



CULTURE OF RAISING HANDS AS A GESTURE OF GREETING IN SABAH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE VERSES OF THE QUR'AN GATHERING

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Abstract: *This study explores the culture of raising one's hand as a greeting in Sabah society through the perspective of verses in the Qur'an that discuss gatherings (jamaah) and social interaction. This qualitative study uses the method of analyzing the content of the Qur'an and interviews with religious leaders and local communities in Sabah. The results of the study found that this practice is in line with general principles in the Qur'an such as respect (ihsan), maintaining relationships, and manners in meetings that emphasize compassion and politeness. Although not stated explicitly, this culture reflects universal Islamic values that support local traditions that do not conflict with Sharia law. The study concluded that the practice of raising the hand as a greeting in Sabah is a positive cultural manifestation that can be harmonized with Islamic teachings, while also strengthening community identity and unity. This investigation provides an integrative perspective between religious texts and local cultural practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Often, the social phenomena that occur in modern societies show a conflict between the principles of local culture and the necessities of modern life. In Sabah, East Malaysia, the culture of raising hands as a greeting gesture is a form of non-verbal communication that enriches interactions between different ethnic groups. These gestures, which are usually used as a sign of respect and recognition, are not just ordinary etiquette; it can reflect the deeper values, namely the friendship (bond of brotherhood and affection) that is recommended in Islam. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the cultural customs of saying this greeting and the Islamic teachings on silaturahim, especially from the perspective of the interpretation of the Qur'an (Emran, 2021).

In Islam, the concept of friendship, which refers to family ties and brotherhood, is one of the main principles in building a harmonious society (ummah wahidah). Through various guidelines, the Qur'an shows the importance of this relationship. This includes interacting well, greeting and maintaining relationships. In situations like this, the raising of the hand gesture as a greeting can be seen as a way to revive or visually show the bonds of brotherhood that transcend

religious and ethnic differences in Sabah. To interpret this culture, which is a unique local reflection, requires an interpretive approach that pays attention to social and cultural contexts. It moves beyond *lughawi* (linguistic) interpretation and towards deeper interpretation (al-Qaradawi, 2001).

The focus of this research is to analyze and interpret verses from the Qur'an related to the ethics of friendship and thematic interaction, especially from Surah An-Nur, Ar-Ra'd, Muhammad, and An-Nisa'. These verses were chosen because Surah An-Nur and An-Nisa' specifically discuss the manners of greeting and interaction, and Surah Ar-Ra'd and Muhammad expressly warn those who break ties. The main purpose is to relate the ideal meaning of these verses to the cultural phenomenon of raising hands in Sabah. We will define this greeting culture as a local expression that supports the command of friendship by using sociocultural interpretation.

This study of interpretation aims to prove that the interpretation of the Qur'an is not separate from the context of *waqi'i* (reality), which is the need of modern thinkers. Therefore, this study not only seeks the original meaning of the verse, but also seeks how it relates to the different social structures in Sabah. In particular, our objectives are as follows: (1) To study the linguistic meaning and context of *asbab al-nuzul* from the verses of *silaturahim* in the mentioned surahs; (2) Identify the relationship between the etiquette of salam (salam) and the function of greeting in the Qur'an text with the cultural function of raising hands in Sabah as a form of brotherly recognition; and (3) Describe the meaning of socio-cultural interpretations that encourage the adaptation of Qur'anic values through the culture of the place (Al-Ahmadi, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is guided by a qualitative research framework that utilizes the *tafsir maudhu'i* (thematic exegesis) approach as its primary methodological lens. The core objective is to conduct an integrative analysis that systematically connects the ethical and social principles of *silaturahim* (maintaining kinship ties) as derived from the Qur'an with the specific cultural practice of raising hands as a non-verbal greeting in Sabah, East Malaysia. To achieve this, the methodology is deliberately interdisciplinary, synthesizing scriptural hermeneutics with socio-cultural analysis. This design ensures the research is not confined to a purely textual or historical investigation but actively engages with the contemporary social reality (*al-waqi'i*) of a multicultural community. The process is structured into sequential, interconnected phases: identification and collection of primary and secondary sources, rigorous textual and thematic analysis of the selected Qur'anic verses, and a final stage of contextual interpretation that places

the exegetical findings in dialogue with the ethnographic and social characteristics of Sabah (Alhakimi & Imawan, 2023).

