

## The Sacredness and Performativity of Sarafal Anam in the Maulid Celebration: A Living Qur'an Study in Kaloy Village, Aceh Tamiang

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**Abstract:** The *Sarafal Anam* tradition, performed during the *Maulid* celebration in Aceh Tamiang, reflects a culturally embedded practice through which Qur'anic values are enacted and transmitted. While often seen as a ceremonial event, this tradition offers deeper significance as a form of lived engagement with sacred texts, particularly within the framework of the *Living Qur'an*. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, using field observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to examine the embodiment of Qur'anic values in the *Sarafal Anam* tradition. The research was conducted in Kaloy Village, a community known for its consistent preservation of this practice. Thematic analysis was employed with the support of NVivo software to identify key patterns and values expressed through the tradition. Findings reveal that *Sarafal Anam* functions both as a religious ritual and an educational medium that transmits Qur'anic principles such as prophetic devotion, compassion, social solidarity, and moral responsibility. The practice integrates elements of local culture—regional language, traditional foods, and poetic forms—demonstrating how Islamic values adapt to and are sustained within specific cultural contexts. The tradition plays an important role in character development, especially among the youth, though recent trends show a decline in their active participation. The *Sarafal Anam* tradition exemplifies the *Living Qur'an*, offering a meaningful intersection between scripture and culture. To ensure its sustainability, the study recommends youth-centered revitalization efforts, digital adaptation, and institutional support. This research contributes to Qur'anic studies by highlighting how localized rituals serve as dynamic sites for ethical education and cultural continuity in the modern Muslim world.

**Keywords:** *Living Qur'an; Sarafal Anam; Maulid; Islamic tradition; Aceh*

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### Introduction

The *Sarafal Anam* tradition, performed during the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday in Aceh Tamiang Regency, reflects a rich convergence of spirituality, cultural identity, and Qur'anic expression. Far from being a mere ceremonial custom, *Sarafal Anam* functions as a dynamic medium for preserving and transmitting Qur'anic values across generations. Through the collective chanting of verses such as QS Al-Fath (1–3), QS At-Taubah (128–129), and QS Al-Ahzab (45–47), participants not only honor the Prophet but also engage in a form of lived exegesis, where sacred texts are embodied through communal performance. This practice aligns closely with the *Living*

*Qur'an* framework, in which scripture is not limited to textual interpretation but becomes embedded in everyday rituals, speech, and symbols.<sup>1</sup>

The essence of *Sarafal Anam* lies in its ability to bridge religious devotion with communal life. Recitations typically occur in solemn, yet warm, social settings—often accompanied by shared meals, traditional foods, and expressions of gratitude—reflecting the Qur'anic ethos of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and collective responsibility.<sup>2</sup> Qur'anic spirituality often finds its most enduring expression not in formal institutions, but in communal traditions that draw from oral transmission and cultural familiarity. In this sense, *Sarafal Anam* serves as both a spiritual exercise and a mode of character formation, embedding values such as compassion, humility, and moral leadership into the community's social fabric.

However, this tradition faces significant challenges in the modern era.<sup>3</sup> Field observations and interviews in Kaloy Village reveal a generational disconnect: younger participants often recite the verses without fully grasping their meanings, treating the practice as ritual rather than reflection. Community figures such as Mr. Ros<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Yusuf<sup>5</sup> express concern that the tradition is becoming more symbolic than substantive, with its Qur'anic roots increasingly obscured. This phenomenon echoes what Zein et al., describes as the ethical drift of religious practices when educational engagement is insufficient.<sup>6</sup>

Global scholarship has emphasized the need to revitalize such traditions through integrative, context-sensitive approaches. Zadeh<sup>7</sup> and Saeed<sup>8</sup> argue that Qur'anic traditions must be understood as evolving processes—shaped by cultural context,

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Saeed and Ali Akbar, "Contextualist Approaches and the Interpretation of the Qur'ān," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (July 13, 2021): 527, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070527>.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, "The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 22, no. 2 (July 30, 2021): 469–84, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2021.2202-10>.

