



Internalization of *Asy'ariyyah* Creed Values through '*Aqidul Iman* Learning

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Abstract

Amidst the proliferation of transnational ideologies and the phenomenon of religious instantism in the digital era, the preservation of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja) theology requires a pedagogical approach rooted in local wisdom. This research investigates the internalization of *Asy'ariyyah* creed values at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus, Purwakarta, specifically through the study of the book '*Aqidul Iman* by KH. Adang Badruddin (Abah Cipulus). Using a qualitative field research method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation of *sorogan* and *lalaran* activities, and manuscript analysis. The study reveals that '*Aqidul Iman* serves as a strategic instrument of vernacularization of theology, transforming the classical text *Tijan ad-Darari* into Sundanese *nadhham* (poetry) written in *Pegon* script. The internalization process follows a holistic trajectory: the transformation stage via the *bandongan* method for cognitive understanding; the transaction stage via the *lalaran* (collective chanting) tradition for affective habituation; and the trans-internalization stage, where theological values manifest as humility (*tawadhu*) and social tolerance. The research concludes that integrating the author's charismatic authority (*Rabithah*) with the mnemonic efficacy of the local language creates a robust theological fortress that effectively shields *santri* from radicalism and superficial religious understanding.

Keywords: Local Wisdom; '*Aqidul Iman*; *Asy'ariyyah* Theology.

Abstrak

Di tengah merebaknya ideologi transnasional dan fenomena instanisme beragama di era digital, pelestarian teologi *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja) memerlukan pendekatan pedagogis yang berakar pada kearifan lokal. Penelitian ini mengkaji internalisasi nilai-nilai akidah *Asy'ariyyah* di *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus, Purwakarta, khususnya melalui pembelajaran kitab '*Aqidul Iman* karya KH. Adang Badruddin (Abah Cipulus). Menggunakan metode penelitian lapangan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan pada kegiatan *sorogan* dan *lalaran*, serta analisis naskah. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa '*Aqidul Iman* berfungsi sebagai instrumen strategis vernakularisasi teologi, yang mentransformasi teks klasik *Tijan ad-Darari* menjadi *nadhham* (syair) Sunda beraksara *Pegon*. Proses internalisasi mengikuti lintasan holistik: tahap transformasi melalui metode *bandongan* untuk pemahaman kognitif, tahap transaksi melalui tradisi *lalaran* (hafalan bersama) untuk pembiasaan afektif, dan tahap trans-internalisasi di mana nilai-nilai teologis bermanifestasi sebagai kerendahan hati (*tawadhu*) dan toleransi sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi antara otoritas karismatik penulis (*Rabithah*) dengan efektivitas mnemonik bahasa lokal menciptakan benteng teologis yang kokoh, yang secara efektif melindungi *santri* dari radikalisme dan pemahaman agama yang dangkal.

Kata Kunci: '*Aqidul Iman*; Kearifan Lokal; Teologi *Asy'ariyyah*.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of global Islam, the ideological contestation between moderate Islam (*Wasathiyah*) and transnational radicalism has become increasingly visible. The rapid flow of information in the digital era has exposed the younger generation of Muslims to various theological streams, some of which tend to be rigid, intolerant, and exclusive. As highlighted by some studies, this phenomenon has precipitated a character crisis and a degradation of moral values among students, necessitating a robust theological anchor.¹ In the Indonesian context, the theology of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (*Aswaja*), specifically the *Asy'ariyyah* school, serves as this primary anchor. *Asy'ariyyah* theology offers a middle path that harmonizes the authority of divine revelation (*naqli*) with the rationality of the human intellect (*aqli*).² This balance is crucial in forming a religious character that is not only devout but also tolerant and adaptable to modernity.

The preservation and transmission of this moderate theology rely heavily on the traditional Islamic educational institution known as *Pesantren*. For centuries, *pesantren* have served as guardians of Islamic orthodoxy in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. In West Java, the tradition of manuscript writing and teaching, particularly through the *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods, is not merely an academic activity. It is a cultural mechanism for preserving scientific authority (*sanad*) and ensuring the continuity of Islamic values.³ Within this system, the study of *Tauhid* (monotheism) through classical texts (*Kitab Kuning*) is the fundamental instrument for internalizing the *Asy'ariyyah* doctrine, effectively shielding Islamic students (*santri*) from exposure to radical ideologies.⁴

However, the efficacy of this internalization process is deeply rooted in the specific local wisdom of each *pesantren*. While general studies on *Aswaja* internalization are abundant,⁵ there is a significant scholarly need to explore how specific local texts authored by influential local scholars (*Ulama Nusantara*) are used in this process. The urgency of consulting works by local

¹ Ferdinand J. Potgieter, Johannes L. van der Walt, and Charste C. Wolhuter, "Towards Understanding (Religious) (in)Tolerance in Education," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 70, no. 3 (February 2014): 8; Yanto Maulana Restu et al., "Kontribusi Pemikiran Imam Al-Asy'ari Dan Imam Al-Maturidi Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik (Penelitian Di MTs Bahrul Ulum Awipari Kota Tasikmalaya)," *An-Nahdloh: Journal of Education and Islamic Studies* 1, no. 3 (January 2026): 1087–106, <https://doi.org/10.58788/jeis.v1i3.132>; Muh. Rusli, "Teologi Islam Di Era Modern: Antara Tantangan Dan Peluang Dalam Pemikiran Kontemporer," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Jauhari: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Interdisipliner* 8, no. 2 (December 2023): 232–46, <https://doi.org/10.30603/jiaj.v8i2.4249>.

² Uswatun Hasanah and Ainur Rofiq Sofa, "Peran Imam Al-Asy'ari Dan Al-Maturidi Dalam Pengembangan Pemikiran Aswaja Di Pendidikan Islam," *Ikhlās: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (March 2025): 123–35, <https://doi.org/10.61132/ikhlās.v2i2.734>; Yogi Sulaeman, Zinul Almisri, and Kerwanto Kerwanto, "Teologi Asy'ariyah: Sejarah Dan Pemikirannya," *El-Adabi: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 1 (March 2023): 25–44, <https://doi.org/10.59166/el-adabi.v2i1.24>.