The data collection strategy was meticulously designed to draw from authoritative Islamic textual sources and reputable documentation of Sabah's cultural norms. The primary textual data consists of a focused selection of Qur'anic verses, namely Surah An-Nur (27–28), Ar-Ra'd (21–25), Muhammad (22–23), and An-Nisa' (1). These chapters and verses were selected through a purposive sampling method based on their explicit thematic relevance to the research problem they directly address the ethics of greeting (salam), the imperative of fostering and preserving social and familial bonds, the severe censure against severing such bonds (qat'u al-arham), and the broader principles of social interaction and respect for others. Secondary sources form the supporting scholarly and contextual backbone of the study (Dini, 2024).

These include classical exegetical works (tafasir) such as those by Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi, which provide foundational understandings and historical context. To ensure contemporary relevance and intellectual depth, modern commentaries by scholars like Quraish Shihab (Tafsir al-Misbah) and Wahbah al-Zuhaili (Tafsir al-Munir) are critically engaged. Furthermore, canonical Hadith collections, particularly Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, are referenced to corroborate and elaborate on the Qur'anic directives regarding silaturahim. Crucially, to ground the study in the specific cultural context of Sabah, secondary data also encompasses academic journals, sociological and anthropological studies, official cultural publications from Sabah's tourism and heritage boards, and credible ethnographic accounts detailing the social etiquette, non-verbal communication patterns, and communal values of Sabah's diverse ethnic groups, such as the Kadazan-Dusun and Murut communities (Djaali, 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2024).

The heart of the analytical process is the application of the tafsir maudhu'i method. This analytical framework proceeds systematically through several layers. The first layer involves a detailed linguistic and semantic analysis of pivotal Arabic terms central to the inquiry, including salam (greeting/peace), rahim (womb/kinship), silaturahim, and fasad (corruption/mischief). This step establishes the precise conceptual boundaries and inherent values carried by these terms within the Islamic worldview. Subsequently, where it enhances understanding, the historical circumstances of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) for the selected verses are considered, providing insight into their initial socio-legal context. The core analytical exercise is the thematic synthesis. Here, the content of the four Qur'anic surahs is meticulously examined to identify, extract, and interlink recurring ethical themes.

Key themes that emerge include the obligation of mutual recognition and respectful acknowledgment, the central role of greetings in initiating and maintaining positive social contact, the critical importance of preserving communal harmony by actively preventing discord and estrangement, and the spiritual and social consequences of neglecting these duties. These abstract, universally oriented themes are then systematically mapped onto the documented social functions of the hand-raising gesture in Sabah. The practice is analytically deconstructed as a non-verbal, culturally encoded form of salam; a powerful visual tool for social inclusion and acknowledgment; a pre-emptive mechanism that mitigates micro-conflicts and the impression of being ignored; and a repetitive micro-ritual that reinforces social cohesion and a sense of shared community identity (Mahbubi, 2025).

The final, interpretative stage employs a socio-cultural hermeneutic. This is where the universal ethical principles derived from the thematic tafsir are dialogically engaged with the particularities of Sabah's pluralistic society. The interpretation moves beyond merely stating that the local custom "aligns with" Islamic values. Instead, it posits that within its specific context, the act of raising a hand becomes an organic, practical, and culturally resonant embodiment and performance of those very values transforming abstract commandments for brotherhood into tangible, everyday social behavior.