<sup>3</sup> Elma Triana and Lisa Dwi Afri, "Ability to Understand Mathematical Concepts and Adversity Quotient Students Reviewed from Al-Qur'an Memorize Ability," *INOMATIKA* 5, no. 2 (July 31, 2023): 113–30, <https://doi.org/10.35438/inomatika.v5i2.382>.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Ros, Personal Communication, Mei 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Yusuf, Personal Communication, Mei 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Sri Hafizatul Wahyuni Zain et al., "Peran Pendidikan Islam Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Masyarakat Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis," *Jurnal IHSAN Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 4 (December 1, 2024): 199–215, <https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v2i4.365>.

<sup>7</sup> Travis Zadeh, "The Qur'an and Material Culture," in *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (Routledge, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Abdullah Saeed and Ali Akbar, "Contextualist Approaches and the Interpretation of the Qur'ān," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (July 13, 2021): 527, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070527>.

pedagogical tools, and the capacity of communities to reinterpret sacred texts in light of contemporary realities. In line with this, scholars such as Thohir advocate for the use of digital technologies to support Qur'anic learning, especially among youth.<sup>9</sup> Their work highlights how platforms for audio-visual interpretation, online classes, and interactive verse study can foster a deeper connection between younger generations and Qur'anic messages.

This study builds on such insights by examining how *Sarafal Anam* functions as a vehicle for the *Living Qur'an* in the local Acehnese context and how its pedagogical and spiritual dimensions can be strengthened to ensure continuity. Adopting a qualitative descriptive approach, this research was conducted in Kaloy Village, purposively selected for its active preservation of the *Sarafal Anam* tradition. Data were gathered through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with community leaders, and documentation of recitations, local customs, and contextual symbols. Thematic analysis was applied to identify how Qur'anic values are embedded, expressed, and interpreted within the practice. NVivo software was employed to support coding and thematic organization, while triangulation and member checking were used to ensure data credibility. The novelty of this study lies in its application of the *Living Qur'an* perspective to a cultural tradition that has not been extensively explored in academic literature. While *Sarafal Anam* is well known locally, systematic inquiry into its Qur'anic foundations and pedagogical potential remains limited. By positioning *Sarafal Anam* as a site of both da'wah and moral education, this study offers not only a deeper understanding of how Qur'anic values operate in practice, but also practical insights into preserving and revitalizing Islamic traditions in a rapidly modernizing world.

## Discussion

### Sarafal Anam Tradition in Aceh Tamiang

The *Sarafal Anam* tradition in Kaloy Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency, stands as a living heritage of Islamic culture that has endured across generations since the pre-independence era. According to local oral history, as recounted by Pak Syahbudin—a respected community leader—the tradition was first introduced by Datu Arsyad, a scholar from Banjar.<sup>10</sup> It is observed annually during the commemoration of the Prophet

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<sup>9</sup> Thohir and Reditiya, "Exploring The Perspective Of Uptq Students," January 26, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Syahbudin Syahbudin, Wawancara bersama Tokoh Adat, Langsung, Mei 2025.

Muhammad's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) and centers around the collective recitation of selected Qur'anic verses in the mosque, framed within a structured poetic performance.

The tradition begins at 8:00 a.m. with the ceremonial burning of frankincense, signifying sanctity and reverence. A *sheikh* initiates the event by reciting an opening verse from the Qur'an, which is then followed by a series of melodic chants performed by designated reciters. The gathering continues until just before the midday prayer (*Zuhur*), punctuated by breaks for refreshments and a communal meal.<sup>11</sup> The *Sarafal Anam* text comprises twelve lyrical sections or "songs," performed without the accompaniment of tambourines. These compositions contain invocations, praises, and prayers derived from verses including QS Al-Fath (1–3), At-Taubah (128–129), Al-Ahzab (45–47, 56), and Al-Saffat (180–182), all of which reinforce themes of devotion, compassion, and prophetic example.