³ Puput Lestari, "Tradisi Penulisan Dan Pengajaran Kitab Pesantren: Proses Membangun Otoritas Dalam Kitab Kuning," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 7, no. 2 (December 2022): 189–209, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jkii.v7i2.1331>.

⁴ Badrut Tamam, "Internalisasi Aqidah Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah Dalam Mencegah Radikalisme Di Madrasah Aliyah Yasrama Jember," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 13, no. 1 (August 2024), <https://journal.penerbitjurnal.com/index.php/educational/article/view/134>.

⁵ Ahmad Bukhori and Amatul Jadidah, "Ideologi Dan Aqidah Aswaja An-Nahdliyah," *Jurnal Studi Pesantren* 3, no. 1 (January 2023): 18–32, <https://doi.org/10.35897/studipesantren.v3i1.907>; Ahmad Dahri and Mahmudi Mahmudi, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Aswaja Melalui Pengajaran Ilmu Tauhid Di Pesantren Darul Huda Sumbermanjingwetan Malang (Kajian Analisis Deskriptif)," *Edupedia: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Dan Pedagogi Islam* 5, no. 2 (January 2021): 177–90, <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v5i2.1209>.

scholars to ensure contextual relevance and emotional proximity to *santris*.⁶ In this specific context, *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus in Purwakarta stands out as a strategic and historically significant locus for such investigation.

Historically, *Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah Cipulus* is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in the region. It was originally founded in 1840 by Kyai Ahmad bin Kyai Nurqoyim (known as *Ajengan Emed*), a disciple of the grand scholar Sheikh Baing Yusuf. After experiencing a vacuum due to the instability of the colonial period and the DI/TII rebellion, the *pesantren* was revitalized in 1963 by KH. Izzuddin (*Ama* Cipulus).⁷ Today, under the charismatic leadership of his son, KH. Adang Badruddin, affectionately known by the community and *santri* as Abah Cipulus, has led the *pesantren* to evolve into a lighthouse of Islamic education in West Java. Abah Cipulus is widely respected not only as a cleric but as a central figure in the *Jam'iyah Ablith Thariqah al-Mu'tabarab an-Nahdliyyah* (JATMAN), reinforcing the *pesantren's* position as a fortress of *Salafiyah* tradition that strictly adheres to the *Asy'ariyyah* creed.

The uniqueness of theological education at *Pesantren* Cipulus lies in the primary source used for elementary creed instruction: the book '*Aqidul Iman*'.⁸ Unlike many other *pesantren* that rely solely on generic classical texts like *Aqidatul Awam* or *Tijan ad-Darari*, *Pesantren* Cipulus utilizes '*Aqidul Iman*', a specific treatise authored directly by KH. Adang Badruddin (*Abah* Cipulus) himself. This text is a concise yet profound summary of the *Asy'ariyyah* doctrine, written in a bilingual format (Arabic and Sundanese *Pegon*) and structured in a question-and-answer style. This pedagogical choice is significant for several reasons. First, the use of the local Sundanese language in the *Pegon* script facilitates a deeper emotional connection and understanding for the *santris*, who are predominantly from West Java. Second, studying a book by their own living teacher (*Murabbi Rubina*) creates a strong spiritual bond (*rabitbah*) and an authoritative transmission of knowledge (*sanad*), which is less likely to occur when studying texts by distant historical authors.

Despite the strategic importance of this local text, academic literature detailing the specific internalization methods of '*Aqidul Iman* at *Pesantren* Cipulus remains scarce. Previous studies, such as those by Aini and Kibtiyah, have largely focused on innovative teaching methods for *Aswaja* in general settings, often overlooking the power of traditional, locally authored texts in shaping *santri* worldviews.⁹ Furthermore, research by Nurjannah and Surikno discusses the contribution of *Asy'ariyyah* thought to ethics but does not touch upon the specific pedagogical instruments used in traditional Sundanese *pesantren*.¹⁰ There is a gap in understanding how the specific text of '*Aqidul Iman*', when combined with the charismatic

⁶ A. Samsul Ma'arif, Qurroti A'yun, and Abdus Shomad, "Urgensi Kitab Risalah Aswaja Pada Umat Masa Kini," *An Nahdbob Jurnal Kajian Islam Aswaja* 4, no. 2 (October 2024): 11–18, <https://doi.org/10.33474/annahdhoh.v4i2.24031>.

⁷ Dewi Silfa, Iwan Hermawan, and Kasja Eki Waluyo, *Implementasi Metode Amsilati Dalam Mempermudah Membaca Kitab Kuning Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah Cipulus Purwakarta* | FONDATIA, August 23, 2022, <https://ejournal.stitpn.ac.id/index.php/fondatia/article/view/2018>.

⁸ KH. Adang Badruddin, *Kitab 'Aqidul Iman: Nahbom Sunda Terjemah Tijan Ad-Darari* (Purwakarta: Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah Cipulus, 2019).

⁹ Ummu Aini and Asriana Kibtiyah, "Pembelajaran Inovatif Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Dalam Mengasah Pemahaman Dan Amaliyah Aqidah Asy'ariyah," *Manazhim* 5 (August 2023): 1096–118, <https://doi.org/10.36088/manazhim.v5i2.3734>.

¹⁰ Fahmi Nurjannah Hsb and Heri Surikno, "Kontribusi Pemikiran Asy'ariyah Dalam Penguatan Akidah Dan Akhlak Islam," *Kbuluq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (June 2025): 16–29.

authority of *Abah* Cipulus and the traditional methods of *lalaran* (collective memorization) and *sorogan*, operates as a comprehensive system of character formation.

