

Interrelation of Religion and Culture: An Analysis of Honoring *Asyhur Al-Hurum* Culture on Clifford Geertz's Anthropological Theory

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Abstract

Religion and culture are two interconnected entities. However, there are some groups who claim that Islam is against local culture and traditions. That arguments are significant to be reviewed and studied comprehensively. This research aims to review the interrelation between Islamic teachings and the culture of honoring *asyhur al-hurum* from the perspective of Clifford Geertz's anthropological theory. With a library research approach and qualitative type, the research uses documentation techniques as a data collection method. This research found that the teachings in Islam appreciate and are accommodative of local traditions. Many pre-Islamic traditions have been adopted and then integrated into Islam, one of them is the culture of honoring *asyhur al-hurum* (Rajab, Dhulqa'dah, Dhulhijjah, and Muharram). There are several verses of the Qur'an that contain an appreciative attitude towards this culture, including QS al-Baqarah verses 194, 197, 217; QS al-Maidah verses 2, 97; and QS al-Taubah verse 36. The verse reflects the tahmil process as a form of dialectic between the Qur'an and culture. Based on the analysis using Clifford Geertz's theory of models for reality and models of reality, the teachings in Islam instruct Muslims to glorify the haram months by increasing worship, both ritual worship and social worship related to cultural practices that apply in a multicultural society. The interrelation between religious teachings about the haram months and local culture contributes to the formation of collective identity, both in religious and social contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and culture are two entities that cannot be separated in the dynamics of society.¹ They are two elements that are integrated into the social system, culture, and values of Islam.² Religion emphasizes the meaning and significance of actions, and so does culture. Religion and culture can influence each other, although they cannot be equated. Religion influences various beliefs and daily practices. Conversely, culture can also influence religion, especially in terms of the interpretation and practice of religious rituals. Therefore, it can be said that religious teachings do not appear in societies that have no culture, but on the contrary, in societies that have many cultures.³

Ironically, there is often an argument that religion and culture are two areas that trigger pros and cons between communities.⁴ The perception that Islam is against local traditions is wrong. The religion accommodates local traditions, even since the time of the Prophet. Islam is very flexible with its environment as long as it does not contradict sharia. The jahiliyyah society of Makkah already had established traditions long before the arrival of Islam.⁵ The Arabs had an established culture and moral tradition even though they had not received revelation from the Prophet.⁶ With all its dynamics, the pre-Islamic Arabs still had a noble culture. Some of the traditions of that time are still preserved to this day. Honoring the four haram months (*asyhur al-hurum*) which include Dhulqa'dah, Dhul-Hijja, Muharram, and Sha'ban, was part of the culture of the Arabs. Such traditions have developed into established rituals in Arab society. This study aims to explore how an anthropological approach that sees religion as a symbol system that shapes cultural meanings, can be applied to understand the practice of honoring the haram months.

The studies that discuss religious and cultural literature are found in the following studies; the role of interfaith and cultural counselors as problem solving in multicultural societies,⁷ harmonization of religion and culture in tolerance,⁸ the relationship between religion and culture in the Ngurisang Tradition of the Sasak Islamic community,⁹ the relationship between religion and culture in the community of Gampong Kereumbok, Pidie Regency, Aceh

¹ Abdul Gafur et al., "Agama, Tradisi Budaya Dan Peradaban," *Medina-Te : Jurnal Studi Islam* 18, no. 1 (2022): 124–38, <https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddun.v21i2.10665>. Riadus Solihah, "Agama Dan Budaya; Pengaruh Keagamaan Masyarakat Gebang Madura Terhadap Budaya Rokat Tase'," *UIN Sunan Ampel* 2, no. 1 (2019): 77–94.

² Abidin Nurdin, "INTEGRASI AGAMA DAN BUDAYA: KAJIAN TENTANG TRADISI MAULOD DALAM MASYARAKAT ACEH," *El Harakah Jurnal Budaya Islam* 18, no. 1 (2016): 47–64.

³ Akmal Bashori, "REFORMULASI HUKUM ARAB ERA FORMATIF ISLAM," *Syariat*, 2015.

⁴ Ahmad Sugeng Riady, "Agama Dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat Perspektif Clifford Geertz," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSAI)* 2, no. 1 (2021): 13–22, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v2i1.1199>.

⁵ Mohamad Zaenal Arifin, "Dialektika Al-Qur'an Dengan Konteks Masyarakat Arab Jahiliyah," *AL Fikrah : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2022): 139–53, <https://doi.org/10.51476/alfikrah.v2i2.396>.

⁶ Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, "Pengaruh Penyebaran Islam Di Timur Tengah Dan Afrika Utara: Studi Geobudaya Dan Geopolitik," *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 16, no. 1 (2019): 1–14.