Community involvement is a defining characteristic of the tradition. Local residents contribute food, logistical support, and moral encouragement, fostering a deeply collaborative and intergenerational atmosphere.<sup>12</sup> Dishes such as oil rice (*nasi minyak*) and *hallo*—a traditional delicacy—are prepared and shared, underscoring the Qur'anic value of *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) through hospitality and mutual care. The structure of the *Sarafal Anam* performance moves thematically from the praise of Allah, to narratives from the Prophet's life, and ends with universal prayers, highlighting the tradition's dual role as both spiritual observance and moral instruction.<sup>13</sup>

This embodied ritual offers a practical expression of Qur'anic ethics within the daily life of the community. As Safrudin has observed, Qur'anic values such as justice (*adl*), social responsibility, and collective concern are foundational to social transformation—and these are palpably enacted in the *Sarafal Anam* gatherings.<sup>14</sup> The recited verses function not only as spiritual reminders but also as tools for *da'wah* and

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<sup>11</sup> Surahman Surahman, Wawancara bersama Syekh atau Pemimpin Pembacaan Sarafal Anam, Langsung, Mei 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Brigida Marovelli, "Cooking and Eating Together in London: Food Sharing Initiatives as Collective Spaces of Encounter," *Geoforum* 99 (February 2019): 190–201, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.006>.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Dwiki Rizki, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kesenian Sarafal Anam Pada Masyarakat Di Kecamatan Selebar Kota Bengkulu," 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Moh. Safrudin, Nasaruddin Nasaruddin, and Ihwan Ihwan, "'Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Kemasyarakatan' Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Kemanusiaan Dalam Kehidupan Modern," *TAJID: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan* 7, no. 1 (April 20, 2023): 135–48, <https://doi.org/10.52266/tajid.v7i1.1851>.

character development. As Mr. Yusuf noted, the recurring command to "love the Prophet" in the chants nurtures an emotional and moral attachment that subtly shapes personal behavior and collective consciousness.

Organizationally, the community's practice of *shura* (consultation), *amanah* (trust), and *adl* (equity) is evident in the way the tradition is maintained. As described by Subqi, these values mirror Qur'anic teachings on ethical leadership.<sup>15</sup> Committees are formed to oversee the preparation, ensure participation across social groups, and distribute tasks equitably.<sup>16</sup> Women, such as Mrs. Limpah, also play a vital role in the implementation of the event, reaffirming the inclusive and participatory nature of the tradition. For many, the shared responsibility and togetherness are the most enduring aspects of *Sarafal Anam*.

Moreover, the integration of Qur'anic elements with *adat* (local custom) reinforces the Acehnese principle of "*adat bersanding syarak, syarak bersanding Kitabullah*"—a harmony between custom, Islamic law, and the Qur'an. As Marwiyah and Ghaffar argue, this interplay is vital for preserving Islamic authenticity while respecting cultural context.<sup>17</sup> Many of the poetic elements in *Sarafal Anam* are derived from hadiths and the consensus (*ijma'*) of scholars, transmitted orally from teacher to student. According to Mr. Samana, the verses are not random selections, but part of a curated religious narrative that reflects the Prophet's life and virtues. This blend of textual fidelity and local adaptation strengthens the role of *Sarafal Anam* as a culturally rooted Qur'anic tradition.

These findings affirm that *Sarafal Anam* is a powerful illustration of the *Living Qur'an*—a concept whereby sacred texts are actively practiced, internalized, and transmitted through collective ritual. In comparative terms, similar traditions can be found in other regions, such as Bengkulu, where the recitation of *dzikir* and *sholawat* during

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<sup>15</sup> Imam Subqi, "Nilai-nilai Sosial-Religius Dalam Tradisi Meron Di Masyarakat Gunung Kendeng Kabupaten Pati," *Heritage* 1, no. 2 (December 30, 2020): 171–84, <https://doi.org/10.35719/hrtg.v1i2.21>.

<sup>16</sup> Robi Darwis, "Tradisi Ngaruwat Bumi Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat (Studi Deskriptif Kampung Cihideung Girang Desa Sukakerti Kecamatan Cisalak Kabupaten Subang)," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 2, no. 1 (April 25, 2018): 75, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v2i1.2361>.

<sup>17</sup> Siti Marwiyah and Abdul Ghaffar, "Implementasi Nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an Dalam Induk Undang Nan Limo," *Journal of Comprehensive Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (September 17, 2023): 111–24, <https://doi.org/10.56436/jocis.v2i1.234>.

