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THE BAING YUSUF GRAND MOSQUE: A SYMBOL OF CULTURE AND MUSLIM IDENTITY IN PURWAKARTA

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ABSTRAK

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque plays a significant role in the history of Islamic dissemination and the formation of the local community's Islamic identity. This article discusses how Islam in Indonesia developed by adopting local culture without losing its fundamental teachings, aligning with Gus Dur's concept of Islam's Indigenization (*Pribumisasi Islam*). The mosque's architecture reflects a blend of Islamic culture and local traditions, featuring distinctive elements such as domes, calligraphy, and multi-tiered roofs characteristic of Javanese and Sundanese architecture. Beyond its function as a place of worship, the mosque has also served as a center for education, social activities, and *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) since its establishment by Syeikh Baing Yusuf in the 19th century. This research employed a literature review method to explore the historical, architectural, and social aspects of the mosque. The findings indicate that the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque is not merely a religious symbol but also a continuously evolving hub of Islamic activity. It plays a vital role in building a strong Muslim community and has become a destination for religious tourism. Based on the findings from this literature review, it can be concluded that the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque holds significant importance as a cultural and identity symbol for Muslims in Purwakarta.

I. INTRODUCTION

Islam is often understood solely within the context of formal law or centralized *fiqh*, without considering local traditions and cultures in specific regions, including the Indonesian archipelago. This leads to the perception that Islam is synonymous with Middle Eastern culture, where various aspects of life, such as dress, are expected to conform to practices originating from the region where Islam first developed. According to Gus Dur, this phenomenon is not a process of Islamization but rather Arabization (Wahid, 2006, as cited in Fuadi et al., 2024). This lengthy process led Gus Dur to articulate the concept of Islam's Indigenization (*Pribumisasi Islam*). However, this concept isn't entirely new or solely Gus Dur's original thought. For a long time, pesantren clerics have been developing a distinct Indonesian form of Islam that adheres to Islamic teachings without excessively adopting Arab cultural elements. Thus, *Pribumisasi Islam* is more a term coined by Gus Dur to describe the ongoing struggle championed by Indonesian ulama from the era of the Walisongo (the nine revered saints) to the present day. Gus Dur played a crucial role in popularizing this concept, which fundamentally asserts that Islam can flourish in harmony with local cultures without losing the essence of its teachings (Fuadi, et al., 2024)

Islamic culture is a rich tapestry woven from history, religion, philosophy, and art, reflecting the grandeur of human civilization. Rooted in Islamic teachings, this cultural heritage encompasses diverse traditions and practices that have evolved over centuries across various parts of the world. From mosques adorned with beautiful calligraphy in Andalusia to bustling markets in Istanbul, Islamic culture manifests in myriad forms, showcasing the dynamic interplay between faith, tradition, and innovation (Mahmudulhassan, 2024). Beyond its role as a spiritual guide, Islamic culture also serves as a moral foundation and cultural identity, shaping the way millions of people live and interact globally. Furthermore, Islamic culture offers profound insights into the complexity of human life, while simultaneously fostering inter-cultural dialogue, mutual respect, and a broader understanding within an increasingly interconnected global society. Islamic culture isn't limited to religious aspects; it encompasses diverse areas of life that reflect a blend of history, religion, philosophy, and art. One of the most tangible examples of Islamic culture is mosque architecture, which has evolved into more than just a place of worship. Mosques play a central role in Muslim community life, functioning as spiritual, social, educational, and cultural hubs.

According to Faruq (2010) in (Apiah., 2023) Mosques serve as vital centers of Islamic activity, going beyond mere places of worship. They are platforms for shaping the future according to religious teachings, encompassing economic, political, social, and overall life aspects. Our predecessors ensured mosques played an optimal role in community life. Currently, mosque construction is rapidly expanding in both urban and rural areas. Mosques are easily found in various locations, such as terminals, entertainment venues, and educational institutions. This phenomenon is certainly encouraging as it indicates a growing public awareness of the importance of prayer. The construction of mosques in various locations aims to make it easier for Muslims to

