

## **MARITIME QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION IN COASTAL RITUALS: A CASE STUDY OF THE SEA OFFERING TRADITION IN MADURA**

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**Abstract:** The phenomenon of religious-cultural syncretism in Indonesia's coastal communities remains underexplored within the framework of *living Qur'an* studies, especially regarding the interpretation of maritime Qur'anic verses in local ritual practices. The sea offering tradition (*sedekah laut*) in Pamekasan, Madura, represents an actualization of Islamic values intertwined with local wisdom; however, its direct connection to Qur'anic maritime verses has yet to be thoroughly investigated. This study aims to explore how the fishing communities in Pamekasan interpret and actualize the values of maritime Qur'anic verses in the context of the sea offering ritual. A qualitative ethnographic approach was employed through participant observation, in-depth interviews with religious leaders and fishermen, and document and classical tafsir analysis. The findings reveal that the sea is perceived as a manifestation of Allah's greatness, a source of sustenance, and a test of faith that must be honored and preserved. The sea offering ritual functions as a symbolic integration of Islamic teachings and

local cultural practices, strengthening both social solidarity and ecological awareness. Verses such as QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53, Al-Mulk (67): 15, Al-Nahl (16): 14, and Al-A'rāf (7): 163 are contextualized through the combination of prayers and cultural symbols, including *bitek* (miniature boats made of banana trunks) and seven-colored flowers. This study contributes significantly to the advancement of contextual Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic anthropology by highlighting the dynamic integration of sacred texts and local cultural practices. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for developing a more adaptive model of contextual exegesis that aligns with social realities and the preservation of Islamic-based local traditions.

**Keywords:** Contextual Qur'anic Interpretation, Sea Offering Tradition, Madurese Coastal Community, Living Qur'an

## Introduction

In Islamic thought, the sea is not merely understood as a geographical entity, but as a theological phenomenon rich with meaning in the Qur'an. Verses such as QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53 and QS. Al-Rūm (30): 48 portray the sea as a manifestation of divine greatness and power that creates cosmic order and serves as a test of human faith (Yunandar, 2017). Maritime interpretation goes beyond literal understanding to examine the relationship between humans, the sea, and the universe within the framework of monotheistic values and ecology. For coastal communities in Pamekasan, Madura, this interpretation is embodied in everyday life through symbols and sea-based cultural rituals. The sea is regarded as both a source of blessings and an arena for devotion to God. This interpretation materializes in practices such as the sea offering ritual, which not only expresses gratitude for the bounty of the sea but also reflects religious and ecological responsibility for the preservation of marine creation (Sahidah & Anisa, 2023).

Previous studies have explored the sea offering ritual mainly from socio-cultural and environmental perspectives. Afriansyah

and Sukmayadi (2022) examined the tradition in Pelabuhan Ratu, highlighting its role in strengthening social solidarity and local wisdom for sustainable resource management. Nainggolan et al. (2023) studied maritime cultural dynamics around Java's coasts, and Heriyawati et al. (2020) analyzed local wisdom in the Hajat Laut ritual in Pangandaran. However, these studies have not directly addressed the relationship between Qur'anic maritime verses and coastal cultural practices. Research by Yuniarto et al. (2022) and Setiawati (2019) explored ritual communication and cultural values, while studies by Anantha et al. (2024) and El Amin (2022) on the Madurese *Rokat Tase'* tradition focused on its symbolic and Islamic legal aspects, without examining the link between the sacred texts and local traditions.

The absence of in-depth research specifically connecting Qur'anic maritime interpretations with coastal cultural practices, particularly the sea offering ritual in Pamekasan, constitutes a significant research gap. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how coastal fishing communities interpret and actualize Qur'anic maritime values within their cultural practices. The urgency of this research lies in its contribution to developing applied contextual exegesis studies that integrate religious texts with local community wisdom. It also aims to enrich Islamic anthropology by providing insights into how sacred texts interact with socio-cultural realities in coastal societies. This study is expected to offer an academic reference for scholars, theologians, and policymakers in understanding how Islamic teachings are contextualized in local coastal cultures.

This research aims to explore how the coastal communities of Pamekasan interpret Qur'anic maritime verses within the context of the sea offering ritual. Specifically, the study investigates how religious values and local traditions converge in this practice. The research also contributes to the development of contextual exegesis by offering a case study from coastal community dynamics. A qualitative approach with an ethnographic design was

employed (Creswell, 2015; Sugiono, 2017), enabling observation, participation, and interpretation of cultural meaning. The research was conducted along the northern coast (Batumarmar, Pasean) and southern coast (Larangan, Galis, Pademawu, Tlanakan) of Pamekasan (Sukandar et al., 2016). The diversity of social, cultural, and economic conditions in these villages provided a rich context for understanding the community's varied interpretations of Qur'anic texts.

This study was conducted as a living Qur'an research, focusing on how the Qur'anic maritime verses are not only read and recited but also lived and manifested in the daily practices and rituals of the coastal communities of Pamekasan. The living Qur'an approach emphasizes the dynamic interaction between sacred texts and local cultural practices, allowing the researcher to explore the embodiment of Qur'anic values in the *Rokat Tase'* (sea offering) ritual as an expression of religious devotion and ecological responsibility.