*Maulid* events also serves to strengthen communal bonds.<sup>18</sup> However, the *Sarafal Anam* of Aceh Tamiang is distinguished by its emphasis on Qur'anic verses, structured poetic narration, and integration with local foods and performances, illustrating the dynamic adaptability of Islamic traditions across cultural contexts.<sup>19</sup>

The integration of *Sarafal Anam* within the daily religious and social life of the community reflects not only continuity with inherited values but also an ongoing process of adaptation. Despite its deeply rooted Qur'anic and prophetic references, the tradition continues to evolve in response to local circumstances and collective needs. Its capacity to incorporate regional language, symbolic food offerings, and poetic performance illustrates how Islamic teachings can be embodied through culturally resonant forms. This reinforces the notion that Qur'anic values are not confined to formal study but can thrive within participatory and experiential expressions of faith.

Moreover, comparisons with similar traditions in other regions, such as *Maulid* practices in Bengkulu, reveal that while structural patterns may vary, the underlying purpose—strengthening communal bonds and reinforcing Islamic identity—remains consistent. What distinguishes *Sarafal Anam* in Aceh Tamiang is its emphasis on lyrical Qur'anic recitation and its close integration with local customs, which together create a unique form of spiritual and moral engagement. As such, the tradition serves as a valuable lens through which to understand how Islamic texts are not merely recited, but enacted, interpreted, and transmitted within the context of living communities.

### **Qur'an Values in the Sarafal Anam Tradition**

The *Sarafal Anam* tradition in Aceh Tamiang reflects a deep and enduring embodiment of core Qur'anic values, including compassion, reverence for the Prophet, social solidarity, and ethical responsibility. These principles are evident in the deliberate selection of verses, particularly QS Al-Fath (1–3), which convey divine mercy and triumph, and QS At-Taubah (128–129), which emphasize the Prophet Muhammad's heartfelt concern for his followers. These verses are not recited as isolated texts but are interwoven into the spiritual atmosphere and collective memory of the community—

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<sup>18</sup> G. E. Von Grunebaum, *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity*, 1st ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021).

<sup>19</sup> Oktarina Haryani, Syamsul Huda, and Asep Topan, "Kesenian Sarafal Anam Dan Nilai-Nilai Yang Terkandung Di Dalamnya Pada Masyarakat Lembak Dalam Adat Istiadat (Studi Kasus Di Kelurahan Dusun Besar Kecamatan Singaran Pati Kota Bengkulu)" (ut, Universitas Bengkulu, 2014), <https://repository.unib.ac.id/id/eprint/9139/>.



especially during *Maulid* celebrations—thereby reinforcing the lived presence of the Qur'an in daily religious experience.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike ritualistic readings that may remain detached from their social context, *Sarafal Anam* serves as a living and contextualized expression of Qur'anic teachings. The tradition localizes sacred meaning through additional prayers in the Gayo and Indonesian languages, creating a more intimate and accessible spiritual environment. This process illustrates the dynamic interplay between revelation and culture—a hallmark of the *Living Qur'an* approach. For instance, verses from QS Al-Ahzab (45–47, 56), which exhort believers to love and emulate the Prophet, are not only vocalized through praise but are manifested in acts of communal care, mutual respect, and the intergenerational transmission of religious sentiment.<sup>21</sup>

In comparison to analogous traditions across the archipelago—such as *Barzanji*<sup>22</sup> in West Sumatra or *Diba*<sup>23</sup> recitations in Java—*Sarafal Anam* presents a distinctive model that prioritizes simplicity and inclusivity. Whereas *Barzanji* is often accompanied by rhythmic musicality and classical Arabic, *Sarafal Anam* omits instruments altogether and places greater emphasis on oral clarity and collective participation. It incorporates regional languages and familiar culinary practices—such as serving *nasi minyak* and *hallo*—to enhance accessibility and strengthen community bonds. This adaptation demonstrates how Qur'anic values can be indigenized and sustained without diminishing their theological depth.

These findings are consistent with broader research in Islamic cultural studies. Nursikin, for instance, highlights how local religious rituals serve as ethical ecosystems, cultivating values like justice and social responsibility through participation.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Akbar and Bustomi argue that communal Qur'anic practices such as *khataman* are vital

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<sup>20</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Juz 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> Zainab Alwani, "Transformational Teaching: Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) as a Teacher and Murabbī," *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* 2, no. 1 (July 1, 2019): 91–119, <https://doi.org/10.18060/23276>.