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the internalization of *Asy'ariyyah* creed values through the learning of '*Aqidul Iman* at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus. By analyzing the synergy between the text (*Abah* Cipulus's '*Aqidul Iman*), the method (traditional Sundanese pedagogy), and the context (the historical authority of *Pesantren* Cipulus), this study seeks to uncover how classical theology is transformed into a living conviction. The hypothesis is that the use of a locally authored text by a charismatic figure accelerates the internalization of theological values, thereby creating a generation of *santri* who are not only theologically orthodox but also possess a resilient and moderate Islamic character. This study ultimately contributes to the broader discourse on the resilience of indigenous Islamic education in confronting the challenges posed by global radicalism.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a field research design. The qualitative method was chosen to gain a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the internalization of theological values in a natural setting, without manipulating subjects or the environment. The research focuses on describing and analyzing the phenomenon of creed (*aqidah*) strengthening through the study of classic texts within the *pesantren* tradition. The research was conducted at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus, located in Wanayasa District, Purwakarta Regency, West Java. This location was purposefully selected for its historical significance and its consistent preservation of the *Salafiyah* tradition amid modern challenges. Specifically, this *pesantren* is renowned for its specific curriculum that integrates local wisdom with Islamic orthodoxy.

Data sources in this study are categorized into primary and secondary data. Primary data is the manuscript of '*Aqidul Iman*.¹¹ It is the core subject of the study. It is a *nadham* (poetic text) in Sundanese, written in the *Pegon* script. This book is a translation and contextual adaptation of the classical treatise *Tijan ad-Darari* by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Bajuri. Second, informants. Primary information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the Board of *Kyais* (*Dewan Kiai*), senior teachers (*Ustaz*), and *santris* to understand the pedagogical methods used. Third, field activities. Direct observation of the recitation (*ngaji*) activities, specifically during the *sorogan* and *lalaran* (rote memorization) sessions of the '*Aqidul Iman* book. Meanwhile, secondary data includes literature on KH's biography. Adang Badruddin (*Abah* Cipulus) to understand the author's background and chain of knowledge (*sanaad*), and academic literature, such as journals, and books related to *Asy'ariyyah* theology and the *Aswaja* concept.¹²

Data collection was conducted using three techniques. First, observation: the researcher participated in the *pesantren*'s learning activities to observe the interaction between the *Kyai* and *Santri* during knowledge transfer. Second, in-depth interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the *kyais*' perspective on the urgency of the '*Aqidul Iman* book and the *santri*'s understanding of the material. Third, documentation: the researcher documented the contents of the '*Aqidul Iman* manuscript, specifically focusing on the verses related to the core theology.

¹¹ Badruddin, *Kitab 'Aqidul Iman: Nadhom Sunda*.

¹² Hadi Makmun Musa Said et al., *Abah Cipulus: Biografi Abah Cipulus KH. Adang Badruddin*, ed. Hilmi Sirojul Fuadi (Depok: Penerbit Safiha, 2021).

The data analysis technique follows the interactive model proposed by Miles et al., which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the context of content analysis, this study specifically examines the text of '*Aqidul Iman* to identify the values of '*Aqidatul Khamsin* (The Fifty Creeds). This concept constitutes the core of *Asy'ariyyah* theology, comprising: 20 Mandatory Attributes for Allah, 20 Impossible Attributes for Allah, 1 Permissible Attribute for Allah, 4 Mandatory Attributes for Prophets, 4 Impossible Attributes for Prophets, and 1 Permissible Attribute for Prophets. The analysis seeks to understand how these theological pillars are translated from the original *Tijan ad-Darari* into the local Sundanese context to ensure effective internalization among *santris*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Getting to Know the Book '*Aqidul Iman*: Genealogy and Characteristics

To understand the internalization of *Asy'ariyyah* values at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus, one must first dissect the primary instrument used in this process: the book '*Aqidul Iman*. This section analyzes the text not merely as a compilation of pages, but as a cultural and theological artifact. The analysis focuses on three key dimensions: the author's scientific authority (*sanad*), the text's genealogy in relation to classical scholarship, and the pedagogical characteristics that make it a unique tool for character building in the West Java context.

Author Profile and Scientific Authority (Sanad)

The effectiveness of a *Kitab Kuning* (classical Islamic text) in a traditional *pesantren* setting is inextricably linked to the authority of its author. In the *Aswaja*, knowledge is not merely information; it is a transmission of light (*nur*) that requires a clear connection (*sanad*) to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The book '*Aqidul Iman* holds a special position at *Pesantren* Cipulus because it was authored by the *pesantren*'s own central figure, KH. Adang Badruddin, widely and affectionately known as *Abah* Cipulus. *Abah* Cipulus is not only the caretaker of the *pesantren* but also a prominent scholar with a profound influence in the region. His authority is rooted in a rigorous intellectual journey. Based on his biographical records, *Abah* Cipulus represents a golden link in the chain of *Ulama Nusantara*. His scientific genealogy connects him to the great scholars of the 20th century, ensuring that the theology taught at Cipulus is not a new interpretation but a preservation of the authentic *Salaf* tradition.¹³

As a figure who also plays a significant role in JATMAN, his mastery of theology (*Taubid*) is complemented by a deep understanding of Sufism (*Tasanmuf*), giving his works a spiritual weight that resonates deeply with *santris*. The genesis of '*Aqidul Iman* provides a fascinating insight into the dynamic intellectual life of the *pesantren*. This book was not written in an ivory tower of academic isolation; rather, it was born of the community's urgent pedagogical needs. Historical records from the *pesantren* indicate that *Abah* Cipulus composed this work specifically for the "*Pasaran Syawal*" activities.¹⁴ *Pasaran* is a unique tradition in Javanese

¹³ Nurul Hak et al., *Melacak Transmisi Keilmuan Pesantren: Studi Atas Kajian Kitab Kuning, Hubungan Kiai-Santri dan Genealogi Pesantren Salafiyah di Jawa Barat* (Yogyakarta: Semesta Aksa, 2021), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/57669/>.