⁷ Afifatuz Zakiyah, Hayatul Khairul Rahmat, and Nurus Sa'adah, "Peran Konselor Lintas Agama Dan Budaya Sebagai Problem Solving Masyarakat Multibudaya the Role of Cross-Religious and Cultural Counselors As a Multi-Cultural Community Solving Problem," *Multidisciplinary Journal of Counseling and Social Research* 1, no. 1 (2022): 2962–8350.

⁸ Yunus Yunus and Mukhlisin, "Sosial-Budaya: Harmonisasi Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Pendidikan Toleransi," *Kalam: Jurnal Agama Dan Sosial Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2020): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.47574/kalam.v8i2.78>.

⁹ Siti Aminah and Novia Suhastini, "Relasi Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Tradisi Ngurisang Masyarakat Islam Sasak," *Jurnal Tasamuh* 19, no. 2 (2021): 167–80.

Province.¹⁰ Based on the data from the previous study, it appears that there is no research that discusses the study of religious and cultural integration of *asyhur al-hurum* honors through the analysis of Clifford Geertz's anthropological theory. The difference with previous research lies in the object of research and the theoretical model used as an analysis, so that this research examines new and different aspects.

Based on the explanation above, it is interesting to study how the interrelationship between religion and culture of honoring *asyhur al-Hurum* through Clifford Geertz's anthropological theory. This research is significant to do because from an anthropological perspective, religion is sacred while culture is profane.¹¹ Discourses and polemics related to culture and religion become an important agenda to be reviewed more comprehensively. In addition, the discussion in this study will review the explanations in the Qur'an related to social concepts regarding the practices that apply in society. The discussion includes how religious values related to the haram months.

The concepts of the social system in the Qur'an will be seen whether they are related to previous practices or not. The rules in it whether they have a relationship of compatibility, or even contradict the existing tradition. This is the basis for categorizing the Qur'anic response to existing social institutions. Reviewing the cultural concept of the haram months is an important effort to ensure that Muslims can carry out religious teachings with a deep understanding and are relevant to the challenges of the times. Such a concept is an effort to maintain social harmony and deep spirituality. This research can strengthen the spiritual dimension of Muslims by understanding the values of peace, respect and self-discipline contained in the concept of the haram months.

METHODS

This type of research is qualitative research that uses a library research approach. To produce comprehensive research data, documentation techniques are used from the materials and references that have been collected. The data sources used include two parts, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources consist of references that contain discussions related to Clifford Geertz's Anthropological Theory and Tafsir Al-Mishbah as an explanation of the interpretation of Quranic verses. Secondary data sources include various books, articles, journals, and other literature that have relevance to the object of discussion of this research. For the process of analyzing data, using analytical descriptive method. In processing the data, three stages are carried out. The first stage is data reduction, namely the selection and adjustment of data with the object of research. The second stage is the presentation or display of data, namely the presentation of data that has been adjusted and classified so that the collected data becomes systematic. The last stage is verification or drawing conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Review of *Asyhur Al-Hurum* Concept in the Quran

The history of the haram months has its roots in pre-Islamic traditions that were preserved in Islam. In pre-Islamic times, these months were considered sacred by Arab society, which made room for important events. This is as stated in the Qur'an as the mother book of Muslims that contains the teachings of Islam. The Qur'an, which contains universal principles of life,

¹⁰ Muhammad Muhammad, "Hubungan Agama Dan Budaya Pada Masyarakat Gampong Kereumbok Kabupaten Pidie, Provinsi Aceh," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 2 (2020): 85, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v22i2.7769>.

¹¹ Aslam Nur, "Garis Batas Antara Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Perspektif Antropologi Aslam," *ADABIYA* 19, no. 1 (2017): 49–56.

explains that among the twelve months of the year, there are months called *asyhur al-hurum* (noble months), namely: Dhulqa'dah, Dhulhijjah, Muharram, and Rajab. With the arrival of Islam, the tradition of sanctifying these four months was continued, as reflected in the verses of the Qur'an that will be mentioned in the following discussion.¹²

An-Naisaburi states that respect for the haraam months is a straight religious teaching, which was implemented by Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail. This legacy was passed on by the people of Jahiliyyah Arabia from these two prophets. The Jahiliyyah Arabs revered these months very much and forbade war in them. In fact, if someone met the murderer of his father or brother, such a thing would be tolerated because of the reverence of the *asyhur al-hurum* that was held firmly in their tradition.¹³ The Qur'anic response to this tradition of honoring the haram months is appreciative, namely continuing and validating its validity. This attitude is shown in surah al-Baqarah verses 194, 197, and 217.

Q.S. Al-Baqarah Verse 194

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتِ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Bulan haram dengan bulan haram, dan pada sesuatu yang patut dihormati, berlaku hukum kisas. Oleh sebab itu barang siapa yang menyerang kamu, maka seranglah ia, seimbang dengan serangannya terhadapmu. Bertakwalah kepada Allah dan ketahuilah, bahwa Allah beserta orang-orang yang bertakwa.