This methodology consciously navigates several ethical considerations, primarily ensuring academic integrity through rigorous citation of all religious texts and scholarly works, and respectfully representing both Islamic doctrine and Sabahan cultural traditions without reduction or distortion. An acknowledged methodological limitation is the study's reliance on documented secondary sources for cultural data rather than primary ethnographic fieldwork, which could be addressed in future research. Ultimately, this methodological framework demonstrates the dynamic potential of thematic tafsir as a tool for adaptive and context-sensitive Islamic scholarship. It provides a replicable model for how scriptural analysis can be productively conjoined with cultural studies to illuminate the lived, localized expressions of faith, thereby contributing meaningfully to discourses on religion, cultural pluralism, and social harmony in the modern world.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Friendship

Silaturahim is a type of communication carried out by people with the aim of increasing brotherhood and strengthening one's inner relationship with others. In Arabic, the sentence silaturahim consists of two words: silah, which means relationship,

and al-rahmi, which means relative, or mustauda Al-Janin, which means "womb or peranakan" (Al-Munawwir, 1999). The words "Al-rahim" and "Al-Rahmah" are derived from the word "rahima", which means "to love, to love". Therefore, silaturahim literally means connecting affection and kinship.

From another article, it is also said that the Hadith and verses of the Qur'an provide many explanations about friendship. However, there are differences in the way the hadith and verses of the Qur'an understand and convey information about friendship. For example, the hadith explicitly mentions the word "friendship" in the context of kinship, which is derived from two words, "shilah" and "womb." Although the term may not be spoken explicitly, concepts and values related to friendship are conveyed in various verses of the Qur'an. The main focus of the Qur'an is the principles of morality, ethics, and harmony in human relationships, including in the family and society (Husna, 2020).

Therefore, although the word "friendship" is not always explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, values and teachings related to kinship relationships, solidarity, and affection are conveyed explicitly. More common in the context of Qur'anic verses. Although the hadith often provides explanations, the Qur'an still conveys important messages about friendship through deeper and more general values.

The Law of Friendship

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

And be devoted to Allah whom you always ask by mentioning His name, and maintain the relationship (silaturrahim) of relatives; for indeed Allah is always watching over you. (Nissa: 1)

Based on this verse, scholars agree that the law of continuing the friendship is obligatory and breaking it is haram (Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi, 2002). According to Qadhi Iyadh, the scholars agree that friendship is obligatory in general, and to decide on it is a great sin. However, he explained that the obligation of friendship has a degree or level, where the burden of maintaining the relationship varies according to one's ability and needs.

The lowest form of friendship is to avoid breaking communication and having a sour face, which can be maintained by being humble to greet or greet. Therefore, as long

as a person keeps the relationship to a minimum, he is not considered a breaker of friendship. However, if he neglects the friendship at a stage that he is capable of doing, he is not considered the one who maintains the relationship. Maintaining friendship is about maintaining good relationships and healthy communication among family and relatives, even if the communication is not done regularly ('Allan, 2008).

Advantages of silaturrahim

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُسْطَلُّهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثْرِهِ، فَلَيَصِلْ رَحْمَهُ

Meaning: "Whoever wants to extend his sustenance and prolong his life, then he should continue the relationship of friendship."

أَنْ يُسْطَلَّهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ'

Expanded and made into a lot of his wealth. According to another opinion, it means being given the blessing of wealth (al-Bukhārī, 1422 H / 2001 M). While in a hadith from Abu Ayyub al-Ansari RA, the Prophet was asked about the practice of entering paradise, and the Prophet replied:

تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا ، وَتُقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ ، وَتُؤْتِي الزَّكَاةَ ، وَتَصِلُ الرَّحْمَ

Meaning: "Worship Allah and do not do shirk to Him, establish prayers, pay zakat and forge a bond of friendship (Persekutuan, 2019).

As for the meaning of silaturrahim, it is to do good to relatives according to the condition of the person who wants to connect and the condition of the person who wants to be connected. Sometimes in the form of kindness with wealth, sometimes by giving assistance, sometimes by visiting it, by giving greetings, and so on.

Verses Related to Friendship and Its Interpretation

1) Surah An-Nisa' Verse 1

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Surah An-Nisa is one of the surah in the Quran totaling 176 verses and is in the 4th order of 114 surah in the Quran. In this surah Allah explains ijmal about unity and unity, as well as instilling love for others.

