

The Poetics of Aqidah Education: Faith Purification in E. Abdullah's Tahlil Pupujian

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Abstract: *This article examines the poeticization of Islamic creed (aqidah) education through E. Abdullah's Tahlil poetry, which embodies the spirit of theological purification. The findings reveal that Abdullah's work represents a poetic form of creedal education employing metaphorical, satirical, and ironic language to deliver theological critiques against tahlilan rituals and the concept of merit transfer (inadl al-thawab) - practices he argues lack strong foundations in the Quran and authentic hadith. From an educational perspective, Abdullah's Tahlil poetry serves as a medium for critical Islamic education. Through its aesthetic approach, the work not only conveys Islamic teachings but also provides reflective space to critically examine religious traditions often practiced without robust theological basis. The poeticization of tahlil functions as a creedal pedagogy, urging audiences to reorient toward authoritative sources: the Quran, authentic hadith, and recognized scholars. This approach transforms aqidah education beyond rote memorization and ritual practice, fostering critical consciousness among learners.*

Keywords: Religious poetry (pupujian); Islamic creed; Tahlil ritual; Purification; E. Abdullah.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1923 by a group of Sumatran merchants and intellectuals, PERSIS emerged as a response to religious practices perceived as contaminated by local cultures and non-Islamic traditions (Algifari & Suparto, 2024). From its inception, PERSIS activists have emphasized the purification of Islamic teachings (tathir) through a rational-scriptural approach (Gufon, 2019; Nugraha, 2024; Woodward, 1993). Consequently, a key agenda in PERSIS' aqidah education has been the rejection of superstitions, religious innovations (bid'a), and irrational practices (*keburafat*) under the ideological slogan: "Return to the Quran and Sunnah" (Abd Muhaimin & Indal Abror, 2023; Federspiel, 1999, 2001, 2002).

At the implementation level, PERSIS activists often disseminate purification doctrines through open and confrontational methods, including public debates, magazines, and tabligh sessions. This approach has occasionally led to perceptions that PERSIS opposes local culture, including religious literary expressions like pupujian (Fauzan & Fata, 2021). However, this assessment requires nuance. Notable PERSIS figures like E. Abdullah strategically appropriated cultural elements for educational purposes, carefully selecting local traditions compatible with Islamic monotheism. This demonstrates that while committed to creedal purification, PERSIS intellectuals permitted cultural adaptation when consistent with tawhid principles.

One of the most contentious issues sparking intense debate between Modernist and Traditionalist Islamic groups during the 1970s concerned tahlil rituals and the concept of posthumous reward transfer (operan pahala) (Humaidi et al., 2021). Modernist Muslim activists viewed these practices as syncretic traditions requiring abandonment. In responding

to these controversies, E. Abdullah - a charismatic ulama among PERSIS activists - composed the poetic work *Pupujian Tahlil*. This stands as a concrete example of Islamic teachings rendered in poetic form, serving not merely to preserve tradition but also functioning as a critical educational medium that synthesizes local cultural values with PERSIS's theological vision (Abdullah, n.d.; Rohmana, 2020).

This study highlights how PERSIS' purification strategies extended beyond sermons to cultural channels like religious literature. The poetic tahlil functions as alternative Islamic education, blending traditional aesthetics with modernist theology. Such an approach renders *da'wah* not merely normative but culturally resonant (Khoiriyah & Syarif, 2019).

To the author's knowledge, few studies examine E. Abdullah's religious thought or literary expressions among modernist Muslims. Nugraha's (2022) work analyzes Abdullah's exegetical approach in Surah al-Fajr published in *Iber* magazine (1970), revealing how temporal phenomena in QS 89:1-5 are interpreted metaphorically as life stages (al-fajr/youth; *layāl 'ashr*/transition; al-shaf/adulthood; al-watr/old age) through *pupujian*. Abdullah employed literature as a Quranic hermeneutic medium while considering local cultural frameworks (Nugraha, 2022). Permanik's Gadamerian analysis further demonstrates how Abdullah's temporal metaphors reflect Sundanese cultural horizons (Permanik & Nugraha, 2023).

Relevant studies include Federspiel's works, Rusyana's research on *pupujian* and *saweran* demonstrating Islamic values transmission through culturally familiar literary forms, and Rohmana's examination of Quranic poetic interpretations in Pasundan (Nugraha, Permanik, & Rohmana, 2025; Rohmana, 2013). This study specifically analyzes "The Poetics of Aqidah Education: Faith Purification in E. Abdullah's *Tahlil Pupujian*."

METHODS

This study constitutes a library research aimed at analyzing the values of *aqidah* (faith) education in E. Abdullah's *Pupujian Tahlil*. The primary approach employed is Gadamerian hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1986; Muhajir, 2000), which enables researchers to comprehend texts not only literally but also through historical influences, pre-understandings, and the fusion of horizons. Through this approach, the study seeks to reveal how the concept of faith purification manifests in Sundanese oral tradition, particularly through *pupujian* as a medium of education and *dakwah* (Islamic propagation).