In the interpretation of al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains that the Qur'an identifies four months of the year as the Haram months, namely the months that require special respect, which then carries the consequences of certain prohibitions. The four months are Muharram (first month), Rajab (seventh month), Dhulqa'dah (eleventh month), and Dhulhijjah (twelfth month) in the Qamariyah calendar. Respect for these months also reflects the religious and ethical values reflected in the teachings of the Qur'an.¹⁴

According to M. Quraish Shihab, when examined from a linguistic point of view, the word "haram" originally meant "noble" or "honorable," just like Masjid al-Haram. From the same root, comes the derivation of the word "hurmat" which means "respect." In the context of the Indonesian language, the word "respect" has become a common and recognized part as a form of respect and appreciation for something that is considered noble. This understanding brings the concept that something that is considered noble or honorable creates various rules and prohibitions that prevent others from breaking them. Thus, from this perspective, the word "haram" is defined as the act of forbidding, preventing, hindering and avoiding. This reflects the concept that things that are considered sacred and honorable receive special protection and are avoided from being violated.¹⁵

Q.S. Al-Baqarah Verse 197

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَرَوُودُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُوا يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

¹² Bashori, "REFORMULASI HUKUM ARAB ERA FORMATIF ISLAM."

¹³ Ahmad Muntaha, "Kemuliaan Bulan Haram Di Dalam Islam," 2022, https://nu.or.id/sirah-nabawiyah/kemuliaan-bulan-haram-di-dalam-islam-6wQwu#google_vignette.

¹⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Jilid 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002).

¹⁵ Salman Al Farisi, "Unsur Kemuliaan Dalam Syariat Pengharaman; Reinterpretasi Kata 'Haram' Dalam Al-Qur'an Melalui Metode Isytiqaq," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 3, no. 2 (2007): 102–22, <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v3i2.15199>.

(Musim) haji adalah beberapa bulan yang dimaklumi, barang siapa yang menetapkan niatnya dalam bulan itu akan mengerjakan haji, maka tidak boleh rafats, berbuat fasik dan berbantah-bantahan di dalam masa mengerjakan haji. Dan apa yang kamu kerjakan berupa kebaikan, niscaya Allah mengetahuinya. Berbekallah, dan sesungguhnya sebaik-baik bekal adalah takwa dan bertakwalah kepada-Ku hai orang-orang yang berakal.

The verse creates the impression that the haram months have an inherent sanctity and gain holiness through the performance of Hajj during that period. The impression compels every individual, whether performing Hajj or not, to respect and preserve the sanctity of these months by abstaining not only from war, but also from all kinds of sin. This understanding of the sanctity of the haram months has been understood by the Arabs since before the Prophet Muhammad was sent. Thus, for anyone who decides to set the intention to perform Hajj during these months, it is necessary to realize that during the period of Hajj, there is no place for abusive behavior, no breach of etiquette, and no conflict or quarrel is allowed. This confirms that Hajj should be performed with peace and solemnity, avoiding all forms of conflict and immoral behavior.¹⁶

Q.S. Al-Baqarah Verse 217

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكَ حَتَّىٰ يَزُودُوكُمُ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِن سَطَّاعُوا وَمَنْ يَزُودْكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَيُمِتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

Mereka bertanya kepadamu tentang berperang pada bulan Haram. Katakanlah: "Berperang dalam bulan itu adalah dosa besar; tetapi menghalangi (manusia) dari jalan Allah, kafir kepada Allah, (menghalangi masuk) Masjidilharam dan mengusir penduduknya dari sekitarnya, lebih besar (dosanya) di sisi Allah. Dan berbuat fitnah lebih besar (dosanya) daripada membunuh. Mereka tidak henti-hentinya memerangi kamu sampai mereka (dapat) mengembalikan kamu dari agamamu (kepada kekafiran), seandainya mereka sanggup. Barang siapa yang murtad di antara kamu dari agamanya, lalu dia mati dalam kekafiran, maka mereka itulah yang sia-sia amalannya di dunia dan di akhirat, dan mereka itulah penghuni neraka, mereka kekal di dalamnya.

In response to the verse, Quraish Shihab explains that this verse recognizes the tradition of the people regarding the prohibition of fighting during the four Haram months. The verses reaffirm the establishment of the Haram months and the rules that apply in them. The months of Dhulqa'dah and Dhulhijjah are affirmed as the months of Hajj. Prohibitions are also recognized, such as the prohibition of waging war, disturbing those who are performing Hajj, and expelling people from the haram land. The Qur'an even considers offenses committed in the haram months to be a grave sin.