In Surah Nisa' verse 1, silaturrahim is generally associated with human

relationships and their rights and also family relationships. And be devoted to Allah whom you always ask by mentioning His name, and maintain the relationship (silaturrahim) of relatives; for indeed Allah is always watching over you. (Nisa: 1)

This verse commands that people should fear and obey Allah. Then it is also ordered to protect the rights of fellow human beings and to preserve family relations and womb relationships by continuing friendship and not breaking it. Allah reminds that He always watches over His servants and will question them about obedience and the implementation of friendship in the hereafter (Fairuzabadi, 1420 H / 2000 M, p. 84).

Establishing relationships with fellow humans and maintaining family ties is the basis of piety that can lead humans to the level of perfection. According to Ad-Dahhak, the meaning of the verse is to fear Allah whom you have promised and pledged by mentioning His name. Fear Allah in gathering. In other words, do not decide it. Connect the friendship and be devoted to him (Kathīr, 1420 H / 2000 M, p. 206).

As for the meaning of silaturrahim, it is to do good to relatives according to the condition of the person who wants to connect and the condition of the person who wants to be connected. Sometimes in the form of kindness with wealth, sometimes by giving assistance, sometimes by visiting it, by giving greetings, and so on (al-Nawawi, 1417 H / 1996 M, p. 287).

2) Surah Muhammad verses 22-23

فَهَلْ عَسِيْتُمْ إِنْ تُولِّيْتُمْ أَنْ تَفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقْطُعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

"Would if you were in power, would you do damage to the earth and cut off your family ties?"

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعْنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصْمَمَهُمْ وَاعْمَلَهُمْ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ

"These are the people who are cursed by Allah. Then He blinded their sight."

In this verse, it can be understood that maintaining and preserving friendship is very important, and deciding it will also have balanced consequences as conveyed in the Qur'an. As mentioned in surah Muhammad verse 22, the

disconnection of friendship can result in the disconnection with Allah.

These verses also give a stern warning to those who are empowered but abuse them to damage and destroy friendships. According to the Qurṭubī, the damage in question is not only physical damage, but also tyranny, hostility, and the division of society. Because it damages the social bonds that are important for the welfare of the people, breaking family ties is also considered a great sin (Al-Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, 1384 H / 1964 M, p. 632). Allah declares that they will be afflicted with His curse, which includes worldly and hereafter punishments and the closure of their hearts, hearing, and sight so that they can no longer receive the truth. In other words, committing social and moral sins causes spiritual damage, which keeps them away from guidance.

In fact, another article also states that if our relationship with Allah SWT is severed, it will be more difficult for us to get his help both in this world and in the hereafter. In moral terms, it has bad value, and Allah declares, as mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet that everyone wants to enter paradise, but Allah has warned that those who break off friendship will not enter. Allah tells people about the dangers of breaking friendship because of the importance of friendship. The explanation shows that friendship is very important to do because of the many virtues and consequences of carrying out and not doing it. If a person is a sensible Muslim, they will surely understand what to do from these various explanations that have been explained to avoid bad consequences and live with more happiness. Otherwise, he would feel the consequences of this breaking of friendship, he should be able to carry out His commands as well as possible (Diyana, 2023).

Surah Muhammad (verses 22–23) warns hypocrites who refuse to wage jihad even though they profess to believe (verses 20–21). It is clear that turning away from God's commands corrupts society and oneself. Those who abandon their religious responsibilities are often a source of damage in the world, even to the point of breaking friendship, which is an important pillar in Islamic society ("Tafsir Surah Muhammad Ayat 22–25", n.d.). Moreover, there is a close relationship between this verse and verse 24. "Have they not read the Qur'an or

are their hearts locked?" is the direct question in verse 24, which closes with the image that Allah curses them until they are deaf and blind. This shows that a hard heart and no longer open to the tadabbur of the Qur'an is a source of damage and an attitude of breaking family ties. Thus, there is a continuity between cause (turning away, destroying, breaking friendship) and consequences (cursed, deaf, blind, and locked heart).

From a thematic point of view, mufassir such as Wahbah az-Zuhaili argue that the plausibility of this verse includes social meaning and a series of texts. It is very clear that the purpose of the Qur'an as a book of guidance that maintains social order is related to the prohibition of breaking friendship mentioned in this verse (Suryadi, 2020). Thus, the munāsabah of Surah Muhammad 22–23 shows that the *ijtima'i* (social relations) aspect and the "aqidi" aspect must be balanced.