<sup>22</sup> Didi Jubaidi and Khoirunnisa Khoirunnisa, "The Barzanji Tradition in The Context of Cultural Studies: Exploring The Debate Between Sunnah and Bid'ah," *TRANS-KATA: Journal of Language, Literature, Culture and Education* 4, no. 2 (May 20, 2024): 88–101, <https://doi.org/10.54923/jllce.v4i2.68>.

<sup>23</sup> Moh. Fahsin and Iif Muhammad Arif, "Religious Experience Of Jama'ah Mawlid Al-Diba Jamuna (Jamaat Muji Nabi) Girikusumo," *International Journal of Islamic Studies Issues* 1, no. 1 (May 13, 2025): 26–31, <https://doi.org/10.59966/sezqak31>.

<sup>24</sup> Mukh Nursikin and Muhammad Aji Nugroho, "Internalization Of Qur'anic Values In The Islamic Multicultural Education System," *Didaktika Religia* 9, no. 1 (2021): 19–38, <https://doi.org/10.30762/didaktika.v9i1.3276>.

not only for spiritual education but also for reinforcing social cohesion and shared identity.<sup>25</sup> Within this context, *Sarafal Anam* operates not simply as a liturgical event, but as a culturally embedded pedagogical system for internalizing Islamic ethics.

Thus, *Sarafal Anam* illustrates the adaptive vitality of Islamic teachings as they are negotiated within local cultural frameworks. By integrating Qur'anic principles into artistic expression, culinary rituals, and vernacular language, the tradition remains both rooted and relevant.<sup>26</sup> Its continuity affirms the Qur'an's enduring capacity to guide and inspire—not only through scholarly exegesis, but through the rhythms, relationships, and rituals of everyday life. In doing so, it offers a compelling example of how the sacred text lives within the cultural consciousness of a community, shaped by time yet anchored in timeless values.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Sarafal Anam Tradition: Interaction between the Qur'an and Local Culture**

The *Sarafal Anam* tradition in Aceh Tamiang exemplifies the harmonious interaction between divine revelation and local cultural expression. Anchored in the recitation of selected Qur'anic verses, this tradition is closely interwoven with regional customs such as communal gatherings, ritualized welcoming ceremonies, and the serving of symbolic foods like *nasi minyak* and *hallo*. The performance of verses such as QS Al-Fath (1–3) and QS Al-Ahzab (56) in a solemn yet familiar cultural setting illustrates that the Qur'an is not merely proclaimed, but lived—integrated into the social rhythms and aesthetic forms of the community.<sup>28</sup>

This integration demonstrates how *Sarafal Anam* functions as a medium for translating Qur'anic values into culturally resonant experiences.<sup>29</sup> Values such as love for the Prophet, social solidarity, and adherence to Islamic teachings are not external to daily life; rather, they are continually re-enacted in each *Maulid* celebration, reaffirming the presence of the sacred within everyday communal rituals. Far from being a static tradition,

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<sup>25</sup> Muchammad Fariz Maulana Akbar and Ahmad Gibson Albustomi, "Exploring Indonesia's Khataman Al-Qur'an: Insights from Living Religions," *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 8, no. 1 (January 20, 2025): 59–70, <https://doi.org/10.15575/hanifiya.v8i1.43726>.

<sup>26</sup> RC Martin, "Understanding the Qur'an in Text and Context," *History of Religions*, no. Query date: 2023-11-24 14:54:47 (1982), <https://doi.org/10.1086/462906>.

<sup>27</sup> Agusman Damanik et al., "Building Religious Moderation Based on Al-Qur'an Values in Education in Medan Tembung District," *QISTINA: Jurnal Multidisiplin Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (2022): 185–90.

<sup>28</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, Jilid 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Yasmin Moll, "The Idea of Islamic Media: The Qur'an and the Decolonization of Mass Communication," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 4 (November 2020): 623–42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743820000781>.