¹⁴ Malik Ibnu Zaman, "Pasaran Syawal di Pesantren Cipulus, Ajang Silaturahmi Ribuan Santri Jawa Barat," NU Online, April 27, 2024, <https://www.nu.or.id/nasional/pasaran-syawal-di-pesantren-cipulus-ajang-silaturahmi-ribuan-santri-jawa-barat-t5me1>.

and Sundanese *pesantren* in which specific texts are studied intensively (speed-reading with comprehension) during specific months, such as *Ramadan* or *Shanwal*.¹⁵

The creation of *'Aqaidul Iman* for the *Pasaran Syawal* agenda signifies its practical purpose: it was designed to be mastered in a relatively short time but with a lasting impact. By writing this text, *Abah* Cipulus demonstrated a deep understanding of his *santris'* needs. He recognized the necessity for a concise, accessible, yet theologically robust manual that could serve as a foundational pillar for the *santri* before they delved into more complex Arabic texts. Thus, the book carries the dual authority of doctrinal orthodoxy (inherited from his teachers) and contextual responsiveness (addressed to his students).

Anatomy and Genealogy of the Text: From Tijan to Nadham

In terms of its anatomy and genealogy, *'Aqaidul Iman* is a derivative work that showcases the creative adaptability of Islamic scholarship in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Substantively, this book is a translation and adaptation of the renowned classical treatise, *Kitab Risalah Tijan ad-Darari* (The Crowns of Pearls), authored by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Bajuri (1784-1860 AD). *Tijan ad-Darari* itself is a *syarah* (commentary) on the *Risalah fi 'Ilm at-Taubid* by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Laqqani. It is a standard introductory text for *Asy'ariyyah* theology across the Islamic world. However, for novice *santris* (*mubtadi'in*) in West Java, the original Arabic prose of *Al-Bajuri* may pose linguistic barriers that hinder deep understanding.

Recognizing this, *Abah* Cipulus undertook a significant intellectual endeavor: he did not merely translate the text word-for-word, but he transformed the *genre* of the text. *Abah* Cipulus converted the prose (*natsar*) of *Tijan ad-Darari* into *Nadham* (didactic poetry). This transformation is crucial for several reasons. First, in the genealogy of Islamic literature, *nadham* has always been the preferred medium for memorization. By converting *Al-Bajuri's* theological arguments into rhythmic verses, *Abah* Cipulus condensed complex debates about God's attributes into a melodious, rhythmic format. The anatomy of *'Aqaidul Iman* is structured to cover the core of the *Asy'ariyyah* creed, often referred to as *'Aqidatul Khamsin* (The Fifty Creeds).¹⁶ This structure mirrors *Tijan ad-Darari's* content but is presented in a localized format. It establishes *'Aqaidul Iman* as a legitimate heir to the *Asy'ariyyah* intellectual tradition, serving as a bridge that connects the rural *santris* of Purwakarta to the great scholarly traditions of Al-Azhar, Egypt.

Pedagogical Uniqueness: Vernacularization and Mnemonic Efficacy

The most distinctive characteristic of *'Aqaidul Iman* and its greatest pedagogical strength lies in its linguistic medium and its method of delivery. *Abah* Cipulus wrote this book using the Arabic *Pegon* script in the Sundanese language. This choice is a profound strategy of vernacularization of Islam.¹⁷ The use of the Sundanese language is not merely for translation; it is for internalization. In West Java, Sundanese is the language of emotion, the language of the home, and the language of the heart (*basa indung*). When theological concepts are explained in Arabic, they may be understood intellectually. However, when they are chanted in Sundanese,

¹⁵ Gregorius Andika Ariwibowo et al., "Preserving Cultural Heritage and Social Cohesion: The Tukuder Festival at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Kendal, Indonesia," *Journal of Population and Social Studies [JPSS]* 34 (2026): 813–38; Evi Fitriana and Muhamad Khoiri Ridlwan, "Ngaji Online: Transformasi Ngaji Kitab Di Media Sosial," *Asanka: Journal of Social Science and Education* 2, no. 2 (September 2021): 203–20, <https://doi.org/10.21154/asanka.v2i2.3238>.

¹⁶ Badruddin, *Kitab 'Aqaidul Iman: Nadhom Sunda*.

¹⁷ Ustaz KK2, "Interview with Senior Ustaz," July 2025.

they are felt emotionally. For instance, when the abstract concept of *mukhalafatu lil hawaditsi* (difference from created beings) is explained using local Sundanese idioms in the *nadhham*, the *santris* can immediately grasp the essence of God's transcendence without getting lost in grammatical complexities.

Furthermore, the use of Arabic *Pegon* script (writing Sundanese using Arabic characters) serves a dual purpose. It preserves the sanctity of the Islamic identity while honoring the local culture. It trains *santris* to remain familiar with the Arabic script, which is the key to understanding the Qur'an, even when reading their mother tongue. The point of this book lies in its mnemonic efficacy. Because the book is written in the form of *nadhham* (poetry/verses), it is inherently designed for the *hafalan* (rote memorization) method. In *Pesantren* Cipulus, some *santris* stated that the learning process involves *lalaran*, in which *santris* collectively chant these verses. The rhythm and rhyme scheme of the *nadhham* act as cognitive anchors.¹⁸

Psychologically, this method reduces the cognitive load required to learn complex theology. *santris* do not feel like they are memorizing difficult philosophical propositions; instead, they feel like they are singing. That makes the text of '*Aqidul Iman* highly sticky in the *santris*' long-term memory. Years after they leave the *pesantren*, alumni often report that they can still recite the attributes of God fluently because the melody of Abah Cipulus's *nadhham* is embedded in their subconscious. In conclusion, '*Aqidul Iman* is not just a textbook. It is a sophisticated pedagogical instrument. It combines the high authority of the *Asy'ariyyah* genealogy (via *Al-Bajuri*) with the high accessibility of local wisdom (via *Abah* Cipulus Sundanese *nadhham*). This unique combination makes it an exceptionally effective tool for grounding Aswaja's fundamental creed in the hearts of the *santri*, ensuring that their faith is both intellectually sound and emotionally resonant.

