. KH. Abdul Hamid identifies three distinct forms of contemplation, each oriented toward a specific object (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 102):

...bertafakkur artinya berfikir tentang nikmat Allah swt yang diberikan dan kepada dirinya yang Allah swt ciptakan daripada awal sehingga akhir... berfikir tentang dirinya yang malas untuk beribadah yang pernah melakukan larangan Allah swt supaya tidak lupa untuk bertaubat... berfikir terhadap segala penciptaan Allah swt yang berbagai-bagai bermula daripada langit, bumi, dan isi keduanya, surga, neraka, serta isi keduanya supaya hatinya merasakan kekuasaan Allah swt dan keagunganNya.

(Contemplation refers to reflecting on the blessings God has bestowed and on oneself as created by God from beginning to end; reflecting on one's own negligence in worship and past transgressions of God's prohibitions, in order to remain mindful of repentance; and reflecting on the diversity of God's creation, including the heavens, the earth, and all they contain, as well as paradise and hell and their contents, so that the heart perceives God's power and majesty.)

This tripartite schema of *tafakkur* — contemplation of God's blessings (leading to *shukr*), contemplation of one's own moral condition (leading to *tawbah*), and contemplation of the created order (leading to awareness of God's power and majesty) — represents a comprehensive program of interior *adab*. Contemplation of God's blessings cultivates the *adab* of gratitude (*shukr*), which is the proper response of the creature to the Creator's generosity. Contemplation of one's own failings cultivates the *adab* of repentance (*tawbah*), which is the proper response of the sinful creature to God's mercy. And contemplation of the created order — the heavens, the earth, paradise, and hell — cultivates the *adab* of awe (*khashyah*) and wonder (*ta'ajjub*), which is the proper response of the rational creature to God's omnipotence and majesty. Significantly, this third form of *tafakkur* constitutes what the Malay translator's footnote explicitly identifies as an intellectual and rational engagement with creation (translator's note no. 20, in Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d.) — not a withdrawal from the world but a deeper engagement with it as the manifestation of God's creative power, which enlarges the light (*nūr*) of the heart and enables the Muslim to resist the pull of *nafs ammārah* (the commanding self).

The section on *murāqabah* elevates the interior dimension of *adab* to its highest expression. *Murāqabah*, defined as the continual internal awareness that God observes, hears, and knows every action, gesture, and heartbeat, is presented as the foundational source from which all outward *adab* originates (Abdul Hamid bin Isbat n.d., 102–103):

Sesiapa yang rajin muraqabah maka akan cepat besar cahaya dalam hatinya, dikurniai rajin untuk beribadah, diberi kekuatan untuk meninggalkan maksiat, dikurnia sering ingat kepada akhirat, tidak terlalu suka dengan dunia sehingga terkadang diberi pangkat waliyullah. Kerana orang yang gerak-geriknya selalu merasa dilihat oleh Allah swt, itulah tanda-tanda orang yang dekat dengan Allah swt.

(Whoever is diligent in *murāqabah* will quickly experience an increase in the light of the heart, will be granted diligence in worship, will receive strength to abandon sin, will be frequently reminded of the afterlife, and will not be overly attached to worldly matters, such that at times he may be granted the rank of *waliyullah* [a friend of God]. For the individual whose every movement and stillness is accompanied by the sense of being observed by God, this is the sign of one who is close to God.)

This passage articulates the ultimate horizon of *adab* in the *Tarjumān*: the cultivation of *murāqabah* is not solely a spiritual exercise for the mystically advanced but represents the deepest form of *adab* accessible to every Muslim. It entails the complete orientation of one's entire being, in every moment and action, toward God's omnipresent observation. A Muslim who attains *murāqabah* does not require external enforcement of *adab* norms; rather, such an individual is internally ordered by the continual awareness of God's observation. This reflects al-Attas's insight regarding *adab* as the just and proper ordering of the self in accordance with its true nature (al-Attas 1995, 1–2), now articulated at the most intimate level of inner life, where the ordered self and divine observation converge in the experience of proximity to God (*qurb Allāh*).

7. Convergences and the *Tarjumān* as Nusantara *Ta'dīb*

The preceding philological analysis of the *Tarjumān* reveals systematic convergences with al-Attas's framework that are unlikely to be coincidental. Together, these parallels support interpreting the *Tarjumān* as a Nusantara expression of *ta'dīb* in al-Attas's fullest sense: the holistic development of the Muslim individual, integrating theological, legal, ethical, pedagogical, cultural, and contemplative dimensions within a unified system centered on *adab*.

Five main convergences merit clear identification. First, the integration of *tawhīd*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf* within a single, coherent text supports al-Attas's view that these are interconnected aspects of the Islamic worldview, not separate subjects (al-Attas 1995, 1–5). The text's focus on *tawhīd*, especially the Ash'arite doctrine of divine causality, grounds outward practice (*fiqh*) in theology, ensuring that *adab* is not reduced to social custom or legal formality.

Second, the text's pedagogical system—emphasizing the teacher's sincere *niyyah*, the student's filial *adab*,

and the parents' active support—presents *ta'dīb* as a communal and relational process (Wan Mohd Nor 1998, 173–174). The teacher's sincerity enables the blessing (*barakah*) in knowledge, the student's *adab* allows its reception, and the parents' support provides the necessary foundation. Without any of these elements, knowledge transmission cannot achieve the level of *'ilm* that defines true *ta'dīb*.