Data collection employed participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2013). Participant observation involved direct engagement in the sea offering ritual to examine its symbolism and religious meanings. Interviews were conducted with religious leaders, local elders, and fishermen to explore their perspectives on the connection between Qur'anic maritime interpretations and local practices. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility for deeper exploration. Document analysis included classical tafsir literature, local religious texts, and archival materials to understand the adaptation of Qur'anic values within coastal cultural practices. Data validity was ensured through triangulation and member checking (Citriadin, 2020) to guarantee the accuracy and reliability of interpretations in reflecting the actual social realities of the community.

## **The Meaning of the Nautical Verses and Religious-Cultural Syncretism**

For the coastal communities of Pamekasan, Madura, the sea is not only a vast geographical entity, but also an entity full of spiritual, social, and cultural meaning. This means that coastal communities have a very close relationship with the sea, which they view not only as a source of life, but also as a manifestation of the greatness of Allah. Nautical verses in the Qur'an such as those found in QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53, QS. Al-Anfāl (8): 11, QS. Al-A'rāf (7): 163, QS. Al-Mulk (67): 15, QS. Al-Nūr (24): 40, QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164 and QS. Al-Nahl (16): 14, are often used as references in their daily lives. These verses reveal how Allah created the sea as a source of sustenance for mankind and as a means to witness His greatness. However, these verses are not only understood textually in religious teachings, but are also practiced in sea offering rituals which have become an integral part of the traditions of the Pamekasan fishing community. For example, QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53 which talks about Allah governing the sea and making it a source of life, is translated by coastal communities as a form of gratitude to Allah for the sustenance that comes from the sea. The sea, for them, is not only a symbol of God's power, but also a test of faith that must be guarded and maintained (Sholihah, 2023).

To understand this phenomenon more deeply, the concept of religious-cultural syncretism needs to be explained further. Religious-cultural syncretism refers to the process of combining elements of local religion and culture in social practices that create new forms that reflect the dynamic interaction between the two (Nasution et al., 2024; Solahudin, 2016). In this context, syncretism does not only talk about the integration of Islam with local traditions, but also about how the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an that talk about the sea interact with local wisdom that already exists in the culture of coastal communities. According to the theory of cultural interpretation, the interpretation of the

text is not only limited to literal or theological interpretations, but must also consider the social and cultural contexts that surround the reading community (Naamy, 2023; Zulfa & Masruchan, 2021). This theory emphasizes that interpretation is not just an intellectual act that separates the text from its real-life context, but rather a form of search for meaning that involves interaction between sacred texts and local culture, which shapes the way a society interprets religious texts.

In the study of cultural interpretation, as expressed by (Fattah, 2006), interpretation is not only a theological interpretation of texts, but also includes contextual understanding influenced by culture, social experience, and the environment in which a person lives. This phenomenon is clearly seen in how the Pamekasan community interprets the nautical verses in the Qur'an and combines them with elements of their culture in the practice of the sea offering ritual. In this ritual, although the prayers in the Qur'an are the core of each procession, local cultural elements such as the throwing of offerings and the use of local symbols are maintained and integrated as part of a form of respect for the sea and also as an expression of gratitude to Allah. This means that religious-cultural syncretism here is seen in how coastal communities interpret and practice these verses in their lives. On the one hand, they understand the sea as a gift from Allah, but on the other hand, they also perceive the sea as part of nature that needs to be respected and protected.



**Figure 1.** The throwing of offerings into the sea in the Pademawu sea, Pamekasan, Madura

Figure 1 above shows that, in this sea offering ritual, the Pamekasan community interprets the nautical verses in the Qur'an by combining them with cultural elements that have been inherited from their ancestors. In addition to the prayers in the Qur'an being the core of each procession, local cultural elements are maintained and integrated as part of a form of respect for the sea and also as an expression of gratitude to Allah. Rahmatullah, a religious figure in Branta Village, the southern coastal area of Pamekasan, in an interview explained his view on QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53: "The sea is a very large creation of Allah, which contains many blessings for us. The verses in the Qur'an about the sea remind us to always be grateful for all the sustenance that He has given, and to protect the sea as His gift", (Rahmatullah, 02 February 2024).

This interpretation reflects a combination of Islamic teachings that teach gratitude and preserving nature, with local wisdom that already exists in the culture of Pamekasan fishermen, who consider the sea as an entity that must be respected and protected. This interpretation shows that the sea is a gift, but must also be protected with full responsibility (Thobroni, 2017). Here,

the verses of the Qur'an about the sea are not only understood as a source of sustenance, but also as a space that must be protected and respected. This interpretation shows that Islamic teachings and local traditions can enrich each other and form religious practices that are contextual and relevant to the lives of coastal communities. Quraish Shihab, in his interpretation, links this verse in QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53 with the teaching that nature is a blessing given by Allah, but humanity is given the responsibility to protect and care for it, as explained in the Tafsir Al-Mishbah. The sea, with all its ability to give life, is a symbol of God's grace that must be received with gratitude and managed wisely (Shihab, 2005).