*Sarafal Anam* reflects a dynamic process of reinterpreting religious meaning in line with social practice.<sup>30</sup>

Comparable traditions from other regions further support this understanding. For example, research by Lontoh et al. on the *An-Najjam Studio* in Palembang shows how *Syarofal Anam* has evolved into a form of expressive religiosity that blends aesthetic need with spiritual function.<sup>31</sup> There, the tradition incorporates *terbangan* and *rodat* music, offering a localized form of Islamic expression that remains faithful to its spiritual origins while adapting to regional tastes and forms.<sup>32</sup> In Pagar Agung Village, Adetia and Iqbal found that the tradition emphasizes cooperation, shared spirituality, and artistic beauty as central components of *Sarafal Anam*. These elements work as social mechanisms to internalize Islamic values, with collective performance reinforcing both belief and belonging.<sup>33</sup> Mustafa, from the perspective of *Living Hadith*, highlights how these performances express public affection for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), transforming abstract values into tangible, emotionally resonant practices.<sup>34</sup> Further insights are provided by Cahyadi et al., who observed that *Sarafal Anam* functions as a form of culturally embedded *da'wah*. Rather than relying on didactic or confrontational methods, the tradition fosters changes in emotional awareness, moral reasoning, and behavior through participatory and artistic means. This confirms its potential as a non-intrusive, integrative model for value transmission—where faith and culture reinforce rather than compete with one another.

Further insights are provided by Cahyadi et al., who observed that *Sarafal Anam* functions as a form of culturally embedded *da'wah*. Rather than relying on didactic or confrontational methods, the tradition fosters changes in emotional awareness, moral reasoning, and behavior through participatory and artistic means.<sup>35</sup> This confirms its

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<sup>30</sup> Saihu and Athoillah Islamy, "Exploring the Values of Social Education in the Qur'an," June 30, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3923661>.

<sup>31</sup> Willy Lontoh, Wadiyo Wadiyo, and Udi Utomo, "Syarofal Anam: Fungsionalisme Struktural Pada Sanggar an-Najjam Kota Palembang," *Catharsis* 5, no. 2 (2016): 84–90.

<sup>32</sup> Ahmad Fikri Arief, Sunarto Sunarto, and Triyanto Triyanto, "Art of Music Taring In Sanggar Tunas Muda Lahat District In Perspective Aksiologi: Study In The Context Of Socio Culture," *Catharsis* 6, no. 2 (2017): 99–107, <https://doi.org/10.15294/catharsis.v6i2.19283>.

<sup>33</sup> Trio Adetia and Moch Iqbal, "Membangun Nilai-Nilai Religius Dalam Kesenian Syarafal Anam Desa Pagar Agung," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 21, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 216–26, <https://doi.org/10.36835/jipi.v21i2.3962>.

<sup>34</sup> Ilham Mustafa and Ridwan Ridwan, "Tradisi Syarafal Anam Dalam Kajian Living Hadis," *Istinarah: Riset Keagamaan, Sosial Dan Budaya* 3, no. 1 (2021): 76–87.

<sup>35</sup> Ashadi Cahyadi, Muhammad Nikman Naser, and Rini Setiawati, "Integrative Da'wah Strategy For Bengkulu Syarafal Anam Group In A Cultural Perspective," *Al-Ulum* 24, no. 2 (2024): 67–82.

potential as a non-intrusive, integrative model for value transmission—where faith and culture reinforce rather than compete with one another.

From a scholarly viewpoint, the *Sarafal Anam* tradition offers valuable insight into how Qur'anic messages are continuously interpreted and articulated through local cultural mediums. Rather than functioning solely as a recitation of sacred texts, the tradition reflects a form of lived hermeneutics—where the meaning of divine guidance is shaped by collective memory, performance, and aesthetic expression.<sup>36</sup> Its alignment with the social-contextual approach to Qur'anic interpretation illustrates how communities actively negotiate religious meaning in ways that remain rooted in scripture while responsive to contemporary cultural forms.<sup>37</sup>

This observation is echoed in recent field-based studies, such as those by Fadhilah<sup>38</sup> and by Naser and Budrianto,<sup>39</sup> which highlight how traditions like *Sarafal Anam* serve not only as spiritual gatherings but also as spaces for intergenerational learning and social cohesion. Within these spaces, elements of creativity, relational warmth, and communal participation emerge as key features that support the transmission of religious values. As such, the tradition exemplifies how the Qur'an continues to be engaged not only through formal education, but through culturally grounded practices that cultivate ethical awareness in ways that are both accessible and resonant.