The primary data source is E. Abdullah's *Pupujian Tahlil* manuscript as the main analysis object. Secondary data include other works by E. Abdullah, intended to enrich interpretation and provide broader perspectives on the studied text.

Data collection was conducted through two main techniques: text documentation and interviews. Text documentation involved inventorying, examining, and deeply interpreting the *Pupujian Tahlil* text. This stage included poetic structure analysis, diction selection, and exploration of its symbolic and theological meanings.

Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to complement textual data with socio-historical context behind *the pupujian's* creation. Interviewees comprised Sundanese culture experts, local Islamic scholars (*ulama*), and the author's family/colleagues (Hardiman, 2002). These interviews aimed to understand the author's religious background, creative process, and how society internalizes the *aqidah* messages in *the pupujian*.

Data analysis employed the interactive model (Miles, Matthew B. A; Huberman, 1992), consisting of three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers, or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction part.

1.1. E. Abdullah's Biography

K.H.E. Abdullah was born in 1918 in Pasarean Village, Cianjur. He was the youngest of 13 siblings, born to Rd. Muhammad Ghojali, a tailor, and Hafsoh, a traditional textile artisan and herbal medicine practitioner (Redaksi, 1995).

At age five, Abdullah began his six-year education (1925-1931) at al-'Tanah Islamic Boarding School under K.H. Muhammad Nuh's leadership (Hakim, 2009). He subsequently attended tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high school) on Jakarta Street, Cianjur, graduating in 1933. At thirteen, he migrated to Cipayang-Depok, teaching at Madrasah Islamiyyah where he was known as *ustadz shagir* (young teacher). Dissatisfied, he left for Bandung following his elder brother E. Abdurrahman. There, he taught at al-Katiri's MPDI school until dismissed for joining the PERSIS movement (Nugraha & Rohmana, 2021).

Abdullah and his brother later resided in multiple locations while preaching and teaching, including at Rais' house and Pengran Sumedang Street (now Jl. Oto Iskandar Dinata), a PERSIS activist hub. Here, they ran a small afternoon pesantren for children and an adult pesantren led by A. Hasan in mornings (Redaksi, 1995).¹

As he aged, E. Abdullah relocated to Kebon Jati, residing at Enceng's house where he initiated religious courses and taught at Madrasah Al-Balaagh. In 1935, he authored the booklet *Wanita Islam* (Muslim Women) and moved to Bogor with R. Winata, teaching at Bogor Branch Islamic Education Institute on Museum Street while launching the Sundanese monthly Al-Balaagh, which survived only a few editions.

On 31 December 1943, Abdullah married Lyena Qomariyyah and returned to Bandung to teach. During Indonesia's independence revolution, he actively participated in armed resistance as a Sabilillah and Hizbullah member, serving as an undercover police officer. Post-revolution, he resumed teaching at PERSIS pesantren and West Java Provincial Islamic Education Institute. He resigned from military service in 1958 as Second Lieutenant (Letda II), later becoming an Arabic lecturer at PTI Bandung (now UNISBA) in 1962 (Lilis, 2021).

Within PERSIS, E. Abdullah served as Head of Education Division at the 7th PERSIS Congress (Bangil), Chair of Dewan Hisbah at the 10th Congress (Garut, 1990), and Director of PERSIS Pajagalan Islamic Boarding School (1983–1993). He passed away on 12 December 1994 in Bandung (Wildan, 2011).

A prolific scholar, E. Abdullah authored religious works primarily in Sundanese, including Rasiah Shabar, Palerajan Netepan jang Barudak, Tauhid, Jenazah, Tamattu, Urusan Haji, 75 Do'a Rasulullah Saw, Tahlil, Bid'ah dina Netepan, Carita Ibu Idah, Sidakep dina I'tidal, Bahan Khutbah, Qiyammu Ramadhan dan Shalat Malam, and Risalah Surah Al-Fatihah. His writings also appeared in magazines like Iber, Risalah, and at-Taqwaa (Redaksi, 1995).

1.2. The Tahlil Pupujian by E. Abdullah

The book *Pupujian Tahlil* by H.E.A (Haji Enceng Abdullah) was self-published, thus lacking formal publication details such as year of publication or publisher name. The cover only displays the title "*Tahlil: tiluna, tujubna, natusna*," with the author's name H.E.A printed

¹ Nugraha, R. (2026). Sundanese prose as a medium for interpretation education: The reception of the Qur'an in short stories and essays by E. Abdurrahman. *International Journal of Nusantara Islam*, 14(1), 43-56.

at the bottom. Physically, this pocket-sized book measures 10×12 cm and contains 14 pages. Its content comprises 51 verses divided into seven thematic sections: *bubuka* (introduction), social facts about tahlil traditions, religious perspectives on tahlil, social impacts of tahlil ceremonies, legal status of posthumous reward transfer (*oper pahala*), Quranic and hadith evidence along with scholarly authority, and discussions on the use of *da'if* (weak) hadith in religious practices.