Religious-cultural syncretism is clearly seen in the practice of the sea offering ritual, which combines Islamic teachings and local culture. This ritual not only functions as a form of respect for Allah, but also as a practice of Islamic teachings that strengthen social ties among coastal communities. In the ritual, verses of the Qur'an about the sea are recited as part of a joint prayer, while local cultural elements such as the throwing of offerings are still carried out. A ritual that is full of spiritual and cultural symbolism. The offerings are placed in a "*bitek*", a small boat made of banana trees, which is distinctively different from the traditional *bitek* made of wood. The object, which resembles a miniature motorboat used by local fishermen, gives a unique and interesting impression. Before the throwing process begins, the community holds a joint prayer led by a local religious figure, which aims to ask for blessings so that their sea catch will be more abundant in the future. The fragrance of incense and seven types of flowers used in this ceremony adds to the sacred and hopeful impression (Observation, Branta Pesisir, April 6, 2024). This phenomenon reflects how local traditions can adapt to religious teachings and become part of broader religious practices, which not only maintain cultural identity but are also in line with Islamic teachings



that teach to protect and care for nature.

According to Syakir Ransa, a religious figure from Branta Village, southern Pamekasan, said that *“Offerings in the larung sesaji tradition are not only a ritual symbol, but also have a deep philosophical meaning and are closely related to the daily lives of coastal communities. The seven-colored flowers used in the offerings symbolize the seven days of the week, a representation of time that continues to run and the hope that every day will be filled with activities that are beneficial to oneself and others. Fragrant flowers, according to him, are a symbol of prayer and hope that people's lives will always be blessed with prosperity and harmony, both in personal and social life. With these seven-colored flowers, we hope that our lives will not only be filled with effort and hard work, but also with mutual benefit and building togetherness in the community. These offerings also serve as a reminder for the community to always appreciate the time given by Allah, use it for the common good, and maintain good relationships with each other, which will ultimately bring blessings to the entire coastal community of Branta Village, Pamekasan”*, (Syakir Ransa, April 6, 2024). This ritual not only reflects Islamic religious values, but also shows the close relationship between religious beliefs and local wisdom in preserving the coastal environment of Branta Village, Pamekasan. This shows how local traditions not only survive, but also adapt to Islamic teachings, thus creating a syncretism that enriches the understanding of the sea, both as a source of life and a test of faith. This means that the coastal community of Pamekasan adopts Islamic teachings in the practice of prayers that they say to ask for safety and blessings from Allah, but they also maintain traditional elements, such as throwing offerings into the sea, as a form of respect for the sea and as an expression of gratitude to God for the sustenance given.

QS. Al-Nahl (16): 14, which describes the sea as a source of life, is also an important verse in the interpretation of the sea by the coastal community of Pamekasan. In their interpretation, the sea is not only a place to seek sustenance, but also a reminder of Allah's power. Rahman, a religious figure in Tamberu Village, the

coastal area of Pantura Pamekasan, explained: *“Every verse that talks about the sea, for me, is a reminder of Allah’s power. The sea is a symbol of God’s greatness. We must appreciate it, because there are blessings that Allah gives there”*. (Rahman, February 10, 2024). This understanding is in line with Quraish Shihab in his interpretation, which emphasizes that the sea is a source of life that Allah gives, a place where mankind can take sustenance in the form of food and valuables. The blessings contained in the sea remind Muslims to be grateful and to protect the sea as part of their responsibility towards nature and Allah (Shihab, 2012). Here, it is clear how the verses of the Qur’an are interpreted and practiced within a local cultural framework that prioritizes the preservation of nature. Respect for the sea as a blessing from God is integrated with local cultural practices that encourage people to preserve the sea as a natural resource that is vital to their lives.

On the other hand, QS. Al-A’rāf (7): 163, which describes Allah’s warning to mankind regarding the consequences of violating His law, brings a new dimension to the meaning of the sea. The sea is not only a source of sustenance or blessing, but also a test of faith that must be maintained. In his interview, Sholehuddin, a religious figure in Batukerbuy Village, Pantura Pamekasan area, emphasized: *“The sea is a test of faith. Allah gives the sea as a test and also as a blessing. Therefore, we must protect the sea as we protect the earth”*, (Sholehuddin, February 11, 2024). This interpretation shows that the sea has a double meaning, as a blessing but also a test as a reminder for people not only to utilize the sea, but also to protect and respect it according to Allah's command. This view shows that there is a very strong interaction between Islamic teachings and existing local traditions. In the local culture of the Pamekasan Coastal community, the sea is not only considered a gift, but also a challenge that must be faced with great caution. This is another example of religious-cultural syncretism, where Islamic religious teachings serve as moral and ethical

guidelines, while local cultures adapt these teachings into daily life practices based on social and environmental experiences.

Quraish Shihab in his interpretation asserts that the content of QS. Al-A'rāf (7): 163 is not merely a historical story, but is a universal warning for mankind not to ignore Allah's commands, especially in matters relating to greed for natural resources. In the Tafsir Al-Misbah, Shihab explains that the people of Ailah who violated the prohibition on hunting fish on Saturdays is a concrete illustration of how neglect of divine provisions can lead to collective destruction (Shihab, 2005). Therefore, the sea must be respected and protected, not only exploited.