### **Social and Religious Reflections on the Sarafal Anam Tradition**

In Aceh Tamiang, the *Sarafal Anam* tradition functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a social mechanism that reinforces *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and communal solidarity. The collective nature of the event—gathering to recite praises of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), sharing food, and participating in joint preparations—reaffirms the Qur'anic emphasis on mutual cooperation, compassion, and social

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<sup>36</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Erscheinungsort nicht ermittelbar: Taylor & Francis, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Agusman Damanik, "Relasi Spiritual Dengan Seni," *Al-Kaffah* 9, no. 1 (2021): 145–72.

<sup>38</sup> Ana Fadhilah et al., "PERAN Kesenian SARAFAL ANAM DALAM MENINGKATKAN NILAI MORALITAS PEMUDA," *SEMAR: Jurnal Sosial Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 3 (September 30, 2024): 43–47, <https://doi.org/10.59966/semar.v2i3.1168>.

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad Nikman Naser and Budrianto Budrianto, "Internalization of Art Value of Syarafal Anam Adults Characters Building," *KONSELI: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling (E-Journal)* 8, no. 1 (May 31, 2021): 55–60, <https://doi.org/10.24042/kons.v8i1.8721>.

responsibility.<sup>40</sup> These values are not abstract ideals, but are enacted in everyday interactions that sustain a sense of belonging and shared purpose.<sup>41</sup>

Beyond its ceremonial dimension, *Sarafal Anam* also holds educational significance, especially for the younger generation. By participating in the tradition, children and adolescents are introduced to Islamic manners (*adab*), reverence for the Prophet, and communal ethics. This reflects the pedagogical function of religious practice in shaping moral consciousness. As noted by Thohir and Reditiya, the memorization and appreciation of Qur'anic texts—when situated within a living tradition—cultivate both spiritual sensitivity and social awareness across generations.<sup>42</sup>

Yet, the sustainability of this tradition is increasingly challenged by modern cultural shifts.<sup>43</sup> The growing dominance of digital lifestyles, coupled with a reduced understanding of the spiritual values embedded in *Sarafal Anam*, has contributed to declining youth participation.<sup>44</sup> This situation calls for adaptive strategies that bridge traditional content with contemporary forms. Digital platforms, formal religious education, and community-based initiatives could serve as vehicles for revitalization—ensuring that the core values remain relevant and engaging for today's generation.

Such concerns have been echoed in studies across various regions. Mustafa views *Sarafal Anam* through the *Living Hadith* lens, positioning it as both an expression of prophetic love and a site of religiously grounded social interaction.<sup>45</sup> In areas like Malalo, Palembang, and Bengkulu, the tradition continues to function as a form of communal glue. Adetia and Iqbal highlight its emphasis on cooperation and poetic beauty—elements that serve not only aesthetic purposes but also fulfill deep educational and social

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<sup>40</sup> Ana Fadhilah et al., "Peran Kesenian Sarafal Anam Dalam Meningkatkan Nilai Moralitas Pemuda," *SEMAR: Jurnal Sosial Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 3 (September 30, 2024): 43–47, <https://doi.org/10.59966/semar.v2i3.1168>.

<sup>41</sup> Lisa A. Blankinship, Sarah Gillaspie, and Basil H. Aboul-Enein, "Highlighting the Importance of Biodiversity Conservation through the Holy Qur'an," *Conservation Biology* 39, no. 1 (2025): e14309, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14309>.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Thohir And Viola Eva Reditiya, "Exploring The Perspective Of Uptq Students: Surpassing Limitations With Digital Applications For Memorizing The Qur'an," *IJIET (International Journal of Indonesian Education and Teaching)* 8, no. 1 (January 26, 2024): 78–87, <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijiet.v8i1.6780>.

<sup>43</sup> Nezar Alsayyad, ed., *The End of Tradition?*, 0 ed. (Routledge, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203421338>.

<sup>44</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000): 19–51.