1.2.1. Bubuka (introduction)

The introduction (bubuka) section serves as the author's introduction, consisting of six verses. After praising Allah, Abdullah states:

Table 1. Structural Opening of E. Abdullah's Tahlil Pupujian

No	Pupujian Texts	Translation
1	Kalawan asmana gusti Nyanggakeun ka para wargi Manawi bahan katampi Aoseun kangge di bumi	By invoking God's name For the esteemed readers May this be accepted As study material for homes
2	In uridu illa islaah Wa ma taufigi illa billah	<i>In uridu illa islaah</i> <i>Wa ma taufigi illa billah</i>
3	Maksud mah hoyong ngarobah Kana tingkah nu teu mernah Hurapat sinareng bid'ah Mung tofek aya di Allah	The aim is to reform Deviant behaviors Superstitions and innovations Yet guidance belongs solely to Allah
4	Ieu buku sanes moyok Kanu masih keneh osok Dinu kamaotan mokprok Rea mayit tereh montok	This book intends no mockery Toward those still practicing Mortuary rituals Where corpses purportedly flourish
5	Mung ieu mah katerangan Ngeceskeun dawuh pangeran Mun kersa atuh tohonan Teu kersa mah pamohalan	These are but clarifications Elucidating divine commands To accept or reject Rests upon your discretion
6	Nu nyerat mah sambung catur Hakekatna ti Robbun Ghafur Kawasa tur maha luhur Sakitu bahan tafakur Wasalam	The writer merely conveys Messages from the All-Forgiving Lord The Almighty and Exalted As material for contemplation <i>Wasalam</i>

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. i)

Consistent with Sundanese poetic conventions, Abdullah's pupujian begins by praising Allah, reflecting religious humility that acknowledges human fallibility before divine authority. He positions himself as an ordinary mortal prone to error.

Abdullah subsequently clarifies that his *Tahlil* book draws inspiration from Quranic verse Hud 11:88: "*In uridu illa islaah Wa ma taufigi illa billah*" (I desire only reform, and success rests with Allah). This underscores his educational mission: not to impose change but to deliver God's messages (*sambung catur*), as divine guidance (*taufiq*) remains Allah's exclusive prerogative. Among these messages is the critique of religious innovations termed bid'ah in classical jurisprudence (Ma'arif, Al Jufri, & Nahar, 2025).

Abdullah explicitly denies any intent to ridicule Muslims practicing *tahlil* traditions. The phrase "*ieu buku sanes moyok*" (this book mocks none) emphasizes his purpose: enlightenment

rather than coercion or derision. This narrative affirms Islamic educational principles that honor human free will in life choices (Haderi, 2016).

1.2.2. The Phenomenon of Tahlil *tiluna*, *tujuhna*, *natusna*

In Sundanese religious tradition, tahlil ceremonies are typically conducted in stages following a person's death. Each stage carries distinct names and meanings: *tiluna* (marking the initial mourning period), *tujuhna* (reflecting on the deceased's life journey), and *natusna* (symbolizing continuous prayers for the soul in the afterlife) (Purnama, 2021). This phenomenon is poetically expressed in the following verses:

Table 2. Description of Tahlil Tradition in Sundanese Society

Stanza Number	Pupujian Texts	Translation
1	Ilahar kabiasaan Upami aya kamaotan Ngariung balakecrakan Dibarung make <i>tahlilan</i>	It's customary tradition When death occurs People gather while feasting While performing <i>tahlil</i>
2	Didinya aya tiluna Oge kecap katujuhna Beh ditu nepi natusna Kitu nurutkeun biasana	There exists <i>tiluna</i> Then comes <i>tujuhna</i> Followed by <i>natusna</i> Such is the customary practice

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: *tiluna*, *tujuhna*, *natusna* (hlm. 1)

In the first verse, Abdullah invites readers to re-examine this religious phenomenon that has become tradition among Nusantara Muslims, particularly Sundanese communities. Through these four lines beginning with "*ilahar kabiasaan*" (customary tradition), Abdullah portrays community life following a death, emphasizing that the book's subject matter represents common funeral practices..

The deliberate placement of "*ngariung balakecrakan*" (gathering while feasting) before "*dibarung make tahlilan*" (performing tahlil together) creates a cultural-religious contrast. While Islamic teachings obligate communities to assist bereaved families - with some hadiths even warning that accepting food during condolences erases spiritual rewards (Hanbal, n.d.). the diction "*balakecrakan*" critiques prevailing death customs. Meanwhile, "*dibarung make tahlilan*" describes the prayer gatherings held on specific nights

1.2.3. Religious Perspectives

Abdullah provides a thorough theological and sociological analysis of tahlilan traditions through twenty-one verses, which can be categorized into four themes: (1) the legal status and origins of tahlil, (2) theological and social critiques, (3) the authenticity of tahlil-related hadiths, and (4) Islamic views on death:

Legal Status and Origins of Tahlil

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Table 3. Theological Critique of Tahlil's Legitimacy