QS. Al-Mulk (67): 15 which talks about the importance of trying and seeking sustenance on earth, including the sea, also provides practical insight for fishing communities. Ahmadi, a fisherman in Montok Village, southern Pamekasan, explained in an interview: *"The sea is indeed dangerous, but we are used to it. The verses about Allah's power in the sea remind us that our efforts in the sea are always accompanied by His destiny. We cannot rely on the sea completely, but we always try our best, and trust in Allah"*, (Ahmadi, February 23, 2024). This understanding reflects the belief of coastal communities that their efforts at sea must be balanced with trust in Allah. This confirms that even though the sea is a source of life that is full of challenges, they still hold on to the belief that all the results they obtain are by Allah's permission and destiny.

In addition, QS. Al-Nūr (24): 40 which describes the challenges of life as dark as the sea, reminds humans to always be grateful for the results of the sea and prepare themselves to face all possibilities, both profitable and challenging. Abdus Syukur, a fisherman in Padellegan Village, Pesisir Selatan Pamekasan, said: *"For us, the sea is a source of sustenance. The verses that talk about the sea remind us to always be grateful, because there is so much that can be obtained from the sea. However, the sea also sometimes poses risks, so we must be prepared for all possibilities"*, (Abdus Syukur, February 23, 2024). Mahbubi, another fisherman, from Pandan Village, Pesisir Selatan

Pamekasan also said in his interview: *“The verses about the sea are very important to me. I believe that the catch of the sea comes from Allah, and I must appreciate the sea. However, sometimes we see the sea not only as a blessing, but also as a test of life”*, (Mahbubi, February 23, 2024). This view is in line with the message conveyed in QS. Al-Nūr (24): 40 which reminds people to be ready to face all possibilities that come from the sea, be it profitable results or challenges that must be faced. This view is also in line with the message conveyed in Surah QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164 by emphasizing the importance of people to respect the sea and maintain the balance of nature, because the sea is a source of sustenance that must be faced with full awareness of the risks and responsibilities.

Overall, the interpretation of nautical verses by the coastal community of Pamekasan shows a syncretism between Islamic teachings and local wisdom. The verses of the Qur'an about the sea are not only understood textually, but also adapted in their daily lives, especially in the sea offering ritual. This interpretation also reflects an awareness to maintain the balance of nature, especially the sea, as part of humanity's responsibility to Allah. The sea, for them, is not only a symbol of blessing, but also a test of faith that must be guarded with full responsibility. This means that the sea, as the main object in this interpretation, becomes a multifaceted symbol as a gift, a test, and a responsibility. This shows how coastal communities not only understand the text of the Qur'an literally, but also adapt it in the context of their lives which are closely related to nature and the environment.

It is important to note that this religious-cultural syncretism is not a process that occurs in a vacuum, but is strongly influenced by the social and cultural experiences of coastal communities. In this case, the coastal community of Pamekasan developed an understanding of the sea that is contextual, based on their experiences that are directly connected to the maritime nature. This is in line with Gadamer's Hermeneutic view which states that

understanding a text depends on the cultural and social background of the reader (Gadamer, 2004; Sofyan A.P., 2014). In this context, although the verses of the Qur'an have universal meanings, the interpretation of these verses by the coastal community of Pamekasan is strongly influenced by their social context and experiences with the sea. Thus, this interpretation is not only textual, but also contextual, which depends on the social interactions and experiences of the individual.

In addition, the Social Constructivism Theory proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann also provides a framework for understanding how social and cultural experiences shape the meaning of a phenomenon (Berger & Luckmann, 1990). In this case, the understanding of maritime verses in the coastal community of Pamekasan is influenced by their social context, where the sea is not only seen as an object of natural resources, but also as part of the social structure that underlies their lives. The ritual of sea offering, thus, not only functions as a form of respect for God and the sea, but also as a social practice that strengthens the relationship between individuals, communities, and their social structures. This ritual, which combines Islamic prayers with local cultural elements such as the throwing of offerings into the sea, reflects the acculturation between Islamic teachings and existing maritime traditions. Although Islamic prayers dominate this ritual, local cultural elements are maintained because they are considered an integral part of local wisdom that needs to be maintained and respected.

Comparison with other studies that discuss the interpretation of nautical verses also provides broader insights into how local contexts influence religious interpretations. For example, research by (Afriansyah & Sukmayadi, 2022) on the local wisdom values of the sea offering tradition in Pelabuhan Ratu shows that the people there view the sea as a symbol of fertility and blessings related to their maritime life. Although there are similarities with the interpretation of the Pamekasan community,

the people in Pelabuhan Ratu emphasize the aspect of the blessing of the sea as a source of life and as a means to strengthen social solidarity among fishermen. Meanwhile, research by (Nainggolan et al., 2023) on maritime culture on the coast of Java Island shows that the interpretation of nautical verses tends to focus more on the natural cycle and sustainable management of natural resources. This is different from the interpretation of the Pamekasan community, which focuses more on gratitude for the sustenance that comes from the sea and the need to maintain nature so that it remains sustainable. These variations in interpretation reflect how each group’s social and cultural experiences influence the way they interpret religious texts.