perform their worship. This is incredibly helpful, especially for those with physical limitations or difficulty managing their time. With easily accessible mosques, Muslims can more readily perform congregational prayers without having to travel long distances. Mosques, known as the House of Allah or *baitullah* in Islam, are more than just places for worship like prayer (*shalat*) and prostration (*sujud*). Beyond that, mosques play a crucial role in advancing Islamic civilization, strengthening relationships among believers, and fostering harmony. As places of worship, mosques also function as centers for activities that encourage good (*amar ma'ruf*), prevent evil (*nahi munk munkar*), and strengthen faith in Allah (*tu'minuna billah*). These three aspects are interconnected, making the mosque a sacred place to combat all forms of wrongdoing. Thus, mosques serve as a means for Muslims to worship and do good in accordance with religious teachings (Ahmad, et al., 2022). In line with Sedayu et al. (2022), the mosque holds a central role in Muslim life. Beyond being a place for congregational prayers, mosques also serve as hubs for religious, cultural, and social activities. The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque in Purwakarta is no exception to this.

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque is the oldest mosque in Purwakarta and a significant historical site. It was established in 1826 under the initiative of Syeikh Baing Yusuf (Tabroni & Sari., 2022). This mosque isn't just a place of worship for Muslims in Purwakarta; it also serves as a central hub for Islamic propagation, education, and community social activities. In the early 19th century, many in Purwakarta still followed Sunda Wiwitan beliefs, making the mosque's presence a crucial part of Syeikh Baing Yusuf's *dakwah* efforts. Besides being a place of prayer, the mosque was frequently used for Islamic studies and as a meeting place for community discussions on various social and religious matters. Over time, the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque became a powerful symbol reflecting the Islamic identity of the Purwakarta community. Its design, which blends local cultural elements with distinctive Islamic features, demonstrates that Islam can thrive without erasing existing traditions. Today, beyond being a place of worship, the mosque is also known as a religious tourism destination, drawing many pilgrims who wish to pray for Syeikh Baing Yusuf. This clearly illustrates that Islam and local culture can coexist and collaboratively shape the character and identity of the Purwakarta community.

II. METHODS

Methodology is a systematic framework encompassing various methods and principles used in research (Suryani & Hendryani, 2015, as cited in Jannah, 2019). It includes not only specific techniques but also the sequence and steps researchers must follow to obtain valid and accountable understanding within a discipline. Therefore, methodology serves as a structural guide for conducting research, ensuring that data collection, analysis, and interpretation are performed consistently, measurably, and in alignment with research objectives. This study employs

qualitative research with a literature review method. According to Mahdi (2020) In the literature review method, this can be achieved by exploring various theories relevant to the research topic.

Researchers utilize literature review to deeply explore the role of the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque in shaping the identity of the Purwakarta Muslim community and its connection to local culture. This approach aims to provide a detailed overview and a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The data collection technique involves searching for relevant literature, then organizing and adjusting the acquired data to fit the research needs. This process will assist researchers in examining the physical structure, social and religious activities, cultural significance, and the mosque's influence on the formation of Purwakarta's Muslim identity. Data analysis will involve interpreting and describing findings from various literature reviews to construct interpretations of the obtained data and connect them with the concepts of culture, identity, and the role of the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque within the Purwakarta community.

III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Mosque Architecture Reflects Islamic Culture

The word "architecture" originates from the Greek "architekton," composed of two words: "arkhe," meaning original and authentic, and "tekton," meaning stable and strong. Thus, "architekton" can be interpreted as construction and a master builder. Architecture comes in diverse forms, and mosque architecture is no exception. This architectural diversity serves as evidence of a diverse society. In multicultural societies, religion functions not only as a personal belief system but also as a living cultural symbol that evolves with social dynamics. As Dewi (2022) explains, religion in a multicultural society doesn't stand alone; it's part of the living system of cultural symbols within that society. This means that religious symbols are intertwined with the social and local cultural constructs where the religion is adopted and practiced. Religious symbols like clothing, places of worship, religious ceremonies, and even artistic expressions embody religious teachings while also serving as markers of cultural identity.