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
3	Tiluna katut tujuhna Nyakitu deui natusna Teu aya pisan dalilna Hukumna bid'ah ngarana	The three-day, seven-day, And forty-day rites— No scriptural basis exists, Thus deemed <i>bid'ah</i> (innovation)
4	Teu aya conto ti nabi Sahabat oge teu kungsi Imam opat teu kasaksi Milampah rupi nu tadi	No precedent from the Prophet, Nor his Companions' practice, None by the Four Imams— Such acts lack canonical proof

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. i)

These verses respond to earlier depictions of *tahlilan* by explicitly rejecting its religious legitimacy. Abdullah asserts that practices like *tiluna*, *tujuhna*, and *natusna* lack foundational evidence (*dalil*), invoking the absence of Prophetic, Companions', or classical juristic precedents. This aligns with modernist Muslim critiques emphasizing scriptural purity (Ali, 2019).

Beyond normative theology, these verses reflect broader socioreligious tensions in Indonesian Islam: traditionalists defend localized rituals as cultural heritage, while modernists advocate purification (*tajdid*) through exclusive adherence to the Quran and Sunnah (Sanusi, 2018).

Table 4. Historical Origins of Tahlil Traditions

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
5	Mun taliti mariksana Tiluna katut tujuhna Ti Budha asal mulana Djahiliyah mimitina	Scrutinize carefully: The three- and seven-day rites Stem from Buddhist roots, And pre-Islamic Jahiliyyah customs
6	Mungkin maksudna mah alus Sangkan nu maot marulus Tapi hanjakal teu payus Kana agama teu abus	Though intentions may be noble To secure the deceased's salvation Alas, they remain incompatible With Islam's doctrinal framework

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. i)

Verse 5 delegitimizes *tahlilan* by tracing its origins to non-Islamic syncretism (Buddhist and pre-Islamic Arabian practices). The opening line "*mun taliti mariksana*" (scrutinize carefully) frames this as a rational critique aimed at dismantling perceived theological deviations.

Verse 6, however, adopts an ambivalent tone: while acknowledging practitioners' sincerity (*maksudna alus*), Abdullah insists on doctrinal validity. This reflects PERSIS's stance that good intentions cannot sanctify rituals lacking Quranic or hadith evidence (Huda, 2014). Pedagogically, Abdullah's reflective, non-confrontational diction (hanjakal teu payus—"alas, incompatible") exemplifies a culturally sensitive approach to reform, prioritizing persuasion over coercion (Kafie, 1993).

*Socio Critique***Table 5.** Socio-Economic Criticism of *Tablil* Practices

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
7	Wariskeuneun dirampas Dipake ngeusian alas Pikeun nyuguh nu dihiras Maca qulhu falaq binas	Inheritance shares are appropriated, Diverted to lavish banquets, To entertain adorned guests - While mechanically reciting Qulhu and Falaq
8	Disebut siga agama Cenah <i>tablilan</i> ngarana Hadihkeuneun saenggeusna Ngirimkeun ganjaranana	Framed as religious obligation, Dubbed " <i>tablilan</i> " ceremonies, To supposedly "gift" rewards Transferring merit to the deceased
9	Pokna Allahuma ausil Sawaba ma qara nahu Hadiyatan lifulanin Kitu doa ngoper pahala	The prayer goes: "O Allah, convey Rewards for our recitations As gifts to so-and-so" Thus transferring merit

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), *Tahlil*: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 2)

The seventh verse reflects Abdullah's ideological resistance against death rituals. His critique focuses on how *tablilan* has transformed from spiritual observance into socioeconomic burden. The phrase "*Wariskeuneun dirampas*" (inheritance shares appropriated) condemns the misallocation of inheritance wealth - which should follow Islamic inheritance laws (*faraid*) - to finance ceremonious feasts ("*ngeusian alas*"). This practice particularly burdens lower-class families (Sari, Syafril, & Nopriyasman, 2024).

The third line employs the narrative "*pikeun nyuguh nu diharas*", reflecting intense social pressure: bereaved families feel compelled to host guests as social propriety. Here, Abdullah invites readers to critique *tahlil* practices that have deviated from Islamic teachings emphasizing simplicity and sincerity in worship (*amal*).

The verse concludes with "*Maca qulhu, falaq binas*", asserting that recitations of short Quranic chapters during *tahlil* often lack spiritual awareness. From a sociological perspective, such perfunctory recitations illustrate religion's functional shift - from life guidance providing solace to becoming a social burden (Rohmani & Hidayat, 2024).

Through verses 8 and 9, Abdullah expresses reflective criticism toward Muslims who consider *tablilan* part of religious doctrine. The skeptical tone in "*disebut siga agama*" (called as if religious) and "*cenah tablilan ngarana*" (so-called *tablilan*) reveals his distinction between scripture-based teachings and tradition-shaped practices. The phrase "*Hadihkeuneun saenggeusna*" (offered afterward) addresses the ritual's underlying motive: transferring rewards to the deceased. Theologically, this concept lacks strong Quranic or hadith foundations, potentially contradicting Surah an-Najm 39's principle that humans only reap rewards from their own deeds (Abdullah, n.d.).