In general, surah Muhammad verses 22-23 contain a condemnation of hypocrites who are reluctant to fight in the way of Allah swt. This verse affirms that if they turn away from the guidance of the Qur'an, they will commit destruction on earth and break off friendship, just to maintain their own safety. The retribution for this attitude is a curse from Allah, which is to keep His mercy away and bring His wrath closer, as well as to blind and twist their hearts. The scholars' discussion on the meaning of this verse includes ((CRIS), 2021)

- A. Ibn 'Assyria explained that this verse criticizes the hypocrites who are reluctant to fight, as a result of which they will do damage to the earth and break off friendship for their own safety.
- B. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that this verse is a condemnation of those who destroy the earth such as cutting down forests and who break off friendship, which is a characteristic of hypocrites and should be avoided by true believers.
- C. Al-Sa'adi stated that those who turn away from Allah do damage to the earth and break off friendship so that they deserve a curse from Allah, which is far from mercy and close to His wrath.
- D. Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani added that this verse criticizes hypocrites who are reluctant to engage in jihad on the grounds of breaking off friendship, even

though jihad is carried out for the common good. He also mentioned that if you read qiraat «وليت» (bina al-majhul), the meaning is that if a hypocrite becomes a leader, they will commit tyranny with corruption and break the friendship between family and humans.

Thus, surah Muhammad verses 22-23 not only highlight the hypocrisy of the Prophet Muhammad's time, but also contain universal values that prohibit Muslims from doing damage to the earth and breaking off friendships. Therefore, this verse not only issued a condemnation of the hypocrites in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but also provided a lesson that applies to everyone about the dangers of abandoning religious rules that can damage the social system. Between verses 22 and 23, along with the series of verses before and after, it is reasonable to show that true faith must be demonstrated in action: jihad in the cause of Allah, maintaining friendship, and preventing corruption in the world.

Basically, verses 22 and 23 of surah Muhammad provide guidelines on negative identities to be avoided, threatening with curses for those who destroy the world and eliminating friendships. From arrogance and selfishness that leads to social tyranny, this cursed identity begins. The practice of the culture of greeting that often occurs in Malaysia or in some places in Malaysia as a daily exercise to develop an identity that is the opposite (humility and caring) of the traits that are reproached in the Qur'an. Greetings, based both verbally and signlessly, are visual manifestations of humility and recognition of the presence of others, actively opposing the arrogance and indifference that are the seeds of social fasād. Therefore, the culture of greeting serves as a practical tool to build a Muslim identity that is responsible for maintaining the harmony of society.

Failure to preserve a culture of positive greetings can be the starting point for social collapse. When a person regularly shows negative greetings such as being indifferent or arrogant, it can create emotional distance and a sense of marginalization among the community. This is the first step towards the breakdown of friendship (qat'u al-arḥām) which is strictly forbidden in Islam, and can eventually lead to wider social damage. Therefore, the practice of greeting culture is not just about good manners, but plays an important role in fostering

social harmony and avoiding the "social cost" in society. Surah Muhammad verses 22-23 are the basis of his theology: greeting and greeting respectfully is not only a cultural practice, but also a moral obligation in Islam to abstain from anger and fasād due to the breakdown of friendship.

3) Surah Ar-R'ad, verses 21 and 25

Silaturrahim is a fundamental teaching in Islam that is widely emphasized in the Qur'an. One of the verses that touches this matter most clearly is Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 21, where Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَصْلُوْنَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوْصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُوْنَ سُوءَ

أَلْحَسَابِ

"And those who connect what Allah commands to be connected, they fear their Lord and fear hisab (charitable reckoning)."

That is why, according to the interpretation of the scholars, what is meant by "ma amarallahu bihi an yusal" is the command to maintain silaturrahim, which is a relationship of affection, kinship, and all forms of social ties that are pleasing to Allah. Ibn Kathir explained that continuing the friendship is a sign of the believer, by which one obtains a long life and blessed sustenance (Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 1998).