Surah al-Maidah verses 2 and 97 also explain the importance of the haram month and the prohibitions that apply during this period. Specifically, both verses mention the haram month as an integral part of the Islamic symbols. In other words, the position of the month of haram is recognized as equal to other important elements in the symbols of Islam. This confirms that the month has a special and honorable position within the framework of Islamic teachings. The importance of the haram month as part of the Islamic symbols also reflects the recognition and acceptance of the traditions that exist in it. By placing the haram month as part of the symbols of Islam, the Qur'an gives legitimacy and importance to respecting and obeying the prohibitions that apply during the month.¹⁷

¹⁶ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 432-434.

¹⁷ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*.

Q.S. Al Maidah Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا آمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

Hai orang-orang yang beriman, janganlah kamu melanggar syi'ar-syiar Allah, dan jangan melanggar kehormatan bulan-bulan haram, jangan (mengganggu) binatang-binatang had-ya, dan binatang-binatang qalaa-id, dan jangan (pula) mengganggu orang-orang yang mengunjungi Baitullah sedang mereka mencari karunia dan keridaan dari Tuhannya dan apabila kamu telah menyelesaikan ibadah haji, maka bolehlah berburu. Dan janganlah sekali-kali kebencian (mu) kepada sesuatu kaum karena mereka menghalang-halangi kamu dari Masjidilharam, mendorongmu berbuat aniaya (kepada mereka). Dan tolong-menolonglah kamu dalam (mengerjakan) kebajikan dan takwa, dan jangan tolong-menolong dalam berbuat dosa dan pelanggaran. Dan bertakwalah kamu kepada Allah, sesungguhnya Allah amat berat siksa-Nya.

Through this verse, Allah addresses the believers with the command: "O you who believe, do not violate the sanctuaries of Allah in Hajj and Umrah, nor in all religious teachings. Also do not violate the honor of the unlawful months of Dhulqa'dah, Dhulhijjah, Muharram, and Rajab." The word "sya'a'ir" is the plural of the word "sya'irah," which means a sign or symbol, and can also be referred to as a shiar. In the interpretation of the verse Al-Baqarah verse 158, the author states that the word "sya'ar" has the root word of "syu'ur," which means taste. This means that sha'ar are the signs of religion and worship set by Allah. These signs are referred to as sha'ar because they are supposed to generate respect and adoration for Allah. Thus, the prohibition of violating the shi'ar of Allah in this verse includes all forms of signs or symbols that have been established by Allah in the teachings of Islam, including especially in the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages and the haram months.¹⁸

The signs mentioned in Islamic teachings are various. Some of them are places, such as Shafa and Marwah, and *Masy'ar al-Haram*. Some are related to time, such as the Haram months, and some are in the form of something, such as *al-qala'id*, which is a sacrificial animal offered to Allah. The origin of the word "haram" itself means honorable. Something that is honored is generally related to the prohibitions concerned. Therefore, in this context, the word "haram" is defined as "prohibition". The Haram months, including Dhulqa'dah, Dhul Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab, are months to be honored because there are many things that are prohibited or forbidden to be done during these months. This reflects the importance of respecting the boundaries set by Allah to create sanctity and solemnity in these months in the context of worship and reverence.¹⁹

Q.S. Al Maidah Verse 97

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ ذَلِكَ لِيَتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Allah telah menjadikan Kakbah, rumah suci itu sebagai pusat (peribadatan dan urusan dunia) bagi manusia, dan (demikian pula) bulan Haram, had-ya, qalaid. (Allah menjadikan yang) demikian itu agar kamu tahu, bahwa sesungguhnya Allah mengetahui apa yang ada di langit dan apa yang ada di bumi dan bahwa sesungguhnya Allah Maha Mengetahui segala sesuatu.

¹⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *TAFSIR AL-MISHBAH Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, JILID 3 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 10.

¹⁹ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 11.

In al-Misbah's interpretation of the verse, it is explained that regarding the Haram months, Allah emphasizes his majesty by prohibiting warfare in order to preserve human life and create a sense of security and tranquility among them. These months are considered to be periods where people draw closer to Allah and strengthen their relationship with Him. In contrast, during the Haram months, all sins against Allah and mankind should be avoided completely. The importance of avoiding sins and behaviors that are not in accordance with religious teachings during the Haram months emphasizes the sanctity and solemnity of the period. The prohibition of warfare in this context also indicates that life and peace take precedence, and Muslims are urged to utilize these months as an opportunity to draw closer to Allah, improve social relations, and avoid actions that may harm themselves and others.²⁰

Q.S. At-Taubah Verse 36

Surah At-Taubah verse 36 does not specifically mention the haram months, but discusses the behavior of the disbelievers who changed the dates or timing, including the haram months. The Qur'an condemns their actions because they go against the existing religious provisions and traditions of the community. From the content of this verse, it can be concluded that the attitude of the Qur'an remains consistent in emphasizing the need to respect the haram months and the provisions that have become the tradition of the community. The discussion about postponing or changing the determination of time, including the haram month, shows that the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of complying with religious provisions and maintaining the sacredness of times that have been respected in the traditions of Islamic society. This reflects the consistency in the Qur'an's view of respect for the haram month and other elements of Islamic teachings.