Religion becomes a cultural symbol that signifies the existence of a community with a specific religious identity. For example, wearing a *peci* or *kerudung* (head covering) doesn't just show adherence to religious teachings; it also becomes a part of Islamic cultural symbolism in Indonesia. Furthermore, cultural symbols in religion act as a medium for communicating values. These symbols bridge the gap between adherents and their environment, and they strengthen social cohesion within the same religious group and among different ones. These symbols are also evident in mosque architecture. Mosque architecture plays a crucial role in reflecting Islamic culture, serving not only as a place of worship but also as a symbol of religious, social, and cultural values. Additionally, mosque architecture has unique functional characteristics accompanied by aesthetic aspects (Azmi & Kandar, 2019). This notion is further supported by Uwin (2020, as cited in Osim, 2021), who posits that architectural styles are determined not by architects but by the

community, based on the needs of various institutions. Consequently, the local wisdom of each region can influence the architectural design of mosques across Indonesia (Sari et al., 2024), and the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque is no exception. The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque exemplifies how building design can simultaneously reflect Islamic culture and adapt to local traditions. Like other mosques, the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque incorporates quintessential Islamic features such as a large dome symbolizing the greatness of Allah, a mihrab indicating the direction of the *qibla*, and minarets used for sounding the call to prayer (*azan*).

The calligraphy adorning the mosque's interior fosters a spiritual ambiance, while the geometric patterns demonstrate Islamic art principles that avoid the representation of living beings. This aligns with Asfour's (2016) findings, which suggest that traditional elements in mosque architecture remain relevant and can be adapted to contemporary architectural trends. Beyond its Islamic elements, the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque also reflects significant local cultural influences, particularly in its multi-tiered roof design, which resembles traditional Javanese and Sundanese architecture. The materials used, such as teak wood and natural stone, are adapted to the local climate, demonstrating how Islam in Indonesia embraces traditional wisdom. The distinctive Nusantara carvings adorning certain parts of the building showcase how Islamic art can synergize with local culture without losing its essence. These shifts in architectural design mirror the broader evolution of mosques in Indonesia, where mosque architecture has transformed from the royal era to the present day, influenced by locality, colonialism, and modernization (Sastra, 2023). Initially, mosque buildings in Indonesia often featured multi-tiered roofs (*tajug*). However, the arrival of colonialism introduced the dome style, which eventually became more prevalent. Over time, modernization brought new construction methods and more universal designs, including minimalist options. Nevertheless, many mosques still retain traditional elements, reflecting a blend of local identity and global influences. More than just a place of worship, the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque serves as a center for social and spiritual life for the community. Here, residents don't just perform prayers; they also attend religious studies, celebrate Islamic holidays, and gather to strengthen community bonds. The mosque's existence stands as a symbol of the strengthening of Islamic identity within the Purwakarta Muslim community, proving that architecture is more than just a building—it reflects evolving values, history, and culture.

History and Role of Syeikh Baing Yusuf in Establishing the Mosque

Kyai Haji Raden (K.H.R.) Muhammad Yusuf (Syeikh Baing Yusuf) was born in Bogor in 1709, a direct descendant of the Padjajaran Palace. He was the fourth of six sons of Raden Aria (R.A.) Djajanagara, grandson of R.A. Wira Tanu Datar V, and great-grandson of R.A. Wira Tanu Datar IV, and so on. According to Andhitiyara (2018), Syeikh Baing Yusuf, whose real name was R.H.M. Yusuf, was a prominent propagator of Islam in Purwakarta Regency. The title "Baing" bestowed upon him signifies his revered and elder status within the community. Interestingly, in

Japanese, "Baing" also connotes something noble, reflecting his respected position. From a young age, Baing Yusuf displayed extraordinary intelligence. By age 7, he had mastered Arabic, and by age 12, he had memorized the Qur'an. At 13, he continued his education in Mecca, residing there for 11 years.