The Content of *Asy'ariyyah* Creed Values in the Book '*Aqidul Iman*

The theological core of the book '*Aqidul Iman* is a faithful exposition of the *Asy'ariyyah* madhhab, specifically structured around the concept of *al-Aqidah al-Khamsin*. Based on a content analysis of the manuscript, *Abah* Cipulus systematically divides the discussion into two primary dimensions: *Ilahiyat* (Divinity) and *Nubummat* (Prophethood).¹⁹ This structure is not merely a listing of attributes but a strategic theological construction designed to build a fortress of faith for the *santri* against deviant teachings.

The most extensive portion of the book is dedicated to *Ilahiyat*, which discusses the attributes of Allah SWT. *Abah* Cipulus expounds on the 20 Mandatory Attributes, 20 Impossible Attributes, and 1 Permissible Attribute. The analysis reveals that the explanation of these attributes serves a critical dogmatic function: the rejection of Anthropomorphism (*Mujassimah* or *Musyabbihah*). In the current era, where literalist interpretations of the Qur'an often lead to imagining God with physical human traits (such as having a literal hand or sitting on a throne), '*Aqidul Iman* provides a strong counter-narrative through the attribute of *mukhalafatu lil hawaditsi* (difference from created beings).

In his Sundanese *nadhham* (verses), *Abah* Cipulus emphasizes that Allah is distinct from all new beings (*hawaditsi*) in essence, attributes, and actions. For instance, when explaining the attributes of *Qidam* (Beginninglessness) and *Baqa* (Everlastingness), the text explicitly denies that

¹⁸ Santri KS2, "Interview with Santri," July 2025; Santri KS1, "Interview with Santri," July 2025.

¹⁹ Badruddin, *Kitab 'Aqidul Iman: Nadhom Sunda*.

God is subject to the limitations of time and space. By memorizing these verses, the *santri* effectively internalize the concept of *Tanzih* (the declaration of God's absolute transcendence), ensuring their theology remains pure from the corruption of equating God with creation.

Following the discussion on Divinity, the book transitions to *Nubuwat*. Here, the text outlines the 4 mandatory attributes for Prophets (*Sidiq*/Truthfulness, *Amanah*/Trustworthiness, *Tabligh*/Delivery, *Fathanah*/Intelligence), their 4 Impossible Opposites (*Kidzib*, *Khianat*, *Kitman*, *Baladah*), and 1 Permissible Attribute (*A'radhul Basyariyah*/Human traits that do not detract from their dignity, such as eating, sleeping, or marrying). The content analysis indicates that this section is not just theological but also pedagogical. By studying the attributes of the Prophets, specifically *Fathanah* and *Sidiq*, the *santri* are implicitly taught the ideal character of a Muslim scholar. *Abah* Cipulus frames the Prophets not as distant, mythical figures, but as tangible role models whose attributes must be emulated. This section establishes the logical necessity of Prophethood as the medium between the Creator and creation.

One of the most brilliant aspects of *'Aqidul Iman* is its methodology of argumentation. In classical *Asy'ariyyah* theology, proving the existence of God involves complex logical syllogisms (*mantiq*), such as the argument of *budutsul 'alam* (the createdness of the universe requires a Creator). *Abah* Cipulus simplifies these rigorous logical arguments into digestible Sundanese verses without losing their philosophical weight. *Dalil Naqli* (Scriptural Evidence): The text references verses from the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary foundation. *Dalil Aqli* (Rational Evidence): *Abah* Cipulus transforms abstract logic into empirical reality. For example, when explaining the attribute of *nujud* (existence), the *dalil aqli* is simplified into a narrative easily understood by a novice *santri*: “*The existence of this structured universe is proof of a Creator, just as a building proves the existence of a builder.*”

In the form of *nadhaman Sunda* (Sundanese *Nadhaman*), these arguments become rhythmic and easy to recite. *Abah* Cipulus's phraseology avoids high-level Arabic terminology that might confuse beginners. Instead, he uses loanwords or local Sundanese wisdom that parallel Arabic concepts. This method demonstrates a profound understanding of the *santri*'s cognitive level. The *mantiq* (logic) is no longer a dry intellectual exercise but becomes a sung theology that appeals to common sense (*fitriah*). Consequently, the *santri* do not just memorize that God exists; they understand *why* it is rationally impossible for God not to exist. This blend of revelation (*naqli*) and simplified reason (*aqli*) produces a faith that is rational, firm, and unshakable. This finding reinforces the previous study that Sundanese *Nadhaman* is an effort to ground Islamic teachings in Sundanese identity for easier understanding.²⁰

The Process of Internalization: From Textual Knowledge to Living Character

The study of *'Aqidul Iman at Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus is not merely an academic exercise in theological literacy; it is a sophisticated process of value internalization. Internalization, in this context, is defined as the transformation of external knowledge (textual dogma) into an internal guiding principle (character) that manifests in the *santri*'s daily behavior. Based on the field observations and interviews conducted, the internalization of *Asy'ariyyah* values through the book *'Aqidul Iman* follows a systematic trajectory involving three dialectical stages: transformation, transaction, and trans-internalization.

²⁰ Aditia Gunawan, “Puitisasi Ajaran Islam: Analisis Tekstual Nadoman Akhlak karya Kiai Muhyidin Limbangan (1903-1980),” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 17, no. 1 (June 2019): 31–58, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v17i1.578>.