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ
الِدِّينِ الْقِيَمِ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Sesungguhnya bilangan bulan pada sisi Allah ialah dua belas bulan, dalam ketetapan Allah di waktu Dia menciptakan langit dan bumi, di antaranya empat bulan haram. Itulah (ketetapan) agama yang lurus, maka janganlah kamu menganiaya diri kamu dalam bulan yang empat itu, dan perangilah kaum musyrikin itu semuanya sebagaimana mereka pun memerangi kamu semuanya; dan ketahuilah bahwasanya Allah beserta orang-orang yang bertakwa.

The explanation of this verse details the understanding of the limits set by Allah regarding the number of months in a year. The verse emphasizes that the limit or decree regarding the number of months in a year is a decree of Allah that has been determined since the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth. The twelve months cannot be increased or decreased, and their positions cannot be reversed. In the explanation, it is mentioned that among the twelve months there are four certain months that have the status of haram or majestic. These four haram months have a special position in the straight religious decree. Therefore, Muslims are reminded not to violate the restrictions or harm themselves by committing sins during these four months, including by increasing or decreasing the number of months. This understanding emphasizes the importance of adhering to the religious requirements set by Allah, including the respect for the haram months, and stresses that Muslims should avoid sin and adhere to the rules set by Allah.²¹

Before Islam, almost the entire Jahiliyya Arab society recognized and respected four specific months each year. Their reverence for these months was so great that even if one found the murderer of one's father, son or brother during these months, they would not take revenge on the enemy. This reverence for the months reflected the traditions and social norms that had

²⁰ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 210.

²¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *TAFSIR AL-MISHBAH Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, JILID 5 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 585.

taken root in their society. When Islam emerged, some of these traditions were still recognized, while aspects that conflicted with Islamic teachings were modified or removed. The value of reverence for certain months, especially in the context of the prohibition of war, was later explained and recognized in the Qur'ān as part of the religious principles to be upheld.²²

Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the prohibition of persecution or sin in the four haram months does not mean that in other months sin can be considered valid or permitted. The emphasis is more specifically aimed at these four months, because these months are considered the most glorious periods of worship in the sight of Allah. Therefore, performing acts of worship during these times has a positive impact and brings many rewards, whereas committing sins can result in the great wrath of Allah.

In this context, the prohibition of mistreating oneself, as explained in Surah At-Taubah verse 36, refers to the act of mistreating oneself through sins and disobedience that can cause a person to receive punishment from Allah. The scholars of tafsir explain that mistreating oneself in this context means committing sins that can cause themselves to receive punishment from Allah. Therefore, this prohibition emphasizes the importance of avoiding sin and doing good deeds, especially during the haram months, which are considered special in Islamic teachings.

This verse confirms that Allah designated four months of the year as haram months. The honor and majesty possessed by time and place are basically similar to the honor and majesty possessed by humans. Just as humans are honored because of their good outputs, such as sincere faith and noble character, so the place and time are honored because there or at that time, there can be a lot of goodness and abundant rewards. In relation to the verse, according to Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi in his tafsir, *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, scholars have agreed that the months of Rajab, Dhulqa'dah, Dhul Hijjah, and Muharram are considered to be honored months in Islam. The meaning of the word "al-hurum" in the verse is that committing sinful acts in these months will be punished more severely than in other months. Conversely, good deeds will be more rewarded during these months.²³

Religion and Culture in the View of Clifford Geertz

Religion is one of the areas that attracts attention in cultural analysis, and one of the figures involved in this study is Clifford Geertz, an American cultural anthropologist. Geertz was born in San Francisco, California, in 1926 and died on October 31, 2006.²⁴ He earned a B.A. in philosophy from Antioch College in Ohio in 1950, then went on to study anthropology at Harvard University. He earned his doctorate from Harvard's Department of Social Relations in 1956. In 1970, Geertz began teaching as a professor of anthropology at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where he remained until the end of his life. His work spans the study of cultural anthropology, religion, social theory, agricultural development, and ethnic diversity and its impact on the modern world. Some of his notable works include *The Religion of Java* (1960), *Agricultural Involution* (1963), *Islam Observed* (1968), *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), *Negara* (1980), *Works and Lives* (1980), and *Local Knowledge* (1983).