Syeikh Baing Yusuf played a crucial role in establishing the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque because the management of the mosque and religious affairs in the regency's central government fell under the responsibility of the *Hoofdpanghulu*. The Hoofdpanghulu was a key figure in maintaining public order and security. Syeikh Baing Yusuf was appointed Hoofdpanghulu due to his profound knowledge of Islam and his lineage as a Sundanese nobleman who significantly contributed to the spread of Islam. However, Baing Yusuf served as Hoofdpanghulu for only approximately 16 years (1828-1844). After Syeikh Baing Yusuf's tenure, the mosque underwent several renovations to maintain its structural integrity and functionality. The first renovation took place in 1854 under the regency of R.T.A. Sastradiningrat I, followed by improvements in 1926 that added facilities like a water tank and bathing area for the mosque caretaker (*marbot*). Subsequent renovations occurred in 1955, 1967, 1979, 1993, and most recently in 2013. Despite these numerous changes, the mosque has preserved its distinctive West Javanese architecture, becoming a symbol of the history of Islamic dissemination in Purwakarta. Each renovation aimed to adapt the mosque's facilities to the needs of its congregation while preserving its historical and architectural values.

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque's Influence on the Development of Islam in Purwakarta

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque served as the primary center for Islamic propagation (*dakwah*) in Purwakarta. Syeikh Baing Yusuf utilized this mosque to teach various Islamic disciplines, including *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *aqidah* (creed), *tasawwuf* (Sufism), and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*). The teaching methods emphasized deep understanding and direct practice, which led to the emergence of many students (*santri*) who later became prominent Islamic scholars (*ulama*). According to Lubis et al. (2011) teaching methods in Islam also reflect systematic procedures or approaches for achieving goals, whether in worship, education, or other aspects of life. In Islamic education, the methods used include talaqqi (direct learning from teacher to student), scholarly discussions, and experience-based approaches like learning through deeds and emulation. These methods don't just impart knowledge; they also instill morals (*akhlak*) and spiritual values. Furthermore, in worship, Islam has clear methods, such as the procedures for prayer (*shalat*), fasting (*puasa*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*), which must be performed according to the guidance of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Thus, methods in Islam are not merely ways of achieving something; they also reflect discipline, knowledge, and spirituality integrated into daily life. One of Syeikh Baing Yusuf's famous students was K.H. Bakri, the founder of Pondok Pesantren Sempur. Beyond its role as an educational center, the mosque also became the epicenter

of Islamic social and cultural activities in Purwakarta. Various religious traditions, such as regular study groups (*pengajian*), Islamic holiday commemorations, and other social events, were held here. This mosque played a crucial role in shaping the Islamic identity of the Purwakarta community, fostering a community firmly rooted in Islamic values. The mosque's presence also attracts pilgrims from various regions, making it a significant religious tourism destination (Andhitiyara, 2018).

Mosques significantly influence the formation of communities rooted in Islamic values; therefore, their management must adhere to the guidelines of the Qur'an and Sunnah. As exemplified by Prophet Muhammad in early Islam, mosques were not just places of worship but also well-managed centers for education and social activities.

To navigate contemporary developments, mosques need professional management, employing modern systems to remain relevant and meet the evolving needs of the community. When a mosque offers high-quality educational programs, it fosters an excellent generation with noble character. Conversely, if mosque management neglects strategic principles, it risks losing its appeal to congregants, especially children who are the future torchbearers of Islam. Consequently, a prosperous and well-managed mosque will strengthen Islamic propagation and positively impact the Muslim community (Jaya dkk, 2022)**.** He even participated in the Macao War, demonstrating his commitment to defending the sovereignty and dignity of the Muslim community. The collaboration between scholars (*ulama*) and local leaders at this mosque strengthened Muslim community solidarity in facing external challenges.

Another influence of the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque on the development of Islam in Purwakarta can be seen in its existence as a cultural heritage site. The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque attracts many pilgrims and tourists, both from within and outside Purwakarta. Besides serving as a place of worship, the mosque has also become a religious tourism destination that offers insights into the history of Islamic dissemination in the region. This aligns with the opinion of Ashari & Maleka (2023) which explains that mosques have significant potential as bridges for inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. The Nasir Al-Molk Mosque is an excellent example of how Islamic architecture can capture global attention and serve as an effective tool for cultural communication. Interactions between tourists and local congregants within the mosque can help dispel negative stereotypes about Islam and strengthen interfaith relations. By making mosques more open to the global community, it's hoped that more people can understand Islam as a peaceful, tolerant, and culturally rich religion. The presence of Syeikh Baing Yusuf's tomb within the mosque complex further enhances its appeal for pilgrims who wish to commemorate this great scholar. The Purwakarta Regency Government, through its Youth, Sports, Tourism, and Culture Agency (Disporaparbud), has identified the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque as one of 26 cultural heritage sites requiring preservation. According to Koreichi & Benzagouta (2025), cultural heritage preservation efforts include environmental management around the mosque, routine building maintenance,

and the continuous organization of religious and cultural activities. These steps are taken to ensure that the historical, scientific, and educational value embodied in this mosque can continue to be passed down to future generations.