Third, the text's engagement with Madurese cultural practices demonstrates the practical value of the *tasawwur Islāmī* as an ethical framework for principled, context-sensitive judgment. The *Tarjumān* neither accepts Madurese customs uncritically, such as *'urf fāsīd* (corrupt custom), nor rejects them indiscriminately through rigid legalism. Instead, it evaluates each practice by *niyyah* and *adab*, preserving those oriented toward God and redirecting or prohibiting those that are not.

Fourth, the text's use of repetition as a pedagogical strategy, modeled on the Qur'an, shows that the *Tarjumān*'s formal qualities are themselves expressions of *ta'dīb*. The text shapes readers through both its structure and content (al-Attas 1980, 22–26). This extends al-Attas's concept of *ta'dīb* by emphasizing the ethical and epistemological importance of a text's form as well as its content.

Fifth, the text culminates in *murāqabah*, defined as the inner awareness of God's constant observation, which defines the highest aim of *adab* in the *Tarjumān*. Here, *adab* is not just outward conformity to norms or laws, but the inward orientation of the self toward God. This makes *adab* a natural expression of identity rather than an imposed rule. At this level, *ta'dīb* becomes the internal formation of the Muslim self, guided by *adab* in every aspect of life.

Conclusion

Through a philological analysis of *Kitāb Tarjumān*, informed by the framework of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, this study demonstrates that *adab* in this classical Madurese-Malay pesantren text functions as an integrated epistemic architecture. This architecture is simultaneously relational, pedagogical, cultural, and interior, organizing the entire field of Islamic knowledge and practice. Rather than presenting a miscellaneous collection of legal rulings and ethical prescriptions, the text offers a coherent and systematic program of *ta'dīb* that forms the Muslim person in the four relational dimensions of the Islamic worldview: the relation to God, to the Prophet, to the community, and to the self.

This analysis yields six principal findings. First, the *Tarjumān*'s compositional architecture, which integrates *tawhīd*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf* in a deliberate, non-linear manner, reflects a holistic vision of Islamic knowledge that aligns with al-Attas's account of *adab* as the ordering principle of the Islamic worldview. Second, the text's Ash'arite theological foundation, particularly its account of divine causality and the rejection of independent causation in created things, grounds all outward *adab* in a *tawhīd*-centered ontology. Third, the four-domain structure of *adab* (towards God, the Prophet, the community, and the self) constitutes a comprehensive relational ethics, with each domain presupposing and reinforcing the others. Fourth, the pedagogical system, centered on the triadic relationship of teacher, parents, and student and grounded in *niyyah* and *barakah*, instantiates *ta'dīb* as a communal, relational, and spiritual process of knowledge transmission. Fifth, the text's critical and constructive engagement with Madurese cultural practices through the lens of *adab* and *niyyah* constitutes a living ethics that is both principled and contextually responsive, demonstrating the practical efficacy of the *tasawwur Islāmī* as an ethical framework for cultural discernment. Sixth, the text's culmination in *tafakkur* and *murāqabah* reveals the interior foundation of all outward *adab*: the total orientation of the self towards God's omnipresent seeing, which renders *adab* a natural expression of the formed Muslim self rather than an externally imposed constraint.

These findings have several significant implications. For scholars of Nusantara Islamic intellectual history, this study demonstrates that the *kitāb kuning* tradition of the pesantren contains ethical and epistemological resources of greater depth and coherence than is often recognized, meriting sustained philological and philosophical attention alongside, rather than merely as an illustration of, the more celebrated texts of the Arabic-Islamic tradition (van Bruinessen 1995, 17–19). For scholars of al-Attas's thought, the *Tarjumān* provides a well-documented empirical case study of the concepts of *adab* and *ta'dīb* as they function in a living pedagogical text within an actual Islamic community, thereby extending and enriching the theoretical framework. For contemporary Islamic education reformers, the *Tarjumān* offers a model of *ta'dīb* that integrates ethical, relational, spiritual, cultural, and formal dimensions of formation in a manner that standard curricular reform cannot achieve. It highlights both the form and content of educational texts as sites of *ta'dīb*.

More broadly, for the project of Malay-Islamic cultural resilience in the contemporary multipolar era, which is the central concern of ICON IMAD XV, the *Tarjumān* and its tradition indicate that the resources for sustaining Islamic identity and values amid rapid cultural change reside not only in modern Islamic thought but also in the living classical tradition of the pesantren. This tradition, whose *adab* has shaped Madurese and Malay-Islamic life for generations and whose ethical vision is firmly grounded in *tawhīd* while remaining responsive to cultural context, continues to serve as a vital resource. As instantiated in the *Tarjumān*, *adab* is not merely a nostalgic preservation of the past but a living orientation towards God that can engage, evaluate, and, when necessary, transform every dimension of the cultural present.

Future research should extend this philological analysis to the original Madurese Pegon manuscript, enabling a more precise account of the linguistic choices through which KH. Abdul Hamid articulates his conception of *adab* in the original language of his community. This includes examining Madurese terms and formulations that are not fully captured in the Malay translation. Comparative studies of *adab* in other Nusantara pesantren texts, both from the Madurese tradition and from the broader Javanese and Malay traditions, would situate the *Tarjumān* within a broader context of how the concept of *adab* has been instantiated, adapted, and transmitted across diverse settings in Nusantara Islamic intellectual history. Collaborative research involving philologists, philosophers of Islamic education, and scholars of Madurese and Malay culture would be well positioned to further develop the implications of this study for contemporary Islamic educational practice and cultural policy.

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