Clifford Geertz's thinking on culture and religion developed under two main influences: the strong independent tradition of American Anthropology, and the social science outlook he acquired while studying at Harvard University under Talcott Parsons, a renowned theorist. In anthropology, Geertz was heavily influenced by figures such as Boas, Kroeber, and Benedict,

²² Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, 587.

²³ Muhammad Abror, "Tradisi Pra Dan Pasca-Islam: Memuliakan Bulan-Bulan Haram," 2022, <https://islam.nu.or.id/sirah-nabawiyah/tradisi-pra-dan-pasca-islam-memuliakan-bulan-bulan-haram-G9u9d>.

²⁴ Shoni Rahmatullah Amrozi, "Keberagamaan Orang Jawa Dalam Pandangan Clifford Geertz Dan Mark R. Woodward," *Fenomena* 20, no. 1 (2021): 61–76, <https://doi.org/10.35719/fenomena.v20i1.46>.

while in sociology, he was influenced by Talcott Parsons and Max Weber.²⁵ In his famous book, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz sees religion as a symbolic system that serves to create meaning for individuals and society. These symbols provide a way for humans to understand the world around them and explain phenomena that are difficult to understand logically, such as suffering and death. Geertz emphasizes the role of rituals in maintaining religious structures. These rituals are not only an expression of faith, but also a way for people to continue to feel and live the reality shaped by their religion. Rituals reinforce symbolic meanings and bridge between everyday experiences and higher beliefs.²⁶

Geertz's anthropological theory highlights the importance of understanding symbolic meaning in culture and religion. In his analysis of religion, Geertz emphasizes that understanding culture requires an understanding of the meanings it contains. According to him, the key to understanding religion lies in the meaning conveyed by religious symbols. Geertz's thought that produced various arguments about religion and culture became the focus of attention of many anthropologists and sociologists. Geertz's interpretive approach provides a more in-depth picture of the beliefs and practices of a religion through the eyes of its adherents.²⁷ Geertz states that human activities related to culture have a special nature. Geertz discusses in depth the concept of religion and culture through the method of thick description.²⁸ As an anthropologist, Geertz argues that anthropological studies related to human culture must produce an in-depth picture or description in accordance with the meaning and understanding of the actors or owners of the culture.²⁹

In Geertz's famous study of religion in Java, contained in his book *The Religion of Java* (1960), he identified three main variants of Islam in Java. (1) Abangan, combining elements of Islam with local, mystical and animist traditions. This group is more concerned with social rituals than a deep understanding of Islamic teachings. (2) Santri, a more orthodox group, adhering to purer Islamic practices and active in worship and religious education. (3) Priyayi, an elite class more focused on cultural and aristocratic values, with little direct connection to religion. From his study, Geertz shows how Islam in Java cannot be separated from the local cultural context and social structure. Interpretations of religion vary in each stratum of society, showing how religion and culture influence each other.³⁰

An understandable interpretation is that religion cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it is practiced. That is, while major religions may have the same teachings, their interpretation and practice can vary greatly depending on the local cultural context. Religion and culture are closely intertwined, and religion serves as a mechanism for creating meaning that is internalized in people's daily lives. In this sense, religion is not just a belief or doctrine, but also a symbolic system that helps people make sense of the world, give meaning to life and guide behavior. This explains that religion is not only about spiritual life, but also influences people's social, political and cultural actions. Culture influences how religion is

²⁵ Mahli Zainudin Tago, "Agama Dan Integrasi Sosial Dalam Pemikiran Clifford," *Kalam: Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 1 (2014): 79–94.

²⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

²⁷ Nurul Syarifah and Zidna Zuhdana Mushthoza, "Antropologi Interpretatif Clifford Geertz: Studi Kasus Keagamaan Masyarakat Bali Dan Maroko," *Humanis: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 14, no. 2 (2022): 65–74.

²⁸ Riady, "Agama Dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat Perspektif Clifford Geertz."

²⁹ Sodiman, "Mengkaji Islam Empirik; Model Studi Hermeneutika Antropologis Clifford Geertz," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 4, no. 1 (2018): 23–40, <https://ejournal.iainkendari.ac.id/zawiyah/article/view/993>. Zulkifli and Risa Pramita Wilda Fitria, "Mistisisme Pocong Sebagai Representasi Arwah Gentayangan (Studi Tipologi Clifford Geertz)," *Ri'ayah: Jurnal Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 8, no. 02 (2023): 72–84.

³⁰ Clifford Geertz, *THE RELIGION OF JAVA* (London: THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 1960).

practiced and understood, while religion offers a framework of meaning that gives direction to daily life within a culture.