Within the framework of the living Qur’an and the culture of sea offering in Pamekasan, below is the relationship in table form:

**Table 1:** The Meaning of the Nautical Verses and Religious-Cultural Syncretism in Pamekasan

No	Qur’anic Verses	Interpretation by Community	Form of Syncretism
1	Al-Furqān (25): 53	Sea as Allah’s creation and life source	Sea offering ritual with offering ceremony
2	Al-Anfāl, Al-A’rāf, Al-Mulk, Al-Nūr, Al-Baqarah, Al-Nahl	Sea as blessing, trial, and sustenance	Integration of prayers with local symbols ( <i>bitek</i> , flowers)
3	Local Practices	Miniature <i>bitek</i> , seven-colored flowers	Cultural heritage integrated into worship
	Local Figures	Contextualize Qur’anic verses in local culture	Normative values meet symbolic elements

4	Interpretative Outcome	Sea as a gift and trust to be protected	Local customs co-exist with Islamic values
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The study found that the coastal community of Pamekasan interprets the Qur’anic maritime verses not only in theological terms but also in practical, cultural expressions. Table 1 summarizes how verses such as QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53, QS. Al-Anfāl (8): 11, QS. Al-A’rāf (7): 163, QS. Al-Mulk (67): 15, QS. Al-Nūr (24): 40, QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164, and QS. Al-Nahl (16): 14 are viewed by the community as both divine guidance and practical reminders of human responsibility. The sea is perceived as a creation of Allah, a source of sustenance, and a space that requires stewardship and gratitude.

Religious-cultural syncretism is expressed through the Sea offering ritual, where local cultural symbols, including bitek (banana trunk miniature boats) and seven-colored flowers, are integrated within Islamic prayers and practices. These acts are not considered contradictory but serve as contextual adaptations of Qur’anic teachings, reflecting the community’s theological, ecological, and social awareness. The fusion of Islamic normative values with local cultural elements provides a unique example of dynamic Islamic anthropology.

**Interaction of Islam with Local Traditions and Fishermen’s Work Ethic in the Sea offering Ritual**

For the coastal communities of Pamekasan, Madura, the sea is not just a physical space that provides natural resources, but an entity that has deep spiritual values. As a source of life, the sea is the center of all economic and social activities of the fishing community, as well as an arena for manifesting religious values. The sea offering ritual, which has become an integral part of the traditions of the coastal communities of Pamekasan, not only functions as a form of respect for Allah, but also contains

elements of syncretism between Islamic teachings and local wisdom that has developed among the fishing community. This ritual teaches the importance of gratitude and appreciation for nature, which is based on Islamic teachings about human responsibility towards nature and environmental sustainability.

As part of religious teachings, the fishermen's work ethic is reflected in their moral responsibility towards nature. Amidst the hardships of life and the challenges faced at sea, the hard work carried out by the Pamekasan fishing community is not only seen as a mere search for material things, but also as a form of worship that demands fortitude and perseverance. As explained by Hasan, a fisherman in Kaduara Barat Village, the southern coastal area of Pamekasan in his interview: *"We not only work hard at sea, but we also work with sincere intentions. The prayers we read in the Sea offering are our way of maintaining that intention"* (Hasan, March 3, 2024). The work ethic of fishermen who are very dependent on the sea as their main livelihood is closely connected to their hope for blessings and salvation from Allah, which is reflected in the Sea offering ceremony. Although they are aware of their dependence on the sea, they still maintain good manners and gratitude towards nature as part of their moral responsibility. In this context, QS. Al-Mulk (67): 15 which talks about the importance of working on earth, including at sea, is often presented in the collective consciousness of the fishing community as a moral basis for working. Thus, hard work at sea is not only about seeking sustenance, but also as a manifestation of worship that is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize good intentions to gain rewards from Allah.

The Pamekasan fishing community also views the sea as a spiritual testing ground. As explained in QS. Al-A'rāf (7): 163, the sea is a place filled with risks, which is a test of faith for mankind. Therefore, the sea offering ritual is a direct depiction of Islamic teachings that teach mankind to have *tawakkal* (surrender to Allah) in facing life's challenges. In this tradition, although there are



strong local cultural elements, such as the throwing of offerings, Islamic values remain at the core of the ritual. The Pamekasan fishing community maintains their local traditions, which have existed for a long time, but aligns them with Islamic teachings, which teach that the sea is both a blessing and a test that must be guarded and managed wisely.

The sea offering ritual also illustrates the work ethic of fishermen which is closely related to the values of patience, perseverance, and tawakkal. Fishermen in Pamekasan do not only rely on their skills in fishing, but also realize that their sea produce is a blessing from God that must be guarded with gratitude. They consider every catch they bring home as a gift from God, which must be respected and utilized well. In their daily lives, Pamekasan fishermen have a work ethic that is very thick with spiritual values. They work hard all day at sea, but always try to maintain a balance between physical effort and spiritual requests. Their work ethic demands fortitude in facing the risks of life as fishermen, such as big waves, unpredictable weather, and sea conditions that are not always supportive. However, they continue their work with full hope that God will bless their efforts.

The methodological interpretation approach in this case, especially the *maudlu'i* (thematic) approach, allows us to group the verses of the Qur'an that talk about the sea and nature into one big theme. QS. Al-Rūm (30): 48 and QS. Al-Furqān (25): 53, for example, state that Allah created the sea as a source of life for mankind. However, the sea also contains risks that must be faced with wisdom (Shihab, 2023, pp. 463–472). In this context, the sea offering ritual in Pamekasan is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of protecting nature wisely and not destroying it. This ritual is not only a matter of gratitude, but also sustainable management of nature, which is reflected in Islamic teachings on responsibility for the earth and natural resources. This thematic approach also reveals that the sea offering ritual in Pamekasan is not just a cultural or customary expression, but is a

direct implementation of Islamic teachings on social and ecological matters. The fishing community believes that by guarding the sea and performing this ritual, they are also carrying out Allah's command as stated in QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 164, which emphasizes the importance of guarding the earth as a trust from Allah. Therefore, the sea offering ritual is not only a symbol of gratitude, but also a practice of nature management based on Islamic teachings regarding the sustainability and balance of nature.