<sup>45</sup> Mustafa and Ridwan, "Tradisi Syarafal Anam Dalam Kajian Living Hadis."

functions.<sup>46</sup> In Bengkulu, Gefita's study explores how ritual elements—such as turmeric rice and grilled chicken—operate as cultural symbols that convey meanings of reconciliation, openness, and togetherness. These rituals become a kind of social language, encoding Qur'anic ethics into sensory and participatory experiences. Within this framework, *Sarafal Anam* emerges as more than performance; it becomes a dialogical space where community bonds are reaffirmed and collective identity is nurtured.<sup>47</sup> Research by Naser and Budrianto further supports the view that *Sarafal Anam* plays a formative role in shaping adolescent character.<sup>48</sup> Through its focus on relational ethics, creativity, and peer engagement, the tradition provides an alternative mode of value transmission that complements formal education. As Cahyadi argues, traditions like *Sarafal Anam* represent a form of cultural *da'wah* that is both transformative and socially embedded.<sup>49</sup>

The social and religious dimensions of *Sarafal Anam* reveal how local Islamic traditions continue to serve as a dynamic medium for expressing and sustaining Qur'anic values in the context of social change. Rather than existing in isolation from societal developments, the tradition reflects an ongoing negotiation between spiritual principles and evolving communal realities. Practices such as collective recitation, symbolic food offerings, and inclusive participation demonstrate how ethical teachings from the Qur'an—such as justice, compassion, and mutual care—are embedded within everyday cultural expressions. This perspective is supported by observations in the field that highlight the multifaceted nature of the tradition. As noted by Blankinship, Qur'anic values encompass a broad ethical spectrum that includes environmental stewardship, social equity, and empathy—dimensions that are mirrored in the relational structures and symbolic practices found within *Sarafal Anam*.<sup>50</sup> Its communal rituals, performed not for spectacle but for shared remembrance and meaning-making, exemplify how the sacred is

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<sup>46</sup> Adetia and Iqbal, "Membangun Nilai-Nilai Religius Dalam Kesenian Syarafal Anam Desa Pagar Agung."

<sup>47</sup> Yolanda Gemfita, "Komunikasi Ritual Tradisi Sarafal Anam Di Kota Bengkulu." (diploma, UIN FATMAWATI SUKARNO BENGKULU, 2022), <http://repository.iainbengkulu.ac.id/9799/>.

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Nikman Naser and Budrianto Budrianto, "Internalization of Art Value of Syarafal Anam Adults Characters Building," *KONSELI: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling (E-Journal)* 8, no. 1 (2021): 55–60.

<sup>49</sup> Ashadi Cahyadi, "Pengembangan Dakwah Melalui Gerakan Kebudayaan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Syi'ar* 18, no. 2 (2018): 73–83.

<sup>50</sup> Blankinship, Gillaspie, and Aboul-Enein, "Highlighting the Importance of Biodiversity Conservation through the Holy Qur'an."

interwoven with the social. Rather than being static or ceremonial, the tradition reflects a form of religious expression that is both adaptive and rooted. Its endurance suggests that Qur'anic engagement at the local level does not depend solely on formal institutions, but is also sustained through participatory culture, oral transmission, and intergenerational continuity. In this way, *Sarafal Anam* represents not only a site of religious devotion, but a socially embedded process through which Qur'anic ethics are rehearsed, reinterpreted, and reinforced within the lived experience of the community.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that the *Sarafal Anam* tradition in Kaloy Village, Aceh Tamiang, offers a clear example of how Qur'anic values are preserved and expressed through local cultural forms. More than a ritual to commemorate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, *Sarafal Anam* serves as a living space where devotion to the Prophet, compassion, communal solidarity, and moral teachings are practiced and passed on. Through the integration of Qur'anic recitation, local language, traditional food, and poetry, the tradition reflects how sacred texts remain meaningful when embedded in the everyday experiences of the community. At the same time, the research draws attention to the challenges facing the continuity of this tradition. Generational shifts, the influence of digital culture, and the declining understanding of spiritual meanings among the youth suggest that *Sarafal Anam* may lose its relevance without deliberate efforts to sustain it. The observations from community figures point to the need for educational engagement, creative adaptation, and institutional backing to keep the tradition connected to its Qur'anic roots while allowing it to respond to present realities. From an academic standpoint, this study contributes to the broader conversation on how the Qur'an is lived and interpreted within specific cultural contexts. It brings together textual analysis, ethnographic observation, and religious education to offer a grounded account of how Islamic traditions continue to evolve. Future research could explore how digital platforms might support the transmission of values found in *Sarafal Anam*, and how similar practices in other regions articulate the balance between textual fidelity and cultural expression in Muslim communities today.

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