The Stage of Transformation: Cognitive Transfer via Bandongan Method

The first phase of internalization occurs in the cognitive domain through the transformation stage. At this level, the primary goal is the accurate transfer of theological knowledge from the teacher (*Kyai* or *Ustadz*) to the *santris*. At *Pesantren* Cipulus, this process is anchored in the traditional method known as *Bandongan* (also known as *Wetonan* in other Javanese contexts). In the *Bandongan* setting, the pedagogical authority is centered entirely on the *Kyai*. The *Kyai* reads the text of '*Aqidul Iman*, translates it word-by-word into the local Sundanese language (*ngalogat* or *makna gandum*), and explains its deeper meaning. The *santris* sit around the *Kyai*, listening attentively (*sima'i*) and taking notes on the empty spaces of their own books.²¹ This method is crucial for maintaining the *sanad* (scientific chain of transmission). By hearing the explanation directly from the author (*Abah* Cipulus) or his authorized senior *santris*, the risk of misinterpretation, common in autodidactic learning, is minimized.

However, the efficacy of this stage lies not in the passive listening but in the contextual explanation provided by the *Kyai*. The text of '*Aqidul Iman*, while written in *nadham* (poetry), contains concise theological codes. During the *Bandongan* sessions, the *Kyai* decodes these verses by connecting them to contemporary realities. For instance, when explaining the attribute of *Qudrat* (God's absolute power) versus the concept of *Kasb* (human acquisition), the *Kyai* does not stop at medieval definitions. The observation revealed that the *Kyai* contextualizes this doctrine to address modern anxieties. He explains that while humans must utilize technology and science (as part of *Kasb*), they must not deify these tools, for the ultimate result rests on God's *Qudrat*. This contextualization transforms dry theology into living guidance. It answers the *santris*' existential questions, making the doctrine of *Ay'ariyyah* relevant to their lives as Gen-Z individuals. This stage ensures that the *santri* possess a correct intellectual understanding (*Fahm*) of the creed before moving to emotional engagement.

The Stage of Transaction: Habituation through the Joy of Lalaran

Once the knowledge is understood intellectually, it must be embedded in the subconscious. That is where the transaction stage takes place, shifting the focus from the cognitive to the affective domain.²² At *Pesantren* Cipulus, this is achieved through the *Lalaran* tradition. *Lalaran* is the collective chanting or singing of the '*Aqidul Iman* verses (*nadham*). This activity usually takes place after the dawn prayer (*Subuh*) or before the evening prayer (*Maghrib*), creating a unique soundscape in the *pesantren*. Unlike the solemn atmosphere of the *Bandongan* class, the atmosphere during *Lalaran* is vibrant, rhythmic, and joyful. The decision of *Abah* Cipulus to compose '*Aqidul Iman* in the form of Sundanese poetry proves its genius here. The rhythmic nature of the text allows it to be chanted in unison, creating a sense of collective effervescence or communal euphoria. The *santri* do not feel the burden of rote memorization; instead, they feel the joy of singing together. This positive emotional association is critical for internalization. When learning is accompanied by positive emotions (joy, togetherness), the brain retains information more effectively.

²¹ Kyai KK3, "Interview with Kyai," July 2025.

²² Oktio Frenki Biantoro and Muhamad Rozikan, "Internalizing Religious Values through Collective Prayer Practices in Madrasah Diniyah Learning," *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 2, no. 2 (December 2025): 75–86, <https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v2i2.52>.

Psychologically, the *lalaran* method serves as a mechanism of indoctrination without coercion.²³ The repetitive chanting reinforces the theological attributes of God, such as *Wujud*, *Qidam*, and *Baqa*, deep in *santris'* long-term memory. It becomes a cognitive tape that plays automatically in their minds. Even when they are not studying, the verses often hum in their heads during daily chores like washing clothes or cooking. To ensure that this habituation is disciplined, the *pesantren* implements a structural mechanism called *imtihan* (public examination). The memorization of '*Aqidul Iman* is a mandatory prerequisite for grade promotion. It creates a standard of competence. A *santri* cannot claim to have passed a level simply by attending classes; they must prove that the creed is inscribed in their memory. The *imtihan* is often held publicly or in front of senior *Kyai*, adding a layer of sacred accountability to the process.

The Stage of Trans-internalization: The Manifestation of Character

The final and most critical stage is trans-internalization. It is the ultimate goal of Islamic education: *al-Ilmu bila 'Amalin ka asy-Syajari bila Tsamarin* (knowledge without action is like a tree without fruit). At this stage, the memorized verses and understood concepts manifest into tangible character and attitude. Based on interviews and observations of the daily life at *pesantren* Cipulus, the internalization of '*Aqidul Iman* has shaped three distinct character traits in the *santri*. First, *tawadhu* (humility) towards teachers and God. The theological understanding of God's attribute of *Mukhalafatu lil Hawaditsi* (God is absolutely different from creation) and *Qiyamuhu binafsibi* (God stands alone) instills a deep sense of ontological humility. The *santri* realize they are mere possibilities (*Mumkinat*), utterly dependent on God. This vertical humility translates horizontally into *Adab* (ethics) towards their teachers. The *santri* of Cipulus are known for their extreme reverence for the *Kyai*, not out of fear, but out of the realization that the *Kyai* is the conduit of the knowledge that connects them to the divine. The theology of '*Aqidul Iman* eliminates arrogance, as they understand that all knowledge and power are merely borrowed from Allah's attributes.

Second, tolerance and social ethics. The *Asy'ariyyah* theology taught in the book emphasizes the middle path (*Tawassuth*). By understanding the concept of *Jaiẓ* (permissibility) in Allah's eyes, the *santri* learns that God has the prerogative to do as He wills, including creating diversity. Furthermore, the discussion on the Prophetic attributes (*Sidiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, *Fathanah*) provides a behavioral blueprint. The *santri* are trained to emulate the Prophet's *Sidiq* (honesty) in their interactions with friends and *Amanah* (trustworthiness) in managing *pesantren* affairs. The abstract theology becomes a concrete social ethic: they become *santris* who are easy to get along with, respectful of differences, and socially responsible. Third, resilience against radicalism. Perhaps the most significant contribution of '*Aqidul Iman* in the modern context is the formation of an anti-radicalism mindset. Radical ideologies often stem from a rigid, literalist understanding of God's attributes (anthropomorphism) and a tendency to label others as infidels (*Takfir*) easily. The foundational study of '*Aqidul Iman* vaccinates the *santri* against this virus. Because they have mastered the logical arguments (*Dalil Aqli*) regarding God's attributes, they are not easily swayed by simplistic, literalist slogans found on social media. They understand that the *Asy'ariyyah* creed rejects extremism, neither the extreme rationalism of the *Mu'tazila* nor the extreme literalism of the *Mujassimah*.