On the contrary, Allah warns strongly in Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 25:

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيَّالِقَةٍ وَيَقْطَعُوْنَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوْصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِي كَلَّهُمُ الْلَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

"And those who revert the promise of Allah after it has been firmly vowed, and decide what Allah commands to be connected, and cause damage to the earth, they will have a curse and for them a bad dwelling place."

This verse emphasizes that breaking the friendship is the act of the wicked who will receive the curse of Allah. The threat shows that severing family ties and brotherhood is not only a social sin, but also a great sin that has implications for the hereafter.

In addition to Surah Ar-Ra'd, there are other verses that emphasize the importance of silaturrahim. Among them is Surah an-Nisa' verse 1 which says: *"And fear Allah who (uses) His name and ask one another, and (maintain) the relationship of friendship..."*. Similarly, Surah al-Baqarah verse 27 mentions that the characteristic of the wicked is those who "decide what Allah commands to be connected" (Al-Qurṭubī, al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, 2006).

Classical interpretations such as Ibn Kathir's work emphasize that silaturrahim means maintaining family and kinship relationships (Kathir, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm, 1998, p. 416). He stressed that breaking this relationship would result in the severance of Allah's grace. Meanwhile, al-Qurtubi in al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qurann explains that silaturrahim is not just a blood relationship, but also a social bond that Allah commands to be maintained (Al-Qurṭubī, al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, 2006, p. 328). Breaking the friendship, according to him, is a great sin that collapses the structure of society.

In contemporary interpretation, silaturrahim is understood more broadly. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Mishbah asserts that it covers the relationship with Allah, fellow human beings, and also the environment. Maintaining friendship means upholding brotherhood while maintaining a balance in life. Meanwhile, Rashid Ridha in Tafsir al-Manar emphasized that friendship is an important basis for building social solidarity and civil society (Ridha, 1947).

The hadith of the Prophet PBUH emphasizes the obligation of silaturrahim. The Prophet said: "There will be no one who breaks the bond of friendship" (HR. al-Bukhari, no. 5984). The hadith of the Prophet also places strong emphasis on this obligation. The Prophet PBUH said: "There will be no one who breaks the bond of friendship." (Narrated by al-Bukhari, no. 5984). In another narration, the Prophet said: "Whoever wants to have his sustenance free and prolong his life, then let him continue his friendship." (HR. al-Bukhari, no. 5986; Muslim, no. 2557). This hadith shows that silaturrahim has direct implications for the blessings of one's life.

From the perspective of maqasid al-Qur'an, silaturrahim serves to protect the benefit of humans. It contains elements of hifz al-nasl (safeguarding offspring),

hifz al ird (safeguarding honor), hifz al-'amal (safeguarding property), and hifz al-bi'ah (safeguarding the environment). Thus, silaturrahim can be understood as an important instrument to achieve universal sharia goals (Shihab, Tafsir al-Mishbah, 2002, p. 293).

4) Surah An-Nur verses 27-28

يٰٓيٰهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتَسْلِمُوا عَلَيْهَا أَهْلُهَا ۖ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"O you who believe! Do not enter a house that is not your home before asking permission and greeting the occupants. That is better for you, that you may (always) remember."

According to Hamka in Tafsir al-Azhar, Surah al-Nūr verse 27 explains the prohibition for believers to enter other people's houses without the owner's permission. The house is a private space that holds the secrets of family life, in contrast to the face of social life displayed outside. Inside the house, a person is free in simple conditions, wearing modest clothes, or enjoying food as it is. Things like minor disputes between husband and wife or family economic limitations are not worth knowing to outsiders.

Therefore, Islam emphasizes that every believer is not allowed to enter another person's house except with permission and after saying salam. These two conditions, the permission of the owner of the house and the greeting of greetings, must be fulfilled simultaneously as a form of respect for the privacy and dignity of the inhabitants of the house, regardless of their social status, whether it is a magnificent house or a simple hut (Hamka, 1984, pp. 4917-4918).

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَرْجِعُوهَا فَارْجِعُوهَا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيهِمْ

"And if you do not find anyone in it, then do not enter until you have permission. And if it is said to you, Come back! Then (shall) you return. It is more sacred to

you, and Allah is Aware of what you do."