Table 6. Social Impact and Islamic Teachings on Death

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
10	Watir budak nu dikantun Keur yatim taya nu nungtun Hartana ti anu ngantun Dicontang teu unjuk nuhun	Alas for the orphaned child Left with no one to guide Their rightful inheritance Diminished without consent
11	Sedeng ajaran pangeran Teu aya dalil operan Ganjaran reujeung siksaan Nurut amal perbuatan	While God's teachings state No basis for transferred merit Reward or punishment Follows one's own deeds
12	Upami kenging dioper Dikubur moal ngeleper Margi tahlil jeung lelemper Bisa mela nu keur geumpeur	If merit could be transferred Burial would hold no dread For tahlil and offerings Would shield the fearful dead

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), 'Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 2)

The social critique resurfaces in Verse 10. Through the narrative "*watir budak nu dikantun*," Abdullah expresses empathy toward orphans whose rights are often neglected for *tahlilan* rituals. Thus, this verse functions not merely as religious expression but as social criticism, urging communities to prioritize Islamic values that uphold human dignity and justice.

Theological criticism continues in Verses 11-12, challenging the concept of posthumous merit transfer. Islamic doctrine strongly emphasizes that deeds cease upon death, as affirmed by the Prophet in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim: "When a person dies, their deeds end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, and righteous children who pray for them" (Nugraha, 2017). Abdullah employs logical-rhetorical devices to critique the belief that others' merits can be transferred to the deceased. The phrase "Upami kenging dioper" rhetorically questions this notion: if merit were freely transferable, there would be no incentive for righteous acts during one's lifetime. To strengthen his argument, Abdullah cites classical jurists:

Table 7. Madhhab Scholars' Consensus on *Tablilan*

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
13	Riwayat Ahmad ti Jabir Shohih henteu make sindir Nganggap bid'ah tur mubadir Dinu maot tahlil dikir	Ahmad's narration from Jabir Authentic without metaphor Deems it bid'ah and superfluous Tahlil for the deceased
14	Para mufti imam opat Sadaya pada mufakat Lampah kitu teh masiat	The four madhhab jurists Unanimously agree Such practice is sinful

	Wale/si oge kedah mega	...must be discontinued
15	Nyarekna meunang ganjaran	Expecting rewards therefrom
	Kitu numut katerangan	As stated explicitly
	Ti imam anu opatan	By all four imams
	Dianggapna kamungkaran	Is considered reprehensible

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 3)

Verses 13-15 implicitly critique religious rites lacking textual validity. The phrase "riwayat Ahmad ti Jabir" serves as an argumentative premise, asserting that rituals require definitive scriptural evidence. Abdullah reinforces this by citing Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's explicit rejection of tahlil as religiously innovated (*bid'ah*). This position reflects the consensus of all four Sunni madhhabs: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.

The Status of Tahlilan Hadith

Table 8. The Analysis of the Validity of the Hadith on Tahlilan

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
16	Ari hadisna <i>tahlilan</i> Ngariung di kamaotan Riwayatna lemah pisan Ki Asim lemah ingetan	As for the hadith about tahlil Gathering at the deceased's home Its chain is very weak Ki Asim is categorized as having weak memorization
17	Saur mufti ti Syafi'i Nelah sajid Ahmad Zaeni Riunganana jalmi-jalmi Dina kamaotan tadi	According to Shafi'i scholars Notably Sayyid Ahmad Zaeni The gathering of people At the mourning house
18	Eta bid'ah bolongkotan Nyarekna meunang ganjaran Margina matak nutupan Sunnah nabi dicerongan	It constitutes clear bid'ah Forbidding it earns reward As it may obscure The Prophet's sunnah
19	Nyakitu mufti Hanafi Oge ti mufti Hambali Ngahukumanana sami Bid'ah nu kudu dibasmi	Likewise Hanafi jurists And Hambali scholars Unanimously decree It is bid'ah that must be eradicated

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 3)

Through these verses, Abdullah critiques the authenticity of hadith used to justify tahlil ceremonies. He argues these hadith fail to meet authenticity criteria in both chain (*sanad*) and content (*matan*) dimensions. Specifically, he highlights the narrator Asim, who is evaluated in hadith literature as having weak memory, rendering the narration *da'if* (weak).

To substantiate his view, Abdullah cites opinions from jurists across madhhabs. He asserts these authoritative figures unanimously classify tahlil as *bid'ah* (innovation). These citations serve dual purposes: affirming scholarly authority in preserving religious purity and functioning as rhetorical devices to build credibility among audiences who defer to traditional scholars (Amir & Syamsuddin, 2021).