The Role of Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque in the Life of the Purwakarta Community

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque plays a crucial role in the life of its surrounding community, fulfilling a highly significant social function for the people of Purwakarta. Beyond that, according to Triayudha et al., (2019) Mosques also function as centers for the development of Islamic social sciences and culture. This mosque serves as a community gathering place for various social activities and a hub for seeking knowledge, such as religious study groups (*pengajian*), social gatherings (*silaturahmi*), and community deliberations (*musyawarah*). Furthermore, the mosque is utilized for other social activities, including humanitarian aid and community empowerment. Through these initiatives, community members can support each other and strengthen inter-communal bonds. In this context, the mosque acts as a social institution that not only facilitates worship but also significantly contributes to fostering social solidarity within the community. The mosque plays a role in building a society that is not only religious but also committed to social welfare, evident in the various programs implemented by the management of the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque.

The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque has implemented programs to improve the welfare of the local community, including social aid initiatives and orphan care held directly at the mosque. The Regent's Expert Staff for Human Resources, Finance, and Regional Administration commended these social activities, recognizing their effectiveness in alleviating the burden on fellow Muslims and community members struggling to meet daily needs (Prokompim, 2023). According to Vignato (2017) in Benthall (2019) caring for orphans is a moral commitment held in high regard within Islamic tradition. Therefore, the social outreach and aid provided at the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque play a crucial role for the surrounding community, particularly having a significant impact on orphans and those in need.

Beyond its role in social activities, the mosque also frequently serves as a place for acquiring knowledge, notably through regular religious study groups (*pengajian*) like those held at the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque. Mosques are ideal venues for disseminating knowledge, especially when a teacher or scholar is present to share their insights within the mosque environment. From ancient times, mosques have been used to educate children. This aligns with Zaimeche (2002, as cited in Al-Krenawi, 2016), who states that the first mosque school was established in Medina in 653 CE, and since then, mosques have served as schools for educating local children. According to Jannah (2019), the finances or cash funds of the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque are sourced from zakat, infaq, sadaqah, grants, private aid, and government assistance, all used for the mosque's operational needs. This demonstrates that another agenda with significant impact on the local community is

the mosque's collection, management, and distribution of zakat. According to Abdullah & Suhaib (2011), the social impact of zakat is for the common good and positively contributes to community welfare. All practices encouraged by Islam are good teachings that have a positive impact on human interactions. The social impact of zakat in Islam focuses on building individual character, which then extends to forming an ideal community. Therefore, the various social activities conducted at the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque can play a crucial role in the lives of the Purwakarta community.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on this literature review, we can conclude that the Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque holds a significant role as a symbol of culture and identity for Muslims in Purwakarta. Standing strong in the region, the mosque functions not only as a place of worship but also as a vital center for social and cultural activities. Its magnificent architecture reflects both robust Islamic values and the local wisdom prevalent in Purwakarta. The mosque acts as a bridge connecting Islamic tradition with the rich cultural heritage of the Purwakarta community. The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque serves as a cultural symbol by integrating local cultural elements into its design, creating a unique and easily recognizable identity. By blending traditional elements with Islamic nuances, the mosque not only enriches culture but also strengthens the social bonds among Muslims in Purwakarta. It has become a gathering place for discussion and for carrying out various profound religious activities, solidifying relationships among residents. Furthermore, this mosque is a symbol of Purwakarta's Muslim identity. Its very presence illustrates how Islam has rapidly developed in Purwakarta and the efforts of the Muslim community to preserve their traditions. The Baing Yusuf Grand Mosque plays a central role in introducing friendly and tolerant Islamic values, while also affirming the position of Muslims as an inseparable part of Purwakarta society. Thus, the mosque is more than just a place of worship; it is a symbol of unity, pride, and the self-identity of Purwakarta's Muslims within a cultural and social context.

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