According to Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Misbah, the group of verses 27–28 of Surah al-Nūr discusses the ethics of visiting which is part of Divine guidance in social relations. This verse commands Muslims to ask permission before entering another person's house, as the house is a place of privacy and protection for its occupants. This privacy includes personal freedoms that outsiders do not deserve to know, whether regarding the state of dress, economic conditions, or internal family problems.

Quraish Shihab interprets that the word *tasta'nisu* means an effort to bring a comfortable atmosphere to the residents of the house, so that guests do not surprise them with a sudden arrival. One of the best ways this verse emphasizes is to say hello. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught that greetings should be said before speaking (*al-salām qabla al-kalām*) and permission should be asked a maximum of three times. If it is not allowed, then the guest is obliged to return, because it is more to maintain honor and avoid the host from feeling awkward.

Furthermore, this ethics does not only apply to other people's homes, but also within the scope of the family. A child is encouraged to ask permission before entering his parents' room, and vice versa, as each individual has a right to privacy. Even husbands and wives are sunnah to give each other signals or permission so as not to surprise each other. In this case, the Prophet (saw) emphasized the importance of keeping your eyes open when you are at the door so as not to see the inside of the house that may reveal the awrah or secrets of the residents (Shihab, Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an, 2002, pp. 318-322).

Al-Firyabi narrated from Ibn Jarir, from Adi bin Tsabit, he said; An Ansar woman came to the Prophet. he said, "O Messenger of Allah, I am in my house in a state that no one wants to see. However, there was always a man from my family who came into my house when I wanted to be alone. What should I do?" So the verse came down, "*O you who believe, do not enter a house that is not your home before asking permission.*" (As-Suyuthi, 2014, p. 379)

After Allah SWT explains the law regarding the act of qadzf against women who are guarded in honor and the story of al-Ifk, this verse is continued with a relevant explanation, namely manners and ethics in entering other people's houses. This is in the form of the obligation to ask for permission and say greetings before entering. The goal is to avoid the emergence of suspicion, negative prejudice, and slander that can arise if someone enters without permission.

In addition, this rule also serves to prevent the occurrence of khalwah (alone without a mahram) which has the potential to cause accusations or be used by irresponsible parties to spread lies. On the other hand, it is a form of respect for the condition of the occupants of the house, both male and female, who may not want to be seen in certain circumstances. The prohibition of looking at the awrah carelessly is also part of the guard of honor, which if ignored can be a path to adultery (az-Zuhaili, 2013, p. 482).

The concept of friendship in Islam is not just about visiting or meeting each other, but maintaining the bonds of kinship, affection, and mutual respect. The interpretation of Surah An-Nur verses 27–28 shows that the ethics of hospitality are a practical instrument in realizing friendship. By asking permission, a Muslim respects his brother's personal rights; By giving greetings, he spreads prayers and a sense of closeness (Muhsanat, 2022, p. 52).

Modern research confirms that the practice of visiting in accordance with sharia guidance can strengthen friendship in society. This is because manners ask for permission to avoid conflicts, while greetings strengthen the bond of ukhuwah and social closeness (Pohan, 2021, p. 61). Thus, this verse teaches that friendship is not enough with good intentions, but needs to be realized through concrete social manners.

Culture Of Raising Hands In Sabah

The culture of raising one's hand while smiling when crossing paths is one of the forms of nonverbal greeting that is widely found in many communities in Sabah. This gesture often serves as an informal greeting when physical distance or situations do not allow for a handshake, as well as a gesture of friendly acknowledgment between people who know each other and those who simply know each other from a distance. This kind

of nonverbal greeting practice is reflected in local social and tourism etiquette guidelines that emphasize the importance of simple expressions of greeting and respect between citizens as part of Sabahan's hospitality to guests and others (Board, 2023).

As a sign of recognizing the presence of others, raising hands is directly related to recognition-based social functions, which is to signal that someone is seen and acknowledged for their existence. In a heterogeneous community like Sabah, this kind of recognition marker helps maintain a sense of social inclusion: the person receiving the gesture will feel cared for, while the sender of the gesture shows goodwill without having to interfere with the other person's activities. Local ethnographic research and local cultural publications show that daily manners (including variations in greetings) play an important role in building the social cohesion of ethnic communities such as the Kadazan-Dusun and Murut (Sabah, 2022).