²³ Abdullah Muhammad Alfatih et al., "Lalaran and Tasmī's: Traditional Memorisation Techniques in Classical Arabic Education at Pesantren," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (October 2025): 395–420, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v10i2.11355>.

This theological stability makes the *santri* of Cipulus moderate agents. They are firm in their own faith (*Aqidah*) but do not easily judge the faith of others. In an era of religious polarization, the internalized values of '*Aqidul Iman* function as a spiritual shield, preserving the peaceful face of Islam in West Java. In conclusion, the process of internalization at *Pesantren* Cipulus is a holistic cycle. It begins with the ear (hearing the text in *Bandongan*), moves to the tongue (chanting the text in *Lalaran*), settles in the heart (conviction), and finally emanates through the limbs (character and behavior). The book '*Aqidul Iman* acts as the golden thread that weaves these stages together, proving that traditional local wisdom is a powerful tool for modern character education.

The Relevance of '*Aqidul Iman* as a Theological Fortress in the Digital Era

In the third decade of the 21st century, the landscape of Islamic education in Indonesia is facing a disruption known as the disruption of religious authority. The proliferation of the internet and social media has given rise to a new phenomenon often termed Instant-isme in religious learning. In this digital ecosystem, religious knowledge is often consumed in fragmented, decontextualized, and algorithm-driven bites, such as 60-second Instagram Reels or TikTok videos from new religious influencers who often lack clear scientific genealogy (*sanad*). This phenomenon poses a significant threat to the theological stability of the younger generation, leading to confusion, superficial understanding, and vulnerability to radical narratives. Against this turbulent backdrop, the persistence of the traditional learning method of '*Aqidul Iman* at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus offers a compelling case study. The research findings suggest that the study of this specific book is not merely a relic of the past, but rather a robust, sophisticated antidote to the vulnerabilities created by digital religious consumption. The relevance of '*Aqidul Iman* in fortifying the creed (*aqidah*) of the *santris* can be analyzed through two critical lenses: the counter-narrative to epistemological instant-ism and the psychological power of the spiritual bond (*Rabithah*).

Countering Religious Instant-ism: The Epistemology of Patience

The primary challenge of the digital era is the speed at which information is consumed,²⁴ leading to an instant approach to religion, with Islamic students preferring social media and other digital media to visiting the *Kyai* or *Ustaz* and studying relevant literature.²⁵ Digital algorithms prioritize engagement over truth, often promoting controversial or simplified theological takes that lack nuance. In contrast, the pedagogy surrounding '*Aqidul Iman* at Cipulus embodies an epistemology of patience. The study of '*Aqidul Iman* forces the *santri* to undergo a rigorous, slow, and hierarchical process. Unlike a Google search that yields an answer in 0.5 seconds, understanding a single verse of *Abah* Cipulus's *nadham* requires attending the *Bandongan* session, listening to the linguistic breakdown (*tarkib*), understanding the contextual meaning (*murad*), and then internalizing it through *lalaran*. This process serves as a cognitive filter. It teaches the *santri* that religious truth is not something that can be downloaded instantly but must be cultivated through discipline.

²⁴ Jiadong Yu, D. A. Bekerian, and Chelsea Osback, "Navigating the Digital Landscape: Challenges and Barriers to Effective Information Use on the Internet," *Encyclopedia* 4, no. 4 (December 2024): 1665–80, <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia4040109>.

²⁵ Muhamad Riza Chamadi et al., "The Phenomenon of Religious Activities in the Digital Era: Studies on Indonesia Students," *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (June 2023): 169–94, <https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v8i1.6215.aa>

Furthermore, the systematic structure of *'Aqidul Iman* prevents the danger of cherry-picking verses, a common practice among online radical groups. In the digital sphere, one might find a decontextualized Hadith about *Jihad* without understanding its prerequisites. However, *'Aqidul Iman* forces the *santris* to understand the *Ilahiyat* (Divinity) first, specifically the attributes of God, before moving to other topics. By grounding *santris* in rational arguments (*Dalil Aqli*) for God's existence and attributes, the book builds a foundational logic that cannot be easily shaken by a viral video promoting extremist views. The *santris* learn that if a digital preacher attributes a physical direction or body to God, that preacher contradicts the rational necessity of *Mukhalafatu lil Hawaditsi* they memorized in the book. Thus, the old method of the book becomes the most effective firewall against digital hoaxes and theological distortions.

The Power of Rabithah: The Author as the Spiritual Anchor

The second, and perhaps most potent, factor that makes *'Aqidul Iman* superior to generic religious content found online or even standard translated books is the element of *Rabithah* (spiritual bonding). In the open market for Islamic literature, one can easily buy translations of classic works such as *Fathul Majid* or *Bulughul Maram*. While these books contain knowledge, they often lack the teacher's soul because the author is a distant historical figure or an unknown translator. At *Pesantren Cipulus*, the book *'Aqidul Iman* is not treated as a mere text; it is viewed as the intellectual and spiritual extension of *Abah Cipulus*. For the *santri*, *Abah* is not just an author; he is their *Murabbi Rubina* (educator of the soul). There is a profound psychological concept at play here: *Rabithah Qalbiyah* (connection of the heart). When a *santri* studies a book written by their own living teacher, whom they see, kiss the hand of, and pray behind daily, the book's doctrinal content binds them with a much stronger emotional glue. This emotional attachment creates a high level of compliance and trust. When the book states that Allah exists without a place, the *santri* believes it not only because it is logically sound (as per the arguments in the book) but also because *Abah* said so.