In addition, the hermeneutic approach provides a deep understanding of how the Pamekasan community interprets the verses of the Qur'an about the sea and relates them to their lives. Hermeneutic interpretation focuses on a contextual understanding of the text, which allows the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an not only literally, but also in the social and cultural context that surrounds the reader (Muhammad Saekul Mujahidin, 2023; Solahudin, 2016; Yuli Edi Z et al., 2023). In this case, the Pamekasan fishing community interprets the sea not only as a place to seek sustenance, but also as a test of faith that requires trust, patience, and perseverance. As conveyed by Sholikhin, a fisherman in Sotabar Village, Pamekasan Pantura Coastal Area, said in his interview: *"Working at sea is full of challenges. But we are taught not to only rely on our physical strength, but also to depend on Allah. The sea is not only a means of seeking sustenance, but also a place to test faith. For me personally, the sea is a test of life, which teaches steadfastness, patience, and complete dependence on Allah"* (Sholikhin, March 23, 2024). This is in line with Islamic teachings which teach that every struggle in life in the world is a test of faith, and the results of these efforts still depend on the will of Allah.

The statement shows how hermeneutics helps in understanding that the sea for the Pamekasan fishing community is not only considered as a source of economy, but also as part of the test of their faith. This hermeneutic approach provides insight into how the verses that talk about the sea are not only understood

as a form of blessing from Allah, but also as a field of testing faith that requires an attitude of *tawakkal*, complete surrender to Allah and steadfastness in facing challenges. QS. Al-A'rāf (7): 163 which describes the sea as a place of testing faith, is very relevant to this view. In this case, the hermeneutic approach enriches the understanding of maritime verses by connecting them directly to the social reality of fishing communities who face challenges at sea, such as big waves, unpredictable weather, and conditions that are not always supportive. The interpretation of this verse through hermeneutics provides a broader context in which the sea is seen as a symbol of blessing as well as a test that must be faced with patience and *tawakkal*. This understanding reflects the dynamic interaction between Islamic teachings that teach people to remain grateful for the blessings given, even in the face of great challenges. The Pamekasan fishing community interprets that *tawakkal* is not only a matter of surrendering oneself to Allah in achieving material things, but also in facing their life struggles, especially those related to nature which is full of uncertainty.

From the perspective of hermeneutic interpretation, Qur'anic texts such as QS. Al-Mulk (67) :15 which speaks of the importance of striving on earth, can be understood in the local context of fishermen striving hard at sea. Hermeneutic interpretation invites us to see that despite physical effort, the final outcome is still in the will of Allah. This is reflected in their interpretation of verses that emphasize that human effort must be accompanied by the belief that the outcome is the destiny of Allah. In an interview with Sholikhin, he emphasized the importance of relying on Allah, despite the enormous physical and economic challenges at sea. Hermeneutic interpretation emphasizes that *tawakkal* is part of the spiritual responsibility that must be maintained by each individual, while also showing the connection between faith and hard work.

In addition, the sea offering ritual shows how social interaction between fishermen is strengthened in the context of

local religion and culture. Through togetherness in carrying out this ritual, they show very close social solidarity, where they not only share the results of the sea, but also strengthen social relations between fellow fishermen. Rahman, a religious figure in Tamberu Village, Pantura Coastal Area of Pamekasan said: *"This ritual is our way of giving thanks to Allah. But also to remind us all that we live on the sustenance given by Him, and we must protect this sea together"*, (Rahman, February 10, 2024). In this case, the sea offering ritual becomes a tool for practicing Islamic teachings that emphasizes the value of social responsibility taught in Islam. The same thing was stated by Jamal, a fisherman in Lesong Daja Village, the northern coastal area of Pamekasan: *"The sea offering ritual also serves as a reminder to strengthen social ties among fishermen. By performing the ritual together, they rebuild trust and respect each other, which is very important in maintaining the sustainability of their business. In the sea, we are all one. This ritual is not only for Allah, but also to strengthen the relationship between fellow fishermen"*, (Jamal, March 12, 2024). This view shows that the sea offering ritual has a deep social dimension, where religion and culture serve as tools to strengthen social ties among community members.

In the practice of the sea offering ritual, although there are strong local cultural elements such as the throwing of offerings, which are not explicitly taught in Islam, this ritual still has a religious dimension that is closely related to Islamic teachings. Hermeneutic interpretation sees this as a spiritual expression that is relevant to Islamic values even though local cultural elements are maintained. The ritual not only functions as a symbol of gratitude for the sea produce, but also as a practice of Islamic values that teach people to protect nature wisely. In this context, the sea offering ritual represents religious-cultural syncretism, where Islamic teachings provide guidance for existing local traditions, as well as enrich social and ecological values.