Analysis of Clifford Geertz's Theory of Honoring *Asyhur al-Hurum* Culture

The operationalization of Geertz's theory in Islamic studies can be realized through the framework of models of and models for. In this context, Islam as models for reality describes the normativity, teachings, and views of God. It creates an ideal model that, with its guidance, governs physical relationships, idealized concepts for psychological and social systems, and for cultural models. Meanwhile, Islam as models of reality refers to the practice of Islam by its adherents. The practice represents the implementation of the ideal concept contained in Islamic normativity. In other words, Islam as a model of reality reflects how Islamic teachings are applied or practiced in real life by the Muslim community.³¹

Geertz's theory is based on the belief that religion is a system of symbols, where these symbols come together to form cultural patterns that ultimately form a model of religion.³² It can also be interpreted that religion is a model for reality through several patterns of interpretation.³³ Where relations between religions and cultures are expected to be a strategy for the successful development of religious harmony.³⁴ Models of reality are defined as patterns of culture or reality, which are reflected in the connection between religion and culture in the respect for *asyhur al-Hurum*.

The dialectic between the Qur'an and Arabic culture has three main forms, one of which is *tahmil*. *Tahmil* is defined as an attitude that respects and allows the continuation of a tradition. Respect for the culture of *asyhur al-Hurum* shows an attitude of *tahmil*. *Tahmil* is the stage where local culture is accepted and refined in an elegant way and in accordance with Islamic values.³⁵ This attitude is reflected in Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's practice of accepting, continuing and perfecting existing traditions. This respect shows an appreciative attitude, an attitude that reflects an attitude of accepting or allowing a pre-Islamic tradition to exist. This attitude is reflected in the verses of the Qur'an that accept and continue the existence of these traditions and update their rules. In this context, the verses are more of a recommendation than an order. On the other hand, the rules are more about ethics that should be followed, but are not binding.³⁶

This process of models of reality continues with models for reality, where religion provides concepts or doctrines for reality. The Qur'an, revealed to the Prophet, presents ideal and universal concepts that are then applied and implemented in people's lives. The provisions of the Qur'an change the values and ethics that form the basis of societal order. When viewed in the appropriate context, there is nothing in the Qur'an that does not apply. This means that the validity of the Qur'an is maintained with a framework that is suitable for every time and place.³⁷ The tradition of honoring the haram months (Rajab, Dhulqa'dah, Dhulhijjah, and Muharram) is a tradition that is accepted and appreciated by Islam, especially in the Qur'an.

During these months, people are prohibited from engaging in warfare, hostility, acts of injustice, and disrupting the smooth running of the Hajj ceremonies. The months of Dhulqa'dah,

³¹ Novizal Wendry, "KATEGORI ANTROPOLOGI Telaah Terhadap Pemikiran Talal Asad," *Kontemplasi* 4, no. 1 (2016). Sodiman, "Mengkaji Islam Empirik; Model Studi Hermeneutika Antropologis Clifford Geertz."

³² Amrozi, "Keberagamaan Orang Jawa Dalam Pandangan Clifford Geertz Dan Mark R. Woodward."

³³ Muhammad, "Hubungan Agama Dan Budaya Pada Masyarakat Gampong Kereumbok Kabupaten Pidie, Provinsi Aceh."

³⁴ Joko Tri Irianto, "Relasi Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Hubungan Intern Umat Islam," *Smart* 1, no. 1 (2015): 44.

³⁵ Zumrodi, "RESPON HADIS TERHADAP BUDAYA MASYARAKAT ARAB," *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2017): 123–34.

³⁶ Ali Sodikin, *ANTROPOLOGI AL-QURAN* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2008).

³⁷ Bashori, "REFORMULASI HUKUM ARAB ERA FORMATIF ISLAM."

Dhul Hijjah and Muharram are cherished by the Arabs as they are special months for performing the Hajj pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Makkah. Meanwhile, Rajab, which is considered a month with an odd number of days, is the time for performing Umrah. Therefore, these four months are considered as months specifically related to the performance of Hajj and Umrah, and a truce period to ensure the smooth performance of these acts of worship.³⁸

From the verses that explain the *asyhur al-Hurum*, it can be concluded that the attitude of the Qur'an is acceptance, appreciation, and gives legitimacy to its validity. The Qur'an does not even introduce new concepts or reduce the provisions that already apply. Strictly speaking, the arrival of Islam actually strengthens the appreciation of the glory of the haram months. The reward for good deeds was multiplied, along with the burden of sin from bad deeds which became heavier. The tradition of respect still continues in the teachings of Islam to this day. Whereas in the pre-Islamic period the form of respect involved the prohibition of war and abominable acts, in the Islamic context, these months are given various privileges. These include the multiplication of rewards for good deeds, the encouragement to fast, the emphasis on avoiding sin, and various other aspects. This causes a servant to be motivated to continue engaging in good deeds amidst the various blessings bestowed on these months.³⁹