Islamic Teachings on Death

Table 9. Islamic Teachings on Death Management

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
20	Demi pangajaran Nabi mun aya nu keuna pati kudu ngirim mun sayagi bungahkeun nu sedih ati	The Prophet's teaching: When death occurs One should assist if able To console the grieving
21	Sanes nu borok dirorjok Disaroro sina tombok Ngahutang nepika tombok Cengcelengan di barobok	Not worsening wounds By draining resources Incurring debts Depleting savings
22	Mikanyaah kanu maot Doa ulah petot-petot Tanggelanana dicokot Nu sepuhna dipikolot	Show mercy to the deceased Pray continuously Fulfill their obligations Respect their elders
23	Hutangna lunasan Jinajahna saralatan Kanyaahna sobatan Kitu nurut katerangan	Settle their debts Perform their funeral prayer Cherish their loved ones Such are the teachings

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), *Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna* (hlm. 4)

Verses 20-23 describe the Prophet's teachings on treating the deceased and bereaved families. The prophetic tradition mandates prompt funeral rites (washing, shrouding, praying), debt settlement, burial, and supplication for forgiveness. It also emphasizes supporting bereaved families economically. However, contemporary practices often invert these values - rather than alleviating burdens, social pressures to host *tahlil* ceremonies with large-scale food provision economically strain mourning families (Sari et al., 2024).

Abdullah critiques this irony through the Sundanese maxim "*sanes nu borok dirorjok*" (not adding salt to wounds), highlighting how mourners face economic demands instead of receiving support. He sharpens this critique with "*ngahutang nepika tombok, cengcelengan dibarobok*", depicting families to incur debts or exhaust savings to meet ritual expectations.

1.2.4. Negative Effects of *Tahlilan*

Table 10. Negative Impacts of *Tahlilan* on Social and Religious Life

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
24	Ibadah mun lalawora Wungkul nurut sangka-sangka Bakal nambahan doraka Tahlil bisa ngangkat dosa	If worship is disordered Merely following assumptions It will increase transgressions Tahlil may elevate sins
25	Mending oge moro dunya Tuluy miara ahlina Ahli tahlil jeung tujuhna Pikeun nyait tina dosa	...seeking worldly gains While nurturing its practitioners Tahlil experts and their seven rituals Claiming to reduce sins

26	Tangtu kitu balukarna Upama sakam-kama Dina milampah agama Teu make dalil utama	Such will be the consequence When performed arbitrarily In religious practices Without primary authentic proofs
27	Bidah disangkana sunnah Sunnah dianggap teu mernah Datang hak rasa tugenah Magar teh agama pitnah	Bid'ah mistaken for sunnah Authentic practices deemed improper Leading to mockery While religion becomes slandered
28	Kadituna silih benci Nu kuduna ngahariji Dipenta dalil teu bukti Katerangan teu sayagi	Resulting in mutual hatred Where unity should prevail Demanding proofs yet providing none No substantiated explanations
29	Quran jeung hadis patokan Bahan pikeun persatuan Ngahiji jeung sauyunan Moal aya pacengkadan	Quran and Hadith as foundations Means for unity Harmonious cohesion Preventing discord

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 4-5)

In subsequent verses, through satirical style, Abdullah expresses concern about how some Muslim groups perform religious rituals uncritically, even elevating traditions as truth standards without referencing the Quran or Hadith. When religious rituals rely solely on tradition, Abdullah considers them *ghafil* (negligent) worship—not only unacceptable but sin-inducing. This critique is articulated in the narrative "*ibadah mun lalawora, wungkul nurut sangka-sangka*" (disordered worship based on assumptions). Thus, the phrase "*tablil bisa ngangkat dosa*" (*tablil* may elevate sins) reflects Abdullah's view that public beliefs about *tablilan* are unsubstantiated social myths (Abdullah, n.d.).

Furthermore, these verses expose epistemological flaws in religious practice, encapsulated in "*bid'ah disangkana sunnah, sunnah dianggapna teu mernah*" (innovations mistaken for sunnah, while authentic practices are rejected). This narrative reveals confusion in distinguishing between the Prophet's authentic teachings and contaminated interpretations. When religion mixes with traditions contradicting the Quran, it becomes a *fitnah* (misguidance) that deceives adherents

From a social perspective, the verses describe consequences of baseless religious practices: community fragmentation expressed as "*kadituna silih benci, nu kuduna ngahariji*" (mutual hatred replacing required unity). Here, social conflicts often stem not from doctrinal differences but from divergent interpretations of religious traditions and the absence of scholarly dialogue between conflicting parties (Suwardi & Dinata, 2021), as Abdullah notes in "*dipenta dalil teu bukti, katerangan teu sayagi*" (demanding unsubstantiated proofs). Such conflicts could be mitigated through scholarly dialogue, as implied in "*Quran jeung hadis patokan, bahan pikeun persatuan, ngahiji jeung sauyunan*" (Quran and Hadith as unifying foundations).."