This ritual also shows how fishing communities understand

ecological awareness as part of their moral and spiritual responsibility. As explained by Abdus Syukur, a fisherman in Padellegan Village, South Coastal Area of Pamekasan in his interview: *"The sea is where we seek sustenance, but also a place where we must maintain balance. This sea offering ritual is our way of preserving the sea, so that we all receive blessings that are not only abundant, but also sustainable"*, (Abdus Syukur, February 23, 2024). This understanding shows that the sea offering ritual is more than just a cultural expression, but also a form of social and spiritual responsibility to preserve the sea, in line with Islamic teachings on human responsibility towards nature. In this case, religious-cultural syncretism emerged as a response to the fact that although Islamic teachings teach about social and natural responsibility, their local culture still respects the sea as an entity that not only provides sustenance, but also as a space that must be preserved.

The hermeneutic approach also provides a deeper understanding of the interaction between religion and culture in the sea offering ritual. The Pamekasan community, despite having a strong cultural tradition, still integrates Islamic values in their ritual practices. This ritual illustrates how local religion and culture can interact harmoniously, allowing the fishing community to carry out their religious and social lives simultaneously. Through the hermeneutic approach, this ritual is not only seen as part of local wisdom, but also as the practice of religious teachings that align social and ecological practices with Islamic teachings. Overall, the hermeneutic approach provides a deeper understanding of how maritime verses in the Qur'an are translated in the context of the lives of Pamekasan fishermen. These verses are not only understood as a source of spiritual guidance, but also as a reminder that all forms of effort in this world, including the struggle to live as fishermen, are tests of faith that must be carried out with patience, perseverance, and trust in Allah. The sea offering ritual is an expression of gratitude and surrender to Allah, which teaches that even though the results of human efforts are

maximal, the final result still depends on Allah's will.

Furthermore, the sea offering ritual provides space for the development of the spirituality of the fishing community. This ritual combines Islamic elements such as the recitation of verses from the Qur'an with local wisdom values, such as the throwing of offerings, which are maintained even though they are not taught in Islam. However, these elements are aligned with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of gratitude and responsibility for the sustenance given by Allah. As a result, every success and failure in seeking sustenance at sea is seen as part of Allah's destiny, which must be accepted with sincerity and gratitude. In addition, in an interview with Jalaluddin, a religious figure in Sotabar Village, Pantura Pamekasan area, it was revealed: *"We do not see sea offering as something that is contrary to Islam. In fact, this is a form of our devotion to Allah, in a way that is in accordance with our culture"*, (Jalaluddin, March 25, 2024). This view shows that the Pamekasan community is able to harmonize their religious and cultural values through rituals that strengthen their social solidarity and spiritual ties with Allah.

In the perspective of Max Weber's Work Ethic Theory, which connects religious beliefs with people's work patterns. Weber stated that the work ethic in the context of Protestantism emphasized hard work and accountability, which in turn shaped capitalism in Europe (Khabibullah, 2022). However, in Pamekasan, the work ethic of fishermen influenced by Islamic teachings is more inclined towards moral values that prioritize blessings and social welfare, not just material gain (Fitriyah, 2020; Rusmania & Faraby, 2023). This shows that although there are similarities with Weber's theory, the work ethic of fishermen in Pamekasan emphasizes spiritual and social values more than just economic achievement.

Supriadi, a young fisherman in Polagan Village, South Coastal Area of Pamekasan, asserted: *"We always believe that the*

*results we get from the sea are sustenance from God, and it must be shared with others, especially through the Sea offering ritual. This ritual reminds us that what we get is not just our personal property*”, (Supriadi, March 20, 2024). This reflects the principle of zakat in Islam, which teaches that part of the sustenance obtained must be shared for the welfare of others (Sriyani et al., 2024). The sea offering ritual is a way for the coastal community of Pamekasan to implement the principle of zakat in their daily lives, through giving offerings to the sea as a symbol of sharing with nature and others.

In Pamekasan, this is evident in the way the community integrates traditional rituals with religious practices. For example, although the Sea offering ritual contains strong cultural elements, such as the throwing of offerings and the reciting of mantras, this practice still emphasizes Islamic elements through prayers and the recitation of verses from the Qur'an as the core of the ceremony. In addition, in an interview with Jalaluddin, a religious figure in Sotabar Village, Pantura Pamekasan, it was revealed: *“We do not see sea offering as something that is contrary to Islam. In fact, this is a form of our devotion to Allah, in a way that is in accordance with our culture”* (Jalaluddin, March 25, 2024). This view shows that the Pamekasan community is able to harmonize their religious and cultural values through rituals that strengthen their social solidarity and spiritual ties with Allah.

Overall, the interaction between Islam and local traditions in Pamekasan shows how the community is able to harmonize their religious and cultural values. The sea offering ritual combines elements of Islam and customs, which creates cultural harmony in their social life. A study on the adaptation of Islam in local culture shows that Islam is often adopted in a very contextual way, considering the social and cultural realities of the community (Maryamah & Ratnawati, 2018). This is very clear in the practice of the sea offering ritual, which although it contains cultural elements, still prioritizes Islamic prayers and the reading of verses from the Qur'an. Thus, the interaction of Islam and local

traditions in the practice of the sea offering ritual creates a form of cultural harmony, which allows the Pamekasan community to live their religious and social lives simultaneously. This ritual, in turn, enriches the understanding of Islamic scholars about how local religion and culture can interact and strengthen each other in shaping the character of society.