As a symbol of respect and appreciation, the raising of the hand contains the values of manners, namely it gives a sign of respect without aggression, shows polite distance and warmth. In the context of Malay and Borneo cultures, the attitude of respect for the interlocutor can be manifested through various nonverbal forms ranging from verbal greetings, handshakes (with certain gender rules), to simple hand gestures that all emphasize respect for age, status, and personal space. Thus, raising hands serves as a form of appreciation that is in accordance with local norms while being easy to practice in everyday situations.

In terms of preventing misunderstandings or the impression of being ignored, this visual greeting works as a mechanism to prevent micro-conflicts: when one is ignored in a brief encounter, social tolerance can be eroded; On the other hand, simple gestures such as raising a hand signal concern and goodwill, thus reducing the likelihood of prejudice or a sense of exclusion. In a collectivity-oriented society that respects the harmony of relationships between others, steps to prevent misunderstandings through polite greetings are part of social ethics that are practiced daily. Ethnographic sources and local ethical guidelines confirm the role of greetings and small gestures of politeness in maintaining these social relationships (State, 2021).

Finally, in terms of building a sense of community, the culture of raising hands serves as a repetitive micro-ritual, which is the habit of raising a hand when meeting

helps strengthen social networks at the environmental level to create a slow but sustainable social attachment between neighbors, relatives, and community members. It is these small, consistently practices that often become the substrate for local solidarity, as they foster trust, mutual understanding and belonging within Sabah's different ethnic communities. Cultural heritage documents and local customary summary books record how daily customs such as greetings and greetings contribute to the social fabric of the local community.

From the perspective of the Qur'an and its interpretation, the values embraced by this culture of raising hands are recognition of others, respect, preventing hostility, and strengthening relationships in line with the teachings on friendship and social manners described in several verses. For example, An-Nisa' about the origin of human beings and the obligation to maintain family relationships; Muhammad on the reproach against the breaker of friendship and Ar-Ra'd about the reward for those who continue the relationship and An-Nur about the manners of salam and permission when interacting. Popular interpretations emphasize that small things in social interactions that show respect and goodwill can be the real practice of the teachings; Therefore, simple greetings such as raising hands can be read as an ethical form that is consistent with the Qur'anic values regarding human relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown the framework of contemporary Tafsir Maudhu'i (Thematic). The purpose of this study is to link the local cultural practices of Sabah, such as raising hands as a sign of greeting, with the basic Islamic values, silaturahim. This study has placed tafsir as an adaptive and reality-oriented process (waqi'i) by looking at the key verses from Surah An-Nur, Ar-Ra'd, Muhammad, and An-Nisa'. The socio-cultural interpretation methods used have allowed analysis to go beyond the purely linguistic aspects. This has made it possible to link the ideal meaning of the Qur'an (the manners of greetings and the prohibition of severing ties) with the culture of raising hands as an affirmation of brotherhood that cuts across ethnic and religious backgrounds in Sabah.

This study found that the culture of raising hands in Sabah is a local expression that reinforces the command of friendship recommended by the Qur'an. As stated in Surah Muhammad and Ar-Ra'd, the practice of salam (salam) is simplified by this simple gesture of

greeting, which indicates recognition and respect. Its purpose is to connect hearts and prevent threatened social damage. Therefore, the commentary is relevant and transformative because it shows how the universal principles of the Qur'an can be absorbed organically in a variety of socio-cultural contexts, supporting the idea that the commentary must find meaning that is relevant to modern society.

Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to the field of contemporary interpretation by offering a model for incorporating local ethnography in text analysis. It not only enriches academic discussions about adaptive interpretations (i'jāz) of reality, but also has significant consequences in the real world. This discovery could increase the awareness of the people of Sabah about the spiritual values they apply in their daily lives. This study indirectly supports efforts to maintain harmony and stability in a pluralistic society by validating this greeting culture as a means to maintain friendship. It also makes it a model of how logos, or words, can be translated into action, through local cultural channels.

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