1.2.5. Transfer of Rewards (*Ishāl al-Tsawāb*)

Table 11. Criticism of the Reward Transfer Concept in *Tablilan* Rituals

Stanza Numb er	Pupujian Texts	Translation
30	Mikeun ganjaran nu lian Hadiah nurut babasan	Bestowing others' rewards A proverbial gift

	Eta teh taya alesan	This has no justification
	Boh hadits atawa quran	Neither in Hadith nor Quran
31	Aya oge hadis doif	There exist weak hadiths
	Dikuatkeun ku musonnif	Strengthened by compilers
	Magar teh sanajan dhoif	Though deemed weak
	Asal jiga reujeung mirif	If seemingly plausible
32	Reujeung ghalib kudu akur	Must align with customs
	Sanajan ayat kabentur	Even if verses contradict
	Kitu mun dipenta catur	When pressed for proof
	Dalil nu enya mah lapur	Genuine evidence vanishes
33	Pangandika pangeran	Divine decree:
	Wa allaisa lil insani	"Wa allaisa lil insani
	Illa ma sa'a, nu ngeusi	Illa ma sa'a" – one reaps
	Taya balesan nu katampi	Only what one earns
	Anging lampah pribadi	No transferred rewards
34	Ayat-ayat nu sarupi	Similar verses
	Reujeung dalil anu tadi	And prior proofs
	Surat baqoroh pek aji	In al-Baqarah's lines
	Oge dina surat najmi	And an-Najm's chapter
35	Dina yasin ge sayagi	Yasin too bears witness
	Dalil hadis ge teu sepi	With copious hadiths
	Ahli tafsir sami sami	Exegetes unanimously concur:
	Hadiah mah moal nepi	Rewards won't reach the dead
36	Imam Syafei mitutur	Al-Shafi'i declared
	Nafsiran ayat di luhur	Interpreting these verses:
	Mikeun ganjaran kabatur	"Transferring rewards
	Moal tepi malah lapur	Fails – they dissipate"
37	Ibnu Kasier oge Rozi	Ibn Kathir, al-Razi
	Chazim atau syaukani	Al-Khazin, al-Shawkani
	Ibnu Abbas ge Tabrani	Ibn Abbas, al-Tabrani
	Abu Mas'ud ge Nasafi	Abu Mas'ud, al-Nasafi
38	Naisabury boh Hanafiy	Al-Naysaburi, Hanafis
	Maliki oge Hambali	Malikis, Hanbalis
	Kateranganana sami	All concur:
	Ngoper pahala moal nepi	Reward transfer is void

Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 6)

Bait 30-38 contain systematic theological critiques of Muslim communal practices, particularly regarding posthumous reward transfer through *tablilan* rituals. These stanzas articulate key arguments:

1. Reward transfer lacks scriptural basis, encapsulated in Abdullah's phrase "eta teh taya alaesan, boh hadits atau Quran". This reflects Islam's epistemic principle that rewards are personal, as per Quran 53:39: "*wa an laysa li al-insani illa maa sa'a*" (humans reap only what they earn).
2. Criticism of using weak hadiths (hadis dhaif) for theological justification – "*aya oge hadis doif, dikuatkeun ku muisonif majarkeun teh sanajan dhoif, asal jiga jeung mirif*". In hadith sciences, weak narrations cannot establish legal rulings.
3. Consensus among authoritative scholars prohibiting tahlil, evidenced by references to al-Shafi'i, Ibn Katsir, Malikis, and Hanbalis ("*Imam Syafei mitutur... kateranganana*").

sami'). Abdullah's critique thus draws from Quran, hadith, and madhhab imams rather than personal opinion

The verses reveal tension between normative Islam and cultural practices, positioning Abdullah's work within modernist Islamic purification movements (Saparudin, 2022).

3.2.6. E. Abdullah's Biography

Table 12. Analysis of Hadith Status and Religious Epistemology

Stanza Number	Pupujian Texts	Translation
39	Cenah aya katerangan Hadis Buhori pisan Ngahijikeun anu lian Sidekah cai ge nulungan	There is said to be evidence A genuine Bukhari hadith Uniting others Even water charity brings aid
40	Malah dina nailul authar Upamina kersa nalotor Piraku eta teh kotor Pan Buhori teh kasohor	Even in Nail al-Authar Should one scrutinize How could it be flawed? Is not Bukhari renowned?
41	Eta teh dalil nu bukti Yen operan bisa nepi Kanu geus keuna ku pati Kitu dalil anu bukti	That is the definitive proof That rewards can be transferred To those who have died Such is the clear evidence
42	Tapi mun ngaji mustolah Ilmuna maluruh sunnah Di dinya mah moal salah Milih doif jeung nu sah	But if one studies musthalah The science of examining sunnah There will be no mistake Differentiating weak and authentic
43	Margi ari hadis sah Syaratna teh kudu rapih Jeung quran ulah patebih Tah kitu syaratna shaih	For an authentic hadith The conditions must be proper And not contradict the Quran These are the requirements
44	Sanajan hadis Buhori Mun bentrok jeung dawuh gusti Eta lain hadis nabi Moal nabi nentang gusti	Even if from Bukhari When contradicting God's word It's not the Prophet's hadith The Prophet wouldn't oppose God
45	Sedeng katerangan quran Nu sakitu eces pisan Teu aya oper ganjaran Amal mah sewang-sewangan	While the Quran states So very clearly There's no reward transfer Deeds are individual
56	Mun aya oper ganjaran Kudu aya oper siksaan Sangkan ulah sisirangan Pada teu aya alesan	If reward can be transferred Then punishment must transfer too To maintain balance But neither exists
47	Sedeng Islam nyarek kedul Ibadah mah ulah mumul Saperti taul ngajentul Kudu gerak ulah nihul	While Islam forbids laziness In worship don't be sluggish Like a worm twitching Must move not stay still
48	Batur dahar urang gembil Eta teh barang mustahil	Others eat we get full That's absolutely impossible