Regarding the interaction between Islam and local traditions and the work ethic of fishermen in Pamekasan, this can be described as in the table below:

**Table 2:** Interaction of Islam with Local Traditions and Fishermen’s Work Ethic

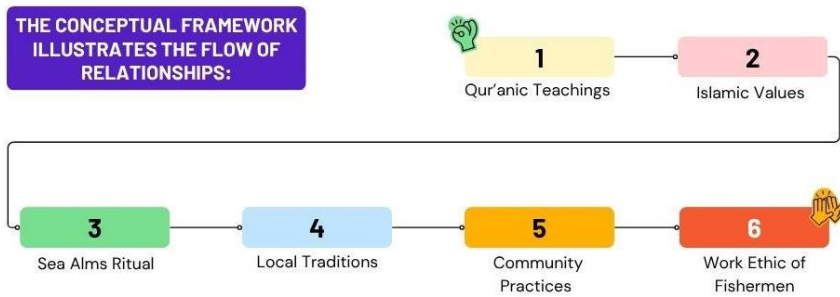
No	Aspect	Explanation	Examples
1	Sea Function	Economic and spiritual resource	Sea offering as gratitude ritual
2	Islamic Values	Gratitude, stewardship, <i>tawakkul</i>	Prayers, Sea offering ceremony
3	Work Ethic	Worship through perseverance	Respecting sea catch as Allah’s gift
4	Hermeneutics	Contextual verse interpretation	Hard work with trust in Allah
5	Social Solidarity	Strengthening community ties	Joint ritual participation
6	Syncretism	Islamic norms meet local expression	<i>Bitek</i> , symbolic offerings
7	Zakat Principle	Sharing sea harvest as trust	Sea offering offerings

Table 2 demonstrates how the interaction between Islamic teachings and local traditions fosters a distinct work ethic among Pamekasan fishermen. The sea is not only an economic resource but also a spiritual realm embodying divine tests and blessings. The Sea offering ritual becomes a medium for expressing gratitude, environmental responsibility, and social solidarity. The fishermen view their labor as worship, guided by Qur’anic



principles of *tawakkul*, patience, and hard work. Verses such as QS. Al-Mulk (67): 15 and QS. Al-A'rāf (7) :163 are understood contextually, emphasizing ethical behavior and resource stewardship. The hermeneutic approach facilitates contextual interpretations of the verses, enabling the blending of Islamic and local traditions without theological conflict.

The conceptual framework illustrates the flow of relationships, as shown in the picture below:



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Framework: Integration Model

Figure 2 above explains how Islamic theology and local culture are intertwined to create sustainable spiritual and socio-economic practices. The Sea offering ritual acts as both religious devotion and a culturally contextualized expression of Islamic teachings, thereby fostering environmental care and communal harmony. This study contributes to Islamic anthropology by providing a rich example of contextual Qur'anic interpretation within a specific cultural and environmental setting.

## Conclusion

This study reveals how maritime verses in the Qur'an are interpreted by the coastal community of Pamekasan, Madura, and translated into the practice of sea offering. The main findings of this study indicate that coastal communities interpret the sea not only as a source of sustenance, but also as a place to test their faith and a means to renew their relationship with God. The sea

offering ritual, which involves reciting verses from the Qur'an and praying, is not only understood as a form of worship, but also as a form of social responsibility to preserve nature and strengthen solidarity between communities. Although the results of this study provide important insights into how maritime verses are translated in the local context, the conclusions need to further develop the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the contextual interpretation approach by providing concrete evidence on how the interpretation of Qur'anic verses can be influenced by specific cultural and social contexts, as seen in the practice of sea offering. A broader contextual interpretation approach can gain richer insights by considering local factors that play a role in shaping the meaning of these verses. These findings suggest that tafsir does not only function as an interpretation of religious texts, but also as a way to understand how religion and culture can interact and strengthen each other in everyday life. From a practical perspective, this study makes an important contribution to the development of a contextual interpretation model in Qur'anic interpretation, especially in dealing with the dynamics of a society that lives in a context that is very connected to the natural environment around them. By viewing the practice of sea offering as part of a living interpretation, this study provides evidence that the interpretation of Qur'anic verses is not only theological, but also greatly influenced by the social and cultural context, leading to the application of religious teachings in the form of actions that are relevant to people's lives. This study also shows that maritime interpretation can be expanded to examine the relationship between sacred texts and local culture, providing space for the development of more inclusive and applicable interpretations in the future.

Overall, the findings of this study also strengthen the methodological basis of social interpretation, which views

interpretation not only as a study of texts, but as a social phenomenon involving interactions between society, texts, and culture. This approach broadens the scope of interpretation studies, which have so far focused more on classical and textual interpretations, to be more dynamic and contextual. Thus, the contribution of this study is to provide a new perspective in the study of interpretation, especially in viewing the relationship between religion and culture, as well as strengthening the methodological basis of social interpretation which emphasizes the importance of context in understanding the text of the Qur'an. This study also has practical implications that can be adapted in the context of modern interpretation studies. By integrating the approaches of cultural interpretation and contextual interpretation, we can build a more flexible and responsive interpretation model to the social realities that exist in society. Through this study, a deeper understanding can be obtained of how society translates religious teachings into their lives, as well as how interpretation can be a tool to strengthen the relationship between religion, culture, and society.

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