In the context of educational psychology, this is referred to as authoritative trust.²⁶ This trust is crucial in the digital age, where authority is fragmented. When a *santri* scrolls through social media and encounters a *Wahhabi/Salafi* influencer mocking the *Asy'ariyyah* creed, the *santri* does not waver. The digital influencer is a stranger, whereas *Abah* Cipulus is a father figure. The *Rabithah* formed through the study of *'Aqidul Iman* acts as an emotional anchor that keeps the ship of their faith steady amidst the waves of conflicting online information. Moreover, this bond ensures that the theology is not just memorized but embodied. Because the author is a living role model among them, the text becomes a living reality. The *santri* sees *Abah* Cipulus practicing the very patience, humility, and tolerance described in the book. That living Qur'an or living theology phenomenon is impossible to replicate in the digital sphere or through the study of translated books by anonymous authors.

Preserving Identity in a Homogenized Digital World

Finally, the relevance of *'Aqidul Iman* lies in its ability to preserve cultural identity. The internet tends to homogenize Islamic culture into a Global Islam that often erases local nuances. By maintaining the use of Sundanese and the *Pegon* script,²⁷ the book asserts that one can be

²⁶ Shuang Liu et al., "Perception of Strong Social Norms during the COVID-19 Pandemic Is Linked to Positive Psychological Outcomes," *BMC Public Health* 22, no. 1 (July 2022): 1403, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13744-2>.

²⁷ Muhammad Nida' Fadlan and Ilham Nurwansah, "Translating Tawhīd: Chinese Tapekong in a Sundanese Islamic Manuscript," *Ulumuna* 30, no. 1 (June 2026): 1–29, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v30i1.2005>; Edi

fully Muslim and fully Sundanese at the same time. This confidence in local identity is a powerful defense mechanism. Radical ideologies often infiltrate by alienating youths from their local culture, claiming that local traditions are *bid'ah* (heresy). '*Aqidul Iman* validates the local culture as a legitimate vessel for sacred knowledge. A *santri* who is proud of their Sundanese heritage and grounded in their local *Ulama's* teachings is far less likely to fall prey to transnational ideologies that seek to uproot them from their cultural soil.

In conclusion, the relevance of '*Aqidul Iman* in the digital era is paradoxical: its strength lies in its backwardness. Its slow pace counters instant-ism; its local language counters globalization; and its traditional authorship counters the fragmentation of authority. It proves that in an era of artificial intelligence and high-speed internet, the human connection (*Rabithah*) and the rigorous discipline of traditional learning remain the most sophisticated technologies for building a resilient soul. The book serves not just as a manual of theology, but as a lifeline connecting the *santri* to a chain of truth that digital disruption cannot sever.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the internalization of *Ayy'ariyyah* creed values at *Pondok Pesantren Al-Hikamussalafiyah* Cipulus is not a monolithic process of doctrinal indoctrination, but rather a sophisticated pedagogical system that integrates theological orthodoxy with local cultural wisdom. The study demonstrates that the book '*Aqidul Iman*, authored by KH. Adang Badruddin (*Abah* Cipulus) serves as the central instrument in this process. Unlike generic theological textbooks, '*Aqidul Iman* possesses a unique double authority: the genealogical authority derived from its connection to the classical *Tijan ad-Darari* of Sheikh Ibrahim al-Bajuri, and the charismatic authority of its author, who serves as the spiritual anchor (*Murabbi Rubina*) for the *santris*. The findings highlight that the effectiveness of this internalization lies in the strategic transformation of the text. By converting complex Arabic prose into Sundanese *Nadham* (poetry) written in the *Pegon* script, *Abah* Cipulus has successfully vernacularized theology. This approach demystifies the abstract concepts of *Ilahiyat* (Divinity) and *Nubuwwat* (Prophethood), specifically the '*Aqidatul Khomsin*, making them cognitively accessible and emotionally resonant for *santris* in West Java. The simplification of *Dalil Aqli* (rational arguments) within the book ensures that the *santris'* faith is grounded in logic, effectively rejecting anthropomorphism (*Mujassimah*) and other theological deviations.

Furthermore, this study identifies that the internalization trajectory follows a holistic cycle: transformation, transaction, and trans-internalization. In the broader context of the digital era, this research offers a critical insight: traditional methodology serves as a potent antidote to religious instant-ism. The epistemology of patience practiced in learning '*Aqidul Iman* acts as a cognitive filter against the superficial and fragmented religious information found online. The strong spiritual bond (*Rabithah*) between the *santris* and the author (*Abah* Cipulus) creates a layer of authoritative trust that protects *santris* from the influence of transnational extremist ideologies. Therefore, this study asserts that the preservation of local scholarly works like '*Aqidul Iman* is not merely an act of cultural heritage conservation but a vital strategy for the

Nurhidin, "Pesantren Tradition-based Nationalism Education Model on Religious Moderation Perspectives in Kediri, East Java," *Edukasia Islamika* 8, no. 1 (June 2023): 61–80, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v8i1.7323>; Vierry Firdaus Ramdani, Muhammad Zarkasyi Syafi'i, and Tatang Tatang, "Adaptation of Arabic Script Into Pegon Sunda In A Kitab of *Tijan Al-Dharari*," *Dzihni: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, Linguistik Dan Kajian Literatur Arab* 3, no. 01 (March 2025): 16–26, <https://doi.org/10.28944/dzihni.v3i01.1965>.

future of Islamic education. It proves that indigenous mechanisms, when rooted in authentic scientific chains (*sanad*) and delivered through culturally relevant pedagogies, remain the most resilient fortress in guarding the moderate face of Islam (*Wasathiyah*) against the challenges of global disruption.

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