	Nu getol tangtu mucekil	The diligent will succeed
	Nu teh gawe tangtu nihil	The lazy get nothing
49	Cekap sakadar pepeling	Just as a reminder
	Malar sami-sami nyaring	Always be aware
	Ku ayat tereh kageuing	Through these verses remember
	Agama ulah curaling	Religion shouldn't be added to
50	Bid'ah pabaur jeung sunnah	Bid'ah mixed with sunnah
	Hak jeung batil saimah	Truth and falsehood together
	Agama mah lain lumrah	Religion isn't customary
	Patokan quran jeung sunnah	It's based on Quran and sunnah
51	Mudah-mudahan berguna	May this be beneficial
	Kanu ngahartoskeunana	For those who understand
	Rahmat allah tur kurnia	Allah's mercy and blessings
	Eta poko panedana	That is the main goal
	Sumber: E. Abdullah (tt), Tahlil: tiluna, tujuhna, natusna (hlm. 7-8)	

From stanzas 39 to 51, the poem transitions into more technical discussions regarding hadith, particularly focusing on Imam Bukhari's role and authority. The work *Nail al-Authar* by Imam Shawkani is cited as containing evidence used to justify tahlil practices. However, Abdullah critically examines this perspective, emphatically stating through the phrase "tapi mun ngaji musthalah, ilmuna maluruh sunnah" the necessity of studying musthalah science to prevent careless citation of hadith. This directly critiques the behavior of some Muslims who lack discernment in selecting hadith. Abdullah argues that properly evaluating religious traditions requires mastery of musthalah science as a framework for understanding Islamic teachings. This discipline enables differentiation between *sahih* (authentic) and *da'if* (weak) hadith. From the perspective of *matan* criticism, a hadith is accepted as *sahih* only when its content is straightforward and does not contradict the Quran.

Even hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari must be rejected if their content is convoluted or contradicts Quranic verses. Abdullah firmly denies the possibility of reward transfer (*operan pahala*), arguing that if reward transfer were possible, then punishment transfer would equally have to exist - including to corpses in graves. Since no concept of punishment transfer exists, reward transfer cannot either.

This analysis demonstrates that E. Abdullah's *Pupujian Tahlil* is a cultural product emerging from the socio-religious dynamics of Sundanese society where Abdullah was born, raised, and active. The work reflects both the author's consciousness as an Islamic scholar and the collective awareness of his community. Abdullah's creative process cannot be separated from the social and ideological contexts that shaped him. (Djik, 2003: 103-126).

As a charismatic *ulama*, Abdullah positions *Pupujian Tahlil* as poetic medium rich with educational values. Using the four-line stanza structure, he presents theological teachings in an emotionally accessible form (Rusyana, 1971). His strategic use of emotive diction invites audiences to purify their faith practices by grounding them strictly in the Quran and authentic hadith.

Pupujian Tahlil demonstrates how Abdullah harnesses the aesthetic power of language to articulate ideas of *aqidah* purification, while simultaneously showing literature's capacity to reinforce social, moral and spiritual values. Therefore, this poem possesses not only literary merit but also strong ideological and pedagogical value within modern Islamic education contexts.

CONCLUSION

E. Abdullah's *Pupujian Tahlil* represents a poetic articulation of aqidah education that advocates purification through theological and social criticism of tahlil practices prevalent among Muslim communities, particularly Sundanese Muslims. Employing metaphorical, satirical, and ironic language, Abdullah rejects the religious legitimacy of tahlil ceremonies, arguing they lack substantive grounding in the Quran and authentic hadith. He explicitly refutes the concept of posthumous reward transfer (*operan pahala*), deeming it incompatible with Islamic principles of individual accountability. Abdullah emphasizes the necessity of *musthalah al-hadith* science as a means to enhance religious literacy, enabling Muslims to distinguish between authentic religious teachings and cultural traditions.

From an educational perspective, Abdullah's poetic treatment of tahlil functions as a critical pedagogical medium addressing how these rituals often impose economic burdens on lower-class communities. Through aesthetic engagement, the work not only conveys Islamic teachings but also creates space for reflecting on religious practices performed without firm doctrinal foundations. The poetic form serves as an aqidah education tool, urging audiences to realign with authoritative sources: the Quran, authentic hadith, and recognized scholarly traditions. This approach transforms aqidah education beyond rote memorization and ritual practice into a process that strengthens *tauhid* (monotheistic consciousness) while cultivating critical awareness among learners. The work exemplifies how poetic discourse can simultaneously transmit orthodox doctrine and stimulate socio-religious reform.

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