Likewise, when sins and disobedience become greater in the eyes of Allah, it will cause a sense of worry and fear of the consequences that may occur. This is due to the threat of Allah's punishment on the Day of Judgment, which encourages one to always try to stay away from these despicable deeds. Therefore, this virtue motivates a person to constantly strive to achieve goodness by obeying Allah's commands and avoiding all forms of evil. He tries to stay away from sin and disobedience, and trains himself to be a Muslim who is consistent in his faith in Allah and His Messenger. All these efforts lead a person to the pinnacle of glory, when he is saved by Allah from the torment of Hellfire and given a place in His paradise.⁴⁰

Analysis from the perspective of Clifford Geertz shows that acculturation between Islam and local culture in Indonesia produces various forms of religiosity. This compromise between Islam and local culture allows for the integration of two perspectives, namely normative Islam and factual Islam. The interrelation or integration between religion and culture is the process by which religious values, practices and traditions merge or interact with local culture. It is a complex phenomenon and occurs in various forms around the world. Many religious symbols are integrated into local cultures. One of them is the culture of honoring *asyhur al-Hurum*. This culture is often colored by local traditions and customs. The moral values taught by religion often form the basis of ethics in society, influencing laws, customs and social norms. Overall, the interrelation and integration between religion and culture is a dynamic process that continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times.

The interrelationship between religious teachings about the *asyhur al-Hurum* and local culture plays an important role in the formation of collective identity, both in religious and social terms. The teachings regarding the haram months, which include Dhulqadah, Dhulhijjah, Muharram and Rajab contain sacred values such as peace, respect and self-control. When these teachings are applied in a local cultural context, they help shape the norms and practices that characterize the identity of a Muslim community.

Teachings about the haram months reinforce religious identity by instilling a deep sense of spirituality among Muslims. Practices such as refraining from acts of violence, increasing

³⁸ Abd. Halim, "Dialektika Hadis Nabi Dengan Budaya Lokal Arab," *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): 65–82, <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v4i1.2060>.

³⁹ Wildana Wargadinata, "TRADISI ARAB DI MASA NABI: Dalam Perspective Teori Change and Continuity," *El-HARAKAH* 5, no. 2 (2008): 47, <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v3i2.5142>.

⁴⁰ Sayyida, "ASYHUR AL-HURUM MENURUT PERSPEKTIF AL-QUR'AN (STUDI KOMPARATIF ANTARA MUTAWALLI AL-SYA'RAWI DAN SAYYID QUTHB) DAN RELEVANSINYA SAAT INI," *Al-Dhikra: Jurnal Studi Quran Dan Hadis* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–18.

worship, and maintaining harmonious social relations during these months become part of collective religious expression. Local cultures then adopt and adapt these teachings into forms that suit local traditions, thus creating variations in religious practices that remain rooted in Islamic principles. Thus, Muslim communities in different regions can distinguish their religious identity based on the way they observe the teachings of the haram months, while still maintaining unity in faith.

On the social side, the interrelation between religious teachings and local culture during *asyhur al-Hurum* creates patterns of interaction that emphasize harmony and togetherness. For example, in some regions, these months may be marked by special rituals, community events, or socially sanctioned periods of peace. These practices strengthen social solidarity and foster a sense of community among community members. The social norms that develop from this integration of religious teachings help to shape a distinctive social identity, in which community members respect each other and maintain good relations, especially during these sacred periods. The combination of these religious and social identities results in a strong collective identity. This identity is built on a foundation of religious teachings about the haram months that are integrated with local culture, creating traditions that are unique yet still in accordance with Islamic principles. This collective identity unites the community in harmonious religious and social practices and can strengthen a common identity.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the teachings in Islam appreciate local traditions and culture, this character is built from the historical fact that Islam cannot be separated from the culture of pre-Islamic society. One of these cultures is the culture of respect for *asyhur al-hurum*. *Asyhur al-hurum* (Dhulqa'dah, Dhulhijjah, Muharram, and Rajab) are months that have special virtues in Islam, both in terms of the prohibition of war, increasing good deeds, and emphasizing the purity of the soul. Respecting and preserving the honor of these months is part of practicing the teachings of Islam which emphasizes peace and respect for the times sanctified by Allah. These months are highly recommended times to increase good deeds such as fasting, charity, Hajj, and others. The reward for doing good deeds in these months is considered greater than in other months. Muslims are taught to guard themselves more from committing sins during these months. For example, it is emphasized to guard the tongue, avoid wrongdoing, and increase worship to cleanse oneself. In addition to the prohibition of war, respect for these months also includes an emphasis on calmness, maintaining order and peace. Through Clifford Geertz's models for reality and models of reality theories, this culture can be integrated and applied into the daily lives and local cultural practices of the Islamic community. Overall, the interrelationship between religious teachings on the haram months and local culture not only enriches religious and social practices, but also plays an important role in shaping collective identities that reflect Islamic values